

The Role of The Military, The Bruneian Political Power and The Malay Realm (14th – 19th Century): From a Historical Perspective

Asbol Mail

Ampuan Haji Brahim Ampuan Haji Tengah

Haji Tassim Haji Abu Bakar

Academy of Bruneian Studies

Universiti Brunei Darussalam

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to discuss the role of the military, the Bruneian political power and the traditional Malay Realm. The period investigated is between the 14th and 19th Century¹. Apart from Brunei, the other countries that is considered to have been a part of the Malay Realm includes Malaysia, Indonesia, Patani in Thailand, and the Philippines. It was in these nations where the Malay Realm sultanates once existed, each with its own military, not only Brunei, but also Malacca, Aceh, Demak and Patani. The military², in general, is defined as a group of people who are authorised to defend a country from any enemy attacks, whether it is from within the country or from external forces. They are also often ordered by a government or leader to attack other countries or certain factions, who they see as the enemy. *Ketenteraan* (The Military) – Malay Language Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia (2020)

INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to discuss the role of the military, the Bruneian political power and the traditional Malay Realm. The period investigated is between the 14th and 19th Century³. Apart from Brunei, the other countries that is considered to have been a part of the Malay Realm includes Malaysia, Indonesia, Patani in Thailand, and the Philippines. It was in these nations where the Malay Realm sultanates once existed, each with its own military, not only Brunei, but also Malacca, Aceh, Demak and Patani. The military⁴, in general, is defined as a group of people who are authorised to defend a country from any enemy attacks, whether it is from within the country or from external forces. They are also often ordered by a government or leader to attack other countries or certain factions, who they see as the enemy. *Ketenteraan* (The Military) – Malay Language Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia (2020)

The military's role in defending a country from enemy attacks is, on its own, related to political influences. If it manages to defeat the enemy, it

means that it was successful in protecting the country's current political powers. Thus, the defended country is regarded as sovereign and independent, free from foreign dominion. Aside from facing foreign military attacks, the military is also often used in disabling any rebellious attempts to overthrow the ruling power. In such situations, it is clear that not only is there armed forces that is owned by the government, but also certain parties who have a significant political influence with many followers. This, then, gave rise to these phrases; government's army, dignitary's army, the government agent's army and '*tentera karah*' (conscripted army).

From here, this paper attempts to discuss the role of the military and political power, focusing on territorial expansion, efforts to overcome internal crises caused by power struggles which led to rebellions, piracy issues, national defence from foreign attacks, and military assistance to other nations.

HEAD OF THE MILITARY

¹ This research uses Anno Domini in its discussions.

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Because of the importance of the military's role in national defence and the strength of a political power, the Bruneian Sultanate, and the other sultanates in the Malay Realm, appointed specialised dignitaries in their government's administrative machinery to oversee the military. These dignitaries played a role as the head of the army who strategized defence and recruited soldiers, especially in preparing for war. In the Bruneian Sultanate, the role of the head of the army was held by the *Pengiran Temenggong*. He was one of the dignitaries of the four viziers in the administrative order the Bruneian Sultanate. Apart from the *Pengiran Temenggong*, the three others were *Pengiran Bendahara*, *Pengiran Digadong* and *Pengiran Pemanca*. The *Pengiran Bendahara* was the Head Vizier, and the most senior advisor to the sultan. He was also involved in governing issues concerned with the military. On the other hand, the *Pengiran Digadong* was responsible for the treasury, and the *Pengiran Pemanca* was the chair for the court council meetings. (Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail 2011, 92, 96). Beneath the Viziers were the *Cheterias* and *Menteris* (Ministers).

The role of *Pengiran Temenggong* as the head of the army can be seen during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Tajuddin (1795-1804) (1804-1807) when His Majesty ordered *Pengiran Temenggong* Abdul Raub to handle a rebellion caused by the Melanau people in the districts of Rejang and Mukah. The role of *Pengiran Temenggong* as the head of the military can also be seen in 1858. At the time, this title was held by *Pengiran Temenggong* Hashim. He recruited a '*tentera karah*' (conscripted army) of 200 residents of Pengkalan Tarap Limbang to attack the Kayan people who were rioting. (Dzulfawati Haji Hassan 1998, 106; Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail 2011, 97).

Aside from the *Pengiran Temenggong*, there were times when the role of the head of the army was held by the *Pengiran Bendahara*. This was possibly because the *Pengiran Temenggong* was unavailable during war, due to other matters that needed his attention. Therefore, his place was substituted by the *Pengiran Bendahara*. However, it could also be that the sultan had ordered as such, because as the head of state, he had the full right and power to

appoint anyone he wished to lead his army. The role of *Pengiran Bendahara* as the head of the army happened during Sultan Saiful Rizal's (1533-1581) era, when His Majesty appointed his brother, *Pengiran Bendahara* Sakam, as the head of the Bruneian armed forces to conquer Sabah and Luzon. Apart from that, he was also ordered to lead the Bruneian army of 1000 soldiers to attack the Spanish army during the Castilian War in 1578. (Sweeney 1968, 54-55; Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail 2011, 12).

As for the other sultanates in the Malay Realm, such as Malacca, the head of the military was the *Temenggong*. As in the Bruneian Sultanate, there were times another dignitary, the *Bendahara*, would stand in place in this role. The role of the *Bendahara* in Malacca as the head of the army can be traced through *Bendahara Paduka Raja* Tun Perak, who led the Malaccan army on the attack on the Siamese navy, led by Awi Dicu, in Batu Pahat. Likewise, *Bendahara Seri Maharaja* Tun Mutahir led the attack on the Portuguese navy. (Muhammad Yusoff Hashim 1989, 169, 173; Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail 2020, 45).

Similarly, the Acehnesse Sultanate also appointed dignitaries as its head of the army. This role was held by the *Orang Kaya Laksamana*. During Sultan Ali Mughayyat Syah's (1514-1530) era, His Majesty appointed his brother, Raja Ibrahim to this position. Raja Ibrahim led the Acehnesse army on the attack on Pidie (A. Hasjmy, 1983, 60, H.M. Zainuddin, 1961, 395).

Apart from the *Orang Kaya Laksamana*, the Acehnesse Sultanate also appointed other dignitaries to hold the position as the head of the army. The other dignitaries who were appointed included the *Perdana Menteri Orang Kaya Maharaja Seri Maharaja*, *Orang Kaya Seri Maharaja* and *Panglima Dalam*. The role of the *Perdana Menteri Orang Kaya Maharaja Seri Maharaja* as the head of the army is seen during Sultan Iskandar Muda Mahkota Alam's (1607-1636) era, when His Majesty appointed his adopted brother. *Perdana Menteri Orang Kaya Maharaja Seri Maharaja* led the Acehnesse navy on the attack on Malacca in 1629 (Ito, 1984, 89-90).

Set apart from the rest, the Acehese Sultanate was unique when compared to the other sultanates in the Malay Realm because it once appointed a woman as the head of the army. During the traditional Malay Realm era, women were considered weak compared to men. The appointment of a woman as the head of the army occurred during the reign of Sultan Alaaddin Riayat Syah Al Mukammil (1589-1604), when His Majesty appointed Malahayati as the *Laksamana* (Admiral) of the Acehese navy. She led the navy, which was known as the Armada Inong Balee, comprising of 2000 men. This armada was ordered to attack Dutch ships, which was led by Cornelis and Frederick de Houtman. This attack was carried out because His Majesty was dissatisfied with the Dutch monopoly on commerce. (A. Hasjmy, 1983, 127; H.M. Zainuddin, 1961, 395-396; Solichin Salam, 1995, 28-29).

As for the Sulu Sultanate, its head of the army was appointed from amongst dignitaries with the title *Datu*. As an example, in 1629, the Sulu Sultanate, under the leadership of *Datu Aceh*, a warrior who was originally from Brunei, led an attack on Samar and Leyte. In 1634, *Datu Aceh* also led the Sulu Sultanate army on an attack on the Bisayah islands. In this attack, he joined forces with the Magindanao Sultanate, under the leadership of *Datu Tagal*. (Nicholl 1991, 39, 40).

Despite the above, the role of dignitaries as the head of the military in the Sulu Sultanate was not constant throughout. In fact, it was different from one sultan to the next. It is possible that it was changed according to the will of the sultan, because only he had the power to appoint anyone he wished as the head of the army. This can be seen during the reign of Sultan Mu'izzuddin (1748-1763). The role of the head of the military at the time was held by a dignitary with the title of *Datu Juhan Pahlawan*. He was ordered to oversee the fort dan cannons. During Sultan Mu'izzuddin's reign, the position as *Datu Juhan Pahlawan* was held by a dignitary, Muhammad Baquir. He was assisted by another dignitary called Munnabil' Alam, whose duty was

to oversee the central government's defence. (Majul 1988, 483-484).

Other than *Datu Juhan Pahlawan*, the Sulu Sultanate had other dignitaries to hold the role of the head of its navy. One such dignitary was called *Datu Amir Bahar*, who was also known as *Raja Laut* (The Sea King). In performing this role, he was assisted by *Datu Sawajahan*. To illustrate, in 1851 the role of *Datu Amir Bahar* was held by *Datu Daniel*. He led the Sulu army to give a tough fight against the Spanish army which attacked Jolo, the capital of Sulu at the time (Majul 1988, 421, 484).

Thus, it is proven that the head of the army played an important role in the military forces of the sultanates in the Malay Realm. Also, the title of the dignitary holding this position changed from one sultan's reign to the next. This shows the sultan's absolute power in appointing dignitaries according to his wish. Apart from that, the title of the dignitary, as the head of the army in the Malay Realm sultanates, were at times similar, yet different during others. A likeness is seen in the Bruneian and Malaccan Sultanates, where the head of their military were both titled *Temenggong*. This was also true for the title of *Bendahara*, who was once appointed as the head of the army when the *Temenggong* was unable to participate in war. However, the title of the head of army in the Acehese and Sulu Sultanates were quite different. Nevertheless, their roles as the head of the army remained the same, despite the different titles.

MILITARY POWER

In the historical records of the traditional Malay Realm sultanates, the kingdoms in this region was recorded to have once had impressive armies, not only in terms of the number of men, but also in terms of the sophistication of its weaponry. This is seen when the Bruneian Sultanate, during the reign of Sultan Saiful Rizal (1533-1581), in 1546, had as many as 160 *calaluz* warships and 90 *lancharas*. These ships were certainly equipped with sophisticated weapons, especially cannons. These warships were sent to assist the Japara Kingdom, which had been in a civil war with the Pasaruan

Kingdom. (Nicholl 1975, 30; Saunders 1994, 51; Bala 2005, 143).

On the other hand, the strength of the Acehese Sultanate's army, in terms of artillery, can be traced to 1629, when Sultan Iskandar Muda Mahkota Alam sent his *Orang Kaya Laksamana* to lead the Acehese navy in an attack against the Portuguese in Malacca. This naval force arrived in a huge number, consisting of 236 warships and 10,000 men (Hamka, 1981, 175). Armies from the other sultanates, such as the Demak Sultanate, were just as impressive. In 1513, Adipati Unus, the son of Raden Fatah (1475-1518), the first sultan of Demak, once led his army against the Portuguese in Malacca. This army consisted of 100 ships and 5000 men (Abdullah Sidek 2019, 203). Thus, it is clear that the sultanates in the Malay Realm, including Brunei, had strong military powers that they were revered by their enemies. This military strength was not only because of the number of soldiers they had, but also because of their sophisticated weapons.

On a different note, the strength of the Patani Sultanate army, in terms of its artillery, came from its sophisticated weapon, which was the cannon. Among its famous cannons, there were three, known as the Seri Negara, Seri Patani and Maha Lela, which were commissioned on the decree of the Blue Queen (1616-1624). They were made for the purpose of defending Patani from Siamese attacks. Soon after the Siamese navy attacked Patani in 1632, which was when Patani was ruled by Raja Ungu (1624-1635), these three cannons were among the weapons used to defend against the attacks. With the power of these cannons, the Patani army successfully defeated the Siamese army (Ibrahim Syukri 2002, 57).

As for the Malaccan Sultanate, it had a shrewd and highly capable military leader. In the *Malay Annals*, it is mentioned that *Bendahara Seri Maharaja Tun Mutahir* was famed as a skilled military leader in defence strategy, that it was difficult for the

Portuguese to defeat him. His prowess was also confirmed by Captain Mor in his report to Alfonso Albuquerque, the Portuguese viceroy in Goa, India. In the report, he mentioned that Malacca would never be defeated, as long as *Bendahara Seri Maharaja* was alive. (Shellabear 1984, 184; Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail 2020, 45). In this matter, it is clear that the *Bendahara Seri Maharaja* was an intelligent military leader in war strategy, to the extent that the Portuguese found it difficult to defeat Malacca at that time. This shows that military strength was not only dependent on the number of men and sophisticated weapons, but also on the ability of its leader.

TERRITORIAL EXPANSION

Having a large and mighty army enabled a sultanate to have a much stronger political power. Thus, it was able to increase its territories by attacking its neighbouring nations. These conquests were carried out to expand its political influence, but it was also encouraged by economic and religious factors. The territorial occupations resulted in an increase in the country's economic sources, especially in terms of tributaries and tax collections from the conquered nations. Apart from that, trading activities were increased, which resulted in profits, not only from commerce itself, but also in the form of taxes imposed on the goods traded. The expansion process also allowed the spread of Islam throughout the Malay Realm, as how happened in the Bruneian Sultanate in the 16th century, and Malacca in the 15th century.

This policy of territorial conquests was also carried out by the Bruneian Sultanate during the era of Sultan Bolkiah (1485-1524), who successfully expanded the Bruneian territories to include the entire Bornean island, and the northern region of the Philippine islands (Pehin Dr. Haji Mohd. Jamil Al-Sufri⁵ 1997, 27, 168; Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail 2011, 2,5). With this conquest, the Bruneian Sultanate established its territorial government centre in Manila. Because of the great distance between the Bruneian Sultanate and the Philippine

⁵ His full title is Pehin Jawatan Dalam Seri Maharaja Dato Seri Utama Profesor Kehormat (Dr.) Haji Awang Mohd. Jamil Al-Sufri bin Begawan Pehin Udana

Khatib Dato Seri Paduka Haji Awang Umar. However, in this paper, he is referred to as Pehin Dr. Haji Mohd. Jamil Al-Sufri.

islands and the expanse of sea separating the two, this conquest portrays that at the time, the Bruneian Sultanate indeed had an impressive navy. Such a military force indicated that it had large numbers of men and warships meant for territorial expansion. Other than that, this policy of conquests also reflects that the Bruneian Sultanate had an impressive economy, because in order to launch attacks unto distant lands, it required substantial funds, especially to commission weapons for war and plentiful food supply for the needs of the army. Similarly, this is also expected as for the other sultanates in the Malay Realm.

Aside from Sultan Bolkiah, the Bruneian Sultanate had also once carried out this territorial expansion policy, during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Hasan (1582-1598). His Majesty expanded the Bruneian territories to the Sulu islands. The conquest of Sulu was not the first, because between 1280 and 1368, Sulu had once been occupied by Brunei. However, Brunei's power over Sulu was weakened; in 1365, Brunei had come under Majapahit rule. Therefore, Sulu managed to pull away and gain its freedom in 1369. (Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail 2011, 3-4). Sultan Muhammad Hasan's success in returning Sulu to Bruneian control illustrates the strength of the Bruneian Sultanate's army, along with sophisticated weapons of warfare. Aside from conquering Sulu, His Majesty also successfully spread Bruneian control throughout the Bornean island. He was revered by the Spanish, who were in Manila at the time. His Majesty also once sent the Bruneian army to assist Pahang during a war with Johor. All these were done, with the existence of an army that is disciplined, strong, loyal to their king and had the spirit to help their nation to increase Brunei territories. (Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail, 2011, 6; Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail & Haji Mohsin Abu Bakar, 2018, 21; Sweeney 1968, 56).

A strong and large army was also utilised to expand the Malaccan Sultanate territories. The kingdom's efforts in increasing its lands started since the reign of Megat Iskandar Syah (1414-1424), the second sultan of Malacca. The Malaccan borders were expanded to Kuala Linggi in the north, and Kuala

Kesang in the south. On the other hand, during Sultan Muhammad Syah's (Raja Kecil Besar) reign, Malaccan lands included Beruas, Hujung Karang in the west, and Terengganu in the east. This sultanate's territories expanded further in 1459, 1477 and up until 1511, which was immediately before the fall of this sultanate's control into the hands of the Portuguese. In that year of 1511, the Malaccan Sultanate's territories had spread to the entire peninsula, including Patani, Kelantan, Kedah and Terengganu (Muhammad Yusoff Hashim 1989, 189-190). The frequent territorial conquests conducted by this sultanate had surely required a royal navy and army that was strong, disciplined and sufficiently equipped with sophisticated artillery. It also reflected a successful Malaccan economy, and for this reason, it was able to build a strong army to carry out these expansion operations.

As with the Bruneian and Malaccan sultanates, the territorial expansion policy was also carried out by the Patani Sultanate. During the reign of the Yellow Queen (1635-1688), the Patani Sultanate had 43 conquered territories. Among them were Terengganu and Kelantan (Ibrahim Syukri 2002, 60-61). During the Yellow Queen's reign, Patani's economy became stronger because its trading activities had developed further. Thus, it was able to form a large and strong army, that it succeeded in expanding its region.

The role of the army as mentioned above is also seen in the Acehnes Sultanate during the reign of Sultan Ali Mughayyat Syah. His Majesty conquered the smaller kingdoms neighbouring Aceh, which included Pasai, Pidie, Daya, Lamuri, Lingge and Tamiang. The expansion policy was carried out, not only to expand its territories, but also to prevent the Portuguese from spreading Christianity to these lands. His Majesty did not want there to be any Portuguese colonies near Acehnes territories, after this western power managed to seize control over Malacca. (Amirul Hadi 2010, 5; M. Dien Madjid 2014, 61). With the expansion, efforts to spread Christianity was successfully halted. In doing so, His Majesty also unified these kingdoms to become a larger kingdom, which became known as the Kesultanan

Aceh Darussalam (Acehnese Sultanate Darussalam) in the 16th century under his leadership. (Amirul Hadi 2010, 14; H.M. Zainuddin 1961, 396; A. Hasjmy 1977, 14-17).

Sultan Ali Mughayyat Syah's success in conquering the smaller kingdoms, as explained above, reflects on how large and strong the military owned by this sultanate was. This is proven when the Acehnese royal army was able to defeat the Portuguese army, who must have had more modern weapons of high technology. Apart from that, the unification of these kingdoms also showed that they feared the strength of the Acehnese Sultanate's army. If they refused to be unified into the Acehnese Sultanate, they risk being attacked. Thus, they surrendered to become a territory under Aceh, because their army would not have been able to defeat the Acehnese Sultanate's army.

The Acehnese Sultanate's army grew even stronger during Sultan Iskandar Muda Mahkota Alam's reign, because His Majesty was a charismatic leader. His Majesty succeeded in expanding the Acehnese territories from the southern region of west coast Sumatra, to Rokan in east coast Sumatra (Ito 1984, 15-16). His Majesty also succeeded in conquering the kingdoms of Johor, Pahang, Kedah and Perak in Peninsula Malaya. (Hasanuddin Yusuf Adan 2014, 207). Sultan Iskandar Muda Mahkota Alam's success in expanding the Acehnese Sultanate's territories was due to His Majesty's strong and impressive navy.

The Demak Sultanate in Java also once conscripted its army to expand its territories. For example, Sultan Trenggana (1521-1546) successfully expanded his kingdom's territories to the east and west of Java island. His Majesty appointed a war general named Fatahilah to lead the royal army. Under his leadership, Banten was successfully conquered in 1526. Next, Sunda Kelapa and Cirebon were each conquered in 1527 and 1528. (Ahmad Jelani Halimi 2008, 279-280).

Due to the strength of these royal armies, several of these Malay sultanates reached a golden era, because they successfully expanded their territorial lands to become an empire. Nevertheless, funding the needs of the expansion operations carried out by

the sultanates in the Malay Realm required a substantial amount of money. Thus, from these conquests, it is shown that not only did these sultanates had strong armies, but also stable economies. In addition, the territorial expansion exercises were a symbol of how strong one kingdom's political influence was over other kingdoms, as well as a way to increase the country's economic resources in the form of tributes, taxes and commercial activities.

POWER STRUGGLES

Politics in the Malay sultanates was not always peaceful. At times, it was turbulent. In those occasions, the army often played a role. Political instability happened in the form of power struggles for the throne, either amongst royal princes, or even amongst dignitaries. A crisis such as this once occurred in the Bruneian Sultanate in the 17th century between Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin (1661-1673) and Sultan Muhyiddin (1673-1690). In this power struggle, the army was involved. This power struggle was due to Sultan Muhyiddin vowing vengeance on Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin, who had killed the former's father-in-law, Sultan Muhammad Ali (1660-1661) by hanging. It started from a cockfight between Sultan Muhammad Ali's prince, named Pengiran Bongsu, with Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin's prince. At the time, Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin was still holding the position of *Pengiran Bendahara* (Sweeney, 1968, 57-58; Pehin Dr. Haji Mohd Jamil Al Sufri, 2015, 135,137; Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail & Haji Mohsin Abu Bakar, 2018, 23).

In this cockfighting incident, Pengiran Bongsu's rooster was defeated by the one owned by *Pengiran Bendahara's* son. After the loss, the *Pengiran Bendahara's* son mocked his opponent, that the latter became angry, and thus killed him. This death angered the *Pengiran Bendahara*, who sought revenge, and wanted to kill the reigning sultan's son. However, he failed to kill him because Pengiran Bongsu ran away. It made Sultan Muhammad Ali offer himself in place, to be killed by *Pengiran Bendahara*. Thus, His Majesty was hanged until his death on a grassy field on 7 November 1661. Due to this, His Majesty became

known as “*Marhum Tumbang di Rumput*” (the late (king) who fell in the grass). Hence, the *Pengiran Bendahara* was installed as the new sultan of Brunei, known as Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin (Sweeney, 1968, 57-58; Pehin Dr. Haji Mohd Jamil Al Sufri, 2015, 135,137; Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail & Haji Mohsin Abu Bakar, 2018, 23).

To foster better ties amongst the Bruneian royalty, Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin appointed Pengiran Bongsu Muhyiddin as the succeeding *Pengiran Bendahara*. With this appointment, it was hoped to end the new *Pengiran Bendahara's* vengeance. However, when he was provoked by *Orang Kaya Besar* Imas, the Kedayan Subuk Minister, the *Pengiran Bendahara's* feelings to seek revenge returned. *Orang Kaya Besar* Imas was disgusted by Pengiran Bendahara's cowardice, for not wanting to avenge his father-in-law's death. In Bruneian society, it was typical to rebel against a king who ascended to the throne without following royal Bruneian customs. Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin was deemed unworthy to be the sultan because he was not the rightful heir. (Sweeney 1968, 59; Pehin Dr. Haji Mohd Jamil Al Sufri, 2015, 138). After being provoked, *Pengiran Bendahara* Bongsu Muhyiddin agreed to take revenge. He conspired with *Orang Kaya Besar* Imas to overthrow Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin. From this pact, there existed a dignitary's army, comprising the followers and supporters of *Pengiran Bendahara* Bongsu Muhyiddin and *Orang Kaya Besar* Imas. Their early strategy was to create commotion in the sultan's palace, and also the homes surrounding the palatial grounds. They scratched on the floorboards of the palace and the surrounding homes every night, that it created disturbance. This strategy seemed to have worked when Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin and his dignitaries felt that their safety was threatened. On *Pengiran Bendahara* Bongsu Muhyiddin's advice, Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin moved to Pulau Chermin, which was seen as safer dwelling. (Pehin Dr. Haji Mohd. Jamil Al-Sufri, 2015, 138,140; Sweeney, 1968, 60-61).

After Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin had moved to Pulau Chermin, *Pengiran Bendahara* Bongsu Muhyiddin declared himself as the new sultan of

Brunei, with the title Sultan Muhyiddin. As a way to endorse his proclamation, a yellow flag was raised at his palace. Hence, it became the first time in Bruneian history that there existed two sultans, which were Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin, who was centred in Pulau Chermin, and Sultan Muhyiddin, centred in Bandar Brunei in Kota Batu. This situation led to the first civil war in the Bruneian Sultanate, which lasted 12 years, between 1661 and 1673 (Pehin Dr. Haji Mohd. Jamil Al-Sufri, 2015, 140-147; Sweeney, 1968, 62-65; Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail & Haji Mohsin Abu Bakar, 2018, 23-24). It ended with victory to Sultan Muhyiddin. However, before he won, the ousted Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin had managed to destroy some of the royal regalia, including the crown. This crown was shot out to sea from inside a cannon (Hughes-Hallet 1998, 36; Sweeney 1968, 64).

In this civil war, clearly, the military played an important role, when Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin and Sultan Muhyiddin each conscripted their royal armies, one centred in Pulau Chermin, and the other in Bandar Brunei. Both these royal armies consisted of a large number of soldiers, and were adequately armed, because they managed to last through a war of 12 years. This was no short term. It had had to take strong armies who were loyal to their respective kings. A war of such length required a solid economy, to fund the needs of the army, as well as for the weaponry. This civil war also proves the existence of weapons then, such as cannons, which was used by Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin to shoot out royal regalia. The cannons are proof that His Majesty owned sophisticated weapons. He also used a war strategy, which was to cut off the food supply that came by sea, barring it from reaching Kota Batu. With this blockade, it was hoped that Sultan Muhyiddin's army would be left low on their food supplies. However, this strategy was to no avail, because Sultan Muhyiddin managed to gain Sulu's assistance to defeat Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin. Sulu was prepared to offer its assistance, when they were promised Kimanis territory, not the entire Sabahan lands, as a reward after Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin was defeated. The help from Sulu also, on its own, shows that there was interfering by foreign military in Bruneian political crises. After

the Civil War ended, Brunei persevered as a sultanate, still owning numerous occupied lands. The involvement of the military in the power struggle to the throne of the Bruneian Sultanate resurfaced in the Second Civil War, between Pengiran Raja Noralam and Sultan Muhammad Alam or Sultan Marak Berapi (1826-1828) in 1828. This incident, as to be expected, involved the royal army, as well as the rebel army. Raja Noralam received the support of the Kampong Burung Pinggai residents, and it was they who managed to kill Sultan Muhammad Alam. Later, upon his death, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin II (1828-1852), Raja Noralam's prince, was installed as the new sultan. Regardless, once again, this civil war did not affect the sovereignty of the Bruneian Sultanate. (Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail & Haji Mohsin Abu Bakar (2018,29)

The same was true for the Third Civil War, which was between Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin II and *Pengiran Bendahara* Raja Muda Hashim in 1846, where the latter was killed. In this incident, the royal army faced the dignitary army owned by *Pengiran Bendahara* Raja Muda Hashim. However, the *Pengiran Bendahara's* death led to foreign interference in the politics of the Bruneian Sultanate once again. This occurred when James Brooke, with the British army, launched an attack on Brunei, in retaliation for the death of the *Pengiran Bendahara*. James Brooke had been the *Pengiran Bendahara's* good friend ever since they first met in Sarawak *Asal* (Original). In this attack, the Bruneian army lost, and the sultan escaped, being led away by Haji Saman, a Bruneian warrior, to Limau Manis.

With this defeat, Labuan island was ceased to the British in 1847, after British naval ships moored in front of the palace, carrying cannons pointing at it, posed a dangerous threat to destroy it. The foreign army, dominated by British soldiers, and the Brooke family, continued a rampage in seizing the rest of Bruneian territories. With the *gun boat diplomacy* policy, one after another of Bruneian occupied lands were seized, after Mukah fell into James Brooke's control in 1861, and Limbang into Charles Brooke's control in 1890. (Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail & Haji Mohsin Abu Bakar (2018,83,158)

This time however, interference from a foreign military force clearly led to the decline of Bruneian territories.

The tumultuous power struggle to seize the throne also occurred in the Malaccan Sultanate, between Raja Ibrahim and Raja Kassim. They were both Sultan Muhammad Syah's (1424-1444) princes. The quarrel between them started when Raja Ibrahim was installed as the new Malaccan sultan, with the title Sultan Abu Syahid (1444-1446). This installation proceeded, despite him being Raja Kassim's younger brother. This may have been because Raja Kassim was of Malay-Tamil mixed race, whereas Sultan Abu Syahid was a pure Malay. By crowning Sultan Abu Syahid, it was possible to stop the growing influence of the Malay-Tamil faction in Malaccan court politics. However, Raja Kassim's uncle, Tun Ali, who was also of Malay-Tamil mixed race, as well as the *Penghulu Bendahari*, was dissatisfied with this ascension. Thus, he sought to find a way to install his nephew as the sultan of Malacca. (Shellabear 1984, 63-66; Muhammad Yusoff Hashim 320-321).

In the Malay Annals, it is recorded that as Raja Kassim and Tun Ali were conspiring to take the throne, they were supported by the *Bendahara's* army, as well as several other dignitaries who were treasonous to Sultan Abu Syahid. Hence, they can be considered as having formed a rebel army. On the other side, Sultan Abu Syahid was supported by his uncle, Raja Rokan, who had the control of the royal army. This power struggle for the throne ended when Raja Rokan was killed, where priorly, he had managed to stab his *keris* (Malay dagger) into Sultan Abu Syahid's body that the latter, too, died. With that, Raja Kassim ascended to the throne with the title Sultan Muzaffar Syah (Shellabear 1984, 63-66; Muhammad Yusoff Hashim 320-321).

In the Patani Sultanate, there was also political turmoil, in the form of power struggles for the throne. It once occurred between Sultan Patik Siam (1572-1573) and Raja Mambang, as well as between Sultan Bahadur Syah (1573-1584) and Raja Bima. The quarrel between Sultan Patik Siam and Raja Mambang was because the latter was dissatisfied with the installation of the former as the

sultan. Despite Raja Mambang being the older brother of Sultan Patik Siam, he could not be crowned as sultan because his mother was a concubine. According to Patani royal customs, the son of a concubine cannot be installed as a sultan. His dissatisfaction led him to kill his half-brother, Sultan Patik Siam. Also killed in this tragedy was his aunt, Raja Aishah, who embraced Sultan Patik Siam to block off Raja Mambang's aim. Despite so, the royal guards managed to kill Raja Mambang by a spear stab. (Ibrahim Syukri 2002, 39-40).

In the context above, in Raja Mambang's murder of Sultan Patik Siam, it is still unclear if he had acted alone, or conspired with others. What is clear, though, is that the men in the palace who sought after and then speared him, is proven to be from the royal armed forces who were loyal to Sultan Patik Siam.

The involvement of the military in the power struggle for the throne also occurred in the Acehese Sultanate. This incident happened during the reign of Sultan Alaadin Riayat Syah Al Mukammil and Sultanah Kamalat Syah (1688-1699). During his Majesty's reign, he was challenged by his prince, Sultan Muda, who acted on seizing the throne. The latter installed himself as the new sultan of Aceh, titled Sultan Ali Riayat Syah III (1604-1607), after he managed to overthrow his own father. This power seizure portrays that Sultan Ali Riayat Syah III had his own military, consisting of his trusted men. This army can be deemed a rebel army. Following that, the struggle for the throne caused the anger of another one of Sultan Alaadin Riayat Syah Al Mukammil's princes. It reached a peak with the start of a civil war between Sultan Husein and Sultan Ali Riayat Syah III. Nevertheless, victory was for Sultan Ali Riayat Syah III. On the other end, Sultan Husein was defeated and killed during war. (Ito 1984, 15; H.M. Zainuddin 1961, 403-404). In this civil war, the military's involvement is clear, being the royal army, which sided with Sultan Ali Riayat Syah III, and Sultan Husein's army, which consisted of his followers comprising the rebel army.

Even though it is stated that Sultan Husein was killed in the civil war as stated above, there is an

opposing viewpoint, which argues that Sultan Husein was not killed in battle. On one hand, the rebellion continued, even after Sultan Ali Riayat Syah III's death, and also after the crown was passed on to his nephew, Sultan Iskandar Muda Mahkota Alam. Possibly, this rebellion was started because Sultan Husein did not approve of his nephew's installation, or even because he himself had ambitions to be the sultan. Due to this rebellion, another civil war erupted. In this civil war, Sultan Husein was captured, but later died (Mohammad Said, 1981, 261-262; Ito 1984, 15). If the existence of this civil war is accepted, it proves the involvement of the royal army, which supported Sultan Iskandar Muda Mahkota Alam, and the army that comprised of Sultan Husein's followers. However, in the end, the royal army managed to defeat Sultan Husein's army. This victory was achieved because the royal army had more men, was stronger and more trained, as well as were more fully equipped with modern weapons. Furthermore, Sultan Iskandar Muda Mahkota Alam was a most famous and commanding sultan in leading the Acehese Sultanate.

Apart from the sultanates above, the military was also involved in the power struggle for the throne in the Demak Jawa Sultanate. This is seen in the power struggle between Adipati Unus's princes, Raden Trenggana and Raden Kikin. This struggle for the throne ended after Raden Trenggana's son, Raden Muslim, managed to kill Raden Kikin. With this death, Raden Trenggana was installed as the sultan, titled Sultan Trenggana. (Abdullah Sidek 2019, 206-207).

After Sultan Trenggana's passing, he was succeeded by his prince, Raden Muslim (1546-1547). At that time, another political crisis started when Raden Kikin's prince, named Arya Penangsang, took revenge on his father's death. He started a rebellious movement, where Raden Muslim was killed. After that, Arya Panangsang (1547-1554) installed himself as the new Sultan of Demak. (Abdul Rahman Abdullah 2000, 265; Abdullah Sidek 2019, 214-215).

Despite so, Arya Penangsang's position as the sultan was yet stable, because another dignitary,

Joko Tingkir had ambitions to seize the throne. He was a *Bupati* (Head of District) from Pajang, as well as Sultan Trenggana's son-in-law. Other than overthrowing the sultan, he also aimed at taking revenge for the death of Raden Muslim, who was also his brother-in-law. Thus, he rose in rebellion, and managed to kill Arya Penangsang, with the help from Sutowijoyo, Ki Ageng Pemanahan's son. Hence, Joko Tingkir was installed as the new sultan, and he moved the Demak Sultanate's capital to Pajang. His victory marked the end of the previous sultanates' lineage, because Demak then became a conquered territory of the Pajang Sultanate. (Abdul Rahman Abdullah 2000, 265; Ahmad Jelani Halimi 2008, 280; Abdullah Sidek 2019, 216).

The struggle for the throne also occurred in the Sulu Sultanate, during Sultan Alimuddin I's (1735-1748) (1764-1774) reign. His Majesty's political position was opposed by Putera Bantilan, Sultan Sahabuddin's (1685-1710) prince, along with his followers. Putera Bantilan rose in rebellion because Sultan Alimuddin I had given good treatment to a Christian missionary group known as the Jesuits. However, this was only a superficial excuse for Putera Bantilan to challenge Sultan Alimuddin I. In reality, there was a hidden agenda behind this excuse, because truthfully, Putera Bantilan was dissatisfied with Sultan Alimuddin I's installation as the Sultan of Sulu. He also thought he had the right to be installed as the sultan, along with Sultan Badaruddin's (1718-1732) other princes who were crowned, Sultan Nasaruddin (1732-1735), and Sultan Alimuddin I. According to Sulu Sultanate customs, after Sultan Badaruddin's passing, it was rightfully the prince of Sultan Sahabuddin's turn to ascend to the throne. Yet, it did not happen. (Saleeby 1908, 179, 181). In such a scenario, there is no denying the military's involvement in both parties during this political conflict.

In this rebellious movement, Putera Bantilan gained support from a Sulu dignitary who was a *Datu*. Because of this, the rebel army under his leadership was strong. This rebellion created chaos in the Sulu capital of Jolo. However, Sultan Alimuddin I managed to leave Jolo, and escaped to Zamboanga (Saleeby 1908, 181). After that, Putera Bantilan

announced himself as the new sultan, with the title Sultan Mu'izzuddin. Upon ascending the throne, His Majesty reinforced defence in the city, and launched attacks against all the *Datus* who had supported Sultan Alimuddin I. These attacks prove that His Majesty owned a loyal army, which helped him ascend to the throne. Nevertheless, in 1773 after the British took control over Manila from the hands of the Spanish, Sultan Alimuddin I was once again installed as the Sultan of Sulu. On the other side, Sultan Mu'izzuddin left Jolo and moved to Kota Gubang, and several years later, he died there. (Saleeby 1908, 181-182, 187).

As explained above, the military was evidently involved in the political conflicts happening throughout the Malay Realm sultanates, especially in power struggles for the throne. The military forces involved generally supported one party or the other. The support given was also aligned to their own political interests, because if they managed to defend the position of either the ruling sultan or the new one, they would be justly rewarded and gain a high position in court.

Other than crises of power struggles, the military also had a role in overcoming rebellions created by the people. Such rebellions posed challenges to the political strength and sovereignty of the kingdom. Thus, they had to be crushed with the force of the military. Otherwise, it would lead to long-lasting chaos, and affect the nation's economic sources. Regardless of such, interestingly, the rebellion caused by the people was not to seize the throne, but it was because they were dissatisfied with the current government. Possibly, it was because they felt oppressed, such as by being heavily taxed that it became a burden to them.

A rebellion once rose when the Bruneian Sultanate sent its army, led by *Pengiran Temenggong* Abdul Raub to attack the Melanau people in Rejang and Mukah, as previously mentioned. The root of this rebellion was their dissatisfaction with the sultan's agents, who had abused their power by imposing taxes that were higher than that set by the central government. This rebellion proves that the Melanau people in Rejang and Mukah had formed their own army. This army can be deemed as a rebel army,

formed by a race of people. Nevertheless, their rebellion was successfully disabled by *Pengiran Temenggong* Abdul Raub. Thus, this territory remained under Bruneian political control (Dzulfawati Haji Hassan 1998, 106; Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail 2011, 97).

The same also happened after the Bruneian Sultanate conscripted to disable the rebellion that broke out in Sarawak Asal⁶ (Original) in 1835, Limbang in 1856 and 1884, as well as Tutong and Belait in 1899 (Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail 2011, 122). The rebellion in Sarawak Asal broke out, partly because of issues related to the economy. It started when *Pengiran Indera Mahkota Pengiran Syahbandar* Muhammad Salleh, who was the appointed royal agent there, monopolised the trading activities with the Bidayuh people, as well as on antimony. This caused the Malays in Sarawak Asal to feel left out. This situation then caused them to rebel in 1835. *Pengiran Indera Mahkota Pengiran Syahbandar* Muhammad Salleh did not manage to break this rebellion because the strength of his army was incomparable against that of the rebel army. (Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail 2011, 94; Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail & Haji Mohsin Abu Bakar 2018, 36).

Following that, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien II sent *Pengiran Bendahara* Raja Muda Hashim to Sarawak Asal in 1836 to quell the rebellion. However, he, too, was unable to do so. Thus, in 1840, the sultan ordered for the other royal agents, as well as the *Menteri Darat* (Inland Minister?) in the Sarawakian territory, to send their armies each to assist *Pengiran Bendahara*. Syarif Jaafar, for example, sent 70 of his soldiers. Assistance was also extended by Syarif Sahab, *Orang Kaya Temenggung* Lundu, *Orang Kaya Pemanca* Bintulu, and the heads in Miri and Mukah. In addition, Raja Muda Hashim also sought assistance from James Brooke on 3 October 1840. With all the military assistance he received, finally, on 20 December 1840, he managed to stop the rebellion

in Sarawak Asal (Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail 2011, 94, 127; Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail & Haji Mohsin Abu Bakar 2018, 51-52).

The same scenario also happened in the other Malay Realm states, such as the Acehnesse Sultanate in the 17th century, during Sultanah Kamalat Syah's reign. She was installed as the new sultanah to succeed Sultanah Zakiahtuddin Inayat Syah (1678-1688). It occurred because several dignitaries and the Acehnesse people disapproved of her installation as the sultanah. This rebellion was led by four dignitaries titled *Orang Kaya* from the inland regions. They were joined by 5000 to 6000 of their followers. This illustrates that these four dignitaries and their followers banded together to form an army. They could be regarded as a dignitary's army formed up of their followers. In this rebellion, they attacked the capital, and even managed to gain control of a part of the Acehnesse river valley. They also confronted several of the people who supported the kingdom. Nevertheless, their rebellion failed, and Sultanah Kamalat Syah remained on the throne, until she was made to abdicate in 1699 (Dampier, 1699, 139-140; A. Hasjmy, 1977, 210-212).

With respect to the above, the question remains as to why she was made to step down, following a *fatwa* (religious advice) letter from the Mecca *Mufti* (jurist), and not due to military force. This *fatwa* stated that in Islam, women cannot be appointed as the head of a country (A. Hasjmy 1977, 215; Amirul Hadi 2010, 140). Thus, in the Acehnesse Sultanate, there was an incident when its ruler was removed from power not by the military, but by peaceful means.

PIRACY ISSUES

The Bruneian Sultanate royal army, and those of the other sultanates in the Malay Realm, also played a role in eradicating pirates. Piracy normally occurred in the coastal areas, where ships that sailed by, especially trading ships, were pillaged. It not only

⁶ Sarawak Asal (Original) is an area covering Bandar Kuching by the confluence of the Sarawak River, reaching upstream of 25 miles. The term *Negeri* (State of) Sarawak was later used by the Brooke family, after they gained control over this Bruneian territory,

between 1842 and the early 20th century. The entire area of this state, until today, encompasses Tanjung (Cape) Dato and several districts in Lawas in west coast Sabah.

threatened public peace, but it also brought losses to the kingdoms because it hindered trading activities. Traders would refuse to stop by to engage in trading at the port of a country, that had its coasts polluted with piracy. Such situations weakened a kingdom's economy because commerce was one of its most important sources of income. Therefore, pirates had to be eliminated by using naval force.

One such occasion in the Bruneian Sultanate was recorded in the *Boxer Codex*. In these records, it is stated that there had been as many as 100 warships in Bandar Brunei. Among them were the *galera* type. Other than being used for war, these ships were also used to attack the pirates that roamed Bruneian waters. (Carroll 1982, 15; Awang Haji Mohamad Amin Hassan 2004, 99). The role in eradicating pirates was led by the *Pengiran Temenggong*, can be seen when *Pengiran Temenggong* Abdul Momin Amirul Faza successfully overcame the disturbance caused by the Belangin and Illanun people in Menggatal. They had rampaged over Sabahan waters by engaging in piracy and causing trouble to the people who made their livelihoods there. (Pehin Dr. Haji Mohd Jamil Al-Sufri, 1999, 12).

It became more worrying in the 18th century, when it was said that Bruneian territories were rife with piracy. These pirates destroyed European ships. Piracy still occurred nearing the 19th century. However, because the Bruneian Sultanate's armed forces were weak, they had difficulties in facing the piracy issues. Therefore, the Bruneian Sultanate had to seek assistance from the British government, in cooperation to eliminate the pirates. The request was approved by the British government, which sent James Brooke as the British Queen's Agent in Borneo to assist the Sultan of Brunei to eradicate pirates. Following that, areas of pirate settlements in Sarawak and Sabah were destroyed by British warships (Hughes-Hallet 1998, 39). The British's involvement in abolishing piracy was included in the contents of the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce that was signed between the British and Brunei in 1847. Among the contents of this treaty, it clarified that the British Queen and the Sultan of

Brunei had a pact to eliminate pirates in the seas, straits and rivers under the control of both kingdoms (Pengiran Dr. Mohammad Pengiran Haji Abd. Rahman 2007, 50).

The same also occurred in the Malaccan Sultanate, which rose as an important trading centre in the Malay Realm. To ensure that its waters were safe for traders, this kingdom made efforts to eradicate pirates, by controlling several areas in west coast Peninsula Malaya, which encompassed Klang, up to Beruas. Malacca also controlled areas in east coast Sumatra, such as Siak, Siantan, Kampar and Indragiri (Zainal Abidin Abdul Wahid 1990, 75). By controlling these areas, it enabled Malacca to easily mobilise its armies to destroy piracy in these waters. On the other hand, in the Sulu Sultanate, during Sultan Alimuddin I's era, His Majesty successfully abolished piracy in his kingdom's waters. (Saleeby 1908, 180).

FOREIGN ATTACKS

On another note, armies also played a role in defending the country from attacks by foreign powers. These invasions were usually carried out because they wanted to seize political control over a kingdom, or even conquer it. However, attacks by foreign powers did not only occur for political reasons, but there were also reasons related to the economy. In the history of the Malay Realm sultanates, the role of the military in defending kingdoms from foreign attacks or foreign powers can be divided into two categories. First, attacks from the regional kingdoms, either from within the Malay Realm itself, or even from Siam. The second were attacks from western powers.

In this context, the Bruneian Sultanate once used its army to defend itself from foreign attacks coming from around this region, when it was attacked by the Sulu army. The Bruneian army lost when it was attacked in 1369. Bandar Brunei was burnt down, which caused huge losses. Numerous Bruneian properties were seized by the Sulu army. It is possible that at the time, Brunei did not have a strong army, because it was still under Majapahit rule. (Pehin Dr. Haji Mohd. Jamil Al-Sufri, 2001, 28; Nicholl 1991, 2; Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail, 2011, 4).

The other sultanates in the Malay Realm, such as the Malaccan Sultanate, also used its army to defend its country from foreign attacks from around this region, especially Siam. However, these attacks were successfully defeated by the Malaccan army. Also, the Siamese kingdom more frequently attacked the Patani Sultanate than it did Malacca. This is because it was located nearer, making more accessible to launch attacks on. In the 17th century, the Patani Sultanate had developed to be a centre of commerce, making it a rich state. This caused the Siamese king a desire to conquer Patani. In 1603, the Siamese navy from Ayutthaya, with its admiral, Upya-Deca leading an army of thousands of soldiers, launched an attack on Patani. However, the Patani army, led by the Green Queen, was able to defend their state from the attacks, with assistance from foreign traders, including those from Europe. In defending its land, the Patani Sultanate used sophisticated weapons, such as cannons. At the time, Siam did not yet have this weapon. The use of this weapon was fruitful in causing the retreat of the Siamese army. (Ibrahim Syukri 2002, 44-45).

The Siamese kingdom continued its strategy to gain control over Patani during the Blue Queen's reign. In this attack, Siam had already learnt to use weapons such as cannons. To overcome the attacks, the Blue Queen commissioned for as many large cannons as possible. They managed to produce three cannons. Each cannon had its own name. Two large cannons were known as the Seri Negara and the Seri Patani. As for a smaller cannon, it was named the Maha Lela. However, before Siam arrived to attack Patani, the Blue Queen had died. Her Majesty was succeeded by her sister, the Purple Queen. During the latter's reign, the Siamese navy was still led by its admiral, Upya-Deca, who came in an attack on Patani in 1632. (Ibrahim Syukri 2002, 52-56).

In this attack, the Siamese military was defeated by the Patani army, led by the Purple Queen and her generals. Patani's victory was because of their artillery, which was more fully equipped, especially the three cannons mentioned. Joining in the ranks was the army brought in by the Crown Prince of

Johor, who was there for his oncoming wedding with the Yellow Queen, the Purple Queen's daughter. He was also the Johorean prince who ruled over the nearby state of Terengganu. (Ibrahim Syukri 2002, 57).

The military's role in the Malay Realm sultanates was also to defend their nations from attacks by western powers, which had ambitions to seize control. This was seen in the Bruneian Sultanate, in the attack by the Spanish during the Castilian War on 14 April 1578. Being the first attack by a western power, it was initially successful in defeating Brunei. Nevertheless, the Bruneian army launched a counterattack in retaliation, led by *Pengiran Bendahara Sakam*, joined by 1000 men. They built a fort from stone in Ambok island. The fort was necessary, not only as a defence strategy from more Spanish attacks, but from here, it also enabled them to easily launch counterattacks on this western power. They also used a war strategy, which was to poison the Spanish army's source of drinking water that many fell ill. Hence, the Spanish only managed to occupy Brunei for 72 days. This shows that the Bruneian royal army, under *Pengiran Bendahara Sakam's* leadership, had given their all to defend the freedom and sovereignty of their nation. (Sweeney 1968, 55)

The same also happened in the Malaccan Sultanate, when the royal army defended the kingdom from Portuguese attack. The Malaccan royal army was led by *Bendahara Seri Maharaja Tun Mutahir*, who was infamous as a leader in defence, and was excellent in coordinating defence strategies (Shellabear 1984, 184; Haji Awg Asbol Haji Mail 2020, 45). However, in 1511 Malacca finally lost, because treasonous foreign merchants had betrayed the kingdom to the Portuguese, as well as because it no longer had outstanding leaders.

Apart from that, there were sultanates in the Malay Realm that used military force to attack western settlements in the region. This was done by the Acehnesse Sultanate, when it launched repeated attacks on the Portuguese in Malacca. These attacks started in early 16th century, as strategised by Sultan Ali Mughayyat Syah, as explained earlier. The attacks on the Portuguese only ended in 1629,

during Sultan Iskandar Muda Mahkota Alam's reign. In these attacks, the Acehnesse Sultanate used a strong army, as happened in 1629. Sultan Iskandar Muda Mahkota Alam ordered *Orang Kaya Laksamana* to lead the Acehnesse navy to attack the Portuguese in Malacca. This dignitary was assisted by *Orang Kaya Raja Setia Lela*. As for the army, it was made up of a very large number of men. (Hamka 1981, 175). Despite so, the Acehnesse Sultanate still failed to defeat the Portuguese. This western power was only defeated and ousted from Malacca by the Dutch and Johor in 1641. The Acehnesse Sultanate's failure was caused by Johore's assistance to the Portuguese, which led off to the Triangular War. (Sher Banu A.L. Khan, 2010, 307-313).

Aside from the Acehnesse, the Demak Sultanate also launched attacks on Portuguese Malacca. Among these attacks, there was one in 1513. This attack was led by Adipati Unus. The Demak army had 100 warships and 5000 soldiers. They were assisted by the Javanese and Palembang in the attack. Despite such, they failed to defeat the Portuguese. Later, after Adipati Unus was installed as the Sultan of Demak, with the title Sultan Alam Akbar As-Tsaniy or Alam Akbar (1518-1521), His Majesty resumed the plans to attack the Portuguese in Malacca. His Majesty prepared a large army with 375 ships commissioned to be built in Gowa, Sulawesi. This place was famed for its ship-making enterprise at the time. Then, in 1521, the ships were used in attacks on the Portuguese in Malacca. Nevertheless, the Demak army lost to the Portuguese. This illustrates that the Demak army's strength was incomparable to the Portuguese army. (Abdul Rahman Abdullah 2000, 264; Abdullah Sidek 2019, 203, 205).

MILITARY ASSISTANCE

On another note, the Bruneian Sultanate had also extended its military assistance to the other Malay Realm sultanates during armed conflicts. Such assistance was given to the Acehnesse Sultanate in 1540, when it attacked the Aru Kingdom. Assistance was also given to the Japara Kingdom in 1546, when it attacked the Pasaruan Kingdom in a civil war, as previously explained. Assistance to the

Acehnesse Sultanate was recorded in a western report, which described that 4000 foreign soldiers had come to the aid of the Acehnesse Sultanate in that war. These soldiers consisted of men who came from Turkey, Abyssinia, Malabar, Gujerat and Brunei (Saunders 1994, 51; Nicholl 1975, 28).

On the other hand, the assistance offered to the Japara Kingdom was reported by Portuguese sources, which mentioned of Bruneian Sultanate warships that came to the aid of the Japara Kingdom. These ships comprised of 160 *calaluzes* and 90 *lancharas* (Nicholl 1975, 30; Saunders 1994, 51; Bala 2005, 143). The existence of these warships proves that the Bruneian Sultanate had an impressive navy, one which was able to assist their allied nations to achieve victory in war.

CONCLUSION

Thus, it is proven that political control and military strength were often closely related to each other, as is seen in the Bruneian Sultanate, as well as in the other Malay Realm sultanates. These two are as melody to song. The role of the military was often applied in conflicts of political power struggles, which, at times, led to the weakened position of a kingdom. On the other hand, having a strong army enabled the Bruneian Sultanate and the other Malay Realm sultanates to bolster their political position. The existence of military force was supported by a strong national economy. Through military force, an expansion policy could be implemented, to increase occupied lands, and at the same time, spread the light of Islam. Thus, clearly, military force contributed much to the glory of the Malay sultanates. Apart from that, an alliance of strong political powers, combined with military strength, enabled the Malay Realm sultanates to eliminate piracy, which posed a threat to a nation's security and economic stability. On the other hand, when a Malay Realm sultanate had a weak army, such as happened in Brunei in the 19th century, it was unable to eliminate piracy. Due to this, the Bruneian Sultanate sought assistance from the British to overcome the piracy issue. Conversely, upon a sultanate in the Malay Realm achieving a strong political position, it could then form stronger armies that were able to defeat any attacks by foreign

enemies, either regional neighbours or western powers. As such, it can be accepted that the role of the military was important to reinforce political power, not only in terms of defence and security in the traditional Malay sultanates and Brunei, but also, the military was one of the important factors that enabled them to reach their glory. Thus, in the kingdom's administrative order, the military aspect always received priority. This did not only happen during the traditional era, it is a legacy, and continues to be implemented to this day, even though in a different form, but with the same aims. Military tactics in facing war would always change, in parallel with the developments of human civilisation. Weapons of war would never be static and in small scale. They would be globally reaching, due to the invention of weapons technology that are becoming more sophisticated as time goes by. Weapons used during World War II are considered obsolete because of the existence of newer weapons, in nuclear and viral forms, as well as lasers, and earthquake- and tsunami-triggers, which would clearly threaten human lives and cause massive destruction of property. Humans have always invented new weapons with an excuse to defend themselves. However, driven by greed and distrust between one another, sophisticated weapons, with the pure intention to defend rights, have been misused for the elimination of parties that are considered the enemy. This has given rise to the invention of a multitude of sophisticated weapons, from as minute as viruses, until as large as can be made, as long as one has the funding to do so. Despite so, when war finally breaks out, as the Malay saying goes, “*yang menang jadi arang dan kalah jadi abu*” (the winner turns to coal, and the loser turns to ashes, meaning neither side benefits in the end). The world would be a more peaceful place when humans cooperate with and respect each other, that there would be no conflicts or suspicions. This is as taught by Islam 1400 years ago. It is apt and rightfully so, when Negara Brunei Darussalam decided to adopt the Malay Islam Monarchy concept, which teaches many noble values. Following that, it is hoped that the findings presented in this paper would open a wider area to explore further research on the military. Not many scholars, including local scholars, show interest in

research on this area. Possibly, conducting research on this area is difficult because it is a sensitive subject. However, for historians, this research can still be carried out, by adhering to approved guidelines by concerned parties because undeniably, military history is a part of the people and country's history. In this matter, His Majesty Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah once mentioned that history is a teacher that never lies. (Muhammad Hadi Melayong (2017))

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