

KONFRONTASI
The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute
1963-1966

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Perpustakaan Negara
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*To my mother
and the memory of my father*

Preface

THIS book has grown out of a project sponsored by the Australian Institute of International Affairs, with the aid of a grant from the Ford Foundation, which was originally conceived as a study of the international relations of the Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines-Australia area in the mid-1960s. When I started work on it in 1964, Indonesia's confrontation of Malaysia had already begun to overshadow other aspects of the problem and it soon became apparent that the problems of how to interpret Indonesia's actions in the dispute were of central importance to any such undertaking. However, I have tried to preserve a balance between the Indonesian and the Malaysian side of the story, tracing the interaction of domestic and international developments in both countries. The full history of the complex domestic politics of Indonesia in those turbulent years still has to be unravelled in far more detail than I have attempted here.

I have put more emphasis on the early development of the conflict rather than the later stages, mainly because the issues were more controversial—and the choices made more fateful—at that period than later, when the logic of events was more rigid. I was able to visit Indonesia, Malaysia (including Sarawak and Sabah) and the Philippines at the end of 1964 to make first-hand enquiries into the course of the conflict, but have relied more on the writings of others for the later stages. While this has resulted in some imbalance of narrative detail, I do not think the central analytical purpose of the study has been weakened thereby.

It has unfortunately been necessary, for reasons of length, to exclude or minimize discussion of several aspects of the problem which deserved much closer attention, such as the role of the Philippines in the dispute and the nuances of British, Australian, American and Russian policy. Their importance is undeniable, but I have felt it more fruitful to stress the domestic background on both sides rather than treat the conflict merely as part of a larger international chess-game with a circumscribed set of rules and relationships. A striking feature of confrontation was that the traditional rules and relationships simply were not applicable.