

From Cooperation to Confrontation: The Dynamics of the Buton Sultanate – VOC Relations from Sultan Dayanu Ikhsanuddin to Sultan Himayatuddin Muhammad Saidi (1613–1763)

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Timeline	This article examines the dynamics of relations between the Sultanate of Buton and the Dutch trading company, the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie or VOC, from the reign of Sultan Dayanu Ikhsanuddin, also known as La Elangi (1578–1615), to the reign of Sultan Himayatuddin Muhammad Saidi, also known as La Karambau (1751–1752 and 1760–1763). Employing the historical research method, this study reconstructs past events in a systematic, critical and objective manner based on authentic and relevant historical sources. The research process consists of four main stages: heuristics, source verification or source criticism, interpretation and historiography. The findings reveal that the early relationship between Buton and the VOC was established on the basis of mutual interests through a series of “eternal alliance” agreements, the contents of which were periodically renewed. Both entities were interdependent. The Sultanate of Buton required VOC protection against threats from neighbouring kingdoms, while the VOC needed Buton as a strategic and secure stopover along its maritime route to the Spice Islands of Maluku. However, the relationship was not always harmonious. Divergent political and economic interests, foreign intervention and the failure of both parties to fulfil the terms of their agreements caused relations between Buton and the VOC to fluctuate. At certain times, the two parties acted as allies and cooperated closely; at other moments, their relationship shifted into rivalry and conflict. This study demonstrates that Buton–VOC relations were not
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merely diplomatic and economic in nature, but also reflected the survival strategy of a local kingdom in responding to geopolitical pressures and the expansion of foreign power in the eastern Indonesian archipelago.

Kata Kunci:
*Kesultanan Buton, VOC,
Diplomasi, Persekutuan
Abadi, Sejarah Nusantara*

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mengkaji dinamika hubungan antara Kesultanan Buton dengan Kongsi Dagang Belanda, Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie atau VOC, sejak masa pemerintahan Sultan Dayanu Ikhsanuddin atau La Elangi (1578–1615) hingga pemerintahan Sultan Himayatuddin Muhammad Saidi atau La Karambau (1751–1752 dan 1760–1763). Kajian ini menggunakan metode penelitian sejarah dengan merekonstruksi peristiwa masa lalu secara sistematis, kritis dan objektif berdasarkan sumber-sumber sejarah yang autentik serta relevan. Proses penelitian dilaksanakan melalui empat tahapan utama, yaitu heuristik, verifikasi atau kritik sumber, interpretasi dan historiografi. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa hubungan awal antara Buton dan VOC dibangun atas dasar kepentingan bersama melalui sejumlah kontrak persekutuan abadi yang secara berkala diperbarui. Kedua-dua entitas tersebut saling bergantung antara satu sama lain. Kesultanan Buton memerlukan perlindungan VOC daripada ancaman kerajaan-kerajaan di sekitarnya, manakala VOC pula memerlukan Buton sebagai wilayah persinggahan strategis dan aman dalam jalur pelayaran menuju Kepulauan Rempah-Rempah di Maluku. Namun demikian, hubungan tersebut tidak selalu berlangsung harmonis. Perbedaan kepentingan politik dan ekonomi, intervensi kekuasaan asing, serta kegagalan kedua-dua pihak dalam memenuhi isi perjanjian telah menyebabkan hubungan Buton dan VOC mengalami pasang surut. Dalam konteks tertentu, kedua-duanya tampil sebagai sekutu yang saling bekerja sama, namun pada masa yang lain hubungan tersebut berubah menjadi perseteruan yang sarat dengan konflik kepentingan. Kajian ini memperlihatkan bahwa hubungan Buton–VOC bukan sekadar hubungan diplomatik dan ekonomi, tetapi juga mencerminkan strategi bertahan sebuah kerajaan lokal dalam menghadapi tekanan geopolitik dan dominasi kuasa asing di kawasan timur Nusantara.



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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the Sultanate of Buton and the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC, *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*) was one of the oldest and most enduring political contacts in the history of interaction

between local kingdoms in the Indonesian Archipelago and Europeans. This partnership lasted for almost two centuries, starting from the beginning of the 17th century until the collapse of the VOC at the end of the 18th century.

Before establishing relations with the VOC, Buton had actually established good relations with neighboring kingdoms, especially regional powers such as the Sultanate of Ternate in the east and Gowa-Tallo-Tallo (Makassar) in the west. This intergovernmental relationship was an important part of efforts to maintain security and economic interests. Kingdoms built alliances and diplomatic relations to protect trade routes, gain political support, and face pressure from other stronger powers (Andaya, 1981; Reid, 1988).

Although these neighboring kingdoms had the status of friends of Buton, they remained a serious threat to Buton's sovereignty. Moreover, the geographical location of the Buton Sultanate was very strategic because it was located right at a vital intersection connecting the Makassar trade route to the Maluku Spice Islands (Schoorl, 2003). Therefore, at that time, Buton faced threats from two sides: from the east there was Ternate, and from the west there was Gowa-Tallo.

Ternate, which experienced a period of revival during the reign of Sultan Baabullah (reigned 1570–1583), was recorded to be very aggressive in expanding its territory in order to expel the Portuguese from the Maluku islands. It is recorded that Sultan Baabullah managed to control 72 islands stretching from Mindanao (Southern Philippines) to Solor (Nusa Tenggara) (Amal, 2010). In its military operations, Ternate often deployed militias from the Tobelo tribe who frequently carried out terror, kidnappings, and

riots in various areas they passed through, including in the seas around Buton (Lapian, 2009). Meanwhile, from the west, the threat came from the Gowa-Tallo Sultanate. During the reign of Sultan Alauddin (r. 1593–1639), Gowa-Tallo also intensively expanded its territory to propagate Islam as well as attack VOC strongholds in various places. Gowa-Tallo's military expansion finally reached Buton in 1626 through a military expedition known as the Bundu Cenrana or the Cenrana War (Zuhdi, 2010).

To deal with the geopolitical situation that threatened its position, Buton began to look for strong foreign allies who could provide protection. The opportunity came when the VOC fleet stopped at Buton on a voyage from Ternate to Solor in 1613. The Sultan of Buton, Dayanu Ikhsanuddin (La Elangi), immediately took a quick step by opening negotiations with the VOC Captain, Apollonius Schotte (Zuhdi, 2010). Since the two sides shared strategic interests, they agreed to cooperate, which was marked by the formation of the "everlasting alliance" treaty in January 1613. In the collective memory of the Buton people, this treaty is known as the *janji Baana* (the first treaty) (Zahari, 1977). Through this treaty, Buton and the VOC were fully committed to protecting each other from common enemies (Zuhdi, 2015). This official relationship was later ratified by the first VOC Governor-General, Pieter Both, who came directly to Buton to meet Sultan La Elangi on August 29, 1613 (Corpus Diplomaticum, 1907). Over time, this alliance fostered a paternalistic diplomatic framework, where the Buton elite considered themselves as "child" and positioned the VOC as a protective "father" (Zuhdi, 2010).

However, behind the so-called "everlasting alliance", the relationship between the Buton Sultanate and the VOC did not always run smoothly.

The pattern of relations between the two parties was highly volatile; sometimes the relations between the two were well established, marked by a series of cooperation, and sometimes they deteriorated, marked by various armed conflicts. Historical records show that Buton was involved in two major military confrontations against the VOC. The first conflict broke out during the reign of Sultan Gafurul Wadudu or La Buke (r. 1632–1645), while the largest confrontation erupted during the reign of Sultan Himayatuddin Muhammad Saidi or La Karambau, also known as Oputa Yi Koo (r. 1751–1752 and 1760–1763). Although the relationship was eventually restored, their long interactions were still fraught with ups and downs that had to be managed through periodic renegotiation of treaties.

This study is important because the history of Buton is still less highlighted in the writing of Indonesian National history, which has been too Java-centric (Zuhdi, 2010). As a result, Buton's important role and strategic position in Indonesian national history are often overlooked (Schoorl, 2003). Several previous studies have indeed discussed similar themes, especially Susanto Zuhdi's (2010) important work entitled *"Labu Rope Labu Wana: Sejarah Buton yang Terabaikan"*. However, the content of that paper analyzes Buton in the vortex of the broader triangular conflict involving the VOC, Ternate, and Gowa-Tallo. Meanwhile, this study focuses solely on the dynamics of the relationship between the Buton Sultanate and the VOC, which lasted from the reign of Sultan Dayanu Ikhsanuddin (La Elangi) to Sultan Himayatuddin Muhammad Saidi (La Karambau). Through this research, it is hoped that we will be able to trace how an alliance that was initially peaceful eventually turned into an armed confrontation.

METHOD

This study employs the historical research method to reconstruct the dynamics of relations between the Sultanate of Buton and the VOC. The research process was conducted through four main stages: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The heuristic stage involved the collection of relevant historical sources, including archival documents, treaties, colonial records, and previous scholarly works related to Buton–VOC relations. These sources were then examined through source criticism to assess their authenticity, credibility, and relevance. The interpretation stage was carried out by analysing the collected evidence in order to identify patterns of cooperation, tension, and conflict between the two parties. Finally, the findings were organised and presented through historiography to produce a systematic historical narrative of the changing relationship between the Sultanate of Buton and the VOC from 1613 to 1763.

At the heuristic stage, the search for sources was categorized into online and offline searches. Online searches were conducted by accessing indexed national and international journals, institutional repositories, and official digital library databases, such as the Digital Collections of Universiteit Leiden (which manages the KITLV collection), the Nationaal Archief (National Archives of the Netherlands) in The Hague, Delpher, and the The National Archives of the Republik of Indonesia (ANRI). Meanwhile, offline searches were conducted through documentation techniques and literature studies by visiting various institutions in Jakarta, such as the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia, the University of Indonesia Library, the Library of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, and the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia. In

Baubau City, Southeast Sulawesi, archival research was extended to the Buton Sultanate Palace, the Wolio Cultural Center, and the Baubau Media Center.

The author obtained crucial primary sources, including a document reporting the VOC attack on Buton dated 24 February 1755, housed at ANRI, as well as various other sources regarding the life and struggle of Sultan Himayatuddin Muhammad Saidi. The next step involved internal and external source criticism to compare, select, and synthesize the gathered materials, including Dutch colonial documents, local Buton manuscripts, and secondary literature, in order to minimize bias and subjectivity.

After the data passed verification, the author carried out the interpretation stage by logically linking historical facts, specifically analyzing how Buton's rational calculations, which initially required external allies, turned into resistance due to the long-term impact of VOC economic and political penetration. In the final stage, the author engaged in historiography, reconstructing the historical facts into a coherent narrative about dynamics of the Buton Sultanate–VOC relationship.

DISCUSSION

Profile of the Buton Sultanate

The Buton Sultanate was one of the oldest kingdoms in Indonesia, existing for 628 years (1332–1960). The area of its jurisdiction covered almost the entire territory of what is today Southeast Sulawesi Province, which included Buton Island, Muna Island, Kabaena Island, the Wakatobi Islands (Blacksmith), and the Poleang area on the mainland of Southeast Sulawesi (Ma'mun, 2014; Zuhdi, 2010; Zahari, 1977).

Based on historical records, the foundation of the Buton Kingdom was pioneered by four groups of immigrants from the Malay Peninsula. In the local language (*Wolio*), these four immigrant groups are popularly known as *Mia Patamiana* (The Four People), consisting of Sipanjonga, Sijawangkati, Simalui, and Sitamanajo. Upon their arrival, they built separate *limbo* (settlements) along the coastal areas of Buton Island. Sipanjonga established Limbo Gundu-Gundu, Sijawangkati opened Limbo Barangkatopa, Simalui pioneered Limbo Baluwu, and Sitamanajo built Limbo Peropa. However, these initial coastal settlements were highly vulnerable to security disturbances, particularly threats from Tobelo pirates who dominated the waters of Eastern Indonesia at the time. Eventually, the four leaders moved and consolidated their settlements on higher ground in the hilly area called Welia or Wolio (Haziroyen, 1994; Zuhdi, 2011). This area later developed into the administrative center of the Sultanate of Buton. The alliance of these four initial villages formed the Patalimbona (Four Regions), which later expanded into nine regions, or Siolimbona, with the addition of five new settlements: Limbo Gama, Limbo Rakia, Limbo Siompu, Limbo Wandailolo, and Limbo Melai. Each region was led by a chief bearing the title Bonto. The Patalimbona institution, which later became the Siolimbona, functioned as a legislative council with full customary authority to appoint and dismiss the king or sultan (Haziroyen, 1994; Zuhdi, 2011).

The early development of the kingdom was also influenced by foreign political dynamics, including the arrival of the remnants of the Mongol army to Buton Island following their military defeat in Java in 1293. This group of refugees was led by General Gao Xing (Kao Ching)—identified by the local Buton people as Dungku Cangia—who arrived with

a woman believed to be a descendant of a Mongol nobleman from the lineage of Kublai Khan, named Wa Kaa Kaa (Manarfa, 1993). Their arrival was warmly welcomed and respected by the local community. Based on the deliberations of the Patalimbona Council, Wa Kaa Kaa was officially appointed as the first Queen and ruler of Buton, while Dungku Cangia became the ruler of the Tobe-Tobe region. Thus, the Kingdom of Buton was officially established around 1332. In its subsequent development, successful diplomacy by the Patalimbona and Tobe-Tobe councils integrated several small pre-existing kingdoms around Buton Island—such as Kamaru, Wabula, Todanga, and Batauga—into the territory of the Buton Kingdom (Zuhdi, 2011).

The legitimacy and internal sovereignty of the Buton Kingdom were strengthened after Queen Wa Kaa Kaa married a Majapahit nobleman whose real name remains unknown but who held the title of Si Batara, arriving in Buton with his troops. This grand dynastic marriage later gave birth to Queen Bulawambona, who became the direct ancestor of the lineage of subsequent Buton monarchs (Reid, 1988; Zuhdi, 2011). The political integration of Buton within the constellation of the Indonesian Archipelago was also clearly recorded in Old Javanese documents. As noted in the historical court poem *Kakawin Nagarakretagama*, written by Mpu Prapanca in 1365, the Buton region was recognized as one of the areas under the sphere of influence of the Majapahit Empire (Muljana, 1979).

A major transformation from a kingdom to a sultanate occurred when Islam began to take root in Buton in the mid-16th century, following its earlier spread in the Sultanate of Ternate during the 15th century (Zahari, 1977; Yunus, 2012). This transformation began with the conversion to Islam

of La Kilaponto, the sixth King of Buton, who then took the title of Sultan Murhum Kaimuddin Khalifatul Khamis. The Islamization process was guided directly by Sheikh Abdul Wahid, a prominent scholar from the Malay Peninsula, specifically from Patani (in southern Thailand today). Since then, Islam has been officially declared the state religion (Zahari, 1977; Sagir, 2008; Bakar, 2005). The Sultanate of Buton subsequently experienced rapid advancement, particularly during the reign of the fourth sultan, Sultan Dayanu Ikhsanuddin (Sultan La Elangi). He introduced a formal constitution and a modern body of constitutional law known as the "*Martabat Tujuh*" (Dignity of Seven) law, which was deeply rooted in Sufi philosophy (Yunus, 2012).

From this golden age onward, Buton managed to maintain its position as a dominant and fully sovereign maritime sultanate over the entire territory of Southeast Sulawesi for more than 600 years. This enduring sovereignty continued until the sultanate voluntarily integrated its territory into the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia in 1953, under the leadership of Sultan La Ode Muhammad Falihi Kaimuddin (Zahari, 1977). The following was a list of kings/sultans who have ruled in Buton;

Table 1. Kings/Sultans who ruled in Buton from the 14th to 20th centuries AD
(Zahari, 1977)

The Pre-Islamic period			
No.	Queen/King/Sultan	The Regnal Title	Reigned
1	Queen Wa Kaa Kaa	-	1332 – 1361
2	Queen Bulawambona	-	1361 – 1416
3	King Bataraguru	-	1416 – 1466
4	King Tua Rade	-	1466 – 1481
5	King La Kilaponto	-	1491-1511

The Islamic period			
1	La Kilaponto	Qaimuddin Khalifatul Khamis / Murhum	1511 – 1537
2	La Tumparasi	Qaimuddin	1545 – 1552
3	La Sangaji	Qaimuddin	1566 – 1570
4	La Elangi	Dayanu Ikhsanuddin	1578 – 1615
5	La Balawo	Abdul Wahab	1617 – 1619
6	La Buke	Gafurul Wadudu	1632 – 1645
7	La Saparagau	-	1645 – 1646
8	La Cila	Mardan Ali	1647 – 1654
9	La Awu	Malik Sirullah	1654 – 1664
10	La Simbata	Aidil Rakhim	1664 – 1669
11	La Tangkaraja	Kaimudin	1669 – 1680
12	La Tumpamana	Zainuddin	1680 – 1689
13	La Umati	Liyaudin Ismail	1689 – 1697
14	La Dini	Syaifuddin	1697 – 1704
15	La Rabaenga	Syaiful Rijaali	1704
16	La Sadaha	Syamsuddin	1704 – 1709
17	La Ibi	Nasraruddin	1709 – 1711
18	La Tumparasi	Mulahiruddin Abdul Rasyid	1711 – 1712
19	La Ngkariry	Sakiyuddin Daarul Alam	1712 – 1750
20	La Karambau	Himayatuddin Muhammad Saidi	1751 – 1752
21	La Hamim	Sakiyuddin	1752 – 1759
22	La Seha	Rafiuddin	1759 – 1760
23	La Karambau	Himayatuddin Muhammad Saidi	1760 – 1763
24	La Jampi	Kaimuddin	1763 – 1788
25	La Masalalamu	Alimuddin	1788 – 1791
26	La Kopuru	Muhyiuddin Abdul Ghafur	1791 – 1799
27	La Badaru	Dayanu Asraruddin	1799 – 1822
28	La Dani	Muhammad Anharuddin	1822 – 1823
29	Muhammad Idrus	Kaimuddin I	1824 – 1851
30	Muhammad Isa	Kaimuddin II	1851 – 1871
31	Muhammad Salihi	Kaimuddin III	1871 – 1885
32	Muhammad Umar	Kaimuddin IV	1885 – 1904
33	Muhammad Asyikin	Adilil Rakhiym	1906 – 1911
34	Muhammad Husein	Bayanu Ikhsanu Kaimuddin	1914
35	Muhammad Ali	Muhammad Ali Kaimuddin	1918 – 1921
36	Muhammad Syafi'u	Muhammad Syafiul Anaami	1922 – 1924
37	Muhammad Hamidi	Muhammad Hamidi Kaimuddin	1928 – 1937

The VOC's Arrival in Buton and the Establishment of the "Everlasting Alliance"

The early arrival of the Dutch in the Indonesian Archipelago in 1596 was driven by the direct motivation of the spice trade, especially after the unification of Portugal and Spain in 1580 closed Dutch access to European markets (Ricklefs, 2008; Worden, 1998; Poesponegoro & Notosusanto, 2008; Meilink-Roelofsz, 1962). Their navigation was greatly aided by the leaking of confidential Portuguese maritime routes published in the book *Itinerario* by Jan Huygen van Linschoten (Lombard, 1996; Subrahmanyam, 1993). The success of the pioneering expedition by Cornelis de Houtman (1597) soon triggered a subsequent wave of large-scale voyages led by Jacob van Neck in 1598 (Ricklefs, 2008; Worden, 1998; Poesponegoro & Notosusanto, 2008; Reid, 1992; Gaastra, 2002).

The fierce commercial rivalry between domestic Dutch Merchants, as well as with other local and European entities (Lombard, 2010), prompted the parliament (Staten-Generaal) to propose the unification of these trading corporations. This step culminated in the formation of the VOC on March 20, 1602, which was managed through a system of regional assemblies (kamers / chambers) under the leadership of the Heeren XVII council (Zuhdi, 2010). As a representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the VOC was granted sovereign privileges (octroi), such as the rights to diplomacy, territorial expansion, jurisdiction, warfare, and minting currency, along with reciprocal financial and military responsibilities to the parliament (Moedjanto, 1988).

The institutional expansion of the VOC in the Indonesian Archipelago began with the opening of representative offices in several major ports starting in 1602. In 1613, the VOC fleet under Apollonius Schotte docked in Baubau, Buton (Schoorl, 2010). Buton's strategic geographical position was considered ideal as a stopover base for the Batavia–Maluku route (Sewang, 2005; Schoorl, 1997). In contrast to other regions that tended to be resistant, the Buton Sultanate under Sultan Dayanu Ikhsanuddin (La Elangi) welcomed this partnership. This choice of diplomacy was influenced by internal political calculations to secure the succession to the throne, as well as external needs to mitigate expansionist threats from the Kingdoms of Gowa-Tallo and Ternate (Yunus, 1995). Moreover, the absence of alternative alliances with other European powers and the perception of VOC superiority strengthened Buton's motives (Zuhdi, 1999). For the VOC, this alliance was crucial to managing regional rivalry as well as securing logistics routes to Maluku (Zuhdi, 1996).

The realization of this strategic partnership was formalized in the "*janji Baana*" (the first treaty) between Sultan La Elangi and Schotte, with the following main points:

The VOC (represented by Apollonius Schotte) committed:

Under this agreement, the VOC committed to providing military protection for Buton against both external aggression and internal conflicts, which included supporting the development of defense fortifications. Crucially, the pact guaranteed full freedom of religion for Buton's ruler and its people. To maintain regional stability, the VOC also acted as a peace mediator between Buton, Makassar, and Ternate. Furthermore, VOC

currency was officially integrated to circulate as legal tender throughout the region.

The Sultanate of Buton (represented by Sultan Dayanu Ikhsanuddin) committed:

On its part, Buton agreed to support the VOC against shared adversaries—specifically Ternate and its allies—by dispatching military aid to Solor using its kora-kora fleet. Economically, the agreement enforced local food price controls and granted exclusive trade monopolies to the Dutch while barring other foreign nations from the market. Dutch merchants were exempted from tariffs and duties, and local rice production was mobilized to supply VOC logistical needs in Maluku. Additionally, the treaty established social regulations concerning marriages between VOC soldiers and local women, along with legal protocols for returning runaway slaves (Zahari, 1977; Schoorl, 2010).

In August 1613, Governor-General Pieter Both visited Buton to ratify the initial agreement and finalize a new amendment known as the Janji Ruaangana (the second treaty). This supplementary pact introduced critical provisions addressing political succession, foreign presence, and maritime security. It designated Kamaruddin as the primary candidate for royal succession upon the Sultan's death, followed by Syamsuddin as the second candidate. Regarding foreign powers, nationals such as the Spanish and Portuguese were permitted to reside in Buton only under a mutually authorized agreement, with their presence strictly limited to extraordinary circumstances like emergency resupply or logistics. Furthermore, any enemy vessels transporting goods from Surabaya that unloaded in Makassar were subject to seizure following formal notification by the Sultan

and a VOC inspection; all confiscated ships and cargo were then divided between the King of Buton and the VOC (Zahari, 1977).

Thus, during the reign of Sultan La Elangi there had been two closures of friendship treaties with the Dutch VOC. Overall, the content of the above treaty is an unbalanced concession in the relationship of interests between the Kingdom of Buton and the VOC. The VOC was more profitable compared to what Buton got from the VOC. For Buton, it does not seem to be an important material concession, but rather obtaining a guarantee of security protection from the VOC to face foreign nations and especially Gowa-Tallo and Ternate, which is the most essential. The other is a matter of habit, in terms of practicing religious teachings, where the VOC stated that it would not interfere (Zuhdi, 1999).

Buton-VOC Conflict in the Era of Sultan Gafurul Wadudu (1632-1645)

After the death of Sultan La Elangi, the throne was continued by his son, Sultan Abdul Wahhab or La Balawo (1617–1619). However, the leadership of Sultan La Balawo, which was considered weak and inconsistent in continuing the policies of his predecessor, triggered his impeachment in 1619 (Zuhdi, 2000). After experiencing an interregnum or power vacuum for eleven years, La Buke ascended the throne with the title of Sultan Gafurul Wadudu (1632–1645). At this periodization, diplomatic relations between Buton and the VOC reached their lowest point (Zahari, 155; Schoorl, 2010).

The fracture of this strategic partnership was triggered by the failure of the VOC in providing military protection when Buton was invaded by the Kingdom of Gowa-Tallo under Sultan Alauddin in 1624. As a result, in 1634, Buton fell into the conquered territory of Gowa-Tallo (Daeng Rapi,

1988). Makassar's dominance in Buton then forced the sultanate to turn to help Gowa-Tallo against the VOC (Yunus, 1995; Sewang, 2005).

Despite official agreements, opposition to the Dutch presence persisted, as anti-VOC resistance in Buton manifested in four crucial incidents between 1634 and 1636 (Zuhdi, 2000). The first occurred during the Alliance in Wowoni (1634), where thirty members of the Buton militia joined forces to support Kakiali from Hitu, who was waging a resistance backed by Makassar (Zuhdi, 2000; Ricklefs, 2008). That same year, anti-VOC sentiment escalated at the Baubau Port Attack, where hundreds of Makassar intermediaries launched a direct assault on the Dutch ship *Batavia*. Tension turned lethal in 1635 with the Velzean incident, which involved the plundering of the vessel and the murder of its crew after it ran aground on Wowoni Island. Resistance reached its peak in 1636 with the sabotage of the *Sasker Douwensen*, in which a Dutch merchant ship was burned at Buton Port, and its captain and crew were executed under direct orders from the Sultan.

In response to the series of sabotages, VOC Acting Governor Antonio van Diemen arrived in Buton on June 13, 1637 to demand financial compensation with the threat of the destruction of the city. Given the nominal demand that was too high, the Sultan was unable to fulfill it directly (Schoorl, 2010). This rejection was responded to by the VOC as a declaration of war, which was immediately followed by the bombardment of the Buton defensive coast guarded by 600 Buton–Makassar joint forces. Although the VOC managed to paralyze the coast on June 15, the Dutch military offensive reached a dead end when trying to penetrate the solid

defense system of the Wolio Palace Fortress, forcing Van Diemen's fleet to retreat to Batavia on June 18, 1637 (Schoorl, 2010).

A year later, on January 21, 1638, the VOC launched a second large-scale punitive expedition with a strength of 1,200 to 1,650 personnel under the command of E. Antonio Coen. This aggression succeeded in scorching the logistics infrastructure and settlements in the coastal area of Buton (Schoorl, 2010). However, the advance of the Coen army was broken again when facing the strong heart of wolio's defense, so the VOC was forced to stop the physical confrontation.

Realizing the failure of the military option, the VOC took advantage of peaceful mediation through Sultan Mandarsyah of Ternate who had good relations with both sides. As a follow-up, the VOC sent Commander Jacobsen van der Muelen in 1643 to negotiate reconciliation. However, the diplomatic mission failed to reach an treaty until 1644. The main factor in the impasse in the normalization of Buton-VOC relations is allegedly due to the still strong hegemony and political influence of Makassar within the Buton Sultanate (Zuhdi, 2000).

Normalization of Buton-VOC Relations

After the abdication of Sultan La Buke in 1645, the leadership shifted to the Sultan of Saparagau (1645–1646). In this short period, the pioneering normalization of Buton-VOC relations began to be pursued through the drafting of a third treaty known as the "*taluanguna janji*". This treaty was delegated to La Cila, a Buton military commander who had previously led the relief forces in suppressing the resistance of Kakiali on Mount Wawani, Hitu (Zahari, 1977). The substance of this treaty is generally harmonious and does not negate the points of treaty in the La Elangi–Schotte Treaty.

After the death of Sultan Saparagau, La Cila ascended the throne with the title of Sultan Mardan Ali (1647–1654) (Zahari, 1977). Under his rule, total reconciliation between Buton and the VOC was successfully realized through the mediation of the Sultanate of Ternate. The sultan's cooperative attitude was shown by paying off all the burden of compensation that had been demanded by the VOC, so that was willing to restore the status of peace (Schoorl, 2010).

An important indicator of this harmonization occurred in March 1650, when five VOC ships (de Tijger, Bergen op Zoom, Aagtekerke, de Luipaard, and de Juffer) sank in the waters of Sagori near Kabaena. Although the Buton nobles urged that the 581 crew of the ship be executed and their cargo looted, Sultan Mardan Ali rejected the proposal and chose to rescue and protect the Dutch sailors (Liebner, 2007; Zahari, 1977).

The sultan's humanitarian actions received high appreciation from the Governor of Amboina, Arnold de Vlaming van Oudshoorn. On his way to Batavia in August 1650, De Vlaming stopped in Baubau to express his gratitude and affirm the commitment of friendship between the two countries (Schoorl, 2010). This relationship was re-formalized through the renewal of a fourth treaty called the "*janji pataaguna*" in 1651 (Zahari, 1977).

The military and logistical synergy that was built as a realization of this treaty included (Zahari, 1977):

The VOC's assistance to Buton included: The provision of 13 personal bodyguards for Sultan Mardan Ali along with 100 pounds of gunpowder, the construction of two coastal defense plants along the Baubau River, and the deployment of Sultan Mandarsyah's troops from Ternate to maintain Buton's domestic stability. Meanwhile, Buton's

assistance to the VOC included: Rescue of shipwreck victims on Sagori Island, sending military expeditions to quell rebellion on Ambelau Island, and mobilizing relief troops to Amboina.

Because of this close relationship, De Vlaming was recorded to have made diplomatic visits to Buton up to seven times in the period from 1650 to 1654 (Zahari, 1977).

Although bilateral relations with the VOC were conducive, Sultan Mardan Ali's domestic policies triggered internal resistance. The actions of the sultan, who were considered to often ignore customary law, violate religious law, and conduct unilateral diplomacy with the VOC, caused deep anxiety for the Syariah Council (customary and religious institution) of the Buton Sultanate. Through a long consensus, the Shari'a Council decided to dismiss and sentence Sultan Mardan Ali to death.

In order to anticipate military protection from the VOC, the Shari'a Council implemented a strategy of tactical elimination against the sultan's inner circle. This stage of execution began with the murder of the sultan's uncle, Kapitaraja (Gogoli Mbela-Mbela), which was followed by the liquidation of 13 Dutch guard personnel entrusted to De Vlaming. After the sultan's protective forces were paralyzed, the execution of Sultan Mardan Ali was successfully carried out on an island in the former Baubau Port, which was later named Makassar Island.

The deaths *of the protégé* and his personnel provoked a harsh military reaction from the VOC. De Vlaming immediately led a combined fleet of 23 Dutch soldiers and 12 Ternate soldiers to launch a surprise retaliatory attack on Buton, which succeeded in destroying one of the sultanate's ammunition storage plants. Although the situation had heated up, further

confrontations could be suppressed after the Buton side proposed diplomatic negotiations. The two sides finally agreed to end tensions and restore the status of relations through a peace treaty (Zahari, 1977).

Formation of the Buton-VOC Military Alliance

During the time of Sultan Malik Sirullah (La Awu), Buton experienced many expansionist threats from the Sultanate of Gowa-Tallo. The restoration of Buton-VOC relations has initiated the formation of a more massive defense coalition with the VOC along with Ternate, and Bone. On October 23, 1666, under the rule of Sultan Aidil Rakhim or La Simbata, Buton faced a massive invasion from a combined fleet of 15,000 to 20,000 personnel under the command of Karaeng Bontomarannu (Zuhdi et al., 1996; Stapel, 1939). The largest retaliatory attack in Gowa-Tallo's history was triggered by the decision of the Sultan of Buton to grant political asylum to Raja Bone Aru Palakka and his followers who were political fugitives from Makassar (Kasim, 2002).

In order to face the massive siege of Gowa-Tallo that had lasted for 38 days at the Palace Fortress, the VOC sent military aid from Batavia on November 24, 1666 under the leadership of Cornelis Speelman. This rescue fleet carried 21 warships carrying 600 Dutch soldiers as well as the Bugis (Bone) and Ambon militias led directly by Aru Palakka and Captain Jonker (Vlekke, 2008; Stapel, 1922). Before arriving in Buton, Speelman broke Gowa-Tallo's external defenses by burning ten logistics barn villages in Langkiang Bay (Kasim, 2002).

On January 1, 1667, relief troops arrived in the waters of Baubau and immediately isolated the main outposts of Gowa-Tallo. A joint offensive strategy was devised: the Buton army attacked from the east with cannon

fire from above Fort Wolio, while Speelman and Aru Palakka's troops clamped down from the west and south (Kasim, 2002). This confrontation reached a turning point when around 300 Bugis, Bone, and Soppeng militias in the Karaeng Bontomarannu camp chose to defect to Aru Palakka's side. The combined alliance of 5,000 personnel managed to win the battle decisively by paralyzing 300 Gowa-Tallo warships and capturing 5,500 Makassar troops (Zuhdi, 1999; Sagimun, 1975).

The coalition's victory led to the signing of the Janji Limaanguna (the fifth treaty) between Sultan La Simbata and Cornelis Speelman aboard the *Tertholen* on 31 January 1667, a pact later renewed on 25 June 1667 aboard the *Hof van Zeeland* in the presence of Sultan Mandarsyah of Ternate (Zahari, 1977). This agreement imposed heavy economic and administrative burdens on Buton. Crucially, it mandated the complete destruction of all clove and nutmeg trees across the sultanate—particularly in the *Tukang Besi*, *Wangi-Wangi*, *Kaledupa*, and *Binongko* islands—in exchange for an annual VOC stipend of 100 gulden starting in late 1667. While merchants from regions like Batavia, Java, Johor, and Palembang were permitted to trade during peacetime, traders from Makassar and Gowa-Tallo were strictly barred without an official VOC permit. Furthermore, foreign envoys could be received, but Buton was prohibited from concluding political or commercial treaties without VOC and Ternate approval. Similarly, although Buton's sovereign could send merchant ships to ports such as Batavia, Ambon, and Ternate under VOC protection, any voyages to Makassar required explicit Dutch licensing.

Politically and militarily, the treaty effectively subordinated Buton's sovereignty to the VOC and Ternate. Buton was bound to treat the VOC's

enemies as its own, provide military support, hand over enemy fugitives, and refrain from signing separate peace treaties. Internally, the appointment or succession of Buton's sultan and key royal officials required the formal approval of both the VOC and Ternate, accompanied by a binding oath of loyalty to the treaty. To enforce these strict terms, the VOC secured the right to hold prominent Buton figures in Batavia as hostages for as long as deemed necessary, build local defense forts using Buton labor and materials, and oversee legal jurisdiction over VOC personnel. Any fleeing Dutch officers—including those attempting to convert to Islam—were to be returned immediately, while any local residents who harmed VOC members faced extradition to Dutch authorities for trial (Schoorl, 2010; Zahari, 1977).

Sultan Himayatuddin Muhammad Saidi: Buton-VOC Open Confrontation

A major upheaval in Buton-VOC relations occurred with Sultan Himayatuddin Muhammad Saidi (La Karambau) or Oputa yi koo. at this time it is one of the most radical portraits of resistance in the history of the relationship between the Sultanate of Buton and the VOC. In contrast to his predecessors who mostly took the cooperative and diplomatic path, Sultan Himayatuddin chose a hard line of military confrontation. This strategic decision to oppose the VOC was driven by a deep commitment to stop exploitation and intervention that increasingly undermined the order of the sultanate.

The main reasons for Sultan Himayatuddin's opposition to the VOC can be mapped into the following crucial factors:

First, Sultan Himayatuddin critically reviewed the past treaty sheets, starting from the era of Sultan Dayanu Ikhsanuddin to the "*janji Limaanguna*" era of Sultan La Simbata (1667). He identified an extreme paradigm shift in bilateral relations between the two sides. The relationship that was initially built on the principle of equality as two independent state entities that help each other, was slowly shifted by the VOC into a relationship of absolute submission and dependence (asymmetric). The VOC's political intervention was considered to have infiltrated too far into the heart of the sultanate's bureaucracy and customs. This is evidenced by the existence of a clause that requires that any inauguration of a new Sultan of Buton and the appointment or replacement of a high-ranking royal official (Dewan Syara) will not be valid without the legitimacy and formal approval of the VOC and the Sultanate of Ternate. For Himayatuddin, the rule of law and Western politics within his territory was a form of insult to the nation as well as a real threat that could eliminate the independent sovereignty of the Buton Sultanate. *Second*, in the economic sector, the reason for this resistance is directly rooted in the suffering of the people due to the implementation of the extirpation policy contained in the 1667 treaty. The VOC imposed rules of mass destruction and logging on all clove and nutmeg trees in the Buton jurisdiction, especially in the Tukang Besi Islands cluster (Kaledupa, Wangi-Wangi, Binongko). Instead, the VOC only provided compensation or compensation (*timpu nutmeg*) of 100 Guilders per year to the sultanate.

This unilateral monopoly policy systematically shut down free trade routes, paralyzed the maritime trade of the Buton people, and destroyed the community's main source of income. As a result of the loss of the right to

their own produce, a wave of poverty hit various *kadie* (regions), making the people of Buton increasingly destitute and suffering from generation to generation. Sultan Himayatuddin saw this as a structured scenario for the VOC to impoverish his country for the sake of unilateral capitalist gain.

Driven by a sense of moral responsibility as supreme leader, Sultan Himayatuddin declared all previous detrimental treaties with the VOC void during his reign, refusing to continue the tradition of blind obedience to Dutch authority. To assert his sovereign position, he implemented a bold policy deconstructing the Dutch trade monopoly through several direct measures: he reopened the free trade market to encourage cross-island commerce—an activity labeled as the "black market" by the VOC—refused to provide lodging and vessels to the VOC detachment (*Kometer Ka Pataaguna*) assigned to oversee spice tree eradication in the Tukang Besi Islands, and deliberately concealed local clove and nutmeg plantations to protect them from destruction by Dutch forces.

Sultan Himayatuddin was aware that in order to break the grip of the VOC, Buton had to take an openly challenging position. One of the manifestations of his political resistance was by providing legal protection, political asylum, and facilitating Frans Frous, a political prisoner of the VOC dissident and former Bulukumba interpreter who fled to Buton in November 1750. The Sultan even granted Frans Frous's request to convert to Islam. This action blatantly violated the ancient Buton-VOC treaty which required the sultanate to arrest Dutch fugitives and prohibited the process of Islamization against Europeans. The logistical support and blessing given by the sultan to Frans Frous to sabotage and rob the VOC merchant ship *Rust en Werk* in Baubau Port in 1752 marked the end of

peace diplomacy, which confirmed that for Himayatuddin, the sovereignty of Buton could only be recaptured through the route of total war (oorlog).

On February 19, 1755, a large VOC fleet under the command of Captain Johan Casper Rijsweber moved from Bulukumba to the waters of Baubau to launch a total military aggression against the Buton Sultanate. Using the trick of pretending to lean on it only to get drinking water, the VOC forces concealed the invasion plan from the sultan's interpreter while investigating the land defense forces. At exactly midnight on February 23, 1755, the VOC troops landed hundreds of well-armed soldiers from Java and Makassar, then launched a sudden double dawn attack through the gates of Lawana Lanto and Wandailolo to capture the Wolio Palace Fortress which became the heart of the sultanate's defenses.

The unilateral landing triggered a major and devastating war within the fortress environment between the 5,000-strong Buton army and the VOC fleet. Although Sultan Himayatuddin (La Karambau) showed his physical strength by knocking down several Dutch soldiers using a keris in the palace hall, the imbalance of modern weaponry eventually forced the Buton troops to retreat and surrender the Palace Fortress to the VOC. This total war left a massive destruction that is clearly recorded in the collective memory of the people of Buton as the Dutch Kaherumua Era (Dutch Riot Era). The sad recording of the despair and suffering of the people at that time was immortalized poetically by Abdul Ghaniyu in the ancient manuscript of Anjonga Inda Malusa in Wolio which reads:

Inda urangoya tongko bungana Walanda., Apopasiki sabara manusia., Sumbere sumbere apeelo palaisa., Apoboli-boli indaa pataku taku... (Didn't you

hear the time of the Dutch commotion., Scattering all the people., Everyone looking for protection., Scattered and riding...)

This confrontation led to the death of a number of key officials of the sultanate including Sapati (Prime Minister) and Kapitalau (Sea Commander), as well as the capture of the sultan's youngest daughter, Wa Ode Wakato, by the Dutch. Meanwhile, Sultan Himayatuddin and the rest of his army chose to retreat to the top of Mount Siontapina to wage guerrilla warfare from the middle of the forest until the end of his life.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the relationship between the Sultanate of Buton and the VOC from 1613 to 1763 was dynamic and complex. Initially shaped by strategic cooperation and mutual interests, the relationship gradually changed due to conflicting political and economic interests, VOC intervention, and the failure of both parties to uphold their agreements. Buton–VOC relations were not merely diplomatic alliances, but also reflected the Sultanate of Buton's efforts to defend its sovereignty and political autonomy against external pressure. At the same time, the VOC used this relationship to expand its influence in eastern Indonesia. Thus, a relationship that began as cooperation eventually developed into tension and confrontation.

At the outset of the alliance, through the first treaty (*Janji Baana*) and the Second treaty (*Janji Ruaangana*) in 1613, Buton and the VOC agreed to become everlasting allies who would mutually assist and protect one another against external enemies. Buton sought protection from regional military threats, while the VOC primarily regarded Buton as a secure transit point on the route to the spice-producing islands of Maluku. However, this

relationship began to deteriorate during the reign of Sultan La Buke or Gafurul Wadudu (1632–1645), due to a growing divergence of interests and perspectives. Buton became deeply disappointed by the VOC's failure to provide military assistance during the Gowa-Tallo-Tallo's attack of 1624, leading the sultanate to strengthen its ties with Makassar and to disrupt Dutch shipping activities. From the VOC's perspective, however, these actions constituted a betrayal, prompting it to act as a "father" disciplining a "disobedient child" through the military expeditions led by Antonio van Diemen in 1637–1638. Although relations temporarily improved with the conclusion of the third treaty (*Janji Taluanguna*) (1645) and the fourth treaty (*Janji Pataanguna*) (1651), and were further strengthened by the humanitarian act of Sultan Mardan Ali, or La Cila (1647–1654), who rescued hundreds of Dutch sailors shipwrecked near Sagori, the alliance remained fragile due to increasing Dutch pressure and political tensions within the Buton court.

A major turning point that proved particularly detrimental to Buton occurred in 1667, when Sultan La Simbata or Aidil Rakhim (1664–1669), signed the fifth treaty (*Janji Limaanguna*). Through this agreement, the VOC significantly expanded its influence by restricting the selection of future sultans and enforcing the large-scale destruction (*extirpatie*) of clove and nutmeg trees. These policies severely weakened the local economy and had long-lasting adverse effects on the welfare of the people of Buton. This growing pressure eventually sparked strong resistance under Sultan Himayatuddin or La Karambau in the mid-eighteenth century. From Buton's perspective, the sultan's decision to annul the existing treaty and reopen free trade was an effort to defend the sovereignty of the kingdom

and the welfare of its people. In contrast, the VOC viewed these actions as an act of defiance that had to be suppressed. This conflict culminated in a full-scale war (oorlog) on 23 February 1755, when Dutch forces attacked and occupied the Wolio Palace Fortress. Although this tragic event inflicted profound suffering upon the people of Buton, remembered in local collective memory as the *Zamani Kaherumua Walanda* (the Age of Dutch riots), the Dutch ultimately failed to extinguish Buton's resistance. Sultan Himayatuddin withdrew to the forests of Mount Siontapina and continued the struggle through a people-based guerrilla campaign until the end of his life, demonstrating that the sovereignty of the Sultanate of Buton never fully succumbed to Western colonial domination. Although relations between Buton and the VOC were eventually restored after the reign of Sultan Himayatuddin, these historical developments clearly demonstrate the highly dynamic nature of the relationship between the two parties. The sequence of events challenges the long-standing assumption that Buton and the VOC maintained a stable and enduring alliance. Instead, the historical evidence indicates that their relationship was shaped by shifting political interests, persistent tensions, and recurring cycles of cooperation and conflict.

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