



## Geographical Factors and General Soedirman's Strategy in Second Dutch Military Aggression, 1948–1949

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### Abstract

On December 19, 1948, Dutch military forces were able to capture major cities in Java and Sumatra but could not control rural areas or remote areas. It was their weakness, so General Soedirman used it to fight against the Dutch during the Second Military Aggression. This research aims to analyze the role of Indonesia's geographic conditions in General Soedirman's strategic achievement and its potential influence on Indonesia's defensive posture during the Second Dutch Military Aggression. The research method used in this article is qualitative, with a literature study approach of collecting information and conducting library research from books, historical documents, and journals. The results of the analysis show that the geographical characteristics of the Java region, which has a diverse landscape, provided ideal terrain for Soedirman's troops and became a driving force for Indonesia's success in facing the Dutch; this had the effect of exhausting the enemy and contributed to the military failure of the Dutch troops.

## INTRODUCTION

From 1948 to 1949, the Second Dutch Military Aggression was part of an important event that determined the struggle for independence of the Indonesian state. Although Indonesia gained independence in 1945, the aggression still occurred from the continuation of the previous aggression. In the Second Dutch Military Aggression, Dutch troops had more sophisticated forces and weaponry to regain control of Indonesia. Until the peak of December 19–22, 1948, Dutch troops attacked and tried to control the Yogyakarta area, the capital of the Republic of Indonesia (Pratama & Kamsori, 2015). According to the Indonesian Army Command and General Staff College (1993), the book "General Attack of March 1, 1949, in Yogyakarta: Its Background and Influence" describes the fall of Maguwo to the Netherlands by the way the Dutch attacked by air through the airdrop of troops in Maguwo and land routes to destroy the strength of the Indonesian National Armed Forces spread across several cities in Central Java, with only around 150

soldiers at the time. Although its military strength was not the same as that of the Dutch, Indonesia had a strong spirit of resistance and determination to achieve the desired military mission. A military mission is a task or objective that forces must complete during any combat operation. Depending on the context of strategic demands, these missions can vary and have distinctive features. These missions have their characteristics depending on the context of the strategic decision, including the objectives, and methods of implementation to be achieved (Deitz, Michaelis, Bray, & Kolodny, 2016). During the Second Dutch Military Aggression, General Soedirman's mission was to lead Indonesian troops in fighting for independence and maintaining the sovereignty of the newly established Republic of Indonesia.

General Soedirman left Yogyakarta on December 19, 1948, to lead the war directly, able to perform duties and assume responsibility in difficult situations and physical illness. General Soedirman's actions reflected great moral values for the military and civilians. The Indonesian military forces, consisting of the Indonesian Armed Forces and the civilians, experienced obstacles when facing the enemy because the weapons and equipment owned were limited, making it impossible to achieve victory. Limited armaments required Indonesian troops under the command of General Soedirman to determine effective ways to deal with the Dutch.

Then, General Soedirman released Strategy Order Number 1 on the advice of General A.H. Nasution (Setiadi, Yuliawati, & Septian, 2013). The content of the strategy was to conduct Guerrilla Warfare in the face of Dutch attacks and resistance. The guerrilla strategy involved a series of measures that included relinquishing defenses in significant cities and highway networks to provide flexibility and avoid confrontation with the more powerful Dutch. In addition, it formed guerrilla enclaves to strengthen resistance and maintain the movement's sustainability. The next step was the implementation of guerrilla warfare, which emphasized the tactics of attacks and sudden ambushes. Finally, in the context of returning to the area of origin, Wingate's strategy is used to facilitate units that have migrated to Yogyakarta. This overall strategy is designed to provide tactical superiority and enable continuity of resistance in the face of more significant enemy pressure.

The problem is that the complexity of Indonesia's geographical terrain, including different topography, vegetation, and climate, creates complex logistical and tactical challenges, requiring a deep understanding of natural conditions to optimize military power to be a decisive factor in the war's success. Especially during the Second Dutch Military Aggression is not the same as the current conditions where the use and application of geography in military affairs can be assisted by technological sophistication through assessing terrain conditions and making attack trajectories in military operations that integrate with Geographic Information System (GIS) and Remote Sensing technology (Rahmawati, Swastanto, & Supriyatno, 2019).

Therefore, this study analyzes how geography is related to the success of General Soedirman's strategy and the conveniences provided by geographical factors that can make Indonesia survive in the face of Second Dutch Military Aggression. Following previous research conducted by Sardiman, & Agustinova (2019) entitled "A Humble and Meaningful Life of Commander in Chief, General Soedirman," it was explained that General Soedirman was a humble figure because he was influenced by three sub-cultures: traditional society, governor's descendants, and devout Muslims who played a role in shaping the values of his character, including humility. Suspurwanto's (2020) research entitled "Soedirman's General Strategic Leadership in its Service as a Soldier Indonesian National Military" explained that General Soedirman had good strategic leadership

qualities, and always thought before acting in any battle as a soldier and military commander. The strategy was applied by combining all existing armed forces through guerrilla warfare with *Supit Urang's* attack tactics. Then Lalkovič (2022) research entitled "Geography and Insurgent Strategy in Sri Lanka and the Philippines" explains that one of the factors that drove the success of the rebellion was geography. The research shows how troops harnessed geographic diversity to conduct operations and pinpoint areas for guerrilla warfare in Sri Lanka and the Philippines. From several studies that researchers have obtained, there is no explanation of the relationship between geographical factors and the success of General Soedirman's strategy on the battlefield, even though geography can be a determining factor for the success of guerrilla strategies. So this research is essential to provide new insights into the relationship between geography and strategy in military battles, provide a better understanding of the tactics and strategies used by General Soedirman during the Second Dutch Military Aggression, and understand the importance of geography in determining military tactics.

This study will analyze the importance of Indonesia's geographical factors in General Soedirman's strategic success and their prospective impact on Indonesia's defensive posture during the Second Dutch Military Aggression. The first part will analyze the relationship between geography and the strategy used by Soedirman's forces in general. The second part will analyze how geographical factors, especially terrain, climate, population, and economy, influence the superiority of General Soedirman's strategy. This research can provide additional knowledge to defense strategy planners and military commanders about the importance of geographic factors in designing contemporary defense strategies as an essential component in the planning and decision-making process.

## **METHODS**

This research is a historical qualitative research, it is needed to develop relevant literature by summarizing, analyzing, and synthesizing relevant and reliable literature collections related to the research topic (Paré, Trudel, Jaana, & Kitsiou, 2015). Researchers apply several research steps: First, determine the topic or title of the study. Topic selection is the first step to provide direction and focus on the analysis to be carried out, such as detailing goals, formulating problems, and choosing the suitable method in a well structured. Second, the researcher searched for heuristic data from historical information sources related to General Sudirman's strategy during the Second Dutch Military Aggression.

Historical sources are divided into primary and secondary. The primary data source of research can come from the source of interviews obtained from individuals or several different groups of people, or it can also be from observing an event. On the other hand, indirect data is obtained from books, historical evidence, or published archives, including secondary data (Sugiyono, 2017). Researchers use primary data sources obtained from the veterans or historical documents containing events during the Second Dutch Military Aggression or fighters who experienced guerrilla warfare with General Soedirman. In contrast, secondary sources are obtained from books or journals. After the sources have been completed, the next stage is to interpret or analyze data on General Sudirman's strategy related to geographical factors. The last stage is historiography, where researchers explain the data obtained in writing that can be useful to readers.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Relationship of Geography and War

In a war, geography refers to the physical and geographical aspects that influence military strategy and operations. Geographical factors include tactics, terrain, and logistical factors, which vary depending on the environment. Some researchers have stressed the importance of geographical factors on the battlefield. However, some warring groups will differ in their sense of geography and show that geography often poses problems in combat (Hubbard, P., & Kitchin, 2007). In other words, different perceptions or understandings of geography can fuel tensions and complicate negotiations or resolutions between opposing parties. It creates complexity because the battlefield is a complicated place with intricate physical and symbolic components.

According to Chylińska (2020), geography on the battlefield dramatically influences the strategies, tactics, and results used by each army. Physical geography can be an additional strength if used correctly and effectively. Through defense scenarios, troops with experience in mountainous areas provide an advantage against enemies who lack superior terrain control (Siroky & Dzutsati, 2015). Although physical geography can provide advantages, military commanders need to have a good view in planning and implementing military operations. It involves identifying and integrating an understanding of the battlefield with adaptive strategies and effective military tactics to achieve the intended goal in any military operation.

Throughout history, terrain has been crucial for military operations. Strategic thinkers such as Sun Tzu and Clausewitz have recognized the crucial importance of terrain in the success or failure of military campaigns from ancient times to modern warfare. According to Clausewitz, the battlefield influences war tactics and strategy; favorable terrain can help the operation of military personnel (Howard, & Paret, 1984). A military commander must understand the large and complex terrain that he may not be able to know thoroughly. Often, the defending side has better knowledge of the terrain than the attacker. While an enemy may face similar challenges, having in-depth knowledge and the capability to deploy effectively in the terrain can be the key to gaining a better position in the war.

In addition, the shape and physicality of a region, referred to as physical geography, can influence the strategies and tactics used. According to Sun Tzu, understanding the terrain can be used to choose a better position, avoid unfavorable terrain, and use natural factors to defeat the enemy. Interaction with nature significantly affects military operations, depending on the season and terrain conditions (Griffith, 1971). Understanding geographical factors allows military strategists to adjust their tactics and utilize the unique characteristics of terrain to achieve predetermined objectives. For example, military operations can be affected by rain and summer, as well as how easy the terrain is to travel. Knowing the wide and limited geography of battle locations can also help to utilize how many troops and weapons are needed and where to deploy them becomes easier.

In war or conflict, physical geography examines how elements on the Earth's surface, including terrain, weather, climate, vegetation, and soil, can influence violence and reduce casualties (Carter & Veale, 2013). Some of the main geographical factors are terrain, population density, and landscape. The physical qualities of the land surface, such as elevation, slope, and landscape, as in mountains and forests, are referred to as terrain. It is a challenging military strategy that provides natural protection and makes it difficult for conventional forces to operate effectively. The relationship between terrain and military tactics of troop commanders has been established by the United States Armed

Forces through a process of military field analysis known as OCOKA (Observation and battlefield; Protection and concealment; Obstacles; Main terrain; Road approach) (U.S. Army, 2003). In addition, the weather can also affect the effectiveness of certain weapons. For example, more artillery guns are needed in hilly or wilderness areas (Roland, Winters, Galloway, Reynolds, & Rhyne, 1999).

By capturing the geographical and geological characteristics of an area, such as the nature of mountains, swamps, cliffs, soil conditions, and vegetation in the battle area, military commanders can identify potential enemy weak points or areas that can be exploited to control the battlefield and enable them to evaluate the impact of troop movements. They can be areas that are difficult to access but provide protection for troops from the enemy. Therefore, the collection of accurate information about geographical factors is essential in the planning and execution of military operations. Detailed terrain provides a strategic advantage, allowing troops to adapt and respond more efficiently to changes on the battlefield. By recognizing the terrain, commanders, and troops can plan effective movements and anticipate potential obstacles that may arise.

### **Geography and General Soedirman Strategy**

Developing and implementing effective decisions to resolve war outcomes is essential for a savvy military commander to gain command over other armies. Strategic decisions made and implemented will have consequences over time. Commanding strategists are responsible for the success of their organization and have a responsibility toward all stakeholders (Csaszar, 2018). In various battles, great commanders relate to victory and tactical skills. Strategic action is taken before the conflict begins. Moreover, the best commanders proved their intelligence during military preparations. They train, feed, and motivate their soldiers (Simeone, 2020). As a commander, General Soedirman was a military commander who was highly respected and appreciated by the government and his troops. Under his command, the troops always supported his decisions and orders. General Soedirman's contributions and actions are considered the foundation or basis for the development and organization of the Indonesian Armed Forces, demonstrating his role and influence in Indonesia's military history. His leadership and the trust of his troops showed that General Soedirman had high authority and integrity in leading the Indonesian Armed Forces to protect Indonesia.

A decision-maker must collect and analyze information, assess alternatives, measure risks and uncertainties, and communicate before making decisions (Prastyawan & Lestari, 2020). This step is critical to ensuring an accurate, well-informed, and efficient decision-making process (Eisenhardt, 2007). Decision-making conditions in conflict conditions are faced with problems in uncertain situations, but a decision-maker can make predictions for the occurrence of such conditions. So, military commanders must also consider the challenges and uncertainties of military operations and adopt behaviors that correspond to the actual capabilities of the troops. Understanding the underlying structure of the decision-making process can also contribute to more effective strategic decision-making in the military. The best strategic decision-making involves analyzing various factors, such as terrain, enemy capabilities, and available resources (Riyanto, 2022). General Soedirman's strategy during the Second Dutch Military Aggression was guerrilla (Susilo, 2020). Soedirman and his troops had a better understanding of the local terrain than the Dutch, which gave Indonesian troops a strategic advantage in mobility, defense, and guerrilla warfare capabilities (Rizal, 2021).

In this research, the leading theory used in analyzing the geographical relationship and strategy of General Sudirman during the Second Dutch Military Aggression uses the theory of Galula (2010) in his book entitled "Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice" that geographical factors that can affect strategy are not only climate and terrain but also location, size, configuration, international borders, and population. These can weaken the strongest rulers and strengthen the weakest rulers. A deep understanding of geography and how to utilize or address it is essential for effective strategies.

### Location

The geographical location of a country that is limited by nature such as the sea, desert, or mountains, or between mountains affects and limits relations between countries with each other, including the presence of rebellions within them. A barrier state or among states opposed to rebellion (Galula, 2010). These geographical factors often become physical barriers that complicate access and communication in efforts to prevent or suppress insurgency within them to maintain regional stability and national security. Thus, geography not only affects relations between countries but also the internal dynamics and national security of a country.

Locationally when the Dutch carried out their Second Military Aggression against Indonesia in 1948, geographical factors affected Indonesia's ability to prepare defenses, coordinate military operations, and mobilize troops throughout the region. On December 19, 1948, the Dutch bombed Maguwo airfield in Yogyakarta, the capital of the Republic of Indonesia (Pratiwi, 2016). After the attack, the answer from Indonesia was to fight back with the military and people to defend themselves and resist the Dutch invasion. To offset the advance of the Dutch troops, they used guerrilla tactics, ambushes, and defenses according to the contents of Strategic Order Number 1 on June 12, 1948, which moved guerrilla places. In addition, the strategy of long-term guerrilla warfare applied to the battle area is divided into pockets in each military district that has a guerrilla government or the so-called totalitarian system called *Wehrkreise* which has its center in several mountain complexes. The *Wehrkreise* system was used for the defense of islands and territories. Each commander is given the widest freedom to plan and start a war (Indonesian National Army History Center, 2021).

The guerrilla route taken by General Soedirman during the Second Dutch Military Aggression was a carefully designed strategic journey to maximize geographical advantages and avoid larger enemy forces. The route can be seen in Figure 1.

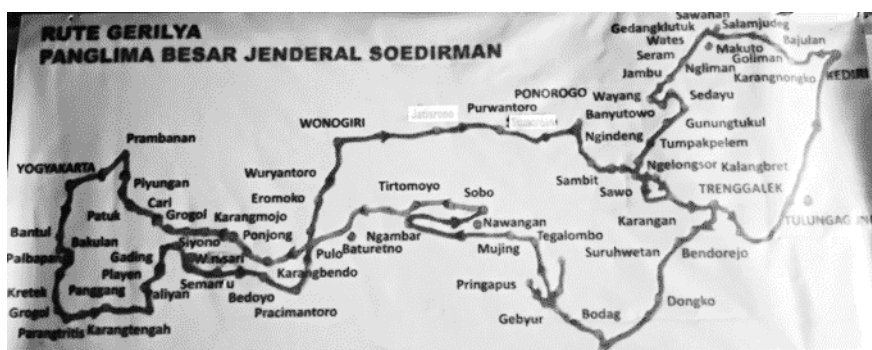


Figure 1. General Soedirman's Guerrilla Route (Neserike, 2018)

While General Soedirman who carried out guerrillas entered the jungle directly made a long journey with his troops from Yogyakarta to East Java and returned to Yogyakarta from December 1949 to July 1949. The beginning of the journey starts from

Yogyakarta to Bantul, which is a fertile area and inhabited by many people. Next to the southeastern part of Yogyakarta arrive at the Gunung Kidul Karst area. Here, he passed through Panggang to Paliyan, Semanu, and Bedoyo. Karst landscapes have many caves and underground water sources. Continue to Wonogiri through Pracimantoro, Eromoko, Wuryantoro, Jatisrono, and Purwantoro areas. As a defensive base, he used the dry valley of Giritontro and the basin of Baturetno. Continue the journey again to Ponorogo Regency in East Java with the Sumoroto-Ponorogo-Jetis-Sambit-Sawoo route. The district was chosen because of its hard soil and many hills. From there, Soedirman returned to Trenggalek, Tulungagung, and Kediri, which are areas inhabited by the Mount Wilis volcano. In Trenggalek, Soedirman passes through the Pelvic District, which is dominated by karst. Soedirman's final destination is Sobo hamlet in Pakisbaru village, Nawangan District, Pacitan. Sobo hamlet has steep cliffs around Mount Gandrung, and there Soedirman settled from February 3 to July 7, 1949. After things got better, Soedirman started back to Yogyakarta with the Baturetno-Gajahmungkur-Pulo-Ponjong and Piyungan routes, where Lieutenant Colonel Suharto picked him up (Saputra, 2021).

The routes across those areas demonstrated the ability to take natural advantage of geographical characteristics involving the topography of diverse terrain. General Soedirman's route from start to finish determined how geography influenced his military strategy decisions, including choosing villages or areas to serve as military headquarters, communication lines, and guerrilla troops' protection. General Soedirman did not think about his safety because the most important thing for him was the safety of his troops. So, he provided maximum protection for his troops while continuing to launch effective guerrilla attacks by choosing places that were difficult for the enemy to reach. Geographically, the route of the area traversed by General Soedirman's troops was a land defense dominated by villages, rivers, and mountains as seen in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** General Soedirman's Guerrilla Route (Saputra, 2021)

Moving between guerrilla locations affected the strength of the troops, with frequent transfers Soedirman troops could infiltrate or carry out sudden attacks. Because the goal of a guerrilla attack is to strike the opponent's power in a combat defined by guerrilla forces, and then move to avoid enemy counterattacks that will almost likely employ overwhelming military force (Senakatha, 2016).

Guerrilla warfare weakened the enemy, prevented Dutch victory, and forced the Dutch to negotiate (Cribb, 1993). The Dutch army led by Lieutenant General Simon Spoor was overwhelmed when faced with the activities of General Soedirman's agile fighters like rats running away from cats, who were able to trick the enemy under the guise of fake General Soedirman. Civilians also helped carry General Soedirman, who was sick, on



a stretcher equipped with communication devices to the hills (Setiadi, Yuliyawati, & Septian, 2013). No matter how well-equipped the Dutch were, they had great difficulty finding and capturing General Soedirman's troops, and they could not anticipate their movements because the local civilians managed to provide knowledge of the ins and outs of the area to protect and hide the guerrilla forces.

Historical facts show that on December 25, 1948, General Soedirman's troops left the city of Kediri to migrate to the slopes of Mount Wilis, but it turned out that Dutch intelligence had known their whereabouts first. Then, on January 17 and 18, 1949, General Soedirman's bodyguards were seen by Dutch troops around Dukuh Sedayu, the enemy entered people's houses to look for General Soedirman but was not found because General Soedirman's troops had moved and hid in the thickets of rattan forest at night before the siege. On January 21, 1949, the forest was again surrounded by Dutch troops, but at night in complete darkness, General Soedirman's troops again managed to escape. When attacked by paratroopers around Wonosari, the Head of Village suggested that General Soedirman and his troops move to Sobo Hamlet for several reasons, one of which was because the terrain was optimal enough to sneak in case of an attack. The location was then used as the main operation center of the guerrilla command and became General Soedirman's longest residence, until he returned to Yogyakarta on July 7, 1949 (Nurchayyo & Hidayati, 2012). Favorable location assessment can be obtained from observation of enemy movements, which was a form of village defense. So that all the people helped, scattered at some point into direct, hidden, and secret surveillance media. Dutch soldiers everywhere, even spreading spies. It takes careful observation to recognize every truly safe area.

Using different locations, General Soedirman effectively neutralized the enemy's superiority. Understand geographical features in selecting areas with topography suitable for guerrilla warfare tactics, and routes that allow the movement of troops, supplies, and equipment. This becomes a barrier to limiting and controlling enemy movements. In addition, using objects from nature as shelter, to remain protected from enemy reconnaissance and fire when launching an ambush. As much as possible, nature is used as a barrier to delay the enemy's advance, navigate, and launch massive attacks that can disrupt enemy formations, as well as create counterattacks.

### *Size and Configuration*

The larger the geographical size of a country, the more complex the challenges faced by governments in managing and controlling it. Although a government has strong oversight, its large scale can complicate efforts for full control. As a country consists of many islands or separate territories, it tends to be more difficult for rebels to spread their movements (Galula, 2010). In the Second Dutch Military Aggression, the approval of the Van Mook line narrowed and limited Indonesia's defense area (Pratama & Kamsori, 2015). The Dutch rule was often limited to major roads, plantations, and nearby towns. In this situation, the Dutch used blockade methods to stop communication between Indonesia and other countries (Wertheim, 1999). Despite having control over their colonies, the Dutch found it impossible to effectively control Indonesia.

The size and configuration of Indonesia during the Second Dutch Aggression played an important role in shaping the outcome of the aggression. Indonesia's size, combined with its archipelagic nature, posed significant challenges for Dutch forces to effectively control and manage the entire territory. With thousands of islands, it was logistically challenging for the Dutch to maintain control over the whole of Indonesia. It provided natural barriers that allowed local resistance movements to develop in remote areas



making the Dutch tackle them. In addition, the ignorance of the many dense forests, steep hills, and active volcanoes disadvantaged the Dutch because it made it difficult for Dutch troops to move troops quickly.

Indonesian forces are well aware of the terrain and gaps in enemy capabilities, so they can infiltrate enemy territory to be filled with guerrilla forces, to create pockets of resistance in the area (Poesponegoro, 2008). General Soedirman's entire guerrilla route stretched from Yogyakarta to the East Java border, through 75 towns and towns, theoretically covering 1,010 KM on foot (Senakatha, 2016). With the formation of defensive pockets Dutch control did not expand. By utilizing small groups of soldiers hidden within these fortified areas, General Soedirman's troops could launch surprise attacks against enemy forces, causing confusion and chaos among their lines. This strategy proved particularly effective against larger forces that relied on traditional formations and strategies.

Before an area was made a Dutch place, the area was burned to the ground. Like what happened to Sanjoto when he was in Mento Village or the Wonogiri-Sukoharjo area. At every bend, mines were installed to prevent cars from seeing Dutch Panser cars. People fled across the Bengawan Solo River amid the ferocity of the Dutch army's strafing fire (Darmawan, 2022). When becoming a fighter the Dutch require courage and being able to occupy the headquarters and carry weapons. Being a fighter does not require military school, combat strategies and tactics are obtained through travel experience (Antoni, 2023). When General Soedirman was in the Wonogiri area on the border of East Java, a safe route was chosen from the observation and patrol of the Dutch army. Guerrillas in and out of the forest are based on a sense of joy and enthusiasm to repel the invaders. His combat tactics were tricked by blocking, shooting, and then running into the forest again. If there are surrounding villages burned by the Dutch, it means that Dutch soldiers have been killed.

Likewise, in the Bantul region, indigenous people moved to safer places, and important buildings such as subdistrict offices, post offices, salt warehouses, schools, and bridges were demolished and burned (Handayani, 2018). Then, in Nganjuk, the main connecting route between East Java and Yogyakarta. This made Nganjuk the center of resistance to cut off Dutch access to Central Java, including Yogyakarta. When the Dutch began their attack on Glondong Tuban Beach in northern East Java, from here, they partly headed towards Ngawi and partly towards Jombang which crossed the Kertosono bridge, Indonesian troops in this region tried to blow up the bridge and tried to stop the journey by uprooting trees, and making holes along the road from Surabaya to Kertosono. Dutch troops who were going through were forced to stop due to the disconnection of access (Lubis & Artono, 2022). Despite the great risks, Indonesian fighters remained strong in their struggle to defend their independence. This action was not only a symbol of determination in the face of the colonizers but also a strategic effort to block enemy mobility and supply.

### *International Borders*

International borders can be an advantage, especially if neighboring countries are supportive because a country can easily control a territory with limited technical resources. In a geographical context, cost and effort can be more efficient compared to securing with conventional efforts. This is due to the need for the military to build, maintain, and maintain artificial infrastructure that requires greater costs and human resources (Galula, 2010). In the context of Indonesia against the Dutch in the Second Dutch Military Aggression, Indonesia took advantage of Indonesia's military struggle and

active diplomacy. Militarily, the support of General Soedirman in leading the Guerrilla War to expel the Dutch proved effective in maximizing limited resources for the defense of important areas efficiently. This finally showed the world and the Indonesian people that Dutch rule in Indonesia would not succeed. Because the Indonesian Armed Forces is always there and strong to fight.

On the other hand, President Soekarno emphasized that Indonesia's policy should be focused on diplomacy with various countries to gain de facto and de jure recognition in a short time, dismissing the idea that Indonesia was the result of Japanese interference. President Soekarno emphasized the importance of focusing diplomacy in Indonesian policy, intending to gain de facto and de jure recognition in a short time and dismissing the notion that Indonesia was the result of Japanese interference (Nurbantoro, Midhio, Risman, Prakoso, & Widjayanto, 2022). Hatta, Syahrir, Setiadjud, Abdul Majid, Amir Syarifuddin, and Agus Salim, agreed to diplomatic steps rather than armed war or complete independence. Because they know that the Netherlands has the support of its allies, such as Britain and the United States. However, some disagree and choose to achieve independence through armed or guerrilla resistance, one of these people is General Soedirman (Suparjan & Khaldun, 2021).

With the strength of General Soedirman's troops on the battlefield and the government's diplomatic negotiations, their struggle for independence will remain within international attention and assistance. The negotiation process reached an agreement in the Roem-Royen agreement on 7 May 1949, which was held to deal with several issues related to Indonesian independence. Furthermore, the Round Table Conference negotiations took place from August 23, 1949, until the recognition of Indonesian independence. The international community forced the Netherlands to follow the orders of the United Nations (UN) to stop the aggression. At the Round Table Conference (*Konferensi Meja Bundar* or KMB) negotiations on December 27, 1949, the Netherlands handed over sovereignty de facto and de jure to the United States of Indonesia and had to leave Indonesia.

### *Terrain and Climate*

In insurgent conflicts, rough terrain such as mountains, swamps, or thick vegetation gives rebels an edge. However, this advantage does not always apply in all locations. In addition to terrain, climate also plays an important role, where troops who are familiar with harsh climatic conditions, such as indigenous people, have the advantage to have the advantage of adaptation and survival in the terrain (Galula, 2010). Similarly, General Soedirman also affirmed in his speech before his troops that the gift of God in the form of natural resources which include mountains, valleys, forests, rivers, and so on, supports military personnel who survive in guerrilla warfare and also have a greater awareness of duty than the enemy who has more complete weapons (Tjokropranolo, 1992). Then, General Soedirman avoided the Dutch troops by crossing hills, rivers, and forests, and building defensive enclaves, so that the entire island of Java was exploited as a massive guerrilla battlefield.

In terms of armaments, it is impossible to attack the Dutch army frontally. Instead, resistance must be carried out using weapons or small vehicles plus utilizing terrain, weather conditions, and occupation elements. General Soedirman's guerrilla strategies and tactics benefited his troops, making the Dutch confused in the face of invisible, sudden, and rapid attacks, and diverting their attention (Novianti, 2021). In addition, Indonesian fighters and soldiers stationed in forests, mountains, and remote villages became weapons, protection, and centers of resistance against the Dutch (Nurbantoro,

Midhio, Risman, Prakoso, & Widjayanto, 2022). During bad weather such as heavy rain, Indonesian troops often launched attacks, further hampering and complicating the Dutch attack attempts. Areas that have natural advantages, especially dense forests, mountains, and swamps allow troops to move hidden, difficult to see, and make it more difficult for Dutch troops to move (Nurhuda, Widjayanto, & Prakoso, 2021). Naturally, it is bad attacking during intense rain would be extremely difficult for both sides' militaries. Rain can increase movement, make it harder to see, and impact how well guns and other equipment work.

General Soedirman's troops designed an attack strategy and strengthened troops in remote rural areas due to natural conditions consisting mostly of forests and hills, for application. The troops needed a lot of logistics to support the continuous movement against the Dutch forces. Although there are obstacles that do not support guerrilla, geomorphological aspects are considered unsupportive due to the fact that most of the natural landscape has changed. Like horizontal volcanic deposits that contain fertile soil minerals, good drainage has been used as a place for residential areas. On the other hand, although the terrain has changed, the existence of settlements has a good impact on the resting place of General Soedirman's guerrilla troops. Because in every place where it is addressed, there are always people who help, either by lifting stretchers or showing the way. As happened when General Soedirman's troops stayed in Goliman Hamlet for nine days.

Parang Village is the location of Goliman hamlet in Manyan District. Access to this hamlet is still very difficult because the road is up and down the hill with cliffs and ravines on the right and left. Geographically, this location is suitable to be the command headquarters. This place is not only far from the highway, but also has springs, hilly land contours that make mobilizing Dutch heavy weapons difficult, and lush trees that make it hidden from pilot observation. Nevertheless, the Dutch were still able to track down General Soedirman's whereabouts. So on January 5, 1949, several Dutch planes were flying low around the hamlet area (Dwiwicaksono, 2017).

Another remote village famous in the history of General Soedirman's guerrilla terrain is Sobo Hamlet, this hamlet is located in Pacitan, the hamlet provides a hiding place with a position behind steep cliffs, hills, rocks, and pine trees, making it very impossible to be tracked by Dutch planes (Soewarno, 1985). The area around the Hamlet is shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Topographic Map of Sobo Hamlet (Saputra, 2021)

Sobo Hamlet played an important role as the main command headquarters of General Soedirman for seven months. Heading to Sobo Hamlet must go down the Gandrung mountain breakthrough road which is located between the slopes of the mountain. General Soedirman's troops came to the house of a figure named Karsosemitro. During his stay, General Soedirman gave instructions against the Dutch from February 3–July 7, 1949 (Saputra, 2021).

In addition to Sobo Hamlet, there is also a famous mountain, Mount Wilis in Kediri. The area around Mount Wilis which is a steep and undulating hill, Mount Wilis has 49 mountain peaks with an average height of 1500 to 2500 meters above sea level spread across 6 districts. The highest peak is Liman or Trogati peak which is located at 2563 meters above sea level on the border of Nganjuk and Ponorogo. The peaks of Mount Wilis are spread across several districts, regencies, and cities, namely: 6 peaks in Kediri, 6 peaks in Nganjuk, 13 peaks in Madiun, 19 peaks in Ponorogo, 2 peaks in Trenggalek, 2 peaks in Tulungagung. Mount Wilis is the largest water mountain on the island of Java because it has many waterfalls (Hamdiloka, 2023).

The geographical uniqueness of remote villages and mountains became a factor that determined the effectiveness of the headquarters during the guerrilla. Most of the areas of General Soedirman's guerrilla route were very difficult for Dutch troops to approach and reach the headquarters of General Soedirman's troops. Nevertheless, guerrilla warfare is not free from hardship and sacrifice. Exceptional resilience and fortitude are necessary to live in the wild with limited supply and resources. The daily lives of the fighters included erratic weather, hunger, and danger from enemy threats (Nasution, 1980). However, the spirit of struggle and love for the homeland has never been extinguished. Also, the threat from enemies was one of the biggest challenges for General Soedirman's troops. However, during all these difficulties and obstacles, the spirit of struggle and deep love for Indonesia remains alive. This shows how strong the commitment and dedication are in maintaining the integrity and preservation of Indonesia's independence.

### *Population*

The size of the population affects the dynamics of the war. As with the size of the country, the larger the population number, the more difficult it is to control (Galula, 2010). This reflects the principle that the larger the population of a country, the more difficult it is for the invading country to control and occupy the territory completely. Thus, the presence of a large population can be a strength for Indonesia in resisting aggression, but at the same time poses logistical and strategic challenges that require good planning and coordination. Military conditions that were not complete enough to attack required cooperation and mingling with the people every day, moving quickly so that Dutch troops could not recognize the presence of the Indonesian Armed Forces. Strategically, every stratum of society maintains each other's security. assisted the Indonesian military by establishing a "Total People's War" defense (Nasution, 1980). The Indonesian society believes that the Indonesian Armed Forces could defeat the Dutch if all Indonesians united. People's trust in the capabilities and strength of the Indonesian Armed Forces became the result of the success of guerrilla warfare.

People's support was important for General Soedirman to keep fighting. The utilization of a large population had an advantage in resisting the Second Dutch Military Aggression. During the Aggression, guerrilla warfare implemented under the orders of General Soedirman was formed in coordination with the people and as a form of diverting the enemy's attention through Wehrkreise (Herlina, Sofianto, & Falah, 2023). All

components of the Indonesian military, police, civil society, and the palace deployed had to show the world that Indonesia was a sovereign and independent state by uniting to carry out attacks against the Dutch (Nurbantoro, Midhio, Risman, Prakoso, & Widjayanto, 2022). The realization of solid cooperation between the military and civilians provides advantages for General Soedirman's troops to continue and get logistical support. However, they knew that cooperation was necessary to fight the well-equipped and organized Dutch military. As a result, they actively supported the troops by providing information, energy, and thoughts, and ensuring General Soedirman's health during the guerrilla. Therefore, this cooperation is not only material but also psychological support.

### **CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS**

Based on the above analysis, this study makes a valuable contribution to uncovering the importance of geography in General Soedirman's military strategy during the Second Dutch Military Aggression. General Soedirman took advantage of geographical advantages, such as difficult terrain and dense forest vegetation, to wage effective guerrilla warfare that benefited his troops. With a strategy of guerrilla warfare entering the jungle and involving all elements of society, General Soedirman was able to reduce enemy superiority, confuse, and outwit the Dutch troops, which eventually led to the recognition of Indonesian independence through the Round Table Conference (KMB). However, although geographical superiority provides advantages, guerrilla warfare also brings challenges and sacrifices, requiring fortitude and strong collaboration between the Indonesian military and the society.

Then, based on the findings from this study, several recommendations can be taken to strengthen the understanding and application of military strategy in the future. First, countries which potentially involved in conflict must improve their understanding of local geography to develop more effective military strategies, including tactics and strategies of warfare suited to specific geographical conditions to deliver the military objectives to be achieved. Furthermore, cooperation between the military and local communities is an important key in resolving conflicts or wars. Therefore, it is important to increase community involvement in territorial defense because it can increase the effectiveness of military operations. Also, the diplomatic approach can be used as a tool to resolve conflicts without violence will be a proactive step in promoting regional peace and stability.

Finally, this article has limitations in terms of the availability of historical data captured through direct conservation. For the validity of the analysis to be more accurate, more complete data can be added for further research. In addition, the main focus of this research is related to General Soedirman's strategy and the role of geography during the Second Dutch Military Aggression based on the concept of using geography written by David Galula (2010), so there are still many other aspects such as political, economic, and social factors that have not been fully studied to get a wider context. Lastly, the findings of this study are specific to Indonesia in the only period of Second Dutch Military Aggression, which means that the generalization of strategies and tactics from these findings to other military conflicts will be different and require further study.

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