

## FROM ALLIES TO ENEMIES: THE DYNAMICS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SULTANATE OF PALEMBANG AND BRITAIN, 1810-1812

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### Abstract

This article examines the dynamics between the Palembang Sultanate and the British from 1810 to 1812. Initially a strategic alliance, the relationship deteriorated into a confrontation due to conflicts of colonial interest in monopolizing the region's main commodities. This research employs a systematic historical method, encompassing heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography to analyze conflicting interests as the primary factor behind the relationship's breakdown. Primary sources include Raffles' letters, colonial archives, and memoirs, which are combined with secondary sources. The findings indicate that Raffles' letters successfully influenced Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II to ally against the Franco-Dutch forces, culminating in a mass massacre in September 1811. Subsequently, Raffles exploited this situation to seize the tin-rich Bangka Island after the Sultan refused to hand it over. This refusal triggered Raffles' attack on Palembang. As the British fleet entered the Musi River and occupied Borang Island Fort, Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II and his family fled. Raffles then appointed Raden Husin Dhiauddin as Ahmad Nadjamuddin II, establishing him as a British puppet. This conflict reflects colonial exploitation that remains relevant to this day.

Keywords: Palembang sultanate; Colonial exploitation; Political conflict.

### INTRODUCTION

The issue of conflicts of interest often arises in the 21st century. A conflict of interest can be defined as a situation where the interests, ambitions, and motivations of both parties cannot be achieved, resulting in a dispute. These conflicts become massive when there is clear polarization. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict that occurred in March 2025 shows Israel's interest in controlling Palestinian territory and politics while disregarding humanitarian aspects (Kristiana, 2025). In August 2024, corruption occurred on Bangka Island. This indicates a conflict of interest, whereby a handful of people reaped huge profits from tin production, disregarding the interests of the people and the state (Ade Ridwan Yandwiputra, 2024).

Conflicts of interest such as Palestine-Israel and acts of corruption show a recurring pattern. In fact, such conflicts of interest also occurred in the Sultanate of Palembang in 1810-1812. The conflict of interest began with an agreement between Britain and Palembang aimed at expelling France and the Netherlands from Palembang's territory. This goal was realized in 1811 through an event known to Europeans as the Palembang Massacre. Upon learning of this incident, France and the Netherlands immediately accused Britain of involvement. However, Britain denied any involvement in the incident. The British then sent a letter requesting a meeting with the ruler of Palembang. During the meeting, the British offered the Sultan amnesty on the condition that he surrender Bangka Island. The Sultan immediately rejected the offer, which then triggered a battle between the British and Palembang.

Existing studies, such as those contained in Palembang during the British Colonization (1811-1816): British Hegemony Over the Sultanate of Palembang Darussalam, show that research on the Sultanate of Palembang focuses on the British occupation of Palembang and does not delve into

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the friendship and feud between the Sultanate and Britain. Then, *The Rise and Fall of Trade During the Palembang Sultanate 1804-1821* focuses on the economic aspects of the Palembang Sultanate, while the political aspects due to the struggle for commodities within the Palembang Sultanate are rarely highlighted.

This study differs from previous research in that it focuses on the relationship and conflict between Britain and Palembang, and utilizes primary sources such as colonial archives and memoirs to provide a broad picture of the importance of this conflict in the history of the Sultanate of Palembang. The main objective of this study is to highlight the conflict of interest between Britain and the Sultanate of Palembang, which was rich in natural resources.

This structure will focus on the relationship between the Sultanate of Palembang and Britain. It will analyze the conflicts that occurred during the reign of Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II. At the same time, it will contribute a new perspective on the political history of the archipelago. How was the alliance between the Sultanate of Palembang and Britain? How was the feud between the Sultanate of Palembang and Britain?

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses the historical method with four systematic stages: Heuristics (source collection), Source Criticism (validation), Interpretation, and Historiography. This study focuses on the reign of Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II. Primary sources were obtained through searches on Archive.org, delpher.nl, Bnf Gallica.fr, and the National Library Board Singapore. Primary sources include books such as *Memoir of the Life and Public Services of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles* (Raffles, 1835). Newspaper *Java Government Gazzete* titled *Samarang July 28, 1812* ("Java Government Gazette: Samarang July 28, 1812," 1812). And Raffles' letter titled *Raffles Collection IV* (Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, 1791). In addition, there is also support from secondary sources, such as Raffles' book and *The Invasion of Java* (Tim Hannigan, 2015), *Kuto Besak: The Sultanate of Palembang's Efforts to Uphold Independence* (Hanafiah, 1986), *Pasemah Sindang Merdeka 1821-1886* (Mahruf, Soetadji, & Hanafiah, 1999), *The Old and the Young: Religious Change in Palembang, 1821-1842* (Jeroen Peeters, 1997), and *Political Conflict in the Sultanate of Palembang Darussalam 1803-1821* (Ravico & Endang Rochmiatun, 2023). Also, the book *Het Sultanaat Palembang 1811-1825* (Woelders, M, 1975). As well as research journals such as *Palembang During the British Colonial Period (1811-1816): British Hegemony Over the Sultanate of Palembang Darussalam* (Mubarokah & Leni Mastuti, 2022). These sources were then processed, analyzed, and compiled into a chronological and imaginative historical narrative (Hamid & Madjid, 2018).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Alliance Between the Sultanate of Palembang and Britain

The 18th century was an unforgettable golden age for the Sultanate of Palembang. Under the leadership of Sultan Muhammad Bahauddin, the Sultanate reached its peak of glory, with prosperity and wealth enveloping the entire population. Palembang was also known as a free port, not overly burdened by the strict contracts of the VOC. Progress was not limited to the economic sector; at the same time, the development of Islam also experienced a significant surge thanks to the widespread dissemination of teachings by Sheikh Abdus Samad Al-Palimbani. However, after 27 glorious years, the throne had to change hands. In 1804, Sultan Muhammad Bahauddin died and the leadership was passed on to Prince Ratu, who was then crowned Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II. Unfortunately, Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II's reign was marked by a storm of problems, both internal and external. Internal problems arose when the Dutch boldly interfered in the affairs of the Palace and the trade system of the Palembang Sultanate. The situation was exacerbated by global dynamics; amid political turmoil in Europe, Britain turned its attention to the east and began to intervene in the affairs of the Dutch East Indies, and Palembang did not escape their attention. It was here that Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles appeared as a representative of Britain who was ready

to change the political and power map in the Sultanate of Palembang (Hanafiah, 1986; Woelders, M, 1975).

Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, a figure who worked as the British Adjunct Secretary on Penang Island since 1805. He had a great ambition to destroy the Dutch. Raffles hated their nature and intended to replace Dutch rule with British occupation (R.H.M Akib, 1978). In the early 19th century, the Indonesian archipelago was ruled by three major powers: the Netherlands, Britain, and France. At the same time, the Netherlands was defeated by France in the Napoleonic Wars of 1803-1815. This had a major impact on the Netherlands, as all of its colonies had to be handed over to France (Mubarokah & Leni Mastuti, 2022). The British, seeing this situation, also felt intimidated, because France was Britain's enemy in Europe. According to the British, France's presence in the Dutch East Indies would have an impact on political stability and the British East India Company (EIC). Hearing this news, EIC Governor-General Gilbert Elliot planned to expel the French-Dutch from the Dutch East Indies. Before implementing his plan, he sought out people who had an interest in Dutch East Indies affairs, such as the Malay languages, and the history and customs of its people. After a search process, Dr. Jhon C. Leyden caught Lord Minto's attention. However, he declined the offer and recommended a young man with burning ambition and brilliant intelligence, Thomas Stamford Raffles. Finally, Lord Minto agreed and sent Raffles to Malacca (Bernard H.M. Vlekke, 2008).

Upon Raffles' arrival in Malacca on December 4, 1810, he began his campaign by sending letters to Malay states in the hope that they would assist him in expelling the French-Dutch colony in the Dutch East Indies, including the conquest of Java (In the early 19th century, areas such as Malacca, West Sumatra, Ambon, Banda, and Timor had already fallen into British hands. Meanwhile, Ternate was still resisting British colonial rule. The areas of Makassar, Banjarmasin, and Palembang were still under the influence of Batavia. (Hanafiah, 1986) 56-57). From these duties he was appointed as Agent to the Governor General (C. E. Wurtzburg, 1949; John Bastin, 1953). It appears that these letters were also addressed to Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II as the ruler of the Sultanate of Palembang.

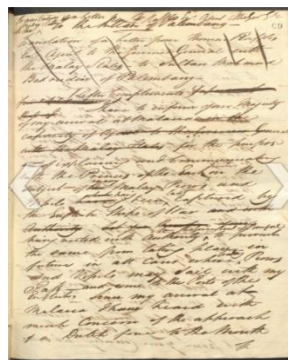


Figure 1. Raffles' letter to the Sultanate of Palembang  
Source: Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, 1791

“....Since my arrival in Malacca, I have heard with great concern about the approach of Dutch troops to the mouth of the Palembang River. Therefore, I recommend to Your Excellency that you expel them from your country immediately. I am pleased to present to Your Excellency one piece of gold-embroidered muslin, one piece of kincob, and a Bengal shawl as a token of my friendship and appreciation.” (Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, 1791).

Not stopping there, Raffles seemed to spread fear to Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II regarding the presence of the French-Dutch in Palembang. On December 10, 1810, Raffles sent another letter to the Sultan of Palembang.

“I have heard with great concern about the arrival of the Dutch army at the mouth of the Palembang River, and I am sending this letter immediately to protect you from the evil

intentions of the Dutch, a nation that desires to enrich itself with Your Majesty's possessions, as the Dutch have done with every Eastern prince with whom they have had dealings... I would advise Your Highness to immediately expel them from your territory, but if Your Highness has reasons not to do so and wishes to be friendly and helpful to England... I command many warships, and if I deem it necessary, I can remove the Dutch even if they number 10,000." (Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, 1791).

The Dutch military presence on the Musi River was not without reason. Rather, the Dutch military supported the garrison factory built there and did not seek to overthrow Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II. Soon after, the fleet weighed anchor and sailed south. As December passed and 1811 began, letters from Malacca continued to be sent to Palembang. It seemed that Raffles' strategy had succeeded in influencing Sultan Badaruddin II. He affirmed his friendship with the British and his dislike of the Dutch. However, Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II tended to procrastinate and felt guilty. On the one hand, he remained steadfast in the agreement made by his ancestors with the VOC in 1642 (The contract, drawn up on October 20, 1642, was executed aboard the *Luijpaerdt* ship off the coast of Kuta Gawang. The Palembang side was represented by Syahing Palembang, Prince Raden Temenggung, and Ki Temenggung Natapraja. On the VOC side, it was executed by Jeremias van Vlieth, Adriaan van Liesveldt, and Dirk Snouck (Hanafiah, 1986) 47) and on the other hand, the Dutch caused divisions within the Sultanate of Palembang. ("Nouvelles Étrangères. Angleterre," 1819; Tim Hannigan, 2015).

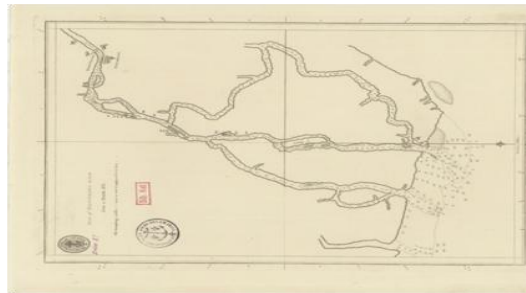


Figure 2. Map of the Palembang River  
Source: Alexander Dalrymple, 1785

In January 1811, Raffles sent another letter to Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II. The letter was sent via his envoy, Tengku Raden Syarif Muhammad (In addition to Tengku Raden Syarif Muhammad, there was another courier named Sayid Abubakar Rumi. They were residents of Penang who had connections with the Arab community in Palembang, which numbered around 300 people, because both of their names implied Middle Eastern ancestry (Tim Hannigan, 2015) 151)

"I wrote a letter to Your Excellency five days ago and now...I am conveying it again through Tunku Raden Mahomet, whom I have appointed as my agent...regarding the Dutch, what does it mean that Your Excellency must remain bound to them and allow them to stay in Palembang, because they are an evil nation and intend to follow an evil path against Your Excellency..." (Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, 1791).

The letter reached the Sultan on January 10, 1811. After reading it, he replied and sent various gifts to strengthen their relationship.

"...Regarding the contents of my friend's letter, I have not yet responded fully because my brother Radin Mahomed, who brought the letter, did not bring letters of credence....I am honored to forward, as a token of friendship, a staff with a gold head, 10 pairs of tin bathing vessels, 2 pairs of elephant tusks, and 2 pikul of candles..." (Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, 1791).

Arriving in February 1811, the French-Dutch warship *de Expeditie* was attacked by the British while en route to Palembang. The attack cut off supplies to the colony in Palembang and killed de Haas, the ship's captain ("Zertijding," 1811). On the other hand, it appears that the Sultanate of

Palembang was facing internal conflict between Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II and his brother Raden Husin Dhiauddin. However, the conflict was resolved by the Sultan appointing him as Pangeran Adipati Negara (Prince Regent) as the daily ruler. He was also accompanied by Prince Temenggung Suro Nandito, who served as the local government, and three others, Prince Natadiraja, Prince Wiranandita, and Prince Nata Agama, as members of the council of ministers (Ravico & Endang Rochmiatun, 2023).

After sending letters for months, it seemed that Raffles wanted to obtain certainty from the Sultan. In order to carry out his plan, he wanted to bind the Sultan with an agreement concerning the expulsion of the Dutch from Palembang (Mahruf et al., 1999). He handed the letter to Tengku Raden Syarif Muhammad on March 3, 1811.

“With the following attachments: (a) Proposed agreement, (b) Memorandum sent to Tengku Raden Mahmud, (c) Letter to the Sultan. The draft agreement proposes: that the Sultan expel the Dutch; that no foreign powers other than the British be accepted; that contracts with the Dutch be transferred to the British, and so on. Regarding the Dutch people in the Kingdom of Palembang, we ask our friends not to harbor any doubts or displeasure” (John Bastin, 1953; Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, 1791).

The agreement certainly received a response from the Sultan. He stated that he did not want to be involved in the war between Britain and France-Netherlands. Furthermore, the Sultan also had no intention of cooperating with the Dutch. Regarding the expulsion of the French-Dutch people in Palembang, he would try his best within certain limits so that his name would not be tarnished. Therefore, he asked Raffles to be patient (Mahruf et al., 1999). April 22, 1811, it appears that Raffles continued to pressure the Sultan to agree to the treaty. Finally, negotiations took place between Badaruddin II and Raffles. Raffles ordered Captain MacDonald to negotiate with the Sultan, offering troops and various types of ammunition to drive the French-Dutch out of Palembang. After several rounds of negotiations, the Sultan finally agreed to the treaty. Captain MacDonald, as Raffles' agent in the treaty, sent the Sultan four chests containing 80 rifles and 10 baskets containing bullets and gunpowder (J.C Baud, 1853; John Bastin, 1953). However, because Tengku Raden Syarif Muhammad and Sayid Abubakar informed him that the Sultan's residence was far from the dock, Captain MacDonald sent Sayid Abubakar to deliver the weapons (C. E. Wurtzburg, 1949).

Month after month passed, and now it was June 1811. Lord Minto and Raffles left Malacca with 100 ships and 12,000 soldiers, aiming to attack the island of Java. They arrived there on August 3, 1811. The attack on the island ended quickly. On September 18, 1811, in the village of Tuntang, Central Java, the French-Dutch surrendered all of their colonial territories to the British (Mahruf et al., 1999). Regarding the British attack on Java, the Sultan received the news on September 3, 1811. However, the Sultan ignored the information because he was unsure about the news. Then, further information was received by the Sultan on September 11, 1811, from Sayid Sin Bil Pake, who had just returned from Semarang and witnessed the conquest (J.C Baud, 1853). Finally, the Sultan did not waste the momentum to expel the French-Dutch from Loji Sungai Aur (Initially, the Dutch trading post was built in 1630 during the era of Governor-General Jacob Specx (1629-1632) near Batu Ampar. However, when war broke out between the Sultanate of Palembang and the VOC in 1659, the trading post was destroyed. (P. De Roo De Faille, *Dari Zaman Kesultanan Palembang* (Jakarta: Bhartara, 1971). 20; Djohan Hanafiah, *Palembang Zaman Bari: Citra Palembang Tempo Doeloe* (Palembang: Humas Pemerintahan Kotamadya Daerah Tk.II Palembang, 1988). 6; Anthony Reid, *Sumatera Tempoe Doeloe dari Marco Polo sampai Tan Malaka*, Edisi Kedua. (Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2014) 148.), remembering his agreement with England and the Sultan's long-held ambitions.

Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II's decision to launch an attack was not only based on political momentum, but also reinforced by deep religious considerations and legitimacy. The influence of Islam in the Sultanate of Palembang at that time was strongly influenced by the teachings of the Sammaniyah Order, an order embraced by most of the people of Palembang. The central role as a religious teacher in the field of Islamic law was held by Sheikh Muhammad Aqib Ibn Kgs. Hasan al-

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Din, who was also a follower of this order and a direct student of the great Palembang scholar, Sheikh Abdus Samad al-Palimbani. This ideological connection through the Sammaniyah Order made the fatwa of Sheikh Muhammad Aqib a solid Sharia basis for the Sultan. This religious consideration was even manifested in the timing of the attack. The execution of the attack at night can be understood in the context of the teachings contained in the famous book by Sheikh Abdus Samad, *Nasihatul Muslimin wa Tadzkiratul Mu'minin* (Abdus Samad Al-Palimbani, n.d.; Bruinessen, 2012; Jeroen Peeters, 1997; Raudatun Jannah, 2017). In the book, there is a hadith quoted about the recommended times for war, as narrated by at-Tirmidhi:

وروى الترمذي عن النعمان بن مقرن رضي الله عنه أنه قال: غزوت مع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ، فكان إذا طلع الفجر أمسك حتى تطلع الشمس، فإذا [ طلعت ] قاتل، فإذا انتصف النهار أمسك حتى تزول الشمس، فإذا [ زالت ] قاتل حتى العصر، ثم أمسك حتى يصلي العصر ثم يقاتل، وكان يقال عند ذلك تهيج رياح النصر، ويدعو المؤمنون لجنودهم [ في صلاتهم

Meaning: "Narrated by at-Tirmidhi from an-Nu'man bin Muqarrin, may Allah be pleased with him, he said: "I once fought alongside the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. It was his custom that when dawn broke, he would hold back until the sun rose. Once the sun had risen, he would engage in battle. And when midday arrived, he would hold back until the sun had passed its zenith (entering the time for Zuhr prayer). Once it had passed its zenith, he would fight until the time for Asr prayer. Then he would hold back until he had finished performing the Asr prayer, after which he would resume fighting. And it was said that during those times, 'the winds of victory blew' (*tahiju riyah an-nasr*), and the believers would pray for their soldiers in their prayers."

Based on these instructions, the time after performing prayers is believed to be the moment when "the winds of victory blow" (*tahijju riyah an-nashr*). Thus, the timing of the attack on Loji Sungai Aur was in line with spiritual calculations rooted in the teachings of the Sammaniyah Order, showing that the Sultan's strategy was a combination of political cunning and obedience to the advice of the ulama.

On the afternoon of September 14, 1811, the forts of the Sultanate of Palembang were put on alert and the people were mobilized. He sent his envoys (The nobles involved in the murder were Prince Citra Diraja, Prince Nata Wikrama, Prince Surodilaya, Prince Syarif Umar, Ki Mas Tumenggung Kertonegoro, Ki Demang Usman, Temenggung Suro Nandita, Prince Wirakusuma, Prince Wiradiwangsa, Prince Wirasentika, Demang Suroyudo, Ingebei Wierayudo, Ingebei Kepinding, Ingebei Krettel, and Ingebei Jalil (J.C Baud, 1853, 39-40.) met with Jacob Groenhoff van Woortman, the Resident of the Loji. The envoy conveyed that Batavia had fallen into the hands of the British and that the Dutch-French were required to leave the Loji. However, the resident refused on the grounds that he had not received any letters regarding the British conquest of Java and had not received any instructions to leave the loji. He went on to say that he did not have a ship to leave and requested three days to prepare everything. The envoy said that he had to report to the Sultan to inform him of his request (J.C Baud, 1853).

On their way to the palace, Resident Jacob and his entourage were welcomed by the nobles and explained their request that they wanted a ship prepared to take them to Batavia. Hearing their request, the officials offered two boats and confiscated their weapons, forcing the residents of the lodge, except for the women, to board them (Wargadalem, 2017). 87 people (It is known that the lodge was inhabited by 110 people, while 87 people were killed, 24 Europeans and 63 natives (Wargadalem, 2017) 53. Captain MacDonald recorded that 30 people were killed in the massacre, including men, women, and children (D.MacDonald, *A Narrative of The Early Life An Services of Capt. D. MacDonald: Embracing An Unbroken Period of Twenty-Two Years, Extracted From His Journal, and Other Official Documents*, Third. (Weymouth: Benson and Barling, 1830). 120.). In the investigation conducted by Colonel Gillispie, there was one woman who was saved by the Prince. However, because the woman continued to scream due to the suffering she had just experienced, she was eventually left behind (R.R.Gillispie, "Java Government Gazette," *A.H. Hubbard*, Batavia, Juni 13, 1812).). They were led to the pancalang boats that had been prepared. Upon arriving at Muara Sungsang at night, they were all killed and the boats they were riding in were sunk. The



actions taken by the Sultan on the basis of his alliance with the British actually became the seed of discord between them. For the Sultan, this was a strategic move to achieve complete independence. However, for Raffles, this event became the perfect tool to carry out his real agenda. Thus, the Loji Sungai Aur incident marked the beginning of a change in British policy towards the Sultanate of Palembang.

### **The Conflict Between the Sultanate of Palembang and Britain**

The conflict began when Raffles responded to the massacre not with an acknowledgment of the alliance, but with political maneuvers to gain advantage. It became clear that Britain's goal was not to liberate Palembang, but to gain control of the tin commodities on Bangka Island. Weeks after the British conquest of Java, there was no news of the massacre. Raffles sent his envoys, Richard Philips, Willem Wardennar, and Alexander Hare, to renew the old agreement between the Dutch and the Sultanate for the benefit of the British. The three men were also instructed to take over the trading post and provide assistance to the Sultan in fighting pirates, and that the transfer of Bangka must be carried out. The commissioners arrived at the Musi River on November 14, 1811, after first stopping at Muntok. There they received a letter from Tengku Raden Syarif Muhammad stating that the Dutch garrison had left Palembang. A few days later, they met with three Temenggungs from Palembang who told them the same thing about the transfer of the Dutch garrison. (John Bastin, 1954).

“That in accordance with Mr. Raffles' wishes and proposal to make Palembang a free port, they had...freed themselves [?] from their ties with the Dutch and expelled their Resident, and razed the Loji to the ground.” (John Bastin, 1954).

On November 23, when the envoys met with the Sultan, they conveyed Raffles' assignment to arrange for the transfer of the Dutch Loji to British control, while also requesting clarification regarding the information they had received from the Temenggungs (John Bastin, 1954). However, the envoy was politely rejected by the Sultan (Hanafiah, 1986).

“He (the Sultan) had followed Raffles' advice to expel the “wicked Dutch,” but he did so before the surrender (albeit after the battle in Batavia!) and, as a result, destroyed Dutch power as the supreme ruler of his territory before Britain took over Dutch rights!” (Bernard H.M. Vlekke, 2008).

When the envoys returned to see Raffles on March 7, 1812, they said that they had been treated very badly, that the Sultan had evaded the subject when they spoke to him about tin on Bangka Island. They had also been restricted in their interactions with the local population and had not been allowed to see the condition of the Loji (After carrying out the massacre at night, the envoys immediately destroyed the lodge building (J.C Baud, “Palembang in 1811 en 1812”) 29). Hearing this statement from his envoy, Raffles felt that the time was right to attack Palembang and seize Bangka Island from his control (Hanafiah, 1986; Raffles, 1835). Before carrying out his plan, Raffles sent several letters to the Governor-General.

“I have the honor to report to Your Excellency that on November 2, after learning that the season this year allowed for communication with Palembang, I sent a commission there consisting of Captain Philips, Mr. Wardena, and Mr. Hare, with the aim of taking over the Dutch factory there, in accordance with the capitulation, and handing it over to Lieutenant Jackson, whom I had appointed temporarily to act as resident.” (Raffles, 1835).

Raffles also emphasized to the Governor-General that it was very important for Britain to take Bangka Island, an island rich in tin production and a place of trade for foreign nations.

“From the documents now submitted, Your Excellency will observe how important Bangka Island and the tin trade have been to me since your departure....” (Raffles, 1835).

After reading the letters, the Governor-General ordered Raffles to immediately attack Palembang (“Java Government Gazette: Samarang July 28, 1812,” 1812). On March 20, 1812, Raffles sent his troops under Colonel Gillespie from Batavia to Palembang. Gillespie was instructed by

Raffles that the possession of Bangka must be an absolute condition, whether obtained through surrender or armed conflict. Furthermore, Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II must be deposed and replaced with a sultan from his close relatives. This was aimed at maintaining public order and establishing a British puppet in Palembang. Based on these criteria, Prince Husin Dhiauddin was deemed the right person for the role (C. E. Wurtzburg, 1954; Major William Thorn, 1815).

Category	Name of Ship/Boat	Captain on Duty
Fleet	Majesty's Ship Coenelia	Captain Owen
	Bucephalus	Captain Drury
	Sloop Procris	Captain Freeman
	The Honorable Companyn's Cruizr, Teignmouth	Captain Howitson
	Mercury	Captain Conyers
Cannon boats	Honourable Company's Schooner Wellington	Captain Mamin
	Young Barracouta	Captain Cromy
		Captain Lynch
Transportation Ship	Samdany	-
	Minerva	-
	Matilda	-
	Mary Ann	-
Others	HMS Phoenix	Captain Bowen

Table 1. Departing fleets  
Source: Raffles, 1835.

Unit	Composition
Detachment H. M. 59th Regiment	3 Companies, Rifle and Flank Companies
Detachment H.M. 89th Regiment	5 Companies
Detachment Madras Horse Artillery	Hussars dismounted
Bengal Artillery	Detail and detachment of Sepoys 5th and 6th Battalions
Amboyane Forces	-

Table 2. Troops that departed  
Source: Major William Thorn, 1815

Realizing the impending danger, Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II gathered his ministers, nobles, and deputies from the uluan to anticipate the British attack. The fleet that was prepared consisted of ships, armed boats, movable cannons, and easily combustible rafts. Meanwhile, 249 cannons had been prepared at the palace. The Sultan also ordered the construction of defensive forts in Muntok, Sungsang, and strategic locations along the Musi River. Of these forts, the Sultan focused his attention on Fort Borang because it was located at the entrance to the Musi River and was far from the palace. Therefore, he sent his brothers, Prince Adipati, Prince Arya Kesuma, and Prince Surya Kesuma. (Major William Thorn, 1815; Wargadalem, 2017; Woelders, M, 1975).

On April 3, 1812, the fleet stopped at Bangka Island for a week. Tents were set up on the beach, and all the craftsmen finished building the boats that were intended for the journey upriver on the Musi River (On March 26, 1812, the fort built by the people of Palembang on Bangka Island near Kotts Waringin was destroyed by the British fleet. ("The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and Its Dependencies," *Black, Parbury, and Allen*, London, 1820).). On April 10, 1812, they continued on to reach the mouth of the Musi River (Sungsang). Due to facing winds and currents in the Bangka Strait, they only arrived at the mouth of the river on April 15. At the mouth of the Musi River, they were forced to wait again because the river was impassable for ships at certain times. On April 19, 1812, at four in the afternoon, the fleet slowly began to move with the help of the sea breeze and favorable conditions on the Musi River. On the morning of April 20, 1812,



Prince Syarif came to meet the fleet as an envoy of the Sultanate of Palembang. He asked what the fleet was doing there, and Gillespie replied that there was a proposal that had to be conveyed to Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II (Raffles, 1835).

The next morning, April 21, 1812, another envoy named Prince Pranah brought a letter. In the letter, Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II congratulated Raffles on his arrival at the mouth of the Musi River. Colonel Gillespie welcomed the envoy and told him to convey that he wanted to stay in Palembang for two days. Colonel Gillespie's response did not fully satisfy the Sultan's curiosity; instead, it raised concerns about the safety of his kingdom. On the morning of April 22, 1812, the fleet slowly and without resistance sailed down the Musi River. The fleet approached Fort Borang, which stood 20-30 feet above the ground and was equipped with 102 cannons (Major William Thorn, 1815; Wargadalem, 2017). Captain Owen and Captain Major Thorn scouted the fort and the weapons there. Soon after, an armed Arab ship was sent by the Sultan to help defend the fort. Unfortunately, the fleet's journey was disrupted by rain that lasted throughout the day and night. However, that night, an envoy named Prince Marto and the fort commander were sent by the Sultan with a letter saying that he was happy to meet his friend, but he asked him not to bring such a large army and to go to the capital without an escort because he was worried that his troops would cause unrest in Palembang (Major William Thorn, 1815; Raffles, 1835). Colonel Gillespie agreed to Prince Marto's offer, but he needed a hostage as collateral for his request. Prince Marto immediately agreed, and the fort commander was taken hostage with the aim of bringing troops to Borang (Major William Thorn, 1815).

After thorough preparations, on the evening of April 23, 1812, Captain Meares, the Malay interpreter, asked Gillespie to confirm whether they would surrender the gun emplacements or not. Meanwhile, the 59th and 89th Regiments continued to advance alongside the artillery transport ships and fire throwers. On the morning of April 24, 1812, the distance between Gillespie's fleet and Fort Borang was only half a cannon shot. The Prince Regent and Captain Meares, as interpreter, surrendered the fort to the expeditionary force commander. The British troops immediately took control of the fort (Raffles, 1835; Wargadalem, 2017). That night, the Duke ordered his ministers and the people not to attack Colonel Gillespie's troops when they entered Palembang the next morning (Woelders, M, 1975). As the British fleet continued downstream, the Sultan's troops from Uluan began firing at them. In addition, burning rafts were launched to destroy the British ships. However, Captain Owen managed to prevent the attack (Major William Thorn, 1815).

	Brass				Iron				Total	
	<i>Pounds</i>				<i>Pounds</i>					
	$\frac{1}{2}$	2	1	14	12	9	8	6		4
Fort on Borang Island	4			1	9	6	5	1		26
The fortress west of the river					1	7	4	1	2	15
The fortress west of the river	2	1			1	9	3	1		17
Floating Fortress, No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6					4			2	8	14
Warfare vessel with a pointed bow	4	9	2		2	2			8	30
Total Overall,	10	10	2	1	17	24	12	5	18	102

Table 3. Report on the armaments at the Borang River forts in Palembang, which were captured on April 24, 1812, by British troops under the command of Colonel R.R. Gillespie. Source: Major William Thorn, 1815

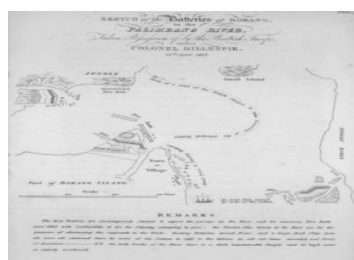


Figure 3. Borang Fortress of the Palembang Sultanate  
Source: Major William Thorn, 1815

After surrendering Borang Island, Prince Adipati went to see Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II. He said that Fort Borang had been taken over by Colonel Gillespie because everyone who was guarding the fort had fled. The sultan replied that they would fight the fleet together here. However, Prince Adipati explained that there was no one left in the city at this time, and the sultan must immediately flee to Uluang and let him face the troops alone. So the Sultan obeyed what Prince Adipati said (Woelders, M, 1975). On the morning of April 25, 1812, Colonel Gillespie received news from an Arab that the Sultan had fled the palace. After hearing this news, he prepared to advance by boat towards the palace. Shortly thereafter, Tengku Raden Syarif Muhammad arrived to report the Sultan's escape. He also added that there was chaos, looting, and murder inside the palace (Major William Thorn, 1815). Colonel Gillespie, accompanied by Captain Meares and Mr. Villneruby (a Spaniard), hurried to the palace, followed by the rest of the troops. They arrived in the capital at night. Upon arriving outside the palace grounds, Gillespie and his troops fought against the Arabs and Malays who supported the Sultan. During the battle, one of the Malays suddenly broke through the troops, swinging a knife, but Gillespie was able to anticipate the assassination attempt. Finally, Colonel Gillespie and his troops took control of the palace under tight security. In the middle of the night, they were joined by reinforcements from Major Trench and 60 men from the 89th Regiment. On the morning of April 25, 1812, the troops commanded by Lieutenant Colonel M'Leod joined Colonel Gillespie's forces (Major William Thorn, 1815). Although the capital had been captured by the British, on April 26, 1812, the Sultan's troops still launched their attack, but it was successfully repelled by Gillespie's fleet. On April 28, 1812, the British flag flew over the Palace of Palembang, accompanied by gunfire (Wargadalem, 2017).

	Brass							Iron						Total
	<i>Pounds</i>							<i>Pounds</i>						
	42	9	8	6	3	$2\frac{1}{2}$	1	24	12	9	8	4		
Northwest Cavalry Fort on the River						23							23	
Defensive Line Along the River	1						16	1	13	37	17	12	97	
Northwest Bastion of the Palace Square		4		6			1				10		21	
Southeast Bastion of the Palace Square					21								21	
Outer Palace Gate						4				15		4	23	
Inner Palace Gate			2		2								4	
Palace Courtyard					5	40	15						60	
Total Overall,	1	4	2	6	51	60	16	1	13	52	27	16	249	

Table 4. Report on the armaments in the forts of Palembang, captured on April 25, 1812  
Source: Major William Thorn, 1815

All of the Sultan's possessions were transported away on dozens of boats, leaving the palace empty. Only Prince Husin Dhiauddin remained in the palace, and Raffles eventually appointed him as Sultan of Palembang with the title Ahmad Nadjamuddin II (Ravico & Endang Rochmiatun, 2023). On May 14, 1812, the reasons for the resignation of Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II and Prince Adipati as the new Sultan were announced. The princes, tribal chiefs, and people were present to express their approval. The inauguration ceremony was conducted in accordance with traditional customs. After that, the Sultan took power with the title and name of Sultan Ratu Ahmad Nadjamuddin II (Major M. H. Court, 1821).

Union Category (December 1810 – September 1811)	
Time	Event
4 December 1810	Raffles sent his first letter to the Sultanate of Palembang.
January 1811	Tengku Raden Syarif Muhammad and Sayid Abu Bakar Rumi were sent as Raffles' agents to the Sultanate of Palembang.
3 March 1811	The signing of an agreement between Raffles and the Sultanate of Palembang to expel the French-Dutch.
22 April 1811	The delivery of weapons by Captain MacDonald following the implementation of the agreement between Britain and the Sultanate of Palembang.
14 September 1811	The massacre at Loji Sungai Aur as a manifestation of the alliance between Britain and the Sultanate of Palembang.
Conflict Category (November 1811 – May 1812)	
Time	Event
23 November 1811	The Sultan's refusal to surrender Bangka Island to the British.
20 March 1812	Raffles sent a British fleet under the command of Colonel Gillispie to attack Palembang.
24 April 1812	The British fleet took control of Fort Borang.
25 April 1812	The British fleet successfully occupied the Sultanate of Palembang.
14 May 1812	The British appointed Prince Husin Dhiauddin as Sultan of Palembang.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows how the relationship between the Sultanate of Palembang and Britain underwent a rapid transformation from a strategic alliance to open hostility in the period 1810-1812. The alliance phase began with Raffles' diplomatic penetration through his letters, offering to expel the French-Dutch. This offer was welcomed by Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II, who wanted to achieve full sovereignty in his territory. The peak of this pseudo-alliance was the massacre at Loji Sungai Aur as an act of trust towards his allies. Ironically, this event became a turning point that revealed the true motives and marked the beginning of the conflict. It became clear that the cooperation between Britain and the Sultanate of Palembang was not for the independence of Palembang, but for control over the most vital resource: tin on Bangka Island.

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