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*Trouble on the Frontier: Dutch–Brooke  
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Borneo Borderlands (1841–1886)*<sup>1</sup>

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**Introduction**

As European influence expanded in insular Southeast Asia throughout the early modern era, colonial interests shifted from maintaining favorable trade zones along the coasts and rivers to an increasing control of territory and its human populations. The island of Borneo entered the colonial ambit relatively late in this process,<sup>2</sup> but its eventual division between British and Dutch spheres of influence and control has had profound consequences for the peoples that fell under either. There and elsewhere, territorial boundaries sliced across well-established networks of communication, trade, common traditions, and strong ties of kinship. These boundaries came to impose different symbols of formal status on people from the same ethnic groups. From the colonial perspective, boundaries were designed to function negatively, to restrict what was deemed illegal such as smuggling and migration, and positively, to promote legitimate activities like taxation and road construction. The usual colonial attitude was that borders should be precisely defined, clearly demarcated, jealously guarded, and exclusive.<sup>3</sup> Yet the people so partitioned

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Freek Colombijn, Eric Tagliacozzo, and John Walker for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

<sup>2</sup> Graham Irwin, *Nineteenth-Century Borneo: A Study in Diplomatic Rivalry* (S-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1955).

<sup>3</sup> A. I. Asiwaju, 'The Conceptual Framework', in A. I. Asiwaju (ed.), *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries, 1884–1984* (London: C. Hurst and Co., 1985), pp. 1–18 at pp. 2–3; A. I. Asiwaju, *Borderlands Research: A Comparative Perspective*. Border Perspectives Paper No. 6 (El Paso: University of Texas, Center for Inter-American and Border Studies, 1983), pp. 2–3; S. Whittemore Boggs, *International Boundaries: A Study of Boundary Functions and Problems* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), pp. 10–11.

routinely defied the border divisions, causing no small amount of worry to the colonial states.

The relations between the Dutch and Brooke state along the West Borneo–Sarawak frontier provide a good case in point.<sup>4</sup> After James Brooke established his kingdom, the Dutch sought to define and demarcate the boundary between their respective claims to western Borneo. However, they were frustrated by the continued movement of people and trade across the inter-colonial border.<sup>5</sup> This frustration was particularly acute along the portion of the border that partitioned the large Iban population. The Iban defied both colonial powers in refusing to end their headhunting practices, pay imposed taxes, and seek permission to move across the border. They also made regular use of the border to escape punishment from one or the other state, for headhunting, tax evasion, and the like. Yet the Dutch and the Brookes could rarely see eye to eye on how best to deal with these troublesome borderlanders. This stemmed in part from the long-established competition over the frontier and its peoples, but also from different approaches to administration and attitudes toward the frontier itself.

In this article, I examine Dutch–Brooke relations relating to the partitioned Iban population and their efforts to suppress Iban rebellion along the frontier. I first outline the early phase of competition between the Dutch and James Brooke, leading up to Dutch contact with the Iban settled on their side of the border.<sup>6</sup> The focus then

<sup>4</sup> I use ‘frontier’ in its multiple meanings as (1) a zone between states, (2) an area physically separate from state cores, and (3) a zone between settled and unsettled areas (or in this case, pacified and unpacified areas). See Boggs, *International Boundaries*, p. 22; Oscar J. Martinez, *Border People: Life and Society in the U.S.–Mexico Borderlands* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994), p. 305; J. R. V. Prescott, *Boundaries and Frontiers* (London: Croom Helm, 1978).

<sup>5</sup> John Walker (personal communication) makes the excellent observation that the Brooke state did not fit the model of most colonial powers. Yet it was not entirely indigenous either, and so might occupy a place between colonial and native rule (see below). While recognizing this ambiguity, I continue to refer to Sarawak here as a colonial power.

<sup>6</sup> In order to distinguish the Iban living on either side, I use the indigenous distinction between the Ulu Ai’ Iban and the Emperan Iban. The former inhabit the upper Batang Lupar (*ulu ai’* in Iban), a principal river in Sarawak whose upper course runs parallel to the border, while the latter live in the low hills and flat lands (*emperan* in Iban) immediately adjacent to the border and north of the extensive Kapuas lakes area within what is now West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Of course there is some arbitrariness to this distinction as both ‘groups’ are closely related, and there have been many occasions of Ulu Ai’ Iban moving to the Emperan and vice versa.

shifts to Dutch and Brooke efforts to suppress headhunting and extend their influence over the border Iban.<sup>7</sup> These efforts culminated, for the purposes here, in the Kedang Expedition of 1886, a large punitive attack on Iban living on both sides of the border. This expedition and its aftermath provide rich material for examining the differences between the Dutch and Brookes in their administration and attitudes toward the frontier and territorial boundaries. Although there were a number of actions by both governments against recalcitrant border Iban after 1886 and well into the early 1900s,<sup>8</sup> the Kedang Expedition has not received much attention in modern scholarship. What is more, the English-language scholarship on the expedition that has drawn on particular Dutch materials has inadvertently omitted important information regarding Dutch attitudes toward their border relations with Sarawak. I examine these sources in light of my recent archival research in the Netherlands.

### Dutch-Brooke Relations and the Frontier Iban

When James Brooke became Raja of Sarawak in 1841, the Dutch were spurred to make more explicit their claims on the southern portions of Borneo. Until then their Borneo possessions had been largely neglected. They knew next to nothing about the far interior kingdoms and peoples, not to mention about basic geography.<sup>9</sup> Regarding western Borneo, only two rather minor expeditions had been sent to the upper Kapuas river in 1822 and 1823 (see Figure 1). The various maps drawn of the Kapuas interior up to 1846 were

<sup>7</sup> Although the Iban are principal actors in these relations, I focus almost exclusively here on the colonial powers. For this reason, I refer to Iban 'rebellion' rather than 'struggle for autonomy', and to the Iban as 'troublesome' or 'recalcitrant' rather than as 'audacious' or 'resistant'. For an Iban perspective on the frontier, see Robert Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels: The Ibans of Sarawak under Brooke rule, 1841-1941* (London: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 209-46; Reed L. Wadley, 'Remembering Punitive Expeditions and Divine Revenge: Iban Oral History and the Process of Creating the Past', unpublished manuscript. For the importance of headhunting in Iban culture, see Julian Davison and Vinson H. Sutlive, 'The Children of *Nising*: Images of Headhunting and Male Sexuality in Iban Ritual and Oral Literature', in Vinson H. Sutlive (ed.), *Female and Male in Borneo* (Williamsburg: Borneo Research Council, 1991), pp. 153-230.

<sup>8</sup> See Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*; Victor T. King, 'Some Aspects of Iban-Maloh Contact in West Kalimantan', *Indonesia*, Vol. 21, 1976, pp. 85-114.

<sup>9</sup> Irwin, *Nineteenth-Century Borneo*, pp. 151-76.

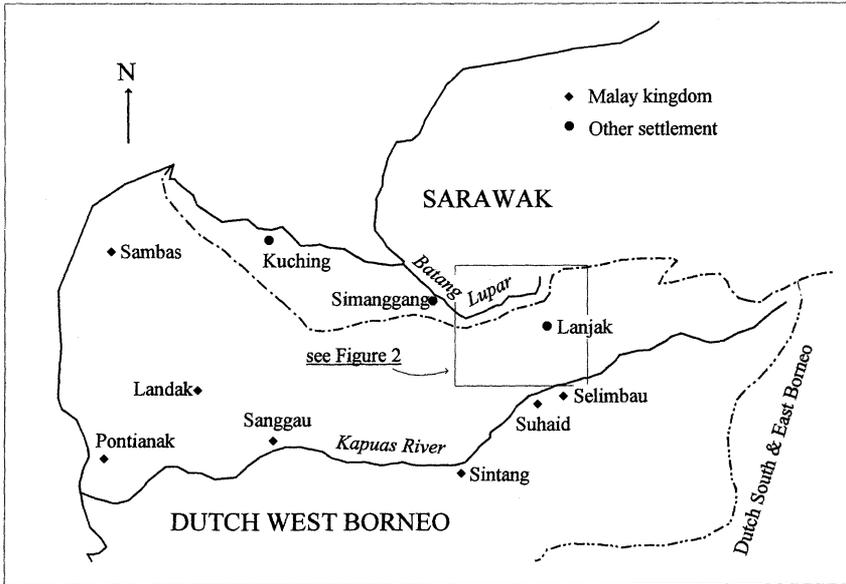


Fig. 1. West Borneo (not to scale).

derived directly from these expeditions,<sup>10</sup> and by 1826 the sole post in the upper Kapuas at Sintang had been withdrawn.<sup>11</sup> Following Brooke's ascendancy, the Dutch sent representatives up the Kapuas in 1847 to contact the various kindgoms along the river, renew contracts made previously in 1823, and make new contracts with others.<sup>12</sup>

At the time they were sure that sending steamboats up the Kapuas now and then would be sufficient to restore Dutch influence. They also tried to determine the boundary between Sarawak and various Kapuas kingdoms, generally based on watersheds.<sup>13</sup> These efforts were followed closely in 1854 and 1855 by other delegations that began the task of organizing administrative divisions under direct and indirect Dutch rule and to quell unrest between upriver king-

<sup>10</sup> See D. J. van den Dungen Gronovius, 'Bijdrage tot de Kennis der Binnenlandse Rijken van het Westelijk Gedeelte van Borneo', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, Vol. 11, 1849, pp. 338-56; Kaarten en Tekeningen Nos 154, 155, 157, and 567, Ministerie van Koloniën, Algemeen Rijksarchief (National Archives, The Hague [hereafter ARA]).

<sup>11</sup> Openbaar Verbaal, 21 March 1865 No. 14, ARA.

<sup>12</sup> J. J. K. Enthoven, *Bijdragen tot de Geographie van Borneo's Wester-afdeeling* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1903), pp. 159-61.

<sup>13</sup> Geheim Verbaal, 28 September 1847 No. 335, ARA.

doms.<sup>14</sup> In the late 1850s and early 1860s, they began to expand their interior administration with special concern to post officers in areas bordering Sarawak. They also sought more clarification of the border.<sup>15</sup> A general understanding between the Dutch and Sarawak governments developed and held for decades that the watershed between the north-flowing and west-flowing rivers formed the international boundary.

The Dutch were very concerned about the contacts James Brooke had made with the various rulers along the Kapuas. Brooke was interested in stimulating trade across the frontier and, most likely, in destabilizing Dutch control of the area, as he offered much lower rates of exchange for goods such as salt.<sup>16</sup> The Dutch, of course, saw this as both a military threat through the potential trade in firearms and an economic threat through the undercutting of their rather meager profits from the area. They regarded as smuggling the native trade from the Kapuas to the north coast that had probably existed for centuries.<sup>17</sup> Suspicions were no doubt further heightened when they learned in 1854 that Brooke was in correspondence with nobles from the Sintang court who would later lead a rebellion against Dutch rule.<sup>18</sup> At that time, the sultan of Suhaid told Dutch officials that if they did not check Sintang's hold on trade in the upper Kapuas, the upriver kingdoms would have no choice but to seek relations with Brooke.<sup>19</sup>

The frontier between the Batang Lupar river in Sarawak and the extensive Kapuas lakes area provided fairly easy access from the upper Kapuas to the north coast, and there were Malay trading settlements along the route (see Figure 2). The Dutch concern grew when Brooke established an outpost at Nanga Skrang (later

<sup>14</sup> See C. Kater, 'Jets over de Batang Loepar Dajakhs in de "Westerafdeeling van Borneo"', *Indische Gids*, Vol. 5, 1883, pp. 1-14; E. B. Kielstra, 'Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis van Borneo's Westerafdeeling', *Indische Gids*, 12 (1), 1890, pp. 1090-112 and 12 (2), 1890, pp. 1482-501.

<sup>15</sup> Openbaar Verbaal, 16 March 1859 No. 30, ARA; Openbaar Verbaal, 22 May 1862 No. 38, ARA.

<sup>16</sup> Geheim Verbaal, 30 January 1847 No. 49, ARA; Geheim Verbaal, 17 July 1847 No. 255/D1, ARA; Geheim Verbaal, 28 September 1847 No. 335, ARA.

<sup>17</sup> Kielstra, 'Bijdragen', 12 (2), 1890, pp. 1484-5.

<sup>18</sup> H. A. A. Niclou, 'Batang-Loepars—Verdelgings-Oorlog. Europeesch-Dajaksche Sneltocht', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië*, Vol. I, 1887, pp. 29-67 at pp. 41-2.

<sup>19</sup> Kielstra, 'Bijdragen', 12(1), 1890, p. 1106. Not all was competition, however, as James Brooke in desperation for financial backing approached the Dutch in 1859 for protectorate status, but nothing came of it. See Irwin, *Nineteenth-Century Borneo*, p. 185.

Simanggang) where Dutch 'subjects' could buy salt and other goods at far lower prices than through sanctioned Dutch channels.<sup>20</sup> These trade concerns were complicated by the existence of the very large, aggressive Iban population along that part of the frontier that formed the watershed between the Batang Lupar river and the Kapuas lakes area. The Dutch regarded them as being subjects of the Brunei ruler (because of their presumptive origin north of the border) and thus recent immigrants to Netherland Indies territory.<sup>21</sup> Yet these Iban had been under nothing but the most nominal control of Brunei, and their leaders told the Dutch that they had never paid any taxes to any ruler on the north coast or upper Kapuas basin.<sup>22</sup> It is also likely that they were not newcomers to the Dutch side of the frontier as they had been established in the upper Batang Lupar for generations.<sup>23</sup>

The first documented contacts between Dutch officials and Iban leaders occurred in 1854. In March, a Dutch delegation on its way up the Kapuas learned that the ruler of Selimbau was preparing to launch an attack against Sintang with the help of some 3000 Iban warriors. (Emperan and Ulu Ai' Iban regularly allied themselves with Malay rulers along the upper Kapuas and north coast as it offered them the opportunity to obtain heads and plunder. Prior to this incident, they had been allied with Sintang.) The Dutch rushed upriver to stop the attack and eventually succeeded in settling the dispute between Selimbau and Sintang, and sending the Iban home. They were reminded by a Malay ruler that if their government did not pay attention to the upper Kapuas, and Raja Brooke established himself there, it would be very costly to dislodge him.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Kielstra, 'Bijdragen', 12(2), 1890, pp. 1483-5. The reasons for salt being more expensive in the Kapuas deserves further investigation, but there might be several explanations. For example, production techniques may have been different, such as extraction from salt beds as opposed to burning nipah palms as was being done in Sarawak. The Brooke taxation regime may have encouraged a lower price, while the numerous rulers along the Kapuas might have imposed their own import or transit taxes as salt passed into their hands [see Niclou, 'Batang-Loepars', p. 35].

<sup>21</sup> The Dutch called the Emperan Iban, 'Batang Lupar Dayaks' and the Emperan area, 'the Batang Lupar lands'.

<sup>22</sup> Openbaar Verbaal, 22 September 1857 No. 9, ARA.

<sup>23</sup> See Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, pp. 213-14; Reed L. Wadley, 'The History of Population Displacement and Forced Settlement in and around Danau Sentarum Wildlife Reserve, West Kalimantan, Indonesia: Implications for Co-Management', paper presented at the 'Displacement, Forced Settlement and Conservation' conference, 9-11 September 1999, Refugee Studies Programme, University of Oxford.

<sup>24</sup> Kielstra, 'Bijdragen', 12(1), 1890, p. 1112.

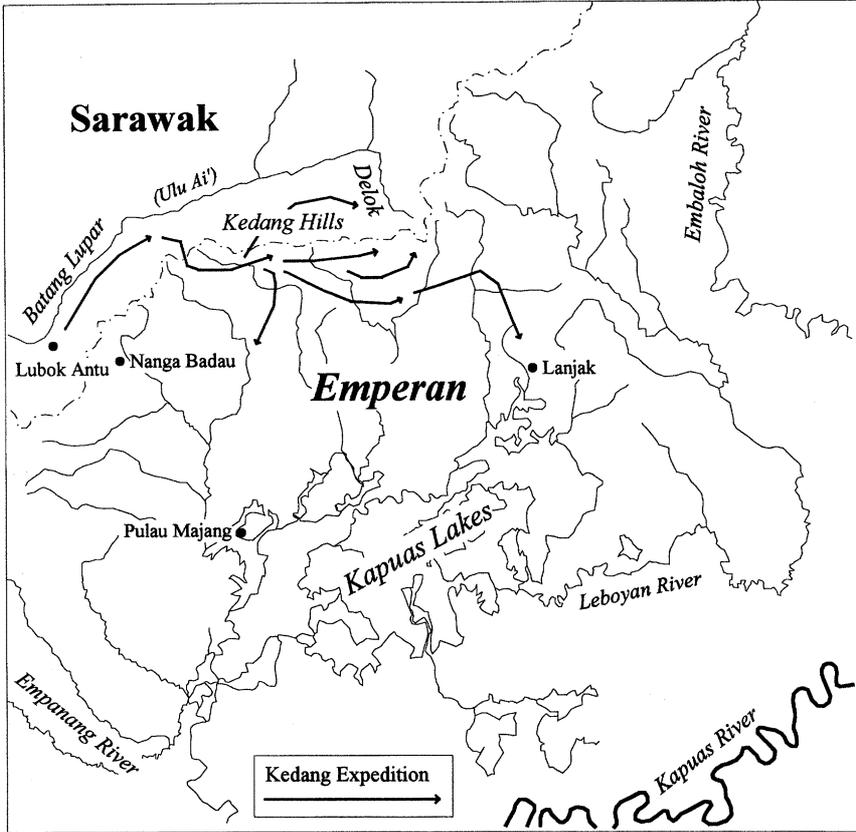


Fig. 2. The Iban-Inhabited Borderlands and Kedang Expedition Route.

Soon after, in September, another Dutch mission went upriver to visit the upper Kapuas kingdoms. This time they also traveled to the Iban-inhabited area around the lakes, meeting with some principal leaders to set up a more formal gathering the following year. In the later meeting with the Dutch government commissioner and division resident, the Emperan Iban formally pledged their allegiance to the Netherlands Indies government. They agreed to cease headhunting, to bring all disputes to the government, and stop trading in smuggled goods. The Dutch specifically forbade trade with Sarawak in salt, opium, and tobacco.<sup>25</sup> This meeting launched what was to become a most troublesome relationship between the Dutch and the Iban, for as soon as the officials had left, the Iban felt under little obligation

<sup>25</sup> Niclou, 'Batang-Loepars', p. 43.

to keep such difficult promises. This was further complicated in the early 1860s when the Dutch called on Iban help in suppressing Malay and Dayak rebellions in the Sintang area, which was in keeping with local practice. The Dutch were horrified that their Iban 'help-troops' regarded each call to arms as an opportunity for headhunting.<sup>26</sup>

### Trouble on the Frontier

Regarding Dutch–Brooke relations along the Iban frontier, Charles Brooke made a prophetic observation in 1861. At the time he was in the middle of the first European ascent of the Batang Lupar river and had stopped along the way to settle local property disputes that involved Iban from both sides of the border:

This separation of governments causes it to be specially difficult to decide their cases, as one cannot interfere with people living in the vicinity of the Kapuas . . . Cases of the kind occur frequently, when correspondence is resorted to with the officials in the Netherlands district lying next to the Sarawak boundaries, for the purpose of obtaining redress; and however desirous they may be of managing and settling such affairs, yet they are not permitted to do so by their instructions. The consequence is, the correspondence is referred from one place to another, until it is eventually lost or forgotten, and the grievances remain unsettled, to be again doubled and trebled, until a serious sore arises which leads to fighting; whereas a few words on the spot at the time would have quelled the dispute, and satisfied both parties. The system is to be deplored, for it can't fail to lead to more and more serious inconvenience, and the want of power in local authorities to settle such questions must deprive them of all beneficial influence, and lead the natives to hold their government in contempt. The bare show of pomp and panoply, soldiers and steamers, is not enough, and will only last for the day thereof. It gives no permanent and useful power and knowledge of such peoples as inhabit the endless jungle.<sup>27</sup>

Brooke's thoughts were later confirmed in the occasional meetings between Sarawak and Dutch officials, and their related correspond-

<sup>26</sup> See Kater, 'Iets'; Niclou, 'Batang-Loepars'. Both James Brooke and his successor, Charles, routinely used large numbers of Iban auxiliaries in their expeditions. I discuss this in more detail below.

<sup>27</sup> Charles Brooke, *Ten Years in Sarawak*, Vol. 2 [Reprint of 1866 edition] (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 163–4. As the Iban had been settling their own disputes for centuries (although with occasional Malay mediation), this was largely a European concern. Yet the Iban came to make frequent use of colonially-established courts [see Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, pp. 190–3].

ence, which reveal a good deal of miscommunication over border Iban cases.<sup>28</sup> The Dutch also complained among themselves of the contradictory demands placed on their local officials. Indeed, until the mid-1870s, Dutch policy was such that the military could not be involved in efforts by civilian officials to arrest headhunters as these were not strictly military matters; yet, without military support, civilian authorities were largely powerless to make arrests.<sup>29</sup>

Only seven years after this journey, in July 1868, Charles Brooke led an expedition against Ulu Ai' Iban who continued to raid and refused to pay the door tax that he had recently imposed.<sup>30</sup> In justifying the expedition, Brooke referred to the Dutch approach of remaining quiet and making empty threats, and he saw the Iban as 'being sheltered by the Dutch, or by their proximity'. Some of the force crossed the ill-defined and unmarked border into Dutch territory, burning four longhouses and killing three people. Brooke himself reported that some of the enemy 'were pursued over the border', and even his 'plan of attack' map indicated two Emperan longhouses as targets.<sup>31</sup> This strongly suggests that he was not as concerned as the Dutch were with formal boundaries, an attitude that was more in keeping with the kind of rule he practiced.

However, it was not as if the Emperan Iban were unconnected to Sarawak's problems, for even the Dutch knew that they were continually supporting their relatives across the border.<sup>32</sup> The result was not what the Brooke government had hoped for, as the Iban subsequently attacked the newly established post at Lubok Antu.<sup>33</sup> In fact, Emperan Iban led the attack in revenge for their losses to the Brooke expedition. They subsequently retreated to the upper Leboyan. The Dutch sent expeditions against them in 1871, 1874, and 1879, but they were largely unsuccessful as the rebels fled across the border and the Dutch forces did not pursue them.<sup>34</sup>

In October and December 1875 Brooke sent two large expeditions to the Ulu Ai' with no more success.<sup>35</sup> However, during the course of the second expedition, a Sarawak Iban band strayed across the

<sup>28</sup> Mailrapport 1880 No. 1030, ARA.

<sup>29</sup> Openbaar Verbaal, 20 September 1872 No. 27, ARA.

<sup>30</sup> Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 216.

<sup>31</sup> Charles Brooke, 'Appendix: The Journal of Charles Brooke, September 1866-July 1868', in Charles Brooke, *Ten Years in Sarawak*, pp. 345-74 at pp. 370-4.

<sup>32</sup> Mailrapport 1871 No. 649, ARA.

<sup>33</sup> Kater, 'Iets', pp. 9-10.

<sup>34</sup> Mailrapport 1879 No. 771, ARA.

<sup>35</sup> Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 217.

border and attacked an Emperan Iban longhouse before realizing where they were.<sup>36</sup> The Dutch later considered this to be a violation of their territory as the Iban were part of a Sarawak government force.<sup>37</sup> As mentioned above, the Dutch took similar measures against the Iban living on their side of the border on several occasions during the late 1870s. They also established military posts in order to protect Netherlands Indies subjects against Sarawak Iban raiding, keep 'their' Iban from headhunting, and see that the border was respected by Sarawak government forces.<sup>38</sup> In addition, they posted detachments and armed boats along the Kapuas to protect the settlements there from Iban attack. But it seems that whenever Dutch officials declared the Iban problem solved, there would only be renewed raiding.<sup>39</sup>

Cross-border raiding continued well into the 1880s. For example, in 1884 'chiefs appointed by the Dutch Government' and joined by some 300 Ulu Ai' warriors attacked the Kantu' in the Empanang. There was also repeated raiding into the Lemanak and Skrang rivers of Sarawak and into the middle Leboyan.<sup>40</sup> At the time, the Dutch argued that the Sarawak government was to blame for not preventing their Iban from raiding across the border.<sup>41</sup> Successive residents complained that Charles Brooke was not cooperating with them to settle border cases. One even suggested Brooke did not understand the border well, that he did not know how difficult it was to keep the peace when one group could make trouble on one side of the border and then escape to the other side to find comfort there. They cited Iban testimony that Sarawak gave permission for them to attack Netherlands Indies subjects and argued that each government was responsible for its subjects' attacks against the other. They also made it clear that the Dutch had never violated the border in their expeditions against rebels.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Brooke forces had also attacked this same community in 1868. At that time, however, it was located on the Sarawak side of the border.

<sup>37</sup> Mailrapport 1880 No. 1030, ARA.

<sup>38</sup> Mailrapport 1880 No. 246, ARA.

<sup>39</sup> Mailrapport 1874 Nos 420 and 576; Mailrapport 1877 Nos 43, 47 and 65; Mailrapport 1878 Nos 219 and 360; Mailrapport 1879 No. 224, ARA.

<sup>40</sup> S. Baring-Gould and C. A. Bamfylde, *A History of Sarawak under its Two White Rajahs, 1839-1908* [Reprint of 1909 edition] (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 383-4; Mailrapport 1882 No. 720, ARA.

<sup>41</sup> Kater, 'Iets', pp. 9-13.

<sup>42</sup> Mailrapport 1880 No. 1059; Mailrapport 1882 Nos 407 and 720, ARA.

For its part, the Brooke government felt that the problem lay in the Dutch failure to use the kind of strong measures that Sarawak regarded as successful—that is, the use of large numbers of native auxiliaries.<sup>43</sup> Brooke himself countered the Dutch accusation that he did not understand the border. He argued that the European governments should not expect the Iban to consider border-crossing to be of much import, that it was impossible to prevent them from living up to their obligations to support their cross-border kin.<sup>44</sup> A *Sarawak Gazette* article made the same point.<sup>45</sup> And he also countered the Dutch concern with their territorial sovereignty that he might consider the military post at Nanga Badau to be a threat to Sarawak. He even suggested that the troubles with the Iban would be solved with a cession of Netherlands Indies territory to Sarawak, thereby uniting the administration of the Iban.<sup>46</sup> The Dutch, of course, rejected this suggestion.

By the early 1880s, both governments were actively searching for a way to solve the 'Batang Lupar question' as the Dutch called their troubles with the Iban. A Dutch assistant resident proposed a joint border expedition with the stipulation that if the border was violated by one side or the other, it would not become a divisive issue.<sup>47</sup> Brooke, however, rejected a combined attack arguing that his forces were better suited to these expeditions than those of the Dutch.<sup>48</sup> In late 1885, the Dutch granted Brooke permission to cross the border with a Sarawak expedition and deal a blow to the Iban. The Dutch requested that Brooke inform them of his plans in time so that they could both protect the Emperan Iban they regarded as well-disposed and prevent them from giving aid to their kin who were to be attacked.<sup>49</sup> Brooke subsequently outlined his targets as those Iban living in the upper Delok (Sarawak), the Kedang hills (on both sides), and in the Lanjak area (Netherlands Indies), sending along a map indicating these places.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, pp. 217-18; Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak*, p. 380.

<sup>44</sup> Mailrapport 1882 No. 851, ARA.

<sup>45</sup> Curiously enough, a Dutch resident cites the article in a letter about Brooke's alleged failure to understand the border, even though the article actually contradicts the resident's claims [Mailrapport 1882 No. 407, ARA].

<sup>46</sup> Mailrapport 1882 No. 1066, ARA.

<sup>47</sup> Mailrapport 1882 No. 720, ARA.

<sup>48</sup> Mailrapport 1885 No. 664, ARA.

<sup>49</sup> Mailrapport 1885 No. 664, ARA.

<sup>50</sup> Mailrapport 1885 No. 736, ARA.

*The Kedang Expedition*

With this permission in hand, Brooke assembled a force of 10,000–12,000 men, mainly consisting of Saribas, Skrang, Banting, and Undup Iban. In March 1886 they set off on what became known in the English-language accounts as the Kedang Expedition. Brooke himself commanded the expedition. All of the longhouses they encountered (and subsequently burned) in rebel territory had been abandoned at least a day earlier, and the force continually spotted small parties of men shadowing them as they advanced. No skirmishes occurred along the way although some careless men in the Brooke force were later ambushed and killed while on patrol.

They set up base camp on the Dutch side of the border. There Brooke divided the force into four divisions, each with the task of burning longhouses and destroying rice fields. Plunder was also a direct consequence of the expedition. Rice stocks, domesticated animals and valued heirlooms (such as ceramic jars, brass gongs, and brass cannon) belonging to the enemy were brought daily back to camp. By the time the expedition began its return march, the four divisions had burned some 80 longhouses on both sides of the border, carried off countless plunder, and killed about 20 of the rebels. Only five Iban auxiliaries were killed. The division sent to Lanjak encountered a detachment of Netherlands Indies soldiers that had rushed to protect one longhouse, but no hostilities occurred.<sup>51</sup>

For their part, the Dutch had been sent scrambling during the expedition. On 10 March in Pontianak, Resident Gijsberts received a letter from Brooke (dated 25 February) announcing the expedition. By this time it was already too late because by the 12th the attack had already begun and Gijsberts was several days' travel away from the Batang Lupar lands. The controleur in the area received a letter from the Sarawak Resident (dated 3 March) on the 12th,<sup>52</sup> and he rushed to protect what longhouses he could. Gijsberts arrived in the

<sup>51</sup> See Niclou, 'Batang-Loepars', pp. 60–6; Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak*, p. 384; Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 219.

<sup>52</sup> I suspect, but cannot yet prove, that this delay in receiving news of the expedition was deliberate on the part of Brooke. The Sarawak government certainly could have notified their Dutch counterparts in West Borneo much earlier, but Brooke was concerned about keeping his plans secret. See Niclou, 'Batang-Loepars', p. 61. Although the letters from Brooke and Deshon *might* have reached their destinations in sufficient time had they been sent promptly, it is possible that the letters were sent at such late dates in the hopes that the Dutch would not have time to tip off area residents with troop movements.

area with soldiers from Pontianak and Sintang, and was able to protect the longhouses of their district headman at Lanjak (above). Once the expedition had returned to Sarawak, the Dutch counted 41 burned longhouses on their territory, at least 13 of which were considered friendly.<sup>53</sup> There were also 16 dead, including some women and children.<sup>54</sup>

In the following months, Ulu Ai' leaders tendered their submission to Brooke as did Emperan leaders to the Dutch. The Dutch gave 'their' Iban two conditions for submission: (1) Those Iban leaders who still had valuable ceramic jars were to give one as a token of their submission and of their promise to stop raiding. (2) All Iban communities affected by the expedition (even those regarded as friendly) were to move away from the border and closer to the lakes so that they could be better watched and protected. Anyone who refused would have their houses burned and crops destroyed.<sup>55</sup> As might be expected, there were a few hold-outs, and the Dutch had to force their submission or drive them across the border. Some were arrested as well.<sup>56</sup> Sarawak authorities took similar measures on their side.<sup>57</sup>

In early April, Resident Gijsberts met with his Sarawak counterpart, Deshon, in Pontianak to discuss the expedition. Deshon maintained his innocence about late arrival of the letters of notification. He also said that the map, submitted by Brooke and indicating the target area within Dutch territory, was inaccurate. With Sarawak on the defensive, Gijsberts pointed out that around 20 longhouses had been left standing in the Kedang and Delok areas, casting into doubt Sarawak's claims that the expedition was completely successful. For their part and reflecting Brooke's feelings that the Dutch were weak in dealing with the Iban, Deshon offered to post an agent in West Borneo to advise the Dutch on Dayak matters, something the Dutch

<sup>53</sup> Thirteen is the most commonly cited figure in English-language scholarship on the expedition, stemming from Burgemeestre's report [J. E. L. Burgemeestre, 'Onze Verhouding tot Serawak en de Batang Loepar-Bevolking: Nota van den Gezaghebber van Semitau', in J. E. L. Bugemeestre, *Memorie van Overgave van den Gezaghebber van Semitau*, 2 Maart 1930-14 September 1934 (KIT 999, ARA, 1934), pp. 12-13], but the figure varies from 13 to 17. In one letter during the incident, Resident Gijsberts even refers to 39 friendly longhouses having been attacked [Mailrapport 1886 No. 293, ARA]. Obviously at the time initial reports were prone to exaggeration.

<sup>54</sup> Mailrapport 1886 Nos 293 and 342, ARA.

<sup>55</sup> Mailrapport 1886 No. 342, ARA.

<sup>56</sup> Mailrapport 1886 No. 733, ARA.

<sup>57</sup> Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 219; Mailrapport 1886 No. 364, ARA.

rejected outright.<sup>58</sup> However, despite the continual acrimony and distrust (expressed publicly and no doubt even more strongly in private), the Dutch realized that close cooperation with Sarawak was important for keeping the border Iban in check. Resident Gijsberts even wrote to the Governor-General in Batavia that he preferred their present, rocky relationship with Sarawak to that with the Iban.<sup>59</sup> Yet, after 1886 and possibly because of the Kedang Expedition, Sarawak–Netherlands Indies relations seem to have improved. There were generally fewer complaints by Dutch officials to their superiors about Sarawak cooperation, and there appears to be more cooperation in arresting and extraditing cross-border troublemakers.

### *Differences in Dutch–Brooke Practices*

There are a number of important differences between the Dutch and Brookes in terms of their approach to both pacifying and governing the Iban. Foremost among these is the use of Iban auxiliaries in punitive expeditions, local geography and access to Iban areas, the size of the Iban population, the nature of day-to-day administration, and the attitude toward formal boundaries.

James Brooke and his successor, Charles, made frequent use of Iban auxiliaries, but they neither abandoned the practice nor regretted its use as the Dutch did after 1866.<sup>60</sup> (Charles Brooke did worry on occasion about his forces becoming undisciplined and killing innocent people.<sup>61</sup>) Even before he took control of Sarawak in 1868, Charles Brooke was firmly convinced of his pacification philosophy that ‘only Dyaks can kill Dyaks’.<sup>62</sup> This meant that government expeditions against rebellious or recalcitrant Iban or other native peoples would consist largely of Iban allies (after the mid-1800s mainly from the Saribas, Skrang, and Undup). They had no military training but a keen desire for headhunting and plunder. It was in essence large-scale government-sanctioned and -led raiding, and this only encouraged further raiding and revenge raiding.<sup>63</sup> However, had

<sup>58</sup> Mailrapport 1886 No. 293, ARA.

<sup>59</sup> Mailrapport 1886 No. 293, ARA.

<sup>60</sup> See Kater, ‘Iets’; Niclou, ‘Batang-Loepars’.

<sup>61</sup> Brooke, *Ten Years in Sarawak*, Vol. 2, pp. 297–8; Brooke, ‘Appendix’, in *Ten Years in Sarawak*, p. 371.

<sup>62</sup> Brooke, *Ten Years in Sarawak*, Vol. 1, p. 188; Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 237.

<sup>63</sup> Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, pp. 132 and 240.

Brooke auxiliaries not been allowed to take heads, it is likely they would not have joined in the expeditions and subsequently would have taken up raiding elsewhere<sup>64</sup> as the Dutch found out for 'their' Iban. The Brookes were thus under pressure to provide legitimate headhunting opportunities for their subjects.

Although the Brookes justified the use of Iban auxiliaries as the best means to the end, it is likely that the low cost of calling on Iban levies to a cash-strapped government was behind this reasoning.<sup>65</sup> It was not until the 1920s under the third Raja that a system of block-houses was established to help patrol rebellious areas,<sup>66</sup> something the Dutch had instituted in the late 1870s with some success. In addition, the Iban population in Dutch West Borneo was substantially smaller than that in Sarawak, and they lived in an area that was more accessible (especially during the rainy season when the lake and river levels were high) to Dutch steamers than the upriver areas of Sarawak.<sup>67</sup> Even beyond this accessibility, it is likely that the much smaller Iban population contributed greatly to the less confrontational relations with the Dutch; that is, there were simply fewer Iban to become rebellious.

Another contrast is that Dutch soldiers were well armed and presented a greater threat than the Brooke forces, and unlike the latter, they did not, by and large, attack remote areas, burning and looting longhouses, and thus create the conditions for revenge raiding.<sup>68</sup> But this is only in part true. Throughout the late nineteenth century, the Dutch continued to employ native 'help troops' accompanying military detachments in their efforts to put an end to Iban raiding. These auxiliaries were invariably drawn from people with scores to settle with the Iban, such as the Kantu' Dayaks and Kapuas Malays. However, the Dutch were concerned to keep these auxiliary forces small and manageable so that their use did not create further hostilities.<sup>69</sup> The Dutch also burned the longhouses and slashed the rice fields of recalcitrant Iban (and there was some looting by the help-troops), but in contrast to the Brookes, their forces did not engage in indis-

<sup>64</sup> John H. Walker, 'Rajahs, Rebels, and Ritual: The Ibans and the Early Brooke State, 1841-1868', in Vinson Sutlive (ed.), *An Encyclopedia of Iban Studies*, forthcoming.

<sup>65</sup> Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, pp. 131 and 138.

<sup>66</sup> Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, pp. 242-3.

<sup>67</sup> Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, pp. 240-2; King, 'Some Aspects', p. 102.

<sup>68</sup> Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, pp. 241-2.

<sup>69</sup> For example, Mailrapport 1878 No. 219, ARA.

criminate headhunting. They were therefore more selective in meting out punishment. In consequence, they did not attack communities that were peripherally or uninvolved in raiding and thereby increasing resistance to their authority or hostility toward their auxiliaries. The generally undisciplined Brooke forces probably constituted the greater threat to both hostile and uninvolved communities.

However, James and Charles Brooke, and their officers, 'were not regarded as common men, of course; they were epic figures. Ibanized versions of their names appeared in songs and stories, and are recalled to this day'.<sup>70</sup> For the Iban then and now, the Brookes were the ultimate men of prowess.<sup>71</sup> In important contrast, this is not the case for the Dutch officials who administered the adjacent border area. Most were not long-serving in West Borneo. Even those who did remain in the residency were not posted to one district for the duration of their careers. In the Emperan, there was a regular turnover of officials, such that there was never any time for the Iban to build strong memories of individuals. When Iban recall the Dutch today, they do so by referring to a very general *urang Belanda*, not to any particular individuals. During the colonial period itself, even the Dutch were well aware that the Iban respected the Raja more than them.<sup>72</sup> An essential difference was that the Brookes had a very personal, local rule (something the Iban understood well), while the Dutch were more bureaucratically oriented in their administration.

In addition, being part of a larger empire allowed the Dutch to rotate officials, something which the Brookes' perpetually cash-strapped state could not afford to do, thereby further distancing government from the governed. Furthermore, the status of Resident in Sarawak and West Borneo was quite different, given the very different expanse of territory under their respective authorities. The Sarawak resident of the Batang Lupar and Saribas Division, based in Simanggang, had a large population of mainly one ethnic group (the Iban) to deal with in an area that was much smaller than most districts in West Borneo. In contrast, the Dutch resident oversaw many different ethnic groups with a much larger bureaucracy, and in an

<sup>70</sup> Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 189.

<sup>71</sup> See Walker, 'Rajahs, Rebels, and Ritual'; J. H. Walker, 'James Brooke and the Bidayuh: Some Ritual Dimensions of Dependency and Resistance in Nineteenth-Century Sarawak', *Modern Asian Studies*, 32(1), 1998, pp. 91-115; O. W. Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982).

<sup>72</sup> For example, Mailrapport 1877 No. 182, ARA.

area that was much larger than the entire state of Sarawak at the turn of the century. Communications may have been better given the Kapuas and the use of steamers, but Dutch officials had much more territory to deal with than their Sarawak counterparts. Dutch assistant residents (subdivision level) and even controleurs (district level) were closer to Sarawak residents in the size of territory they typically had to administer. This, of course, put higher-level Dutch officials further from local administration than those in Sarawak.

This difference in bureaucratic structure and mentality may also have influenced differing attitudes toward borders. As noted above, the Dutch were concerned very early on with determining and establishing the location of their border with Sarawak. And they did not fail to bring up the instances when Sarawak forces had transgressed the boundary in pursuit of rebels, nor did they fail to point out that they had never transgressed the border in pursuit of their own goals. It was not until 1891, after Sarawak had become a British protectorate, that the boundary was formally recognized in a treaty.<sup>73</sup> Yet their efforts to map the boundary-forming watershed continued well into the early 1900s,<sup>74</sup> and they complained about Sarawak's lack of help in surveying the border.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, Charles Brooke may have taken some delight in frustrating Dutch efforts, as in one letter where he suggested that the Dutch border map left out some of Sarawak's interior.<sup>76</sup>

The Brookes appear to have taken a more relaxed attitude toward boundaries, as is reflected in Charles's comments regarding border-crossing by closely related Iban. This may have been in part a conscious strategy to frustrate the Dutch, or it may reflect a willingness to consider immediate circumstances as being important to policy. For example, in 1896 Brooke did nothing to prevent Sarawak Iban from migrating into Dutch territory,<sup>77</sup> while at the same time forbidding people from settling or farming too close to the border.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>73</sup> 'Convention between Great Britain and the Netherlands, Defining Boundaries in Borneo, 1891', in Sir William George Maxwell and William Sumner Gibson (eds), *Treaties and Engagements Affecting the Malay States and Borneo* (Suffolk Lane, E. C.: Jas. Truscott and Son, 1924), pp. 215-17.

<sup>74</sup> *Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië*, Vol. 1930, No. 375, pp. 1-9 (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1931).

<sup>75</sup> Mailrapport 1891 No. 410; Geheim Kabinettsverbaal, 13 February 1894 (H2) No. 7, ARA.

<sup>76</sup> Mailrapport 1891 No. 353.

<sup>77</sup> Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, pp. 276-7.

<sup>78</sup> Mailrapport 1891 No. 602, ARA.

Another important factor may have been the Brooke reliance on indigenous forms and sources of power which stressed authority over people rather than territory.<sup>79</sup> This is not to say that the Brookes were unconcerned with territory, as is demonstrated in Sarawak's successive expansion at the expense of Brunei. Rather they seem to have been less concerned than the Dutch with the formality of territorial boundaries. Indeed, what concern Brooke had over the border was probably conditioned by the continual complaints from the Dutch, and the Dutch never gave Sarawak the occasion to complain in the same way.<sup>80</sup>

### Scholarship on the Kedang Expedition

With these issues in mind, it is instructive to review the limited scholarship on the Kedang Expedition as it underscores the Dutch concern for territorial boundaries.

In the first and very friendly history of Brooke rule, Baring-Gould and Bampfylde provide a brief account of the expedition. They maintain that Brooke 'applied to the Netherlands Government to permit him to disregard the border, for this once at least'. The expedition was so successful that rebel Sarawak Iban submitted, and the Netherlands Indies Iban 'found that they were no longer safe there'. This reflects the Sarawak view that the Dutch coddled 'their' Iban. They cite what appears to be a rather appreciative letter from Resident Gijsberts to Raja Brooke in September 1886. In it, Gijsberts congratulates him for the success of the Kedang Expedition which resulted in 'no more rebellious Batang Lupars' on Dutch territory. They also mention the 'united efforts' and 'mutual management' of the border Iban, the 'mutual consideration and support', and the 'wholesome absence of red-tapeism'.<sup>81</sup>

This would appear at variance with Dutch portrayals of the action (by Niclou, Burgemeestre, and Kielstra)<sup>82</sup> that are most commonly

<sup>79</sup> See Walker, 'James Brooke' and 'Rajahs, Rebels and Ritual'; Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 71.

<sup>80</sup> Of course, my archival sources are almost entirely Dutch, save for some Sarawak letters contained therein. A more thorough investigation of Sarawak archives would no doubt sharpen this contrast.

<sup>81</sup> Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, *A History of Sarawak*, pp. 383-5.

<sup>82</sup> Niclou, 'Batang-Loepars'; Burgemeestre, 'Onze Verhouding'; E. B. Kielstra, 'Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis van Borneo's Westerafdeeling', *Indische Gids*, 15 (2), 1893, pp. 2090-104.

cited in modern English-language scholarship on the subject.<sup>83</sup> These accounts are generally regarded as showing the Dutch were not pleased with the result because the expedition attacked longhouses that lay outside the agreed target area and the Dutch were not given sufficient warning to protect those houses.<sup>84</sup> For example, Niclou's piece is exclusively devoted to exposing what he regards as Brooke hypocrisy. He points out that the Brookes espoused values of peace and civilization but at the same time sanctioned headhunting. He contrasts the activities of the Brookes, beginning with the first raja, with those of the Dutch, which he maintains were more effective and less violent. His outrage over headhunting in general and the excesses of the Kedang Expedition in particular is obvious, and he notes that the punitive expedition failed to stop raiding.<sup>85</sup>

Burgemeestre's account belongs to a class of documents called the *Memories van Overgave*, the reports of local Dutch officials to their successors. These are largely limited to the early twentieth century for West Borneo,<sup>86</sup> but they often contain information about the nineteenth century. These reports follow a certain format, covering information that the official deemed important to pass along, such as transportation, the various ethnic groups under administration, economic activities, health conditions, and education. Occasionally, the official included lengthy appendices. For the Iban area of Dutch West Borneo, Burgemeestre appears to have been the most conscientious in this regard. He served from 1930 to 1934 in the Semitau subdistrict that included the Iban areas along the border.<sup>87</sup> As appendices to his *memorie*, Burgemeestre wrote two lengthy pieces—one on the ritual requirements of Iban swidden farming,<sup>88</sup> and the other on

<sup>83</sup> To my knowledge, there has been no modern Dutch-language scholarship on this subject.

<sup>84</sup> Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 220; King, 'Some Aspects', p. 102; Colin N. Criswell, *Rajah Charles Brooke: Monarch of All He Surveyed* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 128.

<sup>85</sup> Niclou, 'Batang-Loepars', pp. 48, 50-2, 58-60, and 66-7.

<sup>86</sup> The Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia in Jakarta has some *memories* from the early- and mid-19th century, but I have not yet been able to consult them.

<sup>87</sup> The *memorie* of M. A. Bouman might also be included here, but the only copy appears to be in Sintang and I have not seen it yet, if it still exists. Victor King is the only scholar I know who has read it. However, as King does not cite it regarding the Kedang Expedition, it does not appear to be important for the events covered here.

<sup>88</sup> J. E. L. Burgemeestre, 'Adat Gebruiken by de Ladang Aanleg by de Iban Bevolking in de Onderafdeeling Semitau (14 April 1932)', in W. H. E. Scheuer, *Algemeene Memorie der Afdeeling Sintang*, 18 Juli 1932 (KIT 997, ARA, 1932).

Dutch relations with the Sarawak government and the Iban people.

It is this latter that is of concern here as it has entered into the English-language scholarship. In it he provides a historical overview of the border situation, and quotes at length from official correspondence to provide additional weight to his report. Less vociferous than Niclou's diatribe on the events of 1886 but no less a committed supporter of Netherlands Indies policy and practice, Burgemeestre merely cites verbatim one letter to the government in Batavia from Resident Gijsberts (dated 18 April 1886). The letter describes the situation in the aftermath of the expedition, with a focus on the destruction of the thirteen friendly longhouses. And in keeping with Dutch attitudes toward Brooke practices, Burgemeestre also regards the attack as doing little to end raiding.<sup>89</sup>

However, Burgemeestre neglects to cite the entire letter, suggesting he did not wish to present material that did not entirely support his position.<sup>90</sup> This omitted material presents a slightly different official Dutch stance following the expedition. The letter goes on to say that even though the expedition destroyed longhouses the Dutch regarded as friendly, these communities received a deserved punishment as they were often in league with the so-called rebellious Iban.<sup>91</sup> Kielstra's history, also derived from public reports and letters, more closely follows this official line. He notes that although various longhouses outside the target area were destroyed, the inhabitants were often in league with those who were the primary targets of the expedition.<sup>92</sup>

What is left out of these accounts, however, is that the Dutch were quick to take advantage of the situation. Soon after the expedition,

<sup>89</sup> Burgemeestre, 'Onze Verhouding', pp. 12–15.

<sup>90</sup> A further caution to dealing with Burgemeestre's history: He makes the curious mistake of equating a famous Sarawak rebel with an Emperan leader, both called by the same praise name—Rentap [Burgemeestre, 'Onze Verhouding', p. 5]. These two men have no known connection to each other. The first, named Libau, led a long resistance to James Brooke from the upper Skrang river in Sarawak. See Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*; Brooke, *Ten Years in Sarawak*, Vol. 1 and 2. The second, named Jemat, was the Dutch-appointed *temenggong* or principal leader of the Emperan Iban, succeeding his father, Rungguh, in the late 1860s [Kater, 'Iets', p. 8]. He too proved a difficult subject, and the Dutch had to send several expeditions against him. Burgemeestre had obvious access to official reports and letters (not to mention Kater's 1883 article) that would have spelled out clearly the ancestry of the second Rentap, and he had an interest in Iban matters [see Burgemeestre, 'Adat Gebruiken']. It is thus puzzling that he would make this mistake, and this should alert future scholars to treat his account with more scepticism.

<sup>91</sup> Mailrapport 1886 No. 293, ARA.

<sup>92</sup> Kielstra, 'Bijdragen', 15 (2), 1893, p. 2102.

the Resident ordered all Iban in the border area to move to places that were more accessible to Dutch oversight.<sup>93</sup> Another omitted item of importance is the Dutch concern with the border. The government in Batavia stated that its first requirement was that its officials maintain a 'cordial cooperation' with Sarawak. In addition, it restated the position that the friendly Iban who were attacked did indeed deserve some punishment, but it also emphasized that it would not again allow Brooke expeditions across the border.<sup>94</sup> (In 1903, however, the Dutch did give permission for a small Sarawak expedition to cross the border but specified such strict conditions that Sarawak declined the offer.<sup>95</sup>) This suggests the Dutch were more troubled by the fact that their territorial sovereignty was violated in 1886 than some additional longhouses were burned down. None of them was particularly enamored of the Iban, surely their most difficult subjects in West Borneo,<sup>96</sup> but subsequent Dutch writers could play up the destruction of thirteen longhouses to cast Sarawak in a bad light.

### Conclusion

Dutch attempts to define the shape of their claims to western Borneo came in no small measure as the result of James Brooke's own enterprise in Sarawak. The establishment of the Brooke state led to several decades of Dutch frustration as they sought to control the movement of people and trade across the inter-colonial border. The Iban population that the border partitioned produced the most continuous troubles for both colonial powers, but there was much disagreement between the Dutch and the Brookes over how to handle these borderlanders. The above analysis of Dutch-Brooke relations reveals that this disagreement stemmed in part from the long-established competition over the frontier and its peoples that began with James Brooke's ascension to the Sarawak throne. Yet the two colonial authorities had very different approaches to administration and atti-

<sup>93</sup> Mailrapport 1886 No. 342, ARA.

<sup>94</sup> Mailrapport 1886 No. 377, ARA.

<sup>95</sup> Politiek Verslag, 26 August 1906 No. 39, ARA; Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, p. 230.

<sup>96</sup> In 1894, a Dutch resident commented that his government had been in continual difficulty with Sarawak *only* in the Iban-inhabited border area [Openbaar Verbaal, 6 June 1895 No. 12, ARA].

tudes toward the frontier itself. The primary differences lay in the use of Iban auxiliaries in punitive expeditions, local geography and access to Iban areas, the size of the Iban population itself, the nature and structure of each administration (including the greater reliance on native systems of authority in Sarawak), and possibly derived from this, the attitude toward the border.

However, the Dutch and Brookes were quite similar to other European powers in their attempts to draw boundaries in other ways.<sup>97</sup> For example, the Dutch put great effort into delimiting the territorial boundaries of Kapuas Malay kingdoms under their indirect rule. These efforts, of course, went against native practice in which political power was traditionally over people, not land. The Dutch tried to organize what they saw as ill- and irrationally-defined territories, which often resulted in people subject to one sultan living outside of that ruler's contiguous territory and surrounded by people subject to another ruler. They also tried to delineate the geographical boundaries of ethnic groups, such as between the Iban and the Embaloh, or the Iban and the Kapuas kingdom of Selimbau.<sup>98</sup> For its part, Sarawak sought to control territory, often at the expense of Brunei, and Brooke policy produced long-lasting ethnic divisions. For example, the Brookes physically separated Malay and Iban settlements, and their censuses and courts required the offspring of mixed marriages (e.g. Iban and Chinese) to be culturally one or the other.<sup>99</sup> Yet despite these similarities, the Dutch and Brookes differed greatly in the degree of flexibility they allowed in dealing with the border that separated their subject populations.

<sup>97</sup> See, for example, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 164–78.

<sup>98</sup> Mailrapport 1880 No. 275; Mailrapport 1889 No. 467, ARA; King, 'Some Aspects', pp. 107–11.

<sup>99</sup> Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, pp. 283–319.

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