

The 1801 British–Ternate Sultanate Cooperation Agreement: Political Dynamics in the Transitional Period of Colonial Rule

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ABSTRACT

The Sultanate of Ternate held a strategic position in the spice trade in the Maluku Islands, making it an object of rivalry among various European colonial powers. Following the dissolution of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) in 1799 and the political conflicts in Europe triggered by the Napoleonic Wars, the British succeeded in occupying Ternate in June 1801. This study aims to analyze the background of the British occupation of Ternate and to explain the political relationship established between the British Government and the Sultanate of Ternate through the cooperation agreement of 23 November 1801. This research employs the historical method, consisting of heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The primary source used in this study is the archival document Contract Tusschen het Engelsch Gouvernement en den Koning van Ternaten November 1801, preserved at the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia (ANRI), supported by contemporary newspapers and various secondary sources. The findings show that the British occupation of Ternate was influenced by international political changes following the French Revolution of 1789, the issuance of the Kew Letters in 1795, the decline of the VOC, and Britain's alliance with Sultan Nuku of Tidore. The Political Contract of 23 November 1801 reveals that Britain continued to recognize Sultan Muhammad Yasin as the legitimate ruler in order to gain political legitimacy, while at the same time restricting his authority through arrangements concerning defense, military affairs, and the spice trade. These findings indicate that the relationship between Britain and Ternate was built upon a pattern of protection and control, in which British authority was asserted over the region. Thus, the changes that occurred in 1801 reflected more of a shift in colonial actors than a fundamental transformation of the colonial power structure in Ternate.



Introduction

Ternate has often occupied an important position in trade due to its role as one of the centers of spice production. Its advantage also lay in its geographical location, situated along strategic maritime routes connecting the Maluku Sea, the Sulawesi Sea, and the Sulu Sea. The clove-producing regions in Maluku that held significant value within the trade network included Tidore, Moti, and Makian, with Ternate being particularly prominent. The spice trade in these regions subsequently became a driving force of economic activity in Southeast Asia and encouraged interaction with various peoples and cultures across the Indonesian archipelago (Andaya, 1993).

Ternate's strategic position in the spice trade eventually gave rise to competition among European powers seeking direct control over trade routes and sources of spice production. In March 1602, the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) was established. In general, the Sultanate of Ternate fell under VOC authority from 1652 to 1790 (Leirissa, 1999). By the late eighteenth century, however, the VOC itself was experiencing serious decline due to corruption, heavy debt burdens, and decreasing trade profits. The prolonged financial crisis ultimately left the company unable to sustain its operations. In 1799, the VOC was officially dissolved. All of its assets, debts, and territories were taken over by the Dutch government. Thus, authority over Ternate shifted from a private trading company to direct control by the Dutch colonial state, marking a new chapter in the history of relations between Ternate and European power.

The dissolution of the VOC in 1799 did not immediately bring an end to colonial rule in Maluku. Instead, the collapse of the trading company coincided with changes in the political constellation of Europe triggered by the Napoleonic Wars, creating an opportunity for Britain to take control of territories previously under Dutch authority. The transfer of administration from the VOC to the Dutch government took place at a time when Europe was undergoing significant political upheaval. This situation was rooted in the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, which sparked prolonged conflict between France and various European kingdoms, particularly Britain, and had a direct impact on colonial rivalry in Asia, including Maluku (Clercq, 1890).

Another significant change occurred in 1801, when Sultan Mohamad Yasin ascended the throne as the eighteenth Sultan of Ternate. On 21 June 1801, Ternate eventually fell into British hands after Governor Willem Jacob Cranssen was captured through a strategy carried out by Van Dockum and Rodijk. This event marked the temporary end of Dutch rule in Ternate and the beginning of direct British intervention in the Sultanate of Ternate. After successfully taking control of Ternate, the British appointed Colonel K. T. Farquhar as the first British Resident in Ternate. This relationship was formalized through the signing of a cooperation agreement between Sultan Muhammad Yasin and the British Resident Robert Townsend Farquhar on 23 November 1801 (Clercq, 2018).

Studies on the history of the Sultanate of Ternate have been widely conducted by historians with various areas of focus. M. Adnan Amal explains the political development

of the Sultanate of Ternate from its early period to the colonial era, including changes in the relationship between the sultanate and the Portuguese, the VOC, and the Dutch. Meanwhile, Ahmad Sulton Ghozali and Tommy Christomy, in their article entitled “Surat Perjanjian dan Relasi Kuasa dalam Naskah Peti Kesultanan Ternate 113 A 1/22” (2023), analyze the 1805 treaty manuscript between the Sultan of Ternate and the Dutch colonial government. Their study shows that the treaty, consisting of eleven articles, not only regulated military assistance from the Sultanate of Ternate to the Dutch but also reflected a power relation that placed Ternate in a subordinate position. Previous studies have mostly discussed Ternate’s relationship with the VOC and the Dutch, while research that specifically explains how the British government established political relations with the Sultanate of Ternate remains limited. In fact, the 1801 cooperation agreement between Britain and the Sultanate of Ternate, as a primary source, provides important information on the pattern of relations between the British colonial government and the Sultanate of Ternate, including the regulation of authority, the position of the Sultan, and British interests in the Maluku region. Based on this issue, the present study seeks to explain how political relations between Britain and the Sultanate of Ternate were formed in 1801 by using the cooperation agreement between Britain and the Sultanate of Ternate as the main primary source.

Method

This study employs the historical method. The historical research method is used because this study is concerned with the past, particularly by examining power relations between the colonial government and the Sultanate of Ternate during the colonial transition period. The historical method consists of several stages in constructing historical research writing, namely heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography (Madjid & Wahyudhi, 2014). The main source of this research is the archive of the 1801 British–Ternate Sultanate Political Contract entitled *Contract Tusschen het Engelsch Gouvernement en den Koning van Ternaten* November 1801. This contract is preserved at the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia (ANRI), archive number 231. In addition, several newspapers were found through searches on the Delpher website, along with relevant books and scholarly articles on the history of the Sultanate of Ternate and British colonialism in Maluku, which were used to support the interpretation of the study.

This study applies a political approach to analyze the power relations that emerged between the Sultanate of Ternate and British colonial authority after the end of the VOC. This approach helps explain how the cooperation agreement between Britain and Ternate functioned as an instrument for establishing relations between the colonial government and local rulers, while also revealing changes in the distribution of authority following the British occupation of Ternate. The analysis in this study draws on Lauren Benton’s theory of uneven legal geographies and jurisdictional politics. Benton explains that imperial power was not always exercised through direct territorial annexation, but also through the formation of legal orders that distributed authority unevenly between colonial governments and local rulers.

Within this framework, empires maintained the legitimacy of local rulers while continuing to control strategic domains through legal instruments. This perspective is used to explain that the Political Contract of 23 November 1801 served as a means for Britain to formally recognize the position of the Sultan of Ternate, while simultaneously limiting the exercise of his sovereignty through jurisdictional arrangements in the fields of defense, military affairs, and trade (Benton, 2002).

Results and Discussion

The Transition of Colonial Power in Ternate in 1801

The British presence in Ternate in 1801 cannot be understood as an isolated event, but rather as part of a long sequence of political changes in Europe that began with the French Revolution of 1789. The revolution shook the monarchical order in Europe by spreading ideas of liberty, equality, and republican government, while also triggering wars between France and various European kingdoms seeking to defend the monarchical system. At that time, French forces carrying the spirit of the French Revolution succeeded in seizing the Dutch Republic. The Prince of Orange, Stadtholder Willem V, was forced to flee to England on 18 January 1795 (Andaya, 1993). This development encouraged Britain to take political and military measures to prevent strategic Dutch territories from falling under French influence.

Meanwhile, within the Netherlands itself, pro-French revolutionaries known as the Patriots established a new state called the Batavian Republic, which was fully within the orbit of French political and military power. While in exile in England, Willem V issued a series of written instructions to Dutch colonial officials throughout the world, including those in the East Indies. These written instructions became known in historiography as the Kew Letters. The main content of these letters instructed colonial governors to surrender their territories to Britain rather than to France (Sumantri, 2025).

The policy of handing over forts, ports, ships, and colonies to Britain as an ally, as stated in the Kew Letters, was based on the consideration that Britain was viewed as a partner capable of safeguarding the continuity of Dutch colonial territories during the French Revolutionary Wars and later the Napoleonic Wars. However, not all colonial officials complied with these instructions. The Kew Letters created confusion in various colonies because colonial officials were faced with a choice between loyalty to Willem V and loyalty to the new Batavian Republic, which was allied with France. This situation was used by Britain to take over a number of Dutch colonies, such as Malacca, Ambon, Ceylon, and several trading posts in India. As a result, by the end of the 1790s, Dutch colonial power and trade networks in Asia had experienced a significant decline. The Kew Letters served as a form of legitimacy for Britain to occupy Dutch colonies under the pretext of protecting them from French control. The legal and political context of this colonial policy did not necessarily constitute permanent annexation, although in practice the occupation expanded British

influence in Asia and opened the way for British intervention in the Maluku Islands in the early nineteenth century (Israel, 1995).

Alongside political pressure from Europe, the VOC, which had been established in March 1602, was experiencing structural decline. The decline of the VOC in Maluku culminated in the bankruptcy and nationalization of the company at the end of the eighteenth century, specifically in 1798–1799 (Stott, 2017). Prior to its dissolution on 31 December 1799, the VOC was facing an increasingly severe crisis caused by accumulated debts, corrupt practices among company officials, high administrative and military costs, and declining profits from the spice trade. All VOC assets and territories in the Indonesian archipelago, including Ternate, were automatically transferred to the direct ownership of the Batavian Republic. From 1800 onward, it could be said that Maluku was no longer controlled by a private trading company with purely commercial interests, but by a state that was politically and militarily tied to French interests in the Napoleonic Wars. Ternate thus became a legitimate target for British attack, in line with Britain's interest in controlling trade power in Maluku.

This series of factors culminated in June 1801, when Britain made use of its alliance with Sultan Nuku of Tidore, who since the 1780s had rebelled and resisted the VOC. After Britain established a post in Dore in 1793, Nuku began to build an alliance with British traders. This relationship was developed through the supply of weapons, cannons, gunpowder, and military equipment (Widjojo, 2009). Nuku, who intended to resist the VOC because it had exiled his father, intervened in the succession of the Tidore Sultanate, and imposed a spice monopoly that brought hardship to the people, designed a strategy by building cross-cultural alliances. These alliances involved Maluku-Papuan fighters, East Seram traders, and connections with the British. His alliance strategy shows that his resistance not only weakened the VOC's position in Maluku, but also opened space for British intervention. In his resistance, Sultan Nuku relied not only on military force but also on diplomacy.

In 1796, following major changes in European politics marked by the issuance of the Kew Letters by Prince of Orange Willem V, Britain succeeded in occupying Ambon and Banda. This success created concern among VOC officials in Ternate that the growing influence of Britain would encourage local rulers to shift their loyalty. The situation was further worsened by the emerging relationship between Britain and Sultan Nuku of Tidore, causing the VOC to suspect the possibility of cooperation between the Sultanate of Ternate and Britain that could threaten its position in Maluku. Based on this suspicion, the VOC then took a political step by deposing Sultan Aharal and replacing him with Kaicili Sarkan as Sultan of Ternate. Another view, presented by Des Alwi, adds that Sultan Achral was no better than his predecessor and often remained inside the palace, a condition that also led the Dutch to support his deposition (Alwi, 2005).

News of Ambon's fall to Britain reached Nuku. The fall of Ambon into British hands opened an opportunity for Nuku to build a political alliance with this colonial power. With

around 100 boats and approximately 3,000 followers, Nuku set out to approach the British in order to establish communication with the British governor, hoping to obtain support for his struggle. Although Britain was not yet willing to provide direct assistance, the British government gave hope that success in controlling the whole of Maluku would strengthen the political position of Nuku's family. This cooperation began to show results in 1796–1797, when Nuku, with British support, succeeded in capturing Jailolo and Bacan (Dasfordate, Burdam, Merly, & Winoto, 2022).

Nuku's resistance reached its peak in 1797. He launched several attacks on Ternate by deploying a fleet estimated at 150 boats. Nevertheless, these efforts failed to capture Fort Oranje because Britain at that time had not yet provided direct military support. As a result, Nuku's strategy was directed more toward blockading Ternate, disrupting logistical supplies and causing food shortages for the VOC garrison. An important development occurred in 1798–1799 after William Farquhar was appointed Governor of Ambon. Unlike previous policies, Farquhar viewed the alliance with Nuku as a strategic move to strengthen Britain's position and expand its political influence in the Maluku Islands. Around the same time, the VOC was officially dissolved on 31 December 1799, and all its assets and authority were taken over by the Dutch government. These political changes encouraged Farquhar to take more active measures in supporting military operations against Ternate. The peak of cooperation between Britain and Nuku occurred in 1801, when both parties launched three attacks against Ternate. The first two attacks did not produce results, but the third attack succeeded in forcing the VOC to surrender Fort Oranje on 20 June 1801, marking the end of VOC power in Ternate and the beginning of British rule in the region (Andaya, 1993).

The *Utrechtsche Courant* edition of 13 January 1802 and the *Bataafsche Leeuwarder Courant* edition of 23 January 1802 both reported the fall of Ternate into British hands in June 1801. The two newspapers also noted that the siege of the fort in Ternate lasted for 52 days before it finally surrendered due to food shortages. This information provides broader context for the emergence of the 1801 Political Contract. The transfer of power from the Dutch to the British did not take place peacefully or merely through an administrative mechanism, but was preceded by a prolonged military siege that caused hardship for the troops and residents inside the fort ("Engeland," 1802; "Engelend," 1802). For Sultan Nuku, control of Fort Oranje was an effort to eliminate VOC legitimacy and restore the political sovereignty of the kingdoms of Maluku. For Britain, by contrast, control of the fort became the basis for replacing VOC colonial jurisdiction.

The 1801 British–Ternate Cooperation Agreement as the Basis of British Administration in Ternate

British forces under Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Burr launched their first attack on Ternate in January 1801. The first siege failed, forcing the British to revise their strategy. William Farquhar, who had been appointed British Resident in Ambon, then led the second attempt with a more pragmatic approach. Farquhar realized the importance of local support

and eventually accepted full assistance from Nuku's forces. This combined force consisted of British infantry, artillery, and the Tidore naval fleet, which was highly familiar with the waters of the archipelago. The siege of Fort Oranje lasted nearly two months, from April to June 1801. The combination of European tactics with maritime knowledge and local intelligence from Nuku's allies succeeded in breaking Dutch defenses. On 20 June 1801, Governor Willem Jacob Cranssen finally surrendered, marking the fall of Ternate into the hands of the British–Tidore allied forces (Muller, 1864). The success of the combined British and Tidore forces in capturing Ternate in June 1801 also created a new political configuration in Maluku. The replacement of colonial rulers required a legal foundation to regulate relations between Britain and the Sultanate of Ternate within the political order formed after the fall of Fort Oranje. The cooperation agreement between Britain and the Sultanate of Ternate dated 23 November 1801 was therefore drawn up as a diplomatic instrument to determine the rights, obligations, and positions of each party. The contract was not merely a treaty of friendship, but became the formal basis for British political intervention in the Sultanate of Ternate.



Figure 1. Cooperation Agreement between the British Government and the King of Ternate (National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019)

The agreement between the British government and the Sultanate of Ternate, signed on 23 November 1801, is a primary source preserved at the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia (ANRI), archive number 231, under the ANRI archive list number K-76. This document consists of 28 pages, including front and back cover pages, eighteen pages

containing texts in Arabic-Malay script and English, one page containing Arabic-Malay text, and seven blank pages. The contract manuscript is arranged in two columns, with the Arabic-Malay text on the left and the English translation in Latin script on the right. In addition to the original manuscript, the archive is also available in transliterated form, making it accessible for study by the public and researchers (National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

This contract was drawn up during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Yasin, who held the title Paduka Sri Maha Tuan Sultan Siraj ul-Bilat Syah Taj ul-Aulia al-Mukarram Amir Iskandar Jihad Azim ud-Din. Sultan Muhammad Yasin was enthroned on 13 May 1801 and ruled until his death on 10 March 1807 (Humah, Usman, Machmud, Can, & Dun, 2024). He was the second son of Sultan Arun Syah. The drafting of the contract took place several months after Britain successfully seized Ternate from Dutch control in June 1801. Under British colonial administration in Ternate, Robert Townsend Farquhar served as Resident and acted as the representative of the British government in drafting and signing the political contract. Overall, the document consists of 18 articles regulating political relations, governance, and economic interests between the British Government and the Sultanate of Ternate (National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

The contract of 23 November 1801 between the British Government and the Sultanate of Ternate opens with the phrase “qoul wa’ad,” meaning promise or agreement, which affirms the end of hostility and the beginning of an alliance between the two parties, while explicitly canceling all previous ties between the Sultan and the Dutch Company. As stated in the agreement:

“...Thus, all attacks or hostile acts between the British Company’s military forces and those of the Sultan of Ternate, who had previously ruled as a friend of the Dutch Company, are now ended from this day; and all lands, along with the kingdom of Ternate, have now been entrusted to the arms of the English...” (National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

The opening clause of this cooperation agreement explicitly cancels all former ties between the Sultan and the Dutch Company. The phrase “the lands...and the kingdom of Ternate have now been entrusted to the arms of the English” provides an image of a declaration of full sovereignty by explaining the surrender of land and kingdom to British authority.

The recognition of Ternate’s sovereignty is stated more clearly in Article 4, which describes the Sultan as “a sultan who is not subject to anyone, but is entirely free over the kingdom of Ternate.” This clause shows that Britain recognized Ternate as a sovereign kingdom that was not under the authority of any other power. This recognition was reinforced in Article 6, which affirmed friendship and protection from King George III.

Article 4 states: “It is established upon all oaths that the Sultan, princes, and ministers of Ternate acknowledge the supreme authority of the great King named George the Third

and his successors as our great protector and most beloved friend, bound to show all loyalty, respect, and honor to him.” (National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

Britain’s decision to recognize the Sultan rather than build a new structure can be understood as a strategy of consolidating local legitimacy after the fall of the VOC and the conquest of Fort Oranje in June 1801. Maintaining the figure of the Sultan, who already had a base of popular support, was politically far more efficient than constructing authority from the ground up (Manurung et al., 2026).

However, when the recognition of sovereignty in Articles 4 and 6 is read together with other articles in the same contract, it becomes clear that such recognition was symbolic rather than substantive. Articles 8 and 9, for example, prohibited the Sultan from building forts or carrying out military operations at sea or on land without the knowledge and permission of the head of the British Company in Fort Oranje.

Article 8 states: “The Sultan, princes, and ministers shall not be permitted to build any fort anywhere without the knowledge of the nobleman or whoever holds authority on behalf of the British Company; only the Company itself shall forever be free to establish or demolish forts wherever and whenever it wishes.” (National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

Article 9 states: “In matters of war at sea or on land, the Sultan, princes, and ministers shall not plan or carry out anything without the knowledge and authorization of the head of the British Company in Fort Oranje.” (National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

These articles indicate a direct limitation on defense sovereignty, which should have been inherent in the newly granted status of “freedom.” The restriction of the Sultan’s authority in Articles 8 and 9 cannot be understood as the granting of full political independence over Ternate’s sovereignty. Lauren Benton argues that imperial power was not always manifested through direct territorial control, but through what she calls uneven legal geographies, namely legal orders that produced an unequal distribution of authority across various spaces of power. Benton’s explanation points to empires exercising power by delegating certain forms of authority to local rulers, while at the same time retaining control over strategic fields through legal instruments (Ogborn, 2012). The Political Contract of 23 November 1801 reflects this pattern.

Britain continued to recognize the Sultan of Ternate as the legitimate head of government in order to gain political legitimacy in the eyes of local elites and society. However, through Articles 8 and 9, Britain demonstrated its intention to take control over the construction of forts and decisions concerning war on land and at sea. Thus, recognition of the Sultan’s sovereignty functioned more as political legitimacy, while control over defense instruments was placed under the jurisdiction of the British Government. From Benton’s perspective, this condition shows that British intervention in Ternate was not carried out through direct annexation, but through legal arrangements that created a division of authority between the colonial government and the Sultanate. The Sultan’s sovereignty

was formally maintained, but its implementation was limited by jurisdictional corridors established in the 1801 cooperation agreement.

The contract of 23 November 1801, which contained several articles outlining agreements with the Sultanate of Ternate, reveals that its regulatory focus was divided into two main areas. Several articles contained the core of British interests in Ternate, namely control over the spice economy. When compared with VOC monopoly policies implemented in Ternate since the mid-seventeenth century, the economic provisions in the contract of 23 November 1801 show strong continuity in the management system of the spice trade. Although Britain took over colonial power after the fall of Fort Oranje in 1801, the mechanisms regulated in the contract indicate that the new government did not establish an entirely different economic system. Instead, Britain maintained a number of key instruments previously developed by the VOC, especially those related to production control, price setting, and supervision of the spice trade.

Article 11 opens a series of provisions with an annual compensation scheme in which Britain promised to pay seven thousand to the Sultan, one thousand to the ministers, two thousand to the bobato of Makian, and two hundred to the sangaji of Moti, in return for the prohibition on freely planting and selling spices.

Article 11 states: “...therefore now the noble British Company gives, namely to the Sultan seven thousand (...), to the ministers one thousand (...), to the bobato of Makian two thousand (...), and to the sangaji of Moti two hundred...” (National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

The first continuity can be seen in Article 11. This article explicitly refers to the continuation of the “agreement to destroy spice trees,” meaning the cutting down or destruction of spice trees previously carried out by the Dutch Company. Since the agreement between Sultan Mandar Syah and the VOC in 1652, the VOC government had provided fixed payments to the Sultanate of Ternate as compensation for implementing the policy of extirpation, namely the felling of clove trees that exceeded monopoly requirements. This policy was carried out alongside the Hongi expeditions (Hongitochten) as a means of supervising spice production (Sianturi, Manalu, Rezkinah, Saputri, & Sinaga, 2025).

Article 13 strengthened the prohibition of illicit trade. The Sultan, his ministers, and his people were required to actively prevent spice smuggling, with violators handed over to British authorities for trial.

Article 13 states: “In addition to the provisions concerning the locked trade, all voyages and trading activities around Maluku by all kinds of Dutch people other than the English shall be selected and prohibited by the Sultan, princes, and ministers with all their authority; likewise, they shall ensure that any of their subjects who dare to engage in illicit trade in these goods shall be handed over to the noble British Company to be judged according to their wrongdoing.” (National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

Article 14 provided limited exceptions in the form of permission for non-spice trading voyages to Ambon and Banda for local residents as well as Makassar, Bugis, and Chinese

traders under the British flag. This shows that the monopoly targeted strategic commodities rather than all economic activities.

Article 14 states: “Voyages and trade to and from Ambon and Banda shall not be prohibited for the people of these lands and residents from here or there, nor for Makassar, Bugis, and Chinese people from the land of Makassar who are under the Dutch Company, who may sail here until a prohibition order is issued, because they bring goods necessary for the livelihood of the people residing in the lands under the British flag.” (National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

Articles 13 and 14 explain that Britain restricted activities with other parties without its approval and required the Sultan of Ternate to prevent smuggling. This finding reveals a gap between symbolic legitimacy and the practice of colonial power. In colonial history, such a pattern was not unique to Ternate. Leonard Y. Andaya explains that since the seventeenth century, the VOC had maintained the institution of the sultanate as a local political partner, but gradually limited the authority of the Sultan through contracts regulating the clove trade, foreign relations, and military obligations. After the VOC was dissolved in 1799, Britain did not fundamentally change this pattern. Instead, the British government inherited the framework of relations that had been built by the VOC by maintaining the institution of the sultanate as a source of local governmental legitimacy, while control over economic resources remained in the hands of the colonial government. In other words, what changed in 1801 was not the structure of colonial relations, but the colonial actor controlling that structure (Andaya, 1993).

The political arrangement established through the contract of 23 November 1801 did not last long. Only a few months after the contract was signed, the Peace of Amiens was concluded in Europe in March 1802, which, among other things, regulated the return of most Dutch colonial territories that had been occupied by Britain during the War of the Coalition. The *Amsterdamsche Courant* edition of 15 April 1802 published a list of colonial territories that changed hands as a result of the peace agreement and recorded Ternate as part of the territories that returned to connection with the Batavian Republic (“*Bataafsche Republiek*,” 1802).

This change in status occurred as a result of decisions made by European powers at the negotiating table in Amiens. This condition once again emphasizes that the British presence in Ternate since 1801 was never intended as permanent annexation, but rather as a temporary measure to secure Dutch territories amid the conflict in Europe. The Kew Letters, which became the basis for British occupation of Dutch colonies during this period, provide an answer to the pattern of relations between Britain and Ternate at that time.

Conclusion

This study shows that the political relationship between the British Government and the Sultanate of Ternate in 1801 was built upon a pattern of protection accompanied by control. The Political Contract of 23 November 1801 demonstrates that Britain continued to

maintain Sultan Muhammad Yasin as the legitimate ruler in order to gain political legitimacy in the eyes of the people of Ternate. At the same time, however, Britain restricted the Sultan's authority through legal arrangements concerning the construction of forts, the conduct of war, and the management of the spice trade. These findings indicate that the relationship between Britain and Ternate was not an equal relationship between two kingdoms, but rather a colonial relationship carried out through a selective distribution of authority.

The main factors that encouraged Britain to occupy Ternate and formulate the 1801 political contract were not only related to economic interests in the spice trade, but were also influenced by international political changes following the French Revolution of 1789, the establishment of the Batavian Republic, the issuance of the Kew Letters in 1795, and the decline and dissolution of the VOC in 1799. These changes made Dutch territories, including Ternate, targets of British occupation in order to prevent Dutch colonies from falling under French influence while securing strategic trade routes in Maluku. Britain's alliance with Sultan Nuku also paved the way for the successful occupation of Ternate in June 1801 and became the basis for the emergence of the political contract between Britain and the Sultanate of Ternate.

The findings of this study also reveal that although Britain replaced the Dutch as the colonial ruler, its pattern of governance did not undergo any fundamental change. Britain continued to maintain the structure of the sultanate as a source of political legitimacy, while inheriting the mechanisms of control previously developed by the VOC, particularly in the fields of defense and the monopoly of the spice trade. Thus, the changes that occurred in 1801 represented more of a shift in colonial actors than a transformation of the colonial relationship structure that bound the Sultanate of Ternate.

Declarations

Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence. Declares whether or not AI was used in the article.

Author contribution statement. Describes the contribution of each author to the conduct of the research and the preparation of the article, in accordance with the conventions of the specific field of study.

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