

# SOME RECOLLECTIONS AND REFLECTIONS ON THE INDONESIAN REVOLUTION

George Mc.T. Kahin

*Editor's Note: On July 12–14 of this year, the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia) and its journal, Sejarah (History) held an international conference in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Indonesian revolution entitled Revolusi Nasional: Kajian, Kenangan, dan Renungan (National Revolution: Studies, Recollections, and Reflections), at which George McT. Kahin, Emeritus Professor of International Studies at Cornell University, was invited to give a keynote address. The editors of Indonesia wish to express their gratitude to the Indonesian Institute of Sciences for permission to publish this address.*

What can a foreign observer contribute to an understanding of Indonesia's revolution? Perhaps very little, but I would hope enough in terms of perspective and relevant, but now apparently forgotten, elements of history to justify a hearing. If I am at all successful in adding anything to an understanding of the revolution it would be because during one of its most critical periods I was in Yogyakarta and was fortunate enough to gain the confidence of and have numerous talks with some of the Republic's major leaders—and perhaps, from the standpoint of history, because I usually took careful notes.<sup>1</sup>

My good fortune in meeting these men was probably largely because I was something of a curiosity. Not only was I one of the very few foreigners, and the only American, in Yogyakarta, but I had reached there in August, 1948 by driving a very old jeep flying American flags through the buffer zone and across the status quo line separating Dutch and Republican forces. More important, for the next four months, until the Dutch attack of December 19, I drove around Republican territory flying Indonesian and American flags together. Thereby that old jeep became something of a symbol of US support for the Republic—but unfortunately one that was not matched by US government actions. That symbolism understandably infuriated the Dutch and was one of the reasons they so

---

<sup>1</sup> It was a great disappointment to me that I was unable to meet senior officers of the Republic's armed forces. Except for the honor of very briefly meeting with a seriously ill General Sudirman, I then met only one officer above the rank of captain. This was Major Brentel Susilo, head of army intelligence for the city of Yogyakarta. He constituted a hostile roadblock to my meeting other officers.

promptly arrested me following their attack on Yogyakarta. (Nor were my flags appreciated by Merle Cochran, then the American representative on the UN's Committee of Good Offices.)

Another matter that angered the Dutch, but at the same time tended to reinforce the Republican leaders' trust in me, involved the stories I filed with an American news agency through the Republic's supposedly secret, coded radio transmissions to New Delhi and on to New York.<sup>2</sup> (Since the Dutch had already broken this code, these dispatches alone earned me a place on the NEFIS intelligence's list of the most undesirable aliens in Indonesia.)<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, I had to contend with the suspicion of some Indonesians that I must be a disguised agent of the US Department of State. It was after all a bit much to expect them to understand that an American graduate student would be funded to come half way around the world to gather material for a dissertation on their revolution. Although I was eventually able to put that suspicion to rest, it reemerged during the Madiun rebellion when the underground Communist press accused me of being an advisor to the Republic's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. And then there was the head of military intelligence for the city of Yogyakarta, Major Brentel Susilo, who insisted I was a Dutch spy and tried to get me thrown out of the country.

And so let me now describe some of my impressions of conditions within the Republic at this time, as well as some of those features of the Revolution's history which I then observed but which seem to be now largely overlooked. As I'm sure you are aware, contrary to the UN sponsored Renville agreement, the Dutch maintained a tight blockade around the areas still controlled by the Republic in Java and Sumatra. The military truce line established by that agreement became a carefully guarded Dutch barrier not only to the import of food, cloth and medicine, but also to travel, into the Republic. During the first six weeks of my stay in Batavia, while I fruitlessly attempted to get permission from Dutch officials to cross over into the Republic,<sup>4</sup> I found that many of them believed that maintaining the pressure of

---

<sup>2</sup> I had come to Indonesia on a fellowship from the American Social Science Research Council, a private academically oriented American foundation dedicated to scholarship in the social sciences, with the object of gathering material for my doctoral dissertation on the Indonesian revolution. As a precautionary measure, however, in order to ensure greater freedom of travel I had also taken up an assignment as correspondent with Overseas News Agency, then the smallest of the three U.S. worldwide news agencies, and now defunct.

<sup>3</sup> "Ongewenste Amerikaanse Activiteit," file no. 56, compiled April 12, 1949, Inventarisen van de Persoonlijk Archief van S. H. Spoor, 2.21.036.01, Algemene Secretarie en de Daarbij Gedeponeerde Archieven (1942-1950), Algemene Rijksarchief, The Hague. Also NEFIS, file no. 3919, Intercepts betreffende Rep. tg.-verbinding Dokja-Bombay/New Delhi, 2.10.14.02, Algemene Secretarie en de Daarbij Gedeponeerde Archieven (1942-1950), Algemene Rijksarchief, The Hague.

<sup>4</sup> Dutch authorities had refused me permission to occupy one of the frequently empty seats on the plane they made available for flights to Yogyakarta to personnel of the UN's Committee of Good Offices for their occasional meetings held in Kaliurang and sometimes to important correspondents who accompanied them. Trains and buses no longer crossed into the Republic, and Dutch military officials had derisively assured me that I was free to cross if I could find my own transportation—which they were confident would not be available. To their utter surprise something of a miracle made it possible for me to meet their condition. In August it was ordered that all remaining US Lend-Lease military material used by the British in Indonesia during 1945-46 was to be turned over to the American consulate to be sold to the highest bidder, preference going to US World War II veterans. Among the items sold was a battered old jeep which a British Indian army sergeant had taken with him when he had deserted from his unit. Since I was apparently the only former GI bidding, I won the jeep and thus had acquired my own transportation. When the Dutch military nevertheless still refused me permission to cross the status quo line, Van Mook's office intervened—successfully—pointing out that since I'd fulfilled the military's own condition, and since I had press credentials, it would be embarrassing to continue denying me permission.

this blockade would undermine its will to survive.<sup>5</sup> They argued that what they referred to as the “left wing extremists” in Yogyakarta would soon be repudiated once the populace realized how the independence they championed actually brought greater suffering. Most colonial officials I met insisted that Indonesian nationalism was not deeply rooted and except for a small minority of radicals was only skin-deep.<sup>6</sup> Although American intelligence on Indonesia as developed by most junior officers in the State Department, such as the unusually perceptive Richard Stuart, was of high quality, the tendency for US officials at the senior, policy-making level was to rely either directly or indirectly on the Department’s influential European desks and base their understanding of what was going on in Indonesia primarily on the assessments of Dutch officials.<sup>7</sup> And though there were a few able members of the American consulate staff in Batavia, its Political Officer, Glen Abbey was hopeless. When he found I had finally gotten permission to cross over into the Republic he insisted on giving me a political briefing. Warning me that I would be entering what was essentially a pro-Communist country, he stressed that I should be especially on my guard for the *dalang* behind the Communist movement, the very dangerous Molly Bondan! ( I came to know her very well and to admire her selfless dedication to the Republic, and it was clear that she was no more a Communist than Glen Abby; but in those days the Dutch frequently sought to discredit foreign supporters of the Republic by calling them Communists).

Along with the majority of correspondents I did not believe the assertion of many Dutch officials that nationalism in the Republic was only “skin- deep,” and my disbelief was greatly reinforced by two experiences within twenty-four hours after I crossed into it. The first occurred within just over an hour in the town of Kebumen. A large and very angry crowd gathered around my jeep in the belief that I was a Dutch intruder. The Indonesian army through whose territory I had just driven knew what an American flag looked like and understood that I flew one on my jeep so that I wouldn’t be shot at, but, as Lt. Sutrisno, the very helpful officer who had met me at the status quo line, now explained, the general public did not appreciate this. They had been taught that the red and white flag stood for freedom, but that adding blue to it made it Dutch. He wasn’t able to convince the crowd I wasn’t a Dutchman and strongly urged me to address them in the hope I could convince

<sup>5</sup> Prime Minister Hatta carried this proposition a step further. In the middle of the Madiun rebellion, when he feared the Dutch would take advantage of that situation and attack the Republic, he said to me: “It has been the conscious policy of the Dutch to squeeze the Republic economically through their blockade in an effort to break it. It was their belief that a sustained blockade would create such bad economic conditions that communism would grow within the Republic and that because of the increasing strength of communism there they—the Dutch—would be provided with an excuse for sending their troops into the Republic to clean out the Communists. As long as the blockade continues, communism will continue to have adherents, or at least a popular following based upon the deep discontent brought about by the conditions resulting from the blockade. Thus the appeal of communism will not die with the mere victory of the Government forces over the Communists.”

<sup>6</sup> Seasoned colonial officials with significant experience in Indonesia whom I interviewed, such as Hubertus Van Mook, P. J. Koets, and Charles van der Plas, readily acknowledged the strength and widespread character of Indonesian nationalism, but this was not evident in the face their administration or the Netherlands government presented to foreign governments.

<sup>7</sup> It must be understood that within the Department of State, the European desks were much more influential than the newly born Southeast Asia Division, whose senior staff were then nearly all recently added temporary personnel seconded from American Universities, rather than senior foreign service personnel such as occupied the very Eurocentric Netherlands and French desks of the Department. In fact, the only country of Southeast Asia where those who worked in the Southeast Asia Division had a major influence was Thailand, which was, of course, unique because it had not been a colony.

them of this before they became violent. I was afraid my poor knowledge of Indonesian wouldn't be adequate, but I was frightened enough so that my adrenelin surged and I summoned up more of the language than I thought I knew. After stumbling through an attempt to differentiate the flags (the Dutch one has no stars I emphasized!) and a simplistic, but rousing, comparison of the Indonesian and American anticolonial revolutions, I sensed that the crowd's hostility had vanished, and when I concluded with a Merdeka salute there was loud applause. Certainly that crowd's national consciousness was more than skin deep!

The next day, after we had arrived in Yogyakarta, I had another clear lesson. Lt. Sutrisno, wishing to keep me out of trouble such as we'd risked at Kebumen, suggested that it would be safer if my jeep carried an Indonesian flag as well as an American one. We found a blacksmith who was willing to mount the two of them, but he had certain conditions—to which I readily agreed: the Indonesian flag would have to occupy the place of honor on the right fender, and its pole would have to be ten centimeters taller than that flying the American flag. That was certainly a carefully calibrated measure of nationalism!

Having observed the freedom of assembly and speech in Kebumen, I soon discovered that these qualities were widespread in the Republic. I was impressed that a state with its back against the wall under the omnipresent threat of further Dutch attack was willing to countenance such freedom. But this openness was something the leaders of the Republic were proud of. The press was remarkably outspoken, with a multitude of newspapers representing a whole spectrum of parties and ideologies. They refrained, of course, from publishing much about troop movements or dispositions, but I was struck by their freedom to criticize government policies—which some did with great vigor. The contrast with the stifling atmosphere in Dutch-controlled areas could not have been greater.

There was also a remarkable degree of freedom of speech. Thus, though the famous Communist leader Musso returned to Indonesia from the Soviet Union under a considerable cloud of suspicion, the students were free to arrange for him to speak to a massive crowd where admission was open to the public. Having attended the meeting along with some student friends, I discussed it afterwards with several government leaders, all of whom had found the exercise a healthy one and indicative of the benefit of such freedom. For Musso had lost prestige by being exposed to the open scrutiny of intelligent students and proved unable to answer effectively their questions about Tito's relations with the Soviet Union and the Cominform, Gottwald's actions in Czechoslovakia, and the status of religion in Russia.<sup>8</sup>

The widespread and deeply rooted nationalist feeling, nourished by Indonesian civilian leaders over more than three decades, was, of course, an essential precondition for providing the patriotic popular milieu for the successful efforts of the Republic's armed forces. But it was a factor greatly underrated by General Spoor, the Dutch commander, and his officers.<sup>9</sup> And they simply could not believe that Hamengku Buwono IX, the Sultan of Yogyakarta, could have been a nationalist supporter of the Republic. Indeed, the slogan of Dutch troops at this time was "On to Yogya to free the Sultan!"

But the sultan was in fact one of the most ardent supporters of the Republic, and what he wanted to free Indonesia from was Dutch rule. When Dutch forces finally occupied Yogyakarta following their attack of December 19, 1948, no one could have been more surprised than General Spoor and his senior officers at the sultan's unwillingness to cooperate with them and his refusal even to consult with them until after he had first

<sup>8</sup> The meeting was held on September 5, 1948 under the auspices of the Indonesian Student Federation.

<sup>9</sup> This is strikingly evident in the above-cited personal archive of General Spoor (see above, n. 3).

spoken to "Sukarno, Hatta and other colleagues" (all under Dutch arrest).<sup>10</sup> Nothing could have more clearly shown the Dutch miscalculation of the sultan's views than their blundering effort to influence him in their favor by flying in their own tame sultan, Hamid II of Pontianak, to reason with him. Hamengku Buwono refused even to see Hamid.<sup>11</sup> Spoor's exasperated disillusionment with Yogyakarta's sultan came in his highly secret message to Louis J.M. Beel, the High Representative of the Netherlands Crown in Indonesia, of February 28, 1949.<sup>12</sup> In this he complained, among other things, of the sultan's orders to continue guerrilla warfare against Dutch forces and to isolate their troops through a system of blockade; of his conducting twice-weekly meetings within his kraton with two of the Republic's ministers together with underground members of the KNIP (the Republic's parliament); and providing financial support to the two principal Republican military leaders in the area, Lt. Colonel Latief and Lt. Colonel Suharto, for the regrouping and reorganization of scattered Republican army units there. Indeed, since almost the beginning of the Dutch occupation of Yogyakarta, the sultan's aide, Selo Soemardjan, had been regularly climbing over the kraton wall at night to provide liaison between the sultan and guerrilla forces in the area.

Even at this early stage Indonesian nationalism was strongly neutralist. Neither of the great powers was trusted. American financial support to the Netherlands was known to be approximately equal to what it was spending on mounting its military campaign in Indonesia.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, by the end of 1948 the United States had provided the Netherlands not only with \$359 million in Marshall Plan aid, but since the end of World War II also with Export-Import Bank credits of \$300 million, credits for the purchase of US war surplus supplies totaling \$130 million, and \$190 million worth of civilian supplies as military relief.<sup>14</sup> Knowledge of this massive American financial backing of the Netherlands and the sight of modern US equipment, sometimes still bearing the US insignia,<sup>15</sup> had together already done much to weaken Indonesian confidence in the United States.

But trust in Washington was further undermined by what was widely regarded as an American betrayal over the January 1948 Renville Agreement, and during the spring and summer of 1948 this resulted in a broad shift in public opinion that benefitted the Soviet Union and the Indonesian Communist Party. However, following the Madiun rebellion, the

<sup>10</sup> Dispatch from Major (GS) J. G. Smit to Colonel D. R. A. van Langen, Commander of "T" Brigade, Yogyakarta, January 25, 1949, file no. 3070, Inventarisen van de Persoonlijk Archief van S. H. Spoor, 2.21.036.01.

<sup>11</sup> Report from Col. D. R. A. van Langen on Visit of Sultan Hamid II of Pontianak to Jogja, January 10-11, 1949. Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Report from Lt. Gen. S. H. Spoor to de Hoge Vertegenwoordiger van de Kroon (Beel), February 28, 1949. Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> This was well understood by the Republic's leaders, as US intelligence knew. Thus, as early as November 1947 the C.I.A. reported: "Already in Indonesia and Indochina the native population tends to regard Dutch and French efforts to reestablish their control as having been made with US support. To the extent that the European Recovery Plan [the Marshall Plan] enhances Dutch and French capabilities in Southeast Asia, native resentment will increase." *Review of the World Situation as It Relates to the United States, November 14, 1947*, Southeast Asia, paragraph 15 (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1947).

<sup>14</sup> *The New York Times*, December 22, 1948, p. 1 quoted in Robert J. McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War; The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1945-49* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 256.

<sup>15</sup> Although Secretary of State James Byrnes had already in 1946 ordered all US insignia removed from American military equipment being used in Indonesia (as well as in Vietnam), there were still instances of the continued use of such insignia, as I witnessed in the Dutch attack against Yogyakarta on December 19, 1948. A few months later I saw some members of the elite Dutch Marine Brigade, one a major, clad in battle fatigues bearing the clear inch-high lettering "US Marines."

belief grew that Musso's return to Indonesia only a month before the rebellion broke out meant that the Soviet Union was implicated, and this led to a comparable abandonment of trust in Moscow. Nothing, I think, more graphically described the disillusionment with both great powers and a determination to walk a neutralist path equidistant from each than the widely distributed poster then brought out by the Republic's Ministry of Information. On rough, domestically produced paper it depicted on either side what its artist assumed the capital buildings of Washington and Moscow looked like, while in the center of the poster stood the Borobudur. The capitals of the two super powers were crossed out but the Borobudur was left standing, unsullied by any such excrescence. In large letters underneath was the motto: "Tidak Berpedoman: Washington atau Moskow—Tetapi Rep. Indonesia" ("Don't be led by Washington or Moscow, but by the Republic of Indonesia").

The effect of the United States' renegeing on the Renville Agreement has generally been grossly underrated, and it could, I believe, be argued that it significantly affected the course of Indonesian history. Indeed, it could be plausibly posited that without this American betrayal the Madiun rebellion might never have occurred. The irony is that the rebellion and the Republic's response to it constituted the major factor in shifting US backing away from the Netherlands in favor of the Republic. For once the government led by Hatta and Sukarno had put down the rebellion it was no longer possible for the Dutch to make American officials and the US Congress believe—as previously many of them had—that the leaders of the Republic were heavily influenced by communism and that their government constituted a bridge to an ultimately Communist Indonesia. The shift in the American position was discernible not only in the altered, less pro-Dutch, posture of the US representative on the UN's Committee of Good Offices, Merle Cochran. A much more dramatic, though quite unpublicized, indication of the change in US policy was the quiet, week-long visit of the first American CIA agent sent to the Republic, Arturo Campbell. Arriving by plane in November, after it had become clear the Madiun rebellion had been crushed, he quickly worked out arrangements to interview personally officers of the Police Mobile Brigade to determine which would be sent to the United States for special training.<sup>16</sup> In view of the strong public attachment to an unaligned foreign policy, it must have been very difficult for Prime Minister Hatta to agree to this apparent exception to the Republic's neutralist stance, and probably that is why the visit was kept so secret that Dutch intelligence did not learn about it until much later. Presumably, sensing the change in US policy favorable to the Republic, Hatta wished to avoid any action that would risk further American support of the Netherlands, especially at a time when an all-out Dutch attack was regarded as probably imminent. Refusal to accept the secret US police training plan might have done that.

In referring to the conduct of the United States during the eight months period between the Renville Agreement and the Madiun rebellion, the word "betrayal" was the term used by both Amir Sjarifuddin, the Republic's Prime Minister who signed the agreement, and Frank Graham, the American representative on the UN's Committee of Good Offices (GOC), who played the central role in fashioning it. On the basis of what he regarded as

---

<sup>16</sup> I could hardly avoid Campbell for he was put up in the same three-room government guest house where Hamid Alkadri and I were then staying. Having finally succeeded in living down allegations that I was a US government agent, I found it especially awkward to be quartered in the same house as Campbell. He kept insisting that I, as the only American living in Yogyakarta, should help him. When I refused he became apoplectically angry and denounced me then, and later in Washington. During his stay he had at least one meeting with Cochran and appeared to be well looked after by the head of Yogyakarta city intelligence, Major Brentel Susilo.

firm assurances from the US State Department, Graham had given Sjarifuddin equally firm assurances that the United States stood prepared to insist that the Netherlands live up to its obligations under the Renville compromise.<sup>17</sup>

As is well known, the concessions made by Sjarifuddin's government in signing that agreement on January 19, 1948 provoked the withdrawal of the Masjumi and PNI from his cabinet and cost him the Prime Ministership, that position now being taken over by the Vice-President Mohammad Hatta.<sup>18</sup> Loss of this position did not in itself, however, destroy Sjarifuddin's political career. That occurred only after it became apparent during the spring and early summer of 1948 that the Republic's implementation of its central concession in the Renville Agreement was not even beginning to be matched by the Netherlands. By the end of February the Hatta government had fulfilled the Republic's major concession—the withdrawal of some 35,000 troops from the major guerrilla bases in the generally mountainous terrain bypassed by Dutch armored columns in their assault of the previous summer.<sup>19</sup> The Netherlands, however, refused to honor the major quid pro quo it had agreed to—the holding of UN-monitored plebiscites in the territories its army had overrun to determine whether their populations wished to adhere to the Republic or join regimes sponsored by the Dutch. Instead in these areas the Dutch cavalierly proceeded to establish unilaterally a series of puppet states. The fact that this Netherlands-controlled congeries of artificial mini-states was termed a *federal* political system had long-term adverse consequences. It so strongly stigmatized the concept of federalism as to undermine seriously prospects for adoption of any system of substantial administrative and fiscal decentralization in the postrevolutionary period, even though it became clear that in a country as large and varied as Indonesia this might well have been the healthiest course to take. Had that been done, as Hatta and Mohammad Natsir so persistently urged, the likelihood of regional rebellions, such as those in the mid-1950s, would clearly have been diminished. Additionally, the Dutch continued to maintain their tight blockade of the Republic—refusing entry of even desperately needed medicines.<sup>20</sup>

Though Hatta, after succeeding Sjarifuddin as prime minister on January 29, 1948, felt constrained to carry out the Renville agreement, he was not regarded as responsible for it or for the mistaken reliance on American support that had led his predecessor to sign it. It was Sjarifuddin who had to bear the weight of that increasingly heavy stigma. Neither Graham nor Sjarifuddin could, of course, have anticipated that influential senior officials in the US

<sup>17</sup> For comprehensive treatments of the Renville provisions see chapter 3 in Alastair M. Taylor, *Indonesian Independence and the United Nations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1960), and McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, especially pp. 191–214.

<sup>18</sup> Neither the Masjumi nor the PNI was anxious to assume responsibility for leading a cabinet that would be required to carry out the onerous terms of the Renville Agreement (nor was it easy for them to find a mutually acceptable formula for dividing cabinet posts), and finally President Sukarno appointed Hatta, who as vice-president stood above party, to form a presidential cabinet, enrolling as much party support as possible.

<sup>19</sup> The withdrawals were surprisingly rapid, the Dutch acknowledging that a total of 28,735 troops had already been withdrawn by February 8, 1949. Of these, 19,418 had come out of West Java, 2,833 from Middle Java, and 5,954 from East Java. Report to General Spoor from Captain Th. H. De Loo, "Evacuation TNI," March 3, 1948, file no. 1876, KAB/514, Algemene Secretarie en de Daarbij Gedeponeerde Archiven (1942-1950), Algemene Rijksarchief, The Hague.

<sup>20</sup> The only exception I could discover was medicine for inoculation against bubonic plague, which in September was beginning to spread in the Republic, and which if unchecked could, of course, move into Dutch-occupied areas of Java. Every morning I could see a long queue form outside the eye clinic of Dr. Yap of people going blind because of dietary deficiency. With a vitamin concentrate easily obtainable outside the Republic he could arrest their loss of sight, but the Dutch, he said, had repeatedly refused him permission to import it.

government would have concluded that the concessions Graham had exacted from the Dutch went too far and should not be insisted upon. Regarded by the State Department as too accommodating to the Republic's position, Graham was removed soon after the signing of Renville and replaced by Coert DuBois, a regular foreign service officer known to be pro-Dutch. DuBois quickly disabused Republican leaders of the trust they had placed in the United States, on several key issues insisting on a position much closer to that of the Netherlands than Graham had previously indicated.<sup>21</sup> Though by June DuBois had become thoroughly disillusioned by Dutch policy and had begun to report critically on it to Washington, illness forced his departure in early July. He was replaced by H. Merle Cochran, a senior career foreign service officer, with "well-known sympathies for the Netherlands."<sup>22</sup> Cochran's affinity for the Dutch position gradually began to erode, but not significantly so until after the Madiun rebellion.<sup>23</sup>

And so right up to the time of Madiun Amir Sjarifuddin had no reason for believing there would be any change in American policy toward Indonesia, no basis for assuming it would not continue to favor the Netherlands, and specifically no basis for believing it would return to the interpretation of the Renville Agreement that Graham had represented. This was clearly evident in the discussion I had with Sjarifuddin on August 27, two days before he announced his decision to fuse his Socialist Party with the Indonesian Communist Party. I remember vividly the keen interest he showed in American presidential politics and the likely outcome of the election due to be held in just two months time. He had already, quite correctly, come to the dismal conclusion that a victory of Dewey over Truman (an outcome that was then the conventional wisdom in the US) would not be likely to improve American policy towards Indonesia. Then, mentioning his great admiration for Franklin Roosevelt, he asked me when I thought the progressive forces in the United States associated with his name could be expected to reassert themselves. It seemed clear that this couldn't happen for at least another four years, and when I said so his face became drawn and, making a helpless gesture with his hands, he indicated that had been his fear and concluded; "That will be too late."

Keen disillusionment with the United States was not limited to Sjarifuddin. It was by this time surging on a broad front through the ranks of many of the most politically conscious supporters of the Republic, and in an increasingly bipolarized world, with just two superpowers, it was understandable that growing numbers would react by looking hopefully to the Soviet Union and that many would be more inclined to follow the Indonesian Communist Party. This shift was clearly evident, and poor as Soviet intelligence on Indonesia was in this period,<sup>24</sup> Moscow could not help be aware of it. Presumably this accounts for the timing of Musso's return.

While the Madiun rebellion was still in progress Sukarno observed to me that the economic conditions within the Republic brought about by the blockade had been chiefly responsible for the attraction of communism. Musso and Amir, he said, "had made political capital of the fact that negotiations with the Dutch have produced nothing. If only a

<sup>21</sup> For a more detailed analysis see Robert J. McMahon's excellent and carefully researched study, *Colonialism and Cold War*, cited above, especially pp. 213-215.

<sup>22</sup> McMahon's apt characterization, *ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>23</sup> This shift was evident in his cables to the State Department of November 1 and 6, 1948. See McMahon's reference to them, *ibid.*, pp. 245-246.

<sup>24</sup> Ruth McVey clearly establishes the poor quality of Soviet intelligence on Indonesia during this period in her scholarly study, *The Soviet View of the Indonesian Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1957).

reasonable political settlement can be achieved, the wind will be taken out of their sails. If a reasonable settlement can be achieved and the blockade lifted the basis of the Communists' appeal will disappear."

Certainly the force of this new pro-Soviet tide was noted by many Asian specialists in the US State Department and strongly voiced by the acting director of US army intelligence, General A. R. Bolling. In mid-June he observed that the Dutch had not lived up to the political principles in the Renville Agreement and that a breakdown in the negotiations would probably lead to a renewal of fighting. This, he warned, would lead to the accusation that the US was "turning its back on native independence movements," and "the Indonesian Republic and other sincere independence movements in Southeast Asia will turn to Russia in desperation."<sup>25</sup> But Bolling's views were not matched by the senior policy-making officials of the Truman administration. Their Eurocentricity still precluded adopting a position on Indonesia significantly at variance with that of the Netherlands. It would take the Madiun rebellion itself to bring about any fundamental change in American policy.

There has been some dispute as to whether, despite Sjarifuddin's public announcement that he had for long been a Communist, he actually had been one. Certainly in their talks with me, Hatta, Sjahrir, and Sukarno thought not. They believed it was against the background of his traumatic disillusionment with the United States that his fear of losing his potential for political leadership in the Republic brought him to conclude that his prospects for retaining power and influence required that he join forces with the seemingly popular Musso.

Another matter at issue regarding Sjarifuddin is that of the responsibility for his execution some three weeks after he had been captured on December 1. General Nasution, has told me that the army had its own standing orders that in the case of a Dutch attack, army units were not to be encumbered by the extra burden of taking along and protecting prisoners. It was on the basis of those orders, he said, that Colonel Gatot Subroto (Military Governor of Surakarta, where Amir was being held) made the decision to execute Amir and ten of his detained associates. On the other hand, Hatta told me that he was furious that Sjarifuddin had been shot without a trial and in defiance of what he said were *his* orders that the army evacuate him and other captured rebel leaders in the case of a Dutch attack.

Another question at issue was the decision of Sukarno and Hatta not to accompany army units when they evacuated Yogyakarta during the sudden Dutch attack of December 19. In the first place, these two leaders were suddenly thrown off stride because they had expected to be flying out that day on a plane supplied by India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.<sup>26</sup> Hatta was to fly as far as Bukittinggi, where he was to take charge of the Republic's government on Sumatra, and Sukarno on to New Delhi, and then, it was hoped, on to New York to apply his oratory in defense of the Republic's cause at the United Nations.<sup>27</sup> That prospect in itself might have been enough to have precipitated a Dutch preemptive attack. But the report from abroad on December 15—whether accurate or not—that Nehru had invited Indonesia to establish a government in exile in India (and

<sup>25</sup> McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, p. 231.

<sup>26</sup> Nasution notes that as late as the night before the Dutch attack personnel in the presidential palace were busily engaged in making preparations for Sukarno's departure for India. Dr. A. H. Nasution, *Memenuhi Panggilan Tugas, Jilid 2: Kenangan Masa Gerilya* (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 1983), p. 77.

<sup>27</sup> I knew the general nature of their travel plans because Hatta had arranged for me to accompany him to Bukittinggi. (There was an empty seat, available to me, because two, or possibly more, Sumatran officials of the Republic were to join the plane there and be flown on to New Delhi or beyond.)

presumably Dutch concern that if Sukarno were abroad he could head it) was probably an important additional factor in the suddenness and speed of the Netherlands' move against Yogyakarta.<sup>28</sup> And also significant in determining precisely which day the Dutch chose to launch their attack was that, thanks to having broken the Republic's secret code, they knew at least two days in advance that its army on Java planned to launch several days of training maneuvers to begin December 19.<sup>29</sup> In fact two days before launching their attack the Dutch in Batavia were already working out plans for the major press conference they expected to hold just afterwards in an effort to justify it.<sup>30</sup> Nasution has acknowledged that the Dutch attack was timed to coincide with these maneuvers,<sup>31</sup> thus making the situation very difficult for the Republic's army.

While they knew that an evacuation of troops from the city of Yogyakarta had been planned if it were attacked, Sukarno and Hatta could hardly have been reassured by the absence of any real resistance, by the Republic's armed forces in the defense of its airport,<sup>32</sup> or by the lack of their inhibiting fire as Dutch troops that had landed there rapidly traversed the five rural miles between the airport and the city.<sup>33</sup> Hatta's car had been attacked by a Dutch plane as he drove from Kaliurang early that morning to head a cabinet meeting in the capital, and presumably he could readily appreciate the capacity of Dutch airpower to strike anywhere in the Republic. But air strikes apart, he calculated that in case he and Sukarno took to the hills, it would take at least a battalion to defend them. And when Hatta's cabinet met that morning, it was concluded that there were not sufficient troops still available to provide adequate protection.

Moreover, even though Sukarno and Hatta didn't then know that the Dutch had cracked the army's supposedly secret communications code, they had good reason to believe that its intelligence was defective. Otherwise why when the Dutch attacked should Colonel

<sup>28</sup> According to Dutch intelligence, decoding a message intercepted from the Republic's office in New York (relayed via India), the *New York Times* of December 15, 1948 had misinterpreted a briefing by an official of the Republic. Judging from this source, all that had actually been said was that Sukarno would make a "friendship visit" to India. NEFIS, file no. 3919, Intercepts betreffende Rep. tg.-verbinding Dokja-Bombay/New Delhi, 2.10.14.02, Algemene Secretarie en de Daarbij Gedeponeerde Archieven (1942-1950), Algemene Rijksarchief, The Hague.

<sup>29</sup> Dutch intelligence (NEFIS) intercepted a message of December 17, 1948 from the Republic's Minister of Interior to the Governor of West Java (in Serang) informing him that these maneuvers were to be held from December 19 to 27. *Dagelijkse Overzicht van de Belanagrijkste Inlichting Uitgegeven door de NEFIS/CMI*, April 1946-January 1949, file no. 3877, Inventaris van het archief van de algemene secretarie, Algemene Secretarie en de Daarbij Gedeponeerde Archieven (1942-1950), Algemene Rijksarchief, The Hague.

<sup>30</sup> Memorandum No. 3003 (December 16, 1948) from Hoofd Regerings Voolichtings Dienst (Ozinga) to de Hoge Vertegenwoordiger der Kroon in Indonesie, file no. 2888, Inventaris van het archief van de algemene secretarie, Algemene Secretarie en de Daarbij Gedeponeerde Archieven (1942-1950), Algemene Rijksarchief, The Hague.

<sup>31</sup> Nasution, *Memenuhi Panggilan Tugas*, p 74.

<sup>32</sup> Salim Said, in his study of General Sudirman, also notes that there was "no meaningful resistance" at the air field and that "within one hour the airfield was under Dutch control." In his end notes he cites General Nasution's observation that the airfield lacked anti-aircraft guns or a 12.7 caliber machine gun. Salim Said, *Genesis of Power* (Singapore: ISEAS, and Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1991), pp. 96, 124. But dispersed rifle fire alone against the parachutists as they floated down could have constituted enough of a deterrent to have bought significant additional time for troops desiring to prepare positions defending the five-mile approach to Yogyakarta.

<sup>33</sup> As Dutch forces moved up Jalan Terban Taman behind a barrage of machine-gun fire, they were briefly slowed by a few Republican army snipers, but the only unit that advanced to meet them were half-a-dozen poorly clad peasants armed with bamboo spears whom some fool had ordered into battle; they must have been mowed down by the machine gun fire, and I never saw them again.

Nasution, the head of the Java command, and most of his staff, have been on a tour of military units in East Java? And if its intelligence had shown a Dutch attack to be really imminent, how could the army in the Republican areas as a whole have chosen December 19 to go on training exercises rather than assuming a more defensive posture? In view of the clearly evident poor quality of the army's intelligence made manifest during the morning of December 19, Sukarno and Hatta had good reason to question whether, even if they were protected by troops of a much better quality than those that had been assigned to guard the airfield, they could avoid being captured by the Dutch. If they had known of Nasution's own bleak assessment of the quality of the army's intelligence they would undoubtedly have been even more cautious about entrusting their lives to army protection. Apart from its failure to anticipate the timing of the Dutch attack, Nasution faulted army intelligence for the poor integration of its component elements and its being too much concerned with internal political questions.<sup>34</sup>

It has occurred to me that some of the army's intelligence shortcomings might have been partly attributable to its choice of intelligence chief for the city of Yogyakarta: the pompous and paranoid Major Brentel Susilo. Fortunately his limitations were not characteristic of the Republic's intelligence operations as a whole, otherwise it might have been disastrous. Despite the very real intelligence problems the Republic faced, he seemed to find plenty of time to harass me. He confiscated most of the letters I tried to send out—including two that I felt were sufficiently in the Republic's interests for me to urge him to release them. One involved my efforts to get medicines critically needed by the city's clinics through the Dutch blockade. The other was to John Foster Dulles, the only really influential member of the American foreign policy establishment I knew and was an effort to counteract the anti-Republican Dutch propaganda to which he and his colleagues were being subjected.<sup>35</sup> My pleading with the major to let these letters go out on one of the occasional blockade-running planes simply enraged him. He showed no interest at all in the possibility of getting medicine into the Republic or in my effort to give this American foreign policy leader a less Dutch oriented view of the Republic. Indeed, when later the CIA's agent, Arturo Campbell, arrived, Brentel Susilo obligingly turned my letters over to him for his inspection, prompting Campbell to search through papers in my room when I was away.<sup>36</sup>

When after Campbell's departure I again appealed to Major Susilo to release my letters, he threatened to throw me out of the country, and in his attempt to do so went to Haji Salim, the Foreign Minister, and charged that I was a secret agent of the Dutch. When Salim pressed him for his proof, Brentel said that his intelligence files proved conclusively that I was actually a former employee of the Oost Java Stoomtramweg Maatschappij (The East Java Steam Tramway Co.)—and thus surely now a well-disguised Dutch agent. He never explained whether his investigation had disclosed that as a youth in this pre-war period I had been a precocious under-age member of the company's board of directors or simply an engineer who drove one of their wood-burning locomotives—that would surely have been the most glamorous scenario. Since both Dutch intelligence and the underground

<sup>34</sup> Nasution, *Memenuhi Panggilan Tugas*, p. 66.

<sup>35</sup> One letter was to the American Friends Service Committee to try to arrange for badly needed medicines to be flown in through the Dutch blockade. In the other, to John Foster Dulles, then the principal foreign affairs advisor to the Republican Party and its presidential candidate, Thomas Dewey, I contested the badly distorted Dutch version of events and characterization of the Republic's negotiating position. (I had come to know Dulles through his son, who had been one of my closest friends in college.)

<sup>36</sup> My friend, Hamid Algadri, who had a room in the same house, witnessed him going through my belongings. Campbell was evidently interested in my relationship with Dulles.

Communist press had at least charged me with being an agent of the State Department, Haji Salim chuckled at my loss of status.<sup>37</sup> He explained that Brentel had caused his ministry a lot of trouble, but that since this major was in a position of power he had to be humored—though not to the extent of my being expelled from the Republic.

Despite their code-breaking advantage, it seems to me that Dutch intelligence was on balance no better than that of the Republic, and with respect to political matters was worse. Following their occupation of Yogyakarta, the head of their political intelligence, Captain Vosveld, appeared to share all the limitations that had characterized his Indonesian counterpart, Major Brentel Susilo, but was reported to suffer from the added disability of getting roaring drunk every evening (the condition in which I encountered him).

When I returned to Yogyakarta on January 6, 1949, two and a half weeks after its occupation,<sup>38</sup> I found that, partly no doubt due to the limitations of Capt. Vosveld, the Dutch had been able to identify only a small portion of the Republican underground there. Thus, despite often being under surveillance during the four days before I was arrested,<sup>39</sup> I was able to make contact with and talk with a number of its members. And, thanks to the courage of Jo Abdurachman and Jo Kurnianingrat, I was able to obtain and smuggle out with me three important documents.<sup>40</sup> These seem to have been overlooked by Indonesian historians, but were a source of considerable worry for Dutch authorities when they later learned about them.<sup>41</sup> For these were typewritten copies of the proclamations Sukarno, Hatta, and Natsir had prepared on the morning of December 19 for delivery over Yogyakarta radio, but which could not be read before Dutch planes destroyed the transmitters. They all strongly exhorted the Indonesian people to continue fighting against the Dutch.

These calls for resistance and noncooperation<sup>42</sup> were clearly reflected in the conduct of nearly all of Yogyakarta's population. Contrary to the picture of a cooperative and welcoming population that the Netherlands government was presenting to the outside world,

<sup>37</sup> I do not mean to demean or underrate the importance of the Oost Java Stoomtramweg Maatschappij. Figures for 1939 (the last available to me) show that its rails stretched over a total of 677 kilometers, that it operated twenty-one woodburning steam locomotives, ninety freight cars, and fifty-one passenger cars. I'm afraid it was not a very egalitarian enterprise, for of the 4,923 passengers carried during the year only forty-eight rode first or second class, while 4,874 rode third class. *Indisch Verslag 1941, II Statistisch Jaaroverzicht Van Nederlandsch-Indie Over Het Jaar 1940* (Batavia: Landsdukkerij, 1941), pp. 416-17.

<sup>38</sup> Because the more important journalists, being obliged to report on the situation throughout all of Indonesia and not just that in the recently Dutch-occupied areas, were tied down to their desks in Batavia, I was apparently the first journalist to visit Yogyakarta after the Dutch occupation.

<sup>39</sup> My arrest was apparently triggered by a visit to Abikusno Tjokrosujoso (Chairman of the Sarekat Islam Indonesia party) to check on the rumor that Dutch soldiers had shot and killed his two sons, which I found had indeed been the case.

<sup>40</sup> They had inserted them between the pages of casualty reports, which they were able to put into my hands when I visited the Red Cross office. When the Dutch military police released me in Batavia, I took the documents directly to the Australian member of the UN's Good Offices Committee, Thomas Critchley, in whose office copies were made, one set for him and another which I gave to Jusuf Ronodipuro, a leader of the Republic's underground in Batavia.

<sup>41</sup> Dutch intelligence appears to have first got wind of these proclamations only on January 17, 1949, but did not confirm their authenticity and importance to General Spoor until two days later. J. M. Bruyn Buitenkantoor C.M.I., Batavia, January 17; and Dr. J. M. Somer, Director CMI, January 19, 1949, file no. 2893, Algemene Secretarie Batavia, 1942-1945, 2.10.14.02, Algemene Rijksarchief, the Hague.

<sup>42</sup> These exhortations were strongly echoed by the broadcasts from Sumatra by Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, whom Hatta and Sukarno had appointed as head of the Republic's Emergency Government.

not only was their military grip in some areas of Yogyakarta partial and tenuous, but according to B. J. Muller, the outspokenly candid head of the Dutch Economic Administration in the city, out of a civilian population of approximately 400,000 only 6,000 were working for the Dutch—most of them simply to get food. And out of about 10,000 civil servants no more than 150 remained at their jobs, according to Muller, because the sultan had expressly ordered them to do so as not to bring unnecessary suffering to the civilian population by crippling the hospitals, water works, power station, and sanitation.<sup>43</sup> But this situation was decidedly absent from the economic sections of the generally up-beat report by General Spoor to the High Representative of the Crown and other senior Dutch officials describing the situation he found in Yogyakarta on January 4, just two days prior to my talk with Muller. Indeed, despite Muller's obvious authority in such matters, Spoor made no reference to him.<sup>44</sup>

This Dutch Commander-in-Chief and those who read his report must have been deeply shocked by what occurred in Yogyakarta on the night of January 9, just five days after his visit there. The ability and bravery shown by the Republic's armed forces must have given him serious doubts as to the capacity of the Dutch army to defeat them. It was then that several Indonesian battalions fought their way into the very center of the city, penetrating right up to the back door of the Hotel Merdeka, where the senior Dutch administrative officers were quartered, before being driven off by Dutch tanks and armored cars.<sup>45</sup> I've never understood why this attack, which I personally witnessed,<sup>46</sup> appears to be absent from accounts of the revolution I have read. But its success must have considerably raised the morale of the Republic's armed forces, and it certainly left the Dutch badly shaken.

It was not nationalism alone that characterized the citizenry of the Republic during my stay there. Also prominent, but more difficult to define, was another broadly based quality undoubtedly related to the thrust of nationalism. This I think can best be described as a sense of shared purpose—not simply for independence from the Netherlands, but also for far-reaching social change. The nature of this objective was not precisely delineated for many of those who desired this change, nor their way to it clear. But for most of the Republic's leadership there was a strong commitment to greater social justice, and independence was regarded as its indispensable precondition. For nearly all of them the route to that goal was some variant of socialism. This was no mere intellectual exercise. It was, of

<sup>43</sup> Interview with B. J. Muller, Yogyakarta, January 7, 1949.

<sup>44</sup> Only very recently, thanks to the cooperation of the Algemene Rijksarchief in the Hague, was I able to obtain a copy of Spoor's report, "Verslag van de Besprekingen te Djokjakarta op 4 Januari 1949 te 9.30 tot 15.15 Betreffende de Algemene Situatie te Djokjakarta en Soerakarta," file no. 3069, Inventarisen van de Persoonlijk Archief van S. H. Spoor, 2.21.036.01, Algemene Secretarie en de Daarbij Gedeponeerde Archieven (1942-1950), Algemene Rijksarchief, The Hague.

<sup>45</sup> Machine gun and rifle bullets hit the Hotel Merdeka (which the Dutch had renamed "Grand Hotel"), a mortar shell hit the roof of Toko Terang across the street from the hotel, and just as a squad of Indonesian sappers was beginning to lay dynamite charges at the rear wall of the hotel, it was driven off by Dutch snipers on the hotel's roof. (A month later I was able to interview the lieutenant in charge of the dynamite squad.) I was informed that the attacking battalions were from the Police Mobile Brigade and the KRIS (Kebaktian Rakjat Indonesia Sulawesi). Dr. Sam Ratu Langi, probably the most respected nationalist leader from Sulawesi, had told me about six weeks before that there were about 7,000 members of the KRIS on Java, with arms enough for between two and three thousand. I was informed that there had been a previous, smaller scale, attack by other elements of the Republic's army on December 29 which had penetrated to about a thousand yards from the city center.

<sup>46</sup> Thanks to the Dutch, who after arresting me earlier that day had placed me under guard on the top floor of the Merdeka Hotel, I had a particularly good vantage point from which to observe these activities.

course, partly a consequence of experience with colonial rule, which many understandably tended to equate with capitalism. But usually it was also a carefully considered pragmatic calculation reflecting their appraisal of existing economic and social conditions.

As is well known, leaders of the Partai Nasional Indonesia and of Sjahrir's Indonesian Socialist Party regarded themselves as socialists. Though attracted to much of Marxism, they rejected communism and were in varying degrees ideologically eclectic and nondoctrinaire in their espousal of socialism. In Western European terms they might, I think, best be described as radical social democrats.

Sukarno, too, rejected communism, emphasizing that the concepts of class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat were incompatible with Indonesian values. He clearly regarded himself as a socialist, and so did Mohammad Hatta, who insisted on a mixed economy where in addition to a substantial socialist sector there would be a large cooperative component, with some room for third place in the mixture for small-scale capitalism. And both leaders emphasized to me that Islam and socialism were fully compatible. That was also the view of those who led the influential progressive wing of the largest Islamic party, the Masjumi. These men—notably Mohammad Natsir, Mohamad Roem and Sjafruddin Prawiranegara—then all regarded themselves as “religious socialists.”<sup>47</sup> In a small book representative of their views, Sjafruddin, while agreeing that the Indonesian revolution called for some elements of socialism similar to Marxian socialism, rejected historical materialism and the concept of class struggle and posited a socialism based upon what he referred to as “the duty of man towards man and the duty of man towards God.” He was adamant in insisting that whatever the variants of socialism espoused by different groups of Indonesians, “If the elements of socialism do not exist, the national revolution means nothing to us as it does not give us new hope.” And along with leaders of other parties he saw Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution as expressive of socialism.<sup>48</sup>

Some of this may sound very strange today, and I think it is important at least to ask why during the course of the revolution, and in the years immediately thereafter, so little progress was made towards the Republic's widely shared socialist objectives. I certainly don't feel qualified to provide a good answer, but let me at least suggest what I believe to be a few of the relevant factors, particularly certain objective conditions that almost inevitably gave rise to pragmatic calculations of the Republic's leaders militating against their pursuit of socialist goals.

First, was the belief that *realpolitik* dictated that the Republic in its struggle against the Dutch had to adjust to the fact that Indonesia lay in the Anglo-American power sphere. That was, as Sjahrir frankly acknowledged, why Sukarno and Hatta had urged him and Amir Sjarifuddin to serve as prime ministers. For with these two prominent noncollaborators at the helm of government, the Dutch could no longer convince London and Washington that the Republic was a Japanese product. A corollary to that proposition was that if those two capitalist powers were not to give the Netherlands even greater support than they already had in its efforts to reestablish control over Indonesia, it was important not to provoke their antagonism by nationalizing foreign properties (the course advocated by Tan Malaka and his followers). That would have to wait until later, until after independence was secure, and

---

<sup>47</sup> The fundamentals of their socioeconomic views were adopted by the influential centrist Masjumi leader, Dr. Sukiman Wirjosandjojo, and a substantial majority of the Masjumi party council.

<sup>48</sup> For the fullest exposition of Sjafruddin's views at this time, see his *Politiek dan Revolusi Kita* (Yogyakarta, 1948).

until the Republic's government was in a position to at least begin to provide financial compensation to foreign owners of properties that were to be taken over by the Indonesian state.

Sjahrir in his controversial and widely circulated pamphlet, *Perjuangan Kita*, first published in November 1945, just a few days before he formed his first cabinet, put the proposition starkly. Though himself a committed socialist who looked forward to socialism's eventual global displacement of capitalism, Sjahrir was convinced that for its current survival the Republic had to accommodate to the existing global power balance. "Indonesia," he wrote, "is geographically situated within the sphere of influence of Anglo-Saxon capitalism and imperialism," and "so long as the world we live in is dominated by capital, we are forced to make sure that we do not earn the enmity of capitalism." Thus, it was plausible to conclude that any obvious move towards socialism would risk even greater British and American support for the Netherlands in its effort to overcome the Republic's struggle for independence.

A second, and not unrelated, calculation was the conviction that, because of the widespread physical destruction during World War II and the revolution, once full independence was achieved a great deal of foreign capital would be needed simply to rehabilitate the country's economy, most immediately to restore its shattered transport and communications infrastructure. And it was assumed that those few countries in a position to provide capital would be unlikely to do so for socialist enterprises. Indeed, it was logical to argue that openly committing the Republic to a socialist economy might seriously jeopardize the possibility of economic assistance from the United States, the one country in a position to provide it on a significant scale.

In view of this, it was ironic that the expectation of substantial postindependence economic assistance from the United States helped induce the Republic's leaders to make economic concessions to the Netherlands at the mid-1949 Round Table Conference which in fact heavily outweighed the relatively paltry economic assistance that Washington finally did provide. Although Merle Cochran, the American representative at the conference, had clearly encouraged the Republic's leaders to expect that American aid would be generous, all the US finally proved willing to provide the Republic after the transfer of sovereignty was an Export-Import Bank loan amounting to \$100,000,000—a loan that had to be repaid with interest (and which was one-third the size of post World War II Export-Import Bank credits to the Netherlands). This was all Indonesia received after having yielded to Cochran's insistence that it shoulder \$1.13 billion of the Netherlands East Indies debt,<sup>49</sup> much of whose internal component of approximately \$800 million (3 billion guilders) had been incurred as military expenses by the Netherlands in its efforts to subdue the Republic. The Indonesian delegation calculated that these military expenses amounted to about \$320 million. (It should, I think, be noted that at the Round Table Conference the argument against paying the bill Cochran insisted on was argued especially well by Professor Sumitro, and without his input it might have been even larger.)

There was, of course, no way that the Republic's leaders could have realized the extent to which the Cold War was affecting American global policy—more specifically to appreciate how the US had assigned such overriding priority not only to constructing a

<sup>49</sup> In addition, Indonesia was obliged to take over rights and liabilities in the colonial government's external floating debt amounting to a maximum of approximately \$70,000,000. For the fullest published breakdown of debt data see UN Commission for Indonesia, *Special Report to the Security Council on the Round Table Conference*, S/1417 (November 10, 1949), p. 34.

Western European military shield against potential Soviet aggression but also to promoting that area's economic reconstruction. Indeed, American policymakers were much more concerned with resuscitating the war-damaged economy of the Netherlands than they were with that of Indonesia.

Thus the 1949 Round Table Conference saddled Indonesia with an indebtedness that made difficult any major progress in even restoring the country's devastated infrastructure, much less embarking on the socialist programs that had been envisaged during the revolution. The amount of government revenue that from 1950 to 1955 had to be diverted to pay off this heavy debt can be appreciated if we note that when the Harahap Cabinet on February 21, 1955 abrogated the economic and financial agreements arrived at in the Round Table Conference, only \$171 million of the original \$1,113,000,000 remained to be paid.

So not until 1955 did this inherited drain on Indonesia's treasury finally end—a burden which, insofar as I am aware, was comparable to that shouldered by no other ex-colonial country. To appreciate the heavy impact of that exaction one must recall the substantial expenses incurred in other postrevolutionary obligations. Among these was the necessity to absorb and pay the salaries of most of the residual Dutch colonial and Federalist bureaucracies in addition to paying the salaries of those who had served the revolutionary Republic; and incorporating into the armed forces a large portion of the soldiers of the Dutch colonial army (the KNIL), while at the same time trying to provide resettlement support for approximately 100,000 Republican guerrillas who had not been part of the revolutionary army's regular forces. All this in addition to beginning reconstruction of the country's devastated transportation and communications systems.

And thus, despite the Republican leadership's ideological attachment to socialism during the revolution, international political considerations then weighed heavily against that course. And in the years immediately afterwards there was really never the economic space to put socialism into practice on any significant scale—certainly not by leaders who with the most slender of financial resources were under great pressure to deal with the most urgent of economic problems .