

**BETWEEN COLONIALISM AND COLD WAR:  
THE INDONESIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE  
IN WORLD POLITICS, 1945-1949**

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Cornell University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

by

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August 2012



## ABSTRACT

### BETWEEN COLONIALISM AND COLD WAR: THE INDONESIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE IN WORLD POLITICS, 1945-1949

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Cornell University 2012

This dissertation examines the Indonesian war of independence: the process by which the archipelago formerly known as the Netherlands East Indies decolonized between 1945 and 1949. Based on extensive archival research, it investigates this revolutionary struggle through the lenses of Indonesian, Dutch, British, Australian, and American policymakers, diplomats, military leaders, and officials. The project synthesizes foreign relations and domestic political history, highlights the agency of individual leaders on all sides, and places the war in its international context. It asks why it took the Netherlands government, faced with an immediate postwar Indonesian desire for independence, four years to recognize this inalienable right.

Three sets of questions guide this inquiry: the first revolves around the central actors, their motivations, and their definition of national interests; the second centers on domestic considerations, political culture, and party and electoral politics; the third focuses on the realities of the international system and rising Cold War climate. In particular, the project examines the role of Lieutenant Governor-General Hubertus van Mook, his personal ambitions, his doomed federal policy to incorporate Sukarno's

Republic into a “United States of Indonesia” and “Netherlands-Indonesia Union,” and his complicated relationship with Dutch policymakers in The Hague and British and American government officials and diplomats in London, Washington, and Jakarta.

The dissertation maintains that the conflict’s often-overlooked early phase was one during which a peaceful solution might still have been found. This window of opportunity was at its widest at the signing of the preliminary Linggadjati Agreement in November 1946, but closed as the Dutch moved towards the first of two large-scale military offenses in the summer of 1947. In some contrast to the existing English-language literature, the study also argues that it was not American-induced financial pressures that caused Netherlands planners to capitulate in 1949, but rather the intensifying Republican guerilla warfare and the withdrawal of support by previously pro-Dutch Indonesian federalists that finally lead to a sense of moral and military defeat in the archipelago.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Irene Vrinte Lessmeister was born Irene Antoinette Dymphna Maria Vrinte in the Netherlands in 1983. After earning her high school diploma in Boxmeer and a short stint as a pre-med student, she graduated from Radboud University Nijmegen with a *cum laude* double B.A. in English Literature and American Studies in 2005. Summer programs in the UK and the US as well as a *cum laude* M.A. in American Studies whetted her appetite for graduate study abroad, and in 2006 she moved to Ithaca, NY to enroll in the history department at Cornell University.

While pursuing her Ph.D., she served as President of the Graduate History Association and gained professional experience in positions at Cornell's International Students and Scholars Office and Center for Teaching Excellence. She has TA-ed numerous courses and been the recipient of various honors and awards, including a Michele Sicca Pre-Dissertation Research Grant from the Cornell Institute for European Studies, a SHAFR Samuel Flagg Bemis Grant, and an Oliver Wolters Summer Write-Up Grant from Cornell's Southeast Asia Program. For her Freshman Writing Seminar on counterfactual or "what-if" history she won an award from the Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines.

After graduation, she will pursue a career in higher education administration, or be offered a host spot for a "Bake Your Way to the B-Exam"-show on the Cooking Channel.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation could not have come about without the encouragement and support from a host of people to whom I am deeply indebted.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my adviser, Fredrik Logevall. His caring, patience, and excellent guidance have been a source of strength and determination over the course of the last six years. As I moved from a mere idea to a completed study, his knowledge and practical view of the process helped me keep things in perspective. I am especially thankful for his unwavering support as I navigated the road towards defending this dissertation and mapped out the career path ahead of me.

My committee members, Eric Tagliacozzo and Matthew Evangelista, generously gave their time and faithfully read and commented on each chapter I handed them. Their magnificent feedback, fresh perspectives, and sharp insights did much to better my work.

My thanks also goes out to financial and institutional supporters. The Southeast Asia Program and Mario Einaudi Center at Cornell, the Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman Libraries, the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, and the History Department in McGraw made invaluable contributions that both kept me alive and allowed me to travel.

A small legion of librarians and archivists in Washington, D.C., London, The Hague, Jakarta, and in the Olin and Kroch Libraries at Cornell provided tireless assistance in locating materials. Laure Conklin Kamp coached me during the writing process, and gave me the tools to reach my destination and fare well in life beyond it.

My colleagues in the History Department (especially those in the American Foreign Relations group) and my friends across Cornell made these last six years a less bumpy ride.

My family in the Netherlands watched from afar, not always sure what, if anything, they could do to help. Nevertheless, their understanding and belief in me were highly motivating.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge my heaviest debt. Martin, you met me as I was preparing for my A-exams, took me out to dinner or a concert when I needed a night off, found the time and energy to encourage me even as you were busy completing your own studies, accompanied me on research trips across the globe, and married me in the final leg of this long journey. Your unquestioning support meant – and means – the world to me; I owe you so much, and I happily promise to pay you back over the course of a lifetime of adventures. Let's go look for America.

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## Introduction

On December 27, 1949, Dutch Queen Juliana and Prime Ministers Willem Drees and Mohammad Hatta signed the document that transferred sovereignty over the Indonesian archipelago from the Netherlands to the United States of Indonesia. “No longer do we stand partially opposed to one another,” the Queen told those gathered; “we have now taken our stations side by side, however much we may be bruised and torn carrying scars of rancor and regret.” A note on the official program cautioned the few participants of the sober ceremony, which took place behind closed doors at the royal palace in Amsterdam, not to sing when the anthems played.<sup>1</sup>

The following day, hundreds of thousands of jubilant Indonesians lined the streets of Jakarta when President Sukarno returned to the city by plane from Yogyakarta. He made a short speech that was continually interrupted by cheers and applause from the tumultuous crowd, calling on his audience to treat the Dutch, from now on, as honored guests in the country. “*Sekali merdeka!*” he exclaimed; “once free, always free!”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Indonesia Becomes Nation in Ceremony in the Netherlands,” *New York Times*, 28 December 1949, 1; Speech Queen Juliana, 27 December 1949, in: S.L. van der Wal, P.J. Drooglever and M.B.J. Schouten (eds.), *Officiële Bescheiden Betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische Betrekkingen 1945-1950* (hereafter NIB,) 20 volumes (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971-1996), XX, appendix IV. An English translation of the speech appeared in the *New York Times* on 28 December 1949 (page 5).

<sup>2</sup> “Indonesia Throng Acclaims Sukarno,” *New York Times*, 29 December 1949, 12.

Only four years earlier, during the late summer of 1945 when the Japanese regime in the islands was crumbling, Sukarno, Mohammad Hatta, and Sutan Sjahrir had boldly proclaimed Indonesian independence and vowed to strive for “100% *merdeka*” (freedom) from the colonial Dutch. The Netherlands government in The Hague, in turn, had flatly rejected the right of Indonesians to immediate self-determination and sworn to keep the islands within the Kingdom, arguing that it was impossible to negotiate with radical “Quislings” and Japanese collaborators.

In December 1949, the transfer of sovereignty nevertheless officially ended a protracted period of violent struggle and laborious diplomacy in the Indonesian archipelago. Within the relatively short stretch of time between 1945 and 1949, therefore, a marked transition had taken place. Self-government for the inhabitants of the colony became not only a topic that the Dutch had to take notice of – it became an irrefutable reality. In fits and starts, Netherlands policymakers and administrators had come to the realization that their attempts at re-imposing colonial control could not succeed. When we consider the attitudes of 1945 and compare the two remarkably different scenes above, we have to wonder: How did this change come about? And how could the Dutch have thought they could ever stop the complete decolonization of Indonesia? Why did they even try?

The subject matter of this dissertation is the Indonesian war of independence: the painful and drawn-out process by which the archipelago formerly known as the

Netherlands East Indies decolonized between 1945 and 1949. The topic has fascinated scholars for six decades. Ironically, the early work was conducted in the United States rather than the Netherlands; American scholars were the first to tackle the subject in an in-depth way starting in the early 1950s.<sup>3</sup> Australian and European

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<sup>3</sup> In the United States, scholarly work on Indonesia took off when the public's growing sympathy for the Republican struggle and the government's need for unbiased, firsthand knowledge of the strategic significance, political structures, economic potential, and recent historical background of the archipelago and the larger region fostered the establishment of government and institution-supported Southeast Asia programs at several college campuses, including Cornell and Yale. In the 1950s, researchers in these groundbreaking multi-disciplinary programs used not the outdated concepts from traditional Oriental studies centers, but applied sociological, anthropological, and political science methods. Within these area-specific centers of study, Indonesia came to the forefront through the personal experiences and strong sympathies of its leading scholars: Harry J. Benda at Yale and George McT. Kahin at Cornell. The former spent part of the Second World War in a Japanese prisoner camp and finished his dissertation, later published as *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945*, in 1955; the latter witnessed firsthand the later years of the Indonesian revolution, published his classic study *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press) in 1952, and became the first director of the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project (CMIP) in 1954. Under their leadership, the study of Southeast Asian languages also became of prime importance, as did the encouragement and funding of Indonesian scholars publishing on the revolution. See, for instance: Idrus Nasir Djajadiningrat, *The Beginning of the Indonesian-Dutch Negotiations and the Hoge Veluwe Talks* (Ithaca: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1958); Deliar Noer, *The Rise and Development of the Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia during the Dutch Colonial Period, 1900-1942* (Ithaca: Dissertation, 1963).

In the late 1960s and 1970s, restrictions in government funding as well as scholars' disillusionment with both the Vietnam War and events in Indonesia, where 1965 saw mass killings and a coup by General Suharto, caused a change of direction in research on the archipelago away from Western assumptions and models. Benedict R. O'G. Anderson and Benda in particular made waves. They focused not on the elite or the Dutch-Indonesian conflict as a whole, but rather investigated internal Indonesian conflicts and tensions between, for instance, policies of *diplomasi* and *perjuangan*, and paid attention to the social rather than national revolution taking place in the islands. See: Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944-1946* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971); Benda, "Democracy in Indonesia," *Journal of Asian Studies* 23, 3 (1964), 449-456. At the same time, scholars began zooming in on particular time periods and on regional and local events rather than on national happenings. See, for instance: John Smail, *Bandung in the Early Revolution, 1945-1946: A Study in the Social History of the Indonesian Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Press, 1964); Audrey R. Kahin (ed.), *Regional Dynamics of the Indonesian Revolution: Unity from Diversity* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985).

From the 1990s onward, researchers have again widened their focus. "Trendy" subjects in the recent literature on the decolonization of Indonesia include, for instance, the late colonial period, the role of the army and militant groups, and the influence of both Islam and Indonesian communist parties as political agents. See, for instance: Rudolf Mrázek, *Sjabriri: Politics and Exile in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program at Cornell University, 1994); Robert Cribb, *The Late Colonial State in Indonesia: Political and Economic Foundations of the Netherlands Indies, 1880-1942* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994); Cribb, *Gangsters and Revolutionaries: the Jakarta People's Militia and the Indonesian Revolution, 1945-1949* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991); Salim Said, *Genesis of Power: General Sudirman and the Indonesian Military in Politics, 1945-1949* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1991); M.C. Williams, *Communism, Religion, and Revolt in Banten* (Athens: Ohio

researchers outside the Netherlands soon followed.<sup>4</sup> During the first decades immediately following Indonesian independence, however, the Dutch seemed too traumatized by the “loss” of the archipelago to produce much notable scholarship.

The debate on these dark yet decisive pages in Dutch history was not truly ignited in the Netherlands until the 1980s, with many groundbreaking works published only in the 1990s and 2000s.<sup>5</sup>

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University Center for International Studies, 1990); William H. Frederick, *Visions and Heat: The Making of the Indonesian Revolution* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002). Sadly, particularly seeing the continued revelation of new source material on Indonesia, recent U.S. Department of Education budget cuts are set to hit Southeast Asian flagship centers hard, with the study of critical language programs especially vulnerable.

<sup>4</sup> A brief list of the most important publications by Australians illustrates trends in research similar to those in the United States: Anthony Reid, *The Indonesian National Revolution, 1945-1950* (Hawthorn: Longman, 1974); Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979); J.D. Legge, *Sukarno: A Political Biography* (New York: Praeger, 1972); Susan Abeyasekere, *One Hand Clapping: Indonesian Nationalists and the Dutch, 1939-1942* (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies at Monash University, 1976); John Ingleson, *Road to Exile: The Indonesian Nationalist Movement, 1927-1934* (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books, 1979); Margaret George, *Australia and the Indonesian Revolution* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1980); Richard Chauvel, *Nationalists, Soldiers, and Separatists: The Ambonese Islands from Colonialism to Revolt, 1880-1950* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1990); Anton Lucas, *One Soul One Struggle: Region and Revolution in Indonesia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1991).

In Europe, the picture has been somewhat different, despite two early publications by German-born Indonesia scholar Bernhard Dahm (*Sukarno and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969); *History of Indonesia in the Twentieth Century* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1970)). British historians have been mostly concerned with the end of the British Empire in Southeast Asia, and focused their treatments of Indonesia on the role of Lord Mountbatten’s Southeast Asia Command (SEAC) during the early years of the revolution. See, for instance: Nicholas Tarling, *Britain, Southeast Asia, and the Onset of the Cold War, 1945-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); A.J.F. Doulton, *The Fighting Cock, Being the History of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Indian Division, 1942-1947* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1951); P. Dennis, *Troubled Days of Peace: Mountbatten and South East Asia Command, 1945-46* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987); P. Ziegler, *Mountbatten* (New York: Knopf, 1985).

<sup>5</sup> An exceptional early publication is C. Smit’s *De Indonesische Quaestie: De Wordingsgeschiedenis der Souvereiniteitsoverdracht* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1952). *De Excessennota: Nota betreffende het Archiefonderzoek naar de Gegevens omtrent Excessen in Indonesië Begaan door Nederlandse Militairen in de Periode 1945-1950*, a report commissioned by the Dutch government in 1969 and compiled largely by then civil servant at the Dutch Ministry of Justice and later historian Cees Fasseur, details the crimes committed by Netherlands forces while attempting to suppress the Indonesian revolution. Its first publication went relatively unnoticed; it was not so much a study of the behavior of Netherlands forces in the Indonesian archipelago as a stocktaking of available source material. The last and Indonesia-focused volume of Lou de Jong’s seminal and popular series on the Kingdom of the Netherlands during the Second World War (*Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, (The Hague: SDU)) was published in 1988. Controversial in its criticism of The Hague’s neo-

This study investigates the subject through the lenses of Dutch, Indonesians, British, Australians, and Americans. The project synthesizes diplomatic and domestic political history, and highlights the agency of individual leaders on all sides. Based on archival research in Washington, D.C., The Hague, Jakarta, and London, it attempts to examine and explicate one of the first momentous postwar independence struggles.

The questions this project raises, and the methodology it uses to answer them, differ from those prominent in most of the recent scholarship in the field of foreign relations history. During the last two decades, studies in the discipline of diplomatic history have undergone a marked change in subject. Although it takes note of the new approaches and fresh insights, this dissertation to some extent returns to enduring questions that have stayed with us throughout the years because they remain important and controversial.

During the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, diplomatic historians were accused, both from within the field and outside of it, of being too conventional and

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colonial policy during the revolution, it did much to reignite the scholarly debate in Dutch circles. Influential publications from the 1990s and 2000s include: M. Kuitenbrouwer in his *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism: Colonies and Foreign Policy, 1870-1902* (New York: Berg, 1991); P.M.H. Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen: Het Nederlands Militair-Strategisch beleid in Indonesië, 1945-1950* (The Hague: SDU, 1991); Lambert Giebels, *Soekarno: Nederlandsch Onderdaan, 1901-1950* (Amsterdam: Bakker, 1999); H.W. van de Doel, *Afscheid van Indië: De Val van het Nederlandse Imperium in Azië* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2001); E.B. Locher-Scholten in *Sumatran Sultanate and Colonial State: Jambi and the Rise of Dutch Imperialism, 1830-1907* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program at Cornell University, 2003). With the exception of the publication of the long-overdue biography of General Simon Spoor (Jaap de Moor, *Generaal Spoor: Triomf en Tragiek van een Legercommandant* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2011)), it has been relatively quiet in the last few years, but the recent call by three renowned Dutch research institutes for new and deeper research into the questionable practices of Netherlands forces stationed in Indonesia during the revolution (see *De Volkskrant*, 19 June 2012) should result in a wave of fresh scholarship in the coming decade.

For a good overview of the historiography, see also: N. Bootsma, "The Discovery of Indonesia: Western (non-Dutch) Historiography on the Decolonization of Indonesia," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 151, 1 (1995), 1-22.

too elite-centered. The traditional outlooks and scopes of established scholars such as John Lewis Gaddis and Walter LaFeber, critics charged, were insular and restricted; they focused too much on dead white males while too often centering their stories on power relationships. Foreign relations scholars, in other words, were said to be behind the times, producing scholarship not nearly as exciting or relevant as the new social, “bottom-up” history that had quickly become all the rage with hot new works focused on issues of gender, culture, and language. Post-modernist researchers in the discipline had become concerned with, as diplomatic historian Melvyn P. Leffler notes, “discourses rather than subjects, structures rather than actions, process rather than agency, the construction of meaning rather than the definition of experience.”<sup>6</sup>

These charges on the field of foreign relations history, to the extent that they are legitimate, should today no longer be great cause for concern. Diplomatic history has evolved into a field that is currently often called “international history.” In the last two decades, diplomatic historians have turned to new approaches, new subjects, and new methodologies that have resulted in exciting waves of fresh scholarship. Rather than emphasizing structural forces in foreign relations, researchers now regularly focus on contingency, human agency, and the international arena, centering their inquiries on questions related to rhetoric, race, art, and identity, for example. This proliferation of activity is linked directly to a focus on multilingual research in a

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<sup>6</sup> Melvyn P. Leffler, “Presidential Address: New Approaches, Old Interpretations, and Prospective Reconfigurations,” *Diplomatic History* 19 (Spring 1995), 173.

variety of archives around the world that relatively recently opened their previously tightly shut doors to scholars. In short, as then-president of the American Historical Association Eric Foner said in his presidential address of 2001, foreign relations historians today “are a natural center of enquiry into relations between nations, cultures, movements, and people.”<sup>7</sup>

Diplomatic and international historians have combined these fresh approaches and studies of contemporary issues with their traditional attention to power, politics, and the state. As Michael Hunt has also argued, any international history will still necessarily have to consist “of units of study broken down along national or cultural lines.” International history will thus be “not the negation of but the fruitful engagement with nationally or culturally organized histories.”<sup>8</sup> The state, in other words, will remain central to scholars in the field. This suggests that the question as to where policy ultimately comes from will be answered by all foreign relations historians with at least some reference to the state, either as a functional unit in the international system of global forces, or as the site where domestic considerations feed into foreign policymaking.

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<sup>7</sup> Eric Foner quoted in: Thomas W. Zeiler, “Just Do It! Globalization for Diplomatic Historians,” *Diplomatic History* 25 (Fall 2001), 530. Some of the most exciting recent scholarship includes: Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Mark Atwood Lawrence, *Constructing Vietnam: The United States, Europe, and the Making of the Cold War in Indochina* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria’s Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> Michael H. Hunt, “The Long Crisis in U.S. Diplomatic History: Coming to Closure,” *Diplomatic History* 16 (January 1992), 133-34.

This dissertation maintains that even as historians widen their frame of reference and explore new themes, they should affirm that states matter, that individuals matter, that on occasion a mere handful of people can still hold the power to make policy. At the same time, the project is sympathetic to the clear trend in the field of history toward scholarship written more and more in an interdisciplinary fashion and from an international perspective. Indeed, the topic of this dissertation is particularly conducive to a study of that kind. The struggle between Indonesian nationalists and Dutch colonial authorities after the end of the Second World War had a wide scope; foreign policy makers and diplomats in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, The Hague, London, Canberra, Washington, and New York actively took part in the search for a solution to the conflict, sometimes acting independently, sometimes working in concert with the newly established United Nations. This study thus aspires to seize the opportunity and integrate new approaches and insights to sharpen old interpretations.

To frame some of the major themes and questions at the heart of this dissertation, we might reach again for the Queen's 1949 speech. "It is a privilege to perform this act of transfer as it stands in history," she said, "or rather, in the face of God, who knows why this going together in freedom was not achieved sooner, nor later, and who knows the failing of generations." The overarching queries, in other words, are: In the face of an immediate and overwhelming Indonesian desire for

independence, why did it take the Netherlands and Netherlands Indies governments more than four years not only to recognize the inevitable transfer of sovereignty, but also to acknowledge it as an inalienable right? Were there real moments of opportunity when an amicable settlement of the conflict might have been effected, and if so, why and how did policymakers, planners, administrators and negotiators failed to grasp them? Narrowed down further, we can distinguish three sets of questions or directions that the dissertation attempts to investigate in a manner that forges bridges between them and unites them organically.

The first set of questions revolves around the most central individual actors in this dissertation, their motivations and agency, and their definition of their nation's interests. To what extent did Lieutenant Governor-General Hubertus van Mook's personal ambitions have an effect on events? How did Sutan Sjahrir's perception of the Dutch-Indonesian conflict factor in? To what extent is Sukarno's personality relevant? Did Willem Schermerhorn and Louis Beel's experience as Netherlands Prime Ministers color their views once they arrived in Indonesia to fulfill a different role? In what way did the slumbering crisis of authority between policymakers in The Hague and bureaucrats in distant Jakarta influence the process? What other rational or irrational attitudes, on the part of military leaders, for example, mattered? How did foreign observers perceive the legitimacy of the Republic and its leadership in

Yogyakarta, and how did they judge the ability of the Dutch to effect a peaceful and orderly transition?

The second set of questions centers on domestic considerations and political culture. How did party and electoral politics in the Netherlands influence decision-making? What was the role of the Dutch colonial self-image, of the national sense of “mission” or “calling,” of the existing values and practices in imperial policies? How did the struggle to formulate a unified Indonesian identity energize the Republican leadership in Yogyakarta, and what was the effect of the conflicts within and between burgeoning political parties and politicians in the islands? What interest groups were at play in the various states? How did moments of crisis steer events? And what was the role of public opinion in Britain and the United States?

The third and final set of questions revolves around the realities of the international system in which both the actors and states figured; we have to look outward as well as inward. How did direct Dutch-Indonesian negotiations and state-to-state relations, between Britain and the Netherlands, and between the Republic and India, for instance, influence the course of events? What was the role of the interactions that took place in the Security Council of the still young United Nations? How did both the Dutch and Republicans legitimate their struggle in the international arena? How did the American government project its enormous power to force the parties to find a settlement? And how did increasing economic interdependence and

rising Cold War tensions lead to a growing sense of urgency among policymakers in Washington regarding the need to find a solution to the conflict in the Indonesian archipelago?

In my research for this dissertation, I have used secondary sources extensively. I also relied heavily on Dutch, British, American, Australian, and Indonesian primary source material; intelligence reports, newspaper articles, and, most importantly, correspondence by politicians and high-ranking governmental officials regarding policymaking on Indonesia and Southeast Asia, some collections of which have been vastly underused by historians.<sup>9</sup>

In the United States, the archives in the Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman Presidential Libraries and Stanley K. Hornbeck's papers at the Hoover Institution contained small bundles of useful material. The U.S. State Department archives at the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland were indispensable. In the United Kingdom, the National Archives at Kew contain a positive wealth of information. The *Arsip Nasional* (National Archive) in Jakarta holds Indonesian papers. It can be difficult for researchers to gain access, and the collection of documents reflecting high level policymaking is very small compared to the almost overwhelming mountains of material in Britain or the Netherlands, but

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<sup>9</sup> Among these are: *De Ontwikkeling van de Nationalistische Beweging in Nederlands-Indië, 1917-1942* (Groningen: H.D. Tjeenk Willink, 1975-1982); *De Volksraad en de Staatkundige Ontwikkeling van Nederlands-Indië: Een Bronnenpublicatie, 1891-1942* (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1965); and *Officiële Bescheiden Betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische Betrekkingen 1945-1950*, a magnificent twenty-volume collection. I also relied heavily on the Dutch Foreign Ministry's publication of documents on the meetings and proceedings at the United Nations Security Council in New York: *Indonesië in de Veiligheidsraad van de Verenigde Naties* (The Hague: SDU, 1947-1950).

an increasingly better organization of the sources present and helpful staff members make the Indonesian archives a possible treasure trove for scholars who read the language (and have time to spare).

The dissertation is organized chronologically. Chapter 1, *Occupation and Opportunity*, examines the years 1940 until 1945. In zooming in both on wartime developments in the Indonesian archipelago and the debate on imperialism and the future of the Dutch Indies in The Hague, London, and Washington, it foreshadows the divergent perceptions of the coming revolution and conflict in the islands.

Chapter 2, *Revolution and Reconquest*, investigates the last four months of 1945, or the period that immediately followed the Japanese surrender and Sukarno and Hatta's proclamation of independence. In highlighting the role of Admiral Lord Mountbatten, his Southeast Asia Command (SEAC), and their six-week delay in reaching the islands, the chapter argues that the existence of a brief political and military vacuum in the archipelago crucially shaped all events that followed; by the end of 1945, it was clear that there would be no smooth and orderly transition from wartime to peacetime in Indonesia.

Chapter 3, *Negotiation*, looks into the important and often overlooked early period of diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict. It leads up to the initialing of the Linggadjati Agreement in November of 1946, and assesses this signing as an

opportunity that was tragically but predictably lost. In positing this view, the chapter also sets out this study's focus on the troubled relationship between the Netherlands government in The Hague, the Commission General it sent to Jakarta to assist in finding a solution and, most importantly, Lieutenant Governor-General Hubertus van Mook.

Chapters 4 and 5, *On the Way to War* and *International "Interference,"* zoom in on events from early 1947 until the summer of 1948, and specifically examine the growing international interest and intervention in the conflict. They do so especially through the lens of the United Nations Good Offices Committee, dispatched to the archipelago after the first major Dutch military offensive against the Indonesian Republic in the summer of 1947. Throughout, these chapters aim to show that although few policymakers and officials in The Hague and Jakarta realized it at the time, the euphemistically labeled "police action" and its aftermath made Indonesia's complete independence from the Netherlands an inevitability – despite Dutch efforts to present both nationalists in Yogyakarta and the world at large with political *fait accompli* through the unilateral formation of a pro-Dutch federative United States of Indonesia.

Finally, Chapter 6, *Combat and Capitulation*, examines the parties' inexorable move toward a second large-scale war. It also investigates the momentous political developments on the ground in Indonesia in mid 1948, Washington's resultant shift in

thinking, and the role of the new Netherlands representative in Jakarta. This chapter argues that the Netherlands government finally capitulated in the spring and summer of 1949 not strictly speaking because of the clinking of the American moneybag or a peak in international involvement, but because The Hague's Indonesian allies in the islands finally confronted the Dutch and sided with Republicans, and because Netherlands army forces in the archipelago increasingly faced a military quagmire.

In short, my dissertation aims to challenge the standard one-sided national narratives of the Indonesian revolution, be they Indonesian, Dutch, British, or American. Instead, it traces the divergent perceptions of the protracted struggle in the archipelago within the various domestic contexts, and examines the different ways in which actors then placed it within the emerging international discourse on decolonization. The study ultimately intends to demonstrate that what finally led to the establishment of an independent United States of Indonesia in 1949 was not, as most other historians have argued, the growing threat from policymakers and planners in Washington to cease financial aid to the Netherlands, but rather factors beyond austere economic considerations.

This project investigates the conservative decades leading up to the Second World War, the swift and crushing defeat of Dutch forces in 1942 and the rise of an Indonesian independence movement during the Japanese occupation of the islands, and most importantly the difficult to capture but material mindset, motives, and

miscalculations of Netherlands and Netherlands Indies politicians, administrators, and military leaders. It illustrates the latter with close-up examinations of both Lieutenant Governor-General Hubertus van Mook's stillborn plans for an Indonesian federation and army General Simon Spoor's underestimation of the appeal of nationalism among the people and the determination of Republican troops to resist the forceful re-imposition of colonial control. It reveals, finally, that the actual pressures that caused the Dutch to capitulate were not so much related to financial calculations but to a sense of moral and military defeat. In arguing so, the dissertation also makes clear that the question "might things have gone differently?" should ultimately be answered with references to the persons in power and the political cultures that persisted; sadly, no other course of events is imaginable.

A final note should be made here on the spelling and terms used in this study. Throughout, I use the modern English spelling of names and places, which most often corresponds with the newer official spelling in Indonesia: Jakarta instead of Djakarta, Sukarno instead of Soekarno, etc. Where locations have changed name since the start of the revolutionary period, I will note both the Dutch and Indonesian name (e.g. Buitenzorg became Bogor, Celebes became Sulawesi). Although Indonesian nationalists renamed the archipelago's capital and referred to it as Jakarta from 1945 on, Dutch officials and the international community continued to use the colonial name Batavia until the official transfer of power in 1949. As a recognition of the fact

that Indonesia became independent in August 1945, not December 1949, I will use Jakarta when describing events after the declaration of independence. The terms Indonesia, Dutch East Indies, and Netherlands East Indies are applied somewhat interchangeably, although I aim to mostly use the former when referring to the archipelago after August 1945, and the latter two when describing the region up until that time, or as a way of referring to it as the Dutch government did during the years of the Indonesian revolution.

Before contemplating the years 1945-1949, however, let us begin our story by taking a closer look at Dutch colonial policy and the Indonesian archipelago during the first four decades of the previous century. It is here that we find early traces of both independence movements in the islands as well as the patronizingly superior attitude of Netherlands and Netherlands Indies politicians and administrators that would become so influential for the course of the conflict later. This historical context will thus not only introduce us to some of the main characters of the dissertation, but indeed form its foundations.

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At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Dutch had ruled the Indonesian archipelago for almost three centuries. At first they had done so primarily through the vehicle of the privately owned Dutch East India Company. With commercial rather than territorial

goals in mind, it had established footholds on Java, Sumatra, and the Moluccas and used them to trade and collect revenues. Between 1850 and 1880, as European imperial powers shifted the focus of their colonial policies and started dividing up not only Southeast Asia but also Africa into spheres of influence, ringing in what scholars have called the era of high colonialism, control of the Netherlands government over the indigenous peoples of the East Indies still did not extend much beyond the metropolitan centers. Rather than join in on the scramble for Africa, however, the Dutch focused on keeping and further developing the Indies. As this required consolidating their rule in the outer regions or *buitengewesten* of the colony, this task in itself included territorial expansion and was a form of imperialism, as Maarten Kuitenbrouwer has convincingly shown.<sup>10</sup>

With the century drawing to a close, the character of Dutch policy in the archipelago began to change. Illustrative of this shift was the popular reception of the colonial novel titled *Max Havelaar*, written by a mid-rank administrator in the Indies named Eduard Douwes Dekker under the pseudonym “Multatuli,” and first published in 1860. The story featured a European civil servant, pictured as a noble and just messenger of prosperity and civilization, who worked to protect the people of the East Indies from the indigenous rulers who suppressed and abused them. This figure became the ideal of young civil servants from the Netherlands, who felt they were

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<sup>10</sup> M. Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism: Colonies and Foreign Policy, 1870-1902* (New York: Berg, 1991), 366-367.

being called to the Indies to carry out the noble task of “raising” the inhabitants of the islands by establishing centralized administrative-bureaucratic states and tightening their rule in the region. The gradual embrace of this belief by Dutch political parties and the public at large resulted in the new and, so it was described, more enlightened “ethical policy.”

Central to this program, which was adopted by Christian, liberal, as well as socialist parties and which was seen as the Dutch version of the British “white man’s burden,” was the notion of guardianship; Netherlands Indies officials were to improve the welfare of the indigenous population, and cultivate the minds of the people in the archipelago to gently guide them on the path toward eventual independence. This was a significant step forward from the previously held belief that the colonial relationship between the Netherlands and the Indies could, and should, last indefinitely. As the liberal politician Conrad Th. van Deventer argued in his article “Een Eereschuld” (A Debt of Honor) in a 1899 issue of the popular magazine *De Gids* (The Guide), the Netherlands was morally obligated to repay the millions it had taken from the territory in profits. It should do so by investing in the agriculture, infrastructure, and educational and health care systems in the Indies. Colonies had to be administered rather than ruled or, worse, exploited. The duty of the Dutch therefore was not to depart from the archipelago and leave the indigenous peoples to their “tyrannical” rulers, but to stay, win their trust, promote prosperity through social reform, and

slowly but steadily prepare them for self-government. Besides lifting the economic circumstances of the population, this would also lead to an increased feeling of solidarity between the Dutch and the peoples of the Netherlands East Indies, Van Deventer predicted.<sup>11</sup>

In practice, however, the ethical policy contained internal contradictions that resulted in violent resistance and increased paternalism. Indonesians were expected to listen patiently and passively to the teachings of Netherlands officials, and although they were supposed to begin making up a larger share of administrative personnel, the growing specialization of bureaucracy made it difficult for any but those of Dutch origin to acquire positions of real significance. Rather than being paid back a debt of honor, the archipelago was moreover made to pay for or borrow the funds necessary for the planned investments.

Administrative expansion and consolidation of the colony's *buitengewesten* meant establishing Dutch control over local rulers and elites in these outer territories. As a model for this "pacification," Netherlands Indies administrators used the Aceh War (1873-1913) and Lombok expedition (1894), two examples of the violent subjugation of indigenous people in the islands.

A third notable effect of the "ethical policy" was the creation of an educated elite that was becoming ever more dissatisfied with its circumstances and frustrated

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<sup>11</sup> C. Fasseur, *De Weg naar het Paradijs. En Andere Indische Geschiedenissen* (Amsterdam: B. Bakker, 1995), 40-47.

with the Dutch. Those Indonesians that were now attending high schools and universities in the Indies, or receiving schooling in Europe, were exposed to Western ideas and ideals, and to political conditions that included civil liberties and democratic government. When they returned, they found that it was impossible to get a meaningful job and further advance themselves; their own constricting colonial society, as Harry Benda has argued, could not absorb them. As the new measures created a split society, a growing feeling of solidarity came into existence not between the Dutch and the Indonesians, as Van Deventer had hoped, but rather among the victims of repression, and aimed against the colonizers. A modern mass movement of Indonesian nationalism emerged, the first concrete example of which was the *Budi Utomo*, a Javanese political organization established by indigenous intellectuals in 1908 with the goal of furthering popular education. The relatively progressive Governor-General of the East Indies Alexander W.F. Idenburg maintained that the people of the Netherlands should rejoice in these changing circumstances; it was a natural consequence of the fact that Indonesians were beginning to think more deeply about themselves and their surroundings, he noted in 1913, and the Dutch had wanted it so.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> H.J. Benda, "Decolonization in Indonesia: The Problem of Continuity and Change," in: *Continuity and Change in Southeast Asia: Collected Journal Articles of Harry J. Benda* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1972), 218; George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952), 48-52; Governor-General Alexander W.F. Idenburg to A. Kuyper, 4 July 1913, in: S.L. van der Wal (ed.), *De Opkomst van de Nationalistische Beweging in Nederlands-Indië. Een Bronnenpublicatie* (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1967), no. 76; Kuitenbrouwer, 277, 369.

The tumultuous year 1918 brought American President Woodrow Wilson's pledges to reform the traditional imperial structures, the root cause of the world war, he believed, and the fierce attacks of the socialist parliamentarian Pieter Jelles Troelstra on the position of the young Dutch Queen Wilhelmina. Both sent rumors of a revolution flying in the colonial archipelago, and it was under these nervous circumstances of social unrest that the new Governor-General, J.P. van Limburg Stirum, installed the Volksraad ("People's Council"). Although supreme legislative power would continue to rest with the States General in The Hague, this institution was to advise the administration in Batavia. It was to have a partly representative character and give the population of the islands a voice in their government. Only a fourth of its sixty members were Indonesian and elected by the few people in the Indies who were allowed to vote, however; colonial officials appointed the rest. In the speech with which he opened the Volksraad's first meeting, Van Limburg Stirum nevertheless emphasized that the Dutch task was an altruistic one.<sup>13</sup> In November, when news reports describing the volatile situation in the Netherlands created a big sensation in the Indies and the Governor-General grew increasingly pessimistic, he went a step further; he promised, albeit vaguely, to take measures that would bring about a "new relationship" between the government in The Hague and the Volksraad

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<sup>13</sup> Speech Governor-General J.P. van Limburg Stirum at the installation of the Volksraad, 19 May 1918, in: S.L. van der Wal (ed.), *De Volksraad en de Staatkundige Ontwikkeling van Nederlands-Indië. Een Bronnenpublicatie*, (hereafter *Volksraad*), Volume I (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1964-1965), p. 599-600; H.W. van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indië: De val van het Nederlandse imperium in Azië* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2000), 28.

in the Indies. He installed a committee to study political reforms, and when its chairman J.H. Carpentier Alting finally presented its report in June 1920 the latter made several far-reaching suggestions that would shift the center of colonial policy making from the Dutch political capital to Batavia.<sup>14</sup>

For many Netherlands politicians these proposals went too far. Conservatives increasingly believed that it was dangerous to think the peoples of the Indies equal to the Dutch and soon capable of self-government. Only much later and within the structure of the kingdom should the archipelago attain a kind of self-governance, many argued; in the near future, the Dutch must not abandon their calling. The result of this important shift in thinking in the 1920s was a flurry of colonial legislation aimed at decentralization and the establishment of a maze of local and regional councils in the Indies. As the autocratic Netherlands Indies administrators remained in place, however, the limited influence Indonesians could exercise in these councils hardly satisfied their aspirations. The promised change instead had the effect of strengthening the position of the Governor-General, still appointed by the Dutch crown, vis-à-vis the government in The Hague. The Volksraad, meanwhile, remained a relatively powerless institution without any real legislative function, and served

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<sup>14</sup> Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in Fragmenten: Vijf Studies over Koloniaal Denken en Doen van Nederlanders in de Indonesische Archipel 1877-1942* (Utrecht: HES Publishers, 1981), 78; Van Limburg Stirum to Minister of the Colonies Alexander W.F. Idenburg, 1 December 1918, in: *Volksraad*, I, no 109; Doel, 30-31.

mostly, as Cees Fasseur and Robert McMahon have shown, as a forum “for the airing of political views and economic grievances.”<sup>15</sup>

Convinced that the ethical policy took the relationship between the Netherlands and the Indies in the wrong direction, and under the belief that a slackening of the bond between the two could result only in disaster, the Governor-Generals of the 1920s took an increasingly hard line with Indonesian nationalists. Andries C.D. de Graeff underlined that every self-respecting government should fight any movement out to destruct the current order.<sup>16</sup> Like his predecessor Dirk Fock, Governor-General De Graeff shelved previous plans for economic modernization and political participation in favor of a more conservative policy. Increasing emphasis on allegedly insurmountable cultural differences between the western mind and eastern spirit justified, in the minds of many, a virtually permanent colonial relationship. De Graeff severely repressed radical nationalist organizations such as the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (Indonesian Communist Party, or PKI), founded in 1920 by a Western-educated teacher by the name of Tan Malaka. The PKI demanded immediate and complete independence from the Netherlands and refused to cooperate with its colonial administration. In late 1926 and early 1927, the movement launched a poorly planned rebellion against the Indies government on Java and Sumatra that ended in a crushing

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<sup>15</sup> Robert J. McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1945-1949* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 31; Fasseur, 198-200.

<sup>16</sup> Governor-General Andries C.D. de Graeff to Minister of the Colonies J.C. Koningsberger, 11 September 1926, in: R.C. Kwantes (ed.), *De Ontwikkeling van de Nationalistische Beweging in Nederlandsch Indië* (hereafter *Ontwikkeling*), Volume II (Groningen: H.D. Tjeenk Willink, 1975-1982), p. 462, note 2.

defeat. The Dutch arrested thousands of suspected PKI supporters and eventually interned hundreds of them in a penal colony in Boven-Digoel, one of the most remote areas of the archipelago located on the island of New Guinea.<sup>17</sup>

In July 1927, a young and dynamic leader named Sukarno nevertheless founded another independence movement. The son of a Javanese teacher and a Balinese woman, Sukarno was born in Surabaya in 1901 and educated first at the Dutch high school in that city and later at the technical university in Bandung. His education led him to explore Western culture and study political thinkers such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Marx, Lenin, and the American founding fathers. While at school, he established a debating club and became interested in politics.<sup>18</sup> Convinced of the need for a nationalist party that connected with the masses and refused to cooperate with the colonial administration or take seats in the Volksraad, which he labeled a “golden cage,” Sukarno created the *Partai Nasional Indonesia* (PNI).

The PNI quickly became the most important organization in the Indies; its membership rapidly grew to more than 10,000. Its founder set out to shake the power of the colonial regime by bringing to life a more conscious and determined mass movement with clear leadership and direction. The PNI held its first national three-day conference in Surabaya in May 1928. In the year that followed, Sukarno traveled around Java and gave speech after speech. Concentrating his efforts on the

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<sup>17</sup> Doel, 34. See appendices for helpful maps.

<sup>18</sup> Lambert J. Giebels, *Soekarno, Nederlandsch onderdaan: Een biografie 1901-1950* (Amsterdam: B. Bakker, 1999), 56-70.

Indonesian youth, he presented his audiences with historical analyses of imperialism, focused on the theme of education and “*Indonesia Merdeka*” (Free Indonesia), and avoided questions that could result in discord and division among his following. An idea would lead to a belief, he predicted, and a belief would lead to power; out of a national spirit, he said, would be born a national will, and out of a national will a national deed.<sup>19</sup>

An uneasy Governor-General De Graeff at this point wrote a remarkably prophetic note to his colleagues in the Netherlands, whom he felt mistaken in the belief that firm action would keep the situation in the colony under control. He warned them that the Dutch public underestimated the nationalists, and that the government should make itself no illusions about where the loyalty of Indonesians truly lay. His lonely voice identified a “clear and present danger,” though he admitted himself unsure about how to meet it, and foresaw an intensifying struggle that the Netherlands would lose in the end. Alarmed, The Hague ordered authorities in Batavia to outlaw the PNI and arrest its leader in December 1929.<sup>20</sup>

Sukarno’s trial took place in Bandung in 1930. He spoke in his own defense and gave a two-day marathon performance, during which his speech ranged “from highly theoretical exposition to detailed legal argument” and he moved “from

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<sup>19</sup> Bernard Dahm, *Sukarno and the struggle for Indonesian Independence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 80-81; J.D. Legge, *Sukarno: A Political Biography* (New York: Praeger, 1972), 133; Giebels, 103-105; Letter by Sukarno, 7 June 1929, quoted in: *Ontwikkeling*, III, p. 392.

<sup>20</sup> Governor-General De Graeff to Van Limburg Stirum, 5 May 1928, in: *Volksraad*, II, no 17.

passionate oratory to [the reading of] tedious excerpts from his authorities.” As a propaganda occasion it served its purpose; Sukarno’s plea was later published and widely read under the title “*Indonesia Accuses!*” The undisputed leader of the nationalist movement was found guilty of disturbing the political order and attempting to overthrow the established administration, however, and sentenced to four years in prison.<sup>21</sup>

When he was released from jail early in December 1931, Sukarno resumed his political activities by turning once again to the masses. He immediately went on a tour through Java, explaining to his audience that the applause he received from the thousands who came to see him was not for him as a person, but rather for the symbol of a free Indonesia. The public revered Sukarno and saw him as a rallying point.<sup>22</sup> The old PNI, meanwhile, had been revived into what was now called the *PNI-Baru* (New PNI). Its leaders were Mohammed Hatta and Sutan Sjahrir, two Indonesian nationalists who had been educated in the Netherlands, where they had joined the political organization of Indonesian students *Perhimpunan Indonesia*. They believed that the population of the islands first had to be taught self-respect and self-worth before the ideal of a free nation could be achieved. Indonesians did not yet place enough trust and faith in their own abilities and power, Hatta noted, “and must

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<sup>21</sup> Legge, 116-117; Kahin, 91-92.

<sup>22</sup> Legge, 125.

be pulled from the rut that is deep resignation.”<sup>23</sup> The restyled PNI, in other words, envisioned the road to independence to be longer and less spectacular than Sukarno, and in July 1932 the latter joined a new political party similar to the old PNI: the *Partai Indonesia* or “Partindo.” Within a year, 20,000 members had flocked to it.<sup>24</sup>

The conservative B.C. de Jonge, meanwhile, had succeeded De Graeff as Governor-General. He dryly noted that he had not been appointed by the Queen to discuss independence; “One does not casually chat with someone whose throat one wishes to cut about how and when the operation is to take place.” The conversations taking place at the public meetings of nationalist organizations he dismissed as “tall talk.”<sup>25</sup> Of the opinion that Sukarno was a troublemaker who had simply been released from jail too early, the Governor-General ordered his rearrest in August 1933. This time, Sukarno was exiled to the outer island of Flores without a trial. Although he was later moved to Bengkulu in southwest Sumatra, he would remain a political prisoner until 1942. The Dutch then turned their attention to the new PNI and its leaders. Hatta and Sjahrir were arrested in February 1934 and shipped first to Boven-Digoel and later to the tiny island of Banda in the east of the archipelago.

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<sup>23</sup> Mohammad Hatta, 9 March 1928, in: *Verspreide Geschriften* (Amsterdam: C.P.J. van der Peet, 1952), 279-280.

<sup>24</sup> Dahm, 158; Doel 45; Legge 128.

<sup>25</sup> Governor-General B.C. De Jonge in his opening speech at a conference for administrators in Malang, 23 October 1933, in: *Ontwikkeling*, IV, no. 15.

They, too, would stay in forced exile until 1942. Partindo, meanwhile, died a quiet death in 1936; the new PNI suffered a similar fate soon after.<sup>26</sup>

In September 1936, A.W.L. Tjarda van Starckenborgh Stachouwer, a man who had never been to the Indies, succeeded De Jonge as Governor-General. By then, the Dutch government in The Hague and the Netherlands Indies authorities in Batavia had reason to think they had successfully repressed the nationalist movement. Whereas the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had brought the conviction that Indonesia was to be gradually prepared for independence, by the 1930s the notion of perpetual ties between the colony and its motherland and the belief that the Dutch could, and should, stay in Southeast Asia indefinitely had overtaken it. The Netherlands colonial policy was once again, and more than ever, legalistic, unrealistic, and unimaginative.

At the moment we begin our story, even those relatively progressive souls who envisioned Indonesians eventually governing themselves felt there was still too much to do to hasten the arrival of any form of independence. While the British in India and the Americans in the Philippines continued to carry out reforms that resulted in, for instance, the Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935, the 1916 Jones Act, and the Tydings-McDuffie Act in 1934, shortsighted politicians in The Hague, convinced that their colleagues in London and Washington were naive and ill-advised, steered Dutch colonial policy in a different direction. In the run-up to another world

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<sup>26</sup> Giebels 192; Doel, 46.

war, therefore, the East Indies increasingly took the shape of an anxiety filled police state in which Dutch planners and administrators repressed nationalist movements.

As the administration of the Indies grew more autocratic and complex, it at the same time became more difficult for the Dutch to imagine themselves no longer part of it - the power, depth, and inevitability of nationalist sentiment in the archipelago thus went unrecognized.<sup>27</sup> This we will continue to see occurring as we shift our focus to the years of the Indonesian revolution, and the rejection of the so-called Sutardjo petition in the 1930s already illustrates it. Introduced in July 1935 by one of the moderately nationalist members of the Volksraad, a body that had, after all, the right to petition the government, the document modestly proposed an imperial conference to discuss the ultimate reaching of some form of Indonesian independence within the structure of the Netherlands kingdom. Characteristically of the Dutch government, as we will see in the chapters to follow, it took the Governor-General, the cabinet in The Hague, and eventually the Queen until 1938 to reject the proposal: accepting the petition would be comparable to opening a sluice without knowing what would flow through, or how and when one would ever be able to close it.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Fasseur, 44-45.

<sup>28</sup> Governor-General A.W.L. Tjarda van Starckenborgh Stachouwer to Minister of the Colonies Charles Welter, 14 September 1938, in: *Volksraad*, II, no 78.

## Chapter 1

### Occupation and Opportunity: May 1940 - August 1945

*“The Netherlands Indies must be restored – and something within me tells me that they will be.”<sup>29</sup>*

Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1942

On May 10, 1940, Hitler’s armies overran the Netherlands. Grossly outnumbered and by far the weaker, Dutch troops could not resist the German forces; a mere five days after the invasion they surrendered. The royal family headed by Queen Wilhelmina had escaped to London two days previous; government officials had followed a day later. This evacuation meant that although the metropole of the Netherlands empire had fallen, its authority abroad had been safeguarded; because the Dutch cabinet still functioned freely, the Indies were not quite an orphan colony.

Those in the archipelago followed events in the mother country closely. The American Consul-General in the Netherlands Indies capital of Batavia, Erle R. Dickover, assured planners in Washington that in the city all was quiet, the highest colonial authorities having informed him they anticipated “no political disturbances” as a result of the Dutch surrender.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> American President Franklin D. Roosevelt to Dutch Queen Wilhelmina, 6 April 6 1942, in: Franklin D. Roosevelt and Elliott Roosevelt, *FDR: His Personal Letters*, Volume II (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1947-1950), 1305.

<sup>30</sup> Dickover to Hull, 10 May 1940, RG 59, 856D.00/130, U.S. State Department Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter NARA); Dickover to Hull, 15 May 1940, RG 59, 856D.00/131, NARA.

The changed circumstances did not prompt the Governor-General in the Indies to seek closer cooperation with Indonesian nationalists. On the contrary, after the fall of the Netherlands A.W.L. Tjarda van Starckenborgh Stachouwer, a self-confident but coolly reserved diplomat who upon his appointment in 1936 had been a complete stranger to the archipelago, grew convinced that making concessions would be a sign of weakness that conflicted with Dutch interests. Determinedly refusing to discuss future reforms to the colony's position within the Netherlands Kingdom, he announced in a speech on the radio that the international political status of the Indies would remain unchanged, and underlined the willingness and ability of his administration to stay in place despite the chaos in Europe.<sup>31</sup>



**1. Tjarda van Starckenborgh Stachouwer**

Netherlands Minister of the Colonies Charles Welter, who had stated his belief that “sudden shocks” to the imperial system were highly undesirable, was supportive of the Governor-General’s opinion.<sup>32</sup> Welter’s senior assistant W.G. Peekema was more worried about the future of the colony, however, especially after the Dutch surrender to the Germans and the flight of the

<sup>31</sup> L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1984-1986), XIa, 446-447.

<sup>32</sup> Speech Minister Welter in Dutch parliament, 27 February 1940, in: *Handelingen van de Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal: 1939-1940*, Volume II (The Hague: s.n.), 1155.

government and royal family to England. He was convinced that the Dutch could no longer impose policies on the Indies and that the voice of Indonesians themselves would soon become of paramount importance. In August, Peekema proposed a postwar imperial conference where Netherlands officials, Netherlands Indies administrators, and moderate Indonesians might discuss developments in the archipelago and deliberate on reforms.<sup>33</sup> A persuaded Welter agreed, but Van Starckenborgh Stachouwer flatly rejected the proposal. The Governor-General was unwilling to make even the smallest of concessions; afraid of raising the level of anxiety among the Dutch in the Indies, he told Peekema and Welter that they were moving too quickly.<sup>34</sup> He did, however, install a small committee named after its chairman Frans Visman, which was to collect information on political developments and desires in the Indies and give advice once the time had come to give it.

Little did Dutch policymakers and Netherlands Indies administrators expect that their cherished self-image of enlightened, benevolent, and efficient but judicious colonizers would be shattered and exposed as a myth in the events that followed. This chapter examines the years 1940 until 1945, and zooms in both on developments in the archipelago and the debate on imperialism and the future of the Dutch Indies in The Hague, London, and Washington. In particular, it investigates the period of the

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<sup>33</sup> Memorandum W.G. Peekema, 21 August 1940, in: S.L. van der Wal (ed.), *De Volksraad en de Staatkundige Ontwikkeling van Nederlands-Indië. Een Bronnenpublicatie*, (hereafter *Volksraad*), Volume II, No. 114.

<sup>34</sup> Welter to Van Starckenborgh Stachouwer, 23 August 1940, in: *Volksraad*, II, no. 115; H.J. Levelt to Van Starckenborgh Stachouwer, 17 September 1940, in: *Volksraad*, II, no. 116; Van Starckenborgh Stachouwer to Welter, 7 November 1940, in: *Volksraad*, II, no. 119.

Japanese occupation of the islands, its apparent similarities to the centuries of Dutch rule, pointed out also by Shigeru Sato and Benedict Anderson, and the growth of Indonesian nationalism.<sup>35</sup> As such, this chapter foreshadows the Dutch perceptions of the leaders of the independence movement as “collaborators.”

Its natural resources such as oil, tin, and rubber catapulted the archipelago into an area of interest to both Japan and the United States. As a result, the Netherlands East Indies government over the course of 1940 and 1941 increasingly had to juggle outside pressures and demands.<sup>36</sup> As Tokyo pushed for additional exports of oil and gasoline and a new trade agreement, Washington tried to prevent the shipping of strategic materials to Japan.<sup>37</sup> Questions about an American embargo against Japan were swirling by the time a Japanese economic mission arrived in Batavia in mid September 1940. The Dutch negotiators acquiesced to what it deemed reasonable demands, but tried to oppose any further concessions to the Japanese.<sup>38</sup> The Netherlands East Indies government was both hesitant to cut exports to Japan, lest it should provoke aggression, and at the same time hoping for some indication that in

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<sup>35</sup> Benedict R. O’G. Anderson, “Japan: the Light of Asia,” in: Josef Silverstein (ed.), *Southeast Asia in World War II: Four Essays* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1966), 30-31; Shigeru Sato, “Japanization in Indonesia Reexamined: The Problem of Self-Sufficiency in Clothing” in: Li Narangoa and R.B. Cribb (eds.), *Imperial Japan and National Identities in Asia, 1895-1945* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 290.

<sup>36</sup> Robert J. McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1945-1949* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 51.

<sup>37</sup> United States Ambassador in Japan Joseph C. Grew to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, 29 June 1940, in: *Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), *Japan: 1931-1941*, II, 289. Hereafter this series will be cited as FRUS, followed by the year and volume. Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles to Grew, 6 August 1940, in: FRUS, Japan 1931-1941, II, 289-290.

<sup>38</sup> U.S. Consul General Walter Foote to Hull, 5 September 1940, in: FRUS, 1940, IV, 96.

the event of an attack, the islands would be protected by the American fleet.

Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles noted, however, that there was “nothing for the [State] Department to do in the immediate future.”<sup>39</sup>

In April of 1941, Welter and his colleague Eelco N. van Kleffens, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited Southeast Asia. Agreeing with the Governor-General that contact with Indonesian nationalists was out of the question and that no significant reforms to the political structure of the colony could be proposed while the Netherlands was occupied, the two nevertheless convinced a reluctant Van Starckenborgh Stachouwer of the need to officially announce a postwar imperial conference.<sup>40</sup> Of primary concern, however, was the obtainment of reassurances from the British and Americans to aid in the defense of the Indies in the event of a Japanese attack.

This had become especially important after the Soviet Union and Japan signed a neutrality pact in mid April, giving the latter a free hand to move southward. During a press conference in Batavia, Van Kleffens stated that he had found the Americans “keenly aware” of the situation precarious of the Netherlands Indies.<sup>41</sup> Aware though they may have been, the United States refused to publicly commit itself to defend the

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<sup>39</sup> Dickover to Hull, 17 July 1940, in: FRUS, 1940, IV, 51-52; Hull to Grew, 4 July 1940, in: FRUS, IV, 383; Foote to Hull, 21 January 1941, in: FRUS, 1941, V, 25-27; Memorandum of conversation, Adviser on Political Relations Stanley K. Hornbeck, 23 January 1941, in: FRUS, 1941, V, 37; Grew to Hull, 10 February 1941, in: FRUS, Japan 1931-1941, II, 304-305.

<sup>40</sup> Official announcement made in the Volkraad on 16 June 1942, in: *Handelingen Volksraad: 1941-1942* (The Hague: s.n.), 6; De Jong, XIa, 579.

<sup>41</sup> *New York Times*, “U.S. Share in Defending East Indies Is Expected,” 20 April 1941, 1.

islands from military aggression. Washington did not want to play into the hands of extremists in Tokyo, and was of the opinion that it had already warned the Japanese not to threaten the peace in the Pacific.<sup>42</sup> Secretary Hull reaffirmed this belief some months later when he announced that he considered an official statement regarding the joint defense of the Netherlands East Indies “a statement too challenging [and] too threatening.”<sup>43</sup>

In early summer the Dutch government in London and the Netherlands Indies administration in the archipelago requested the Americans to send a special mission to Batavia and undertake a general survey of the national defenses of the islands, as it would help determine what aid might be made available to the Indies. Believing that this would aggravate the tense situation in the region, the State Department dismissed the plan.<sup>44</sup> Although the Lend-Lease agreement had committed the United States to aiding and supplying the Allied nations, and the Netherlands East Indies had followed the American lead in a Japanese oil embargo, Dutch policymakers therefore suspected that the United States prioritized the European theater over the Far East, and remained uncertain about the length to which Roosevelt would go to save the Indies.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Memorandum of Conversation Hull, 22 April 1940, in: FRUS, 1941, V, 136-137; Memorandum of Conversation Hull, 28 April 1940, in: FRUS, 1941, V, 139-140.

<sup>43</sup> Cordell Hull and Andrew Henry Thomas Berding, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1948), 1007-1008.

<sup>44</sup> Lynn R. Edminster, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State, to Major General James H. Burns, Executive Officer, Division of Defense Aid Reports, Office of Emergency Management, 29 July 1941, in: FRUS, 1941, V, 238.

<sup>45</sup> Memorandum of conversation, Minister to the Netherlands Government in Exile Anthony J.D. Biddle, 6 August 1941, in: FRUS, 1941, V, 260-262; H.N. Buisman, *The Eagle and the Lion: the diplomatic relations*

On August 14, the American President and British Prime Minister Churchill made public the Atlantic Charter they had signed on board the cruiser *Augusta* days previous. The momentous occasion made little impression on Dutch politicians in London, however. Although it meant the future of the Netherlands empire would to a large extent depend on the attitude Washington took toward the rights of colonial peoples, and the Charter developed the American commitment to eradicate what it believed to be an outdated system by calling for the “right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live,” Dutch wartime Prime Minister Pieter S. Gerbrandy called it a “weak piece,” and Van Kleffens told his British colleague Anthony Eden he “did not think it meant very much.”<sup>46</sup> The government in Batavia was similarly underwhelmed. A large group of Indonesians in the Volksraad officially requested Netherlands East Indies authorities to give a reaction to the Charter, and to explain what the consequences of its sentiments were for the Indies. After confirming his interpretation with Welter in London, Van Starckenborgh replied that the

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*between the Netherlands government-in-exile and the United States concerning the Dutch Far-Eastern colonial possessions* (Unpublished thesis. S.n., 1967), 114.

<sup>46</sup> McMahan, 54; The text of the Atlantic Charter is reprinted in: *Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), 719; *Minutes meeting*, 26 August 1941, in: A.F. Manning and A.E. Kersten (eds.), *Documenten Betreffende de Buitenlandse Politiek van Nederland 1919-1945, Periode C 1940-1945*, (hereafter *Documenten*) (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), Volume III, No. 212; British Secretary of Foreign Affairs Eden to British Ambassador to the Dutch Government Bland, 17 September 1941, FO 371/F26424, British National Archives.

declaration did not apply to the Netherlands and its colony in Asia because it did not “directly concern the internal affairs of long-standing empires.”<sup>47</sup>

When the Visman Committee that had been installed the previous year finally produced its report on public opinion in the archipelago in December 1941, it admitted that the war in Europe, the occupation of the Netherlands, and the isolation of the archipelago had increased the sense of national consciousness in the Indies. This development was limited to the elite, however; the “underdeveloped masses,” Visman and his colleagues claimed, were uninterested in political matters that they could not comprehend. The Committee maintained it had found no indication that the people of the Indies wished to break the bond with the Netherlands. Making recommendations or proposals for far-reaching future reforms was therefore out of the question, the report concluded.<sup>48</sup>

The Visman Committee had conducted interviews with over a hundred people to come to these conclusions, but had seen no reason to question influential indigenous leaders such as Sukarno, Mohammad Hatta, or Sutan Sjahrir, who, as we have seen in Chapter 1, had been interned and exiled, or any other Indonesian nationalists. Indeed, officials had communicated with the far-sprung regions of the

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<sup>47</sup> Van Starckenborgh Stachouwer to Welter, 30 October 1941, in: *Volksraad*, II, No. 149; Welter to Van Starckenborgh Stachouwer, 31 October 1941, in: *Volksraad*, II, No. 150; Van Starckenborgh Stachouwer to Welter, 9 November 1941, in: *Volksraad*, II, No. 151; Welter to Van Starckenborgh Stachouwer, 13 November, in: *Volksraad*, II, No. 152. The official response from the government to the questions posed by the Indonesians finally came on November 10, and is printed in full in: *Volksraad*, II, p. 653, note 3.

<sup>48</sup> *Verslag van de Commissie tot Bestudeering van Staatsrechtelijke Hervormingen, Ingesteld bij Gouvernementsbesluit van 14 september 1940, No. 1x/KAB* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1941-1942), 6, 11, 14, 16.

archipelago merely through written letters exchanged with Dutch officials in those islands.

Japan's military might erupted in full force after the attack on the American fleet at Pearl Harbor in December 1941. The Netherlands East Indies had long been vulnerable to attack; Japan relied on the archipelago's oil fields and petroleum industry for its regular supply of fuel. "Without the Indies," *Time* proclaimed, "Japan [would] never have all the oil, rubber, and tin she needs, nor the power and prestige she thinks she needs to be a great empire."<sup>49</sup> In early 1942, Japanese troops began occupying parts of the Netherlands East Indies: first Celebes (now Sulawesi) and the northeast of Borneo (Kalimantan). In late February, the Japanese defeated the Allied fleet in the Battle of the Java Sea, and Imperial Army troops landed on Java's north coast. They encountered little resistance; even with British, Australian, and American military aid, the Dutch position was hopeless. On March 8 the existence of the Netherlands East Indies essentially came to an end with the final surrender of its authorities to the Japanese.

The imperial army booked successes throughout Southeast Asia; it drove the British out of Hong Kong, Malaya, and, assisted by the radical Independence Army led by nationalist Aung San, Burma. Singapore had fallen in February. India had declared war on Japan after the attack on Pearl Harbor, but Mahatma Gandhi's call

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<sup>49</sup> *Time*, "Far East: Porcupine Nest," August 18, 1941.

for immediate independence would soon launch the “Quit India” civil disobedience movement. The French colonial administration in Indochina had stayed in place only because its Governor-General Jean Decoux was a representative of the Vichy government that collaborated with the Nazis in Europe.

The Netherlands government in London had instructed local colonial administrators not to abandon their posts. Governor-General Van Starckenborgh, especially, was told to continue his work. An early evacuation of the Governor-General and his team would signify not only to enemy forces but also to the archipelago’s population, senior official Peekema advised Prime Minister Gerbrandy, “an abandonment of the Indies.” The quick defeat of the Dutch military and the rapid crumbling of its colonial regime in Southeast Asia nevertheless left Indonesians astonished.<sup>50</sup>

A dozen Netherlands Indies administrators were ordered from Bandung, the last Dutch stronghold, to Australia, where they were to look after the interests of the islands and prepare for the restoration of the colony in the postwar period. The group included, among others, senior civil servant Charles O. van der Plas, Vice-Admiral in the navy Conrad E.L. Helfrich, and army officer in the Netherlands Forces

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<sup>50</sup> Prime Minister P.S. Gerbrandy to Van Starckenborgh Stachouwer, 20 February 1942, in: *Documenten*, IV, no. 286; H.W. van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indië: De Val van het Nederlandse Imperium in Azië* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2000), 62. A summary of Peekema’s memorandum to Gerbrandy can be found in: De Jong, XIa, p. 881, note 1.

Intelligence Service Simon H. Spoor. Sukarno, Hatta, and Sjahrir, on the other hand, would spend the war in the archipelago.<sup>51</sup>

The man leading the group of evacuated Netherlands Indies policymakers and military men was Hubertus J. van Mook. Born in Semarang, a city in central Java, in 1894, Van Mook was the only child of a Dutch couple that had moved to the Indies



**2. Hubertus J. van Mook**

as teachers. His studies, first in chemistry and later in “Indology,” which prepared candidates for civil service in the Dutch colony, he had completed in the Netherlands. In 1918 he returned to the archipelago, married, had two children, and embarked on a successful career as an administrator. Endlessly energetic and a supporter of the Dutch ethical policy, he was a man convinced of his talents, but not inclined to trust others or work with them closely.<sup>52</sup> In November of 1941 he had succeeded Welter as Minister of the Colonies,

and the following January he had moreover been appointed Lieutenant Governor-General of the Netherlands East Indies. With Governor-General Van Starckenborgh

<sup>51</sup> Gerbandy to Van Starckenborgh Stachouwer, 20 February 1942, in: *Documenten*, IV, no. 286.

<sup>52</sup> C. Fasseur, *De Indologen: Ambtenaren voor de Oost, 1825-1950* (Amsterdam: B. Bakker, 1993), 446. A very informative summary of Van Mook’s formative years can be found in: Yong Mun Cheong, *H.J. van Mook and Indonesian Independence: A Study of His Role in Dutch-Indonesian Relations, 1945-48* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 8-23.

now in the hands of the Japanese occupiers, just as more than 40,000 soldiers from the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (*Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger* or KNIL) as well as hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children of Dutch or European origin, Van Mook had become the highest-ranking Netherlands Indies official outside the archipelago.

The Dutch knew they would have to rely on the American military to painstakingly reconquer the many islands that made up the Netherlands East Indies. Apart from Sumatra, the liberation of which was the responsibility of the British, the archipelago was counted in the South West Pacific Area commanded by General Douglas MacArthur. In the United States, however, the quick capitulation of the East Indies government and the lack of resistance by the population had left a stark impression. Mere days before the fall of the islands, in late February, Roosevelt delivered an anti-imperialistic radio speech in which he declared the right of people to choose their own government applicable to the whole world.<sup>53</sup> Undersecretary of State Welles echoed these sentiments in May, seemingly leaving no doubt about the policy of the United States when he announced: “the age of imperialism has ended.”

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<sup>53</sup> *New York Times*, February 24, 1942, 4.

The principles of the Atlantic Charter, he stated, “must be guaranteed to the world – in all oceans and in all continents.”<sup>54</sup>

The Netherlands leaders in London, who had so coolly dismissed the Charter, was becoming uneasy with and at times offended by the condemnations of the colonial system that reached them from the United States. At the same time, however, they were self-assured about its management of the Indies; had not the Dutch “ethical policy,” politicians asked, illustrated since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the willingness of the Netherlands government to work slowly but steadily toward eventual self-government for the archipelago?

Over the course of 1942, the Dutch nevertheless decided to step up their efforts to influence American public opinion in their favor in order to avoid strains with the United States over its Asian interests. The government-in-exile and the Dutch ambassador in Washington, Alexander Loudon, tried to commit American planners to the postwar restoration of Dutch sovereignty in the Indies. In a letter to Netherlands Queen Wilhelmina in April, President Roosevelt reassured the Dutch, saying: “when and if [Germany is defeated] the combined power of the United Nations will not take long to drive the Japanese back into their own islands. The

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<sup>54</sup> *New York Times*, 31 May 1942, 1. The text of Welles’s speech can be found in *Department of State Bulletin*, VI (1942), 485-489.

Netherlands Indies must be restored – and something within me tells me that they will be.”<sup>55</sup>

One politician particularly sensitive to the American perception of the Netherlands and its East Indies policy was Van Mook. In contrast to his colleagues in the Dutch government in London, most of whom saw imperial Britain as their natural ally in colonial matters, the Lieutenant Governor-General was keenly aware of the influence of American public opinion on the imperial question and foresaw the large role the United States would play in the ultimate Pacific settlement. A 1941 article in *Time* described him as “a big, burly, blond Dutchman” who had “a sharp, broad mind and a sense of humor,” an administrator “of very liberal ideas,” and “American in outlook.” The 46-year-old Van Mook spoke English with an American accent, “[played] golf, and [smoked] Camels.”<sup>56</sup>

Van Mook was not reassured when Dutch decision makers in London argued that the American undersecretary’s prediction about the end of empire had been made in a strictly personal capacity and had been directed to the British and especially the French rather than the Dutch. Ambassador Loudon had spoken very bluntly to Secretary Hull about the constant “propaganda” in the United States regarding imperialism. Such irresponsible statements that held up the Indies “as a horrible example of imperialism,” he complained, displayed a lack of real knowledge about the

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<sup>55</sup> FDR to Wilhelmina, 6 April 6 1942, in: Franklin D. Roosevelt and Elliott Roosevelt, *FDR: His Personal Letters*, Volume II (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1947-1950), 1305.

<sup>56</sup> *Time*, “Far East: Porcupine Nest,” August 18, 1941.

situation.<sup>57</sup> Van Mook took to heart Loudon's proposal that the Dutch government give the Americans something more concrete than the abstract suggestion of a postwar consultative imperial conference.<sup>58</sup> Formulating their plans for the Indies in a more constructive and positive tone, the Lieutenant Governor-General believed, might convince the United States government to pledge aid and assistance to the postwar Dutch restoration in the archipelago.

Before Wilhelmina's scheduled visit to the United States, during which she planned to spend time at President Roosevelt's estate in Hyde Park, New York, Van Mook, Van Kleffens, and Gerbrandy therefore briefed the Queen on Welles' inflammatory speech. Although "legally speaking the United States had nothing to do with this question," they advised her, the Dutch government might soothe America's ruffled feathers by giving a clear and well-timed indication of its "understanding of the new age."<sup>59</sup>

During the first official meeting between the Queen, the president, and Van Kleffens, the subject of the Indies was left untouched.<sup>60</sup> A few days later, however, Roosevelt spoke with Van Kleffens and Loudon and pressed for an announcement regarding Dutch postwar goals for the archipelago. The Queen did so, albeit only in

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<sup>57</sup> Memorandum of Conversation Hull and Dutch Ambassador to the United States Alexander Loudon, 5 June 1942, RG 59, 856D.00/153, NARA.

<sup>58</sup> Loudon to Minister of Foreign Affairs Eelco N. Van Kleffens, 4 June 1942, in: *Documenten*, IV, no. 497; Loudon to Van Kleffens, 5 June 1942, in: *Documenten*, IV, no. 498.

<sup>59</sup> Gerbrandy, Van Kleffens, and Van Mook to the Queen, 18 June 1942, in: *Documenten*, IV, no. 526.

<sup>60</sup> Van Kleffens' notes on his journey to the United States indicate that the Queen told him, after her first meeting with Roosevelt, that he was "a man who constantly [told] stories [...] and hardly [allowed] others to talk." See: Notes from Van Kleffens's journey to the United States, 12 July 1942, in: *Documenten*, V, no. 37

vague terms, when she held a speech before the U.S. Congress in early August. She referred again to preparations for a conference and stated that no definitive decision could be made with both the Netherlands and its colony in Asia occupied. After she arrived back in London in the late summer, however, she decided that more needed to be done.<sup>61</sup>

A small group of Dutch politicians was instructed to carefully look at what a statement on the future of the Indies might say. In September, Peekema wrote what would become a prophetic memorandum. The government must assume, he argued, that upon liberation of the East Indies the Indonesians would in principle be free. Dutch colonial policy had since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century aimed, he explained, at a gradual transfer of powers to the Indies. The logical endpoint of this process, Peekema reasoned, should be complete independence in the not too distant future. Although the war had put a chink in the cable, the Dutch must make themselves no illusions; the course of events after the war would be influenced as much by the government's actions as by the desires of the people in the Indies. All the Dutch could do, Peekema concluded, was to make the option of a continuing voluntarily bond with the Netherlands as attractive as possible for nationalists in the archipelago.<sup>62</sup>

Van Mook was more optimistic, and dismissed Peekema's note as fatalistic; if the Dutch government accepted *a priori* the right of Indonesians to independence, he

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<sup>61</sup> Loudon to Michiels van Verduynen, 17 July 1942, in: *Documenten*, V, no. 53; C. Fasseur, *De Weg naar het Paradijs. En Andere Indische Geschiedenissen* (Amsterdam: B. Bakker, 1995), 221-222; De Jong, XIc, 79-82.

<sup>62</sup> Memorandum Peekema, 9 September 1942, in: *Documenten*, V, no. 193.

argued, it would quickly lose control of the gradual and moderate process toward decolonization it had in mind. Although he admitted that the Japanese invasion had likely affected the population's image of the Dutch as untouchable, the Lieutenant Governor-General maintained that the wartime suffering on both fronts would strengthen the bond between the Dutch and Indonesians. When he summarized his advice to Gerbrandy in early October, therefore, he insisted that the peoples of the Indies desired only equal status within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and recommended a limited reformation of the governmental structure. Appointing an Indonesian ministry under the continued supervision of the Governor-General, and renewing the Volksraad into a parliament with an Indonesian majority, Van Mook predicted, would satisfy even the more radical nationalists.<sup>63</sup>

When the Dutch Council of Ministers discussed these proposals in mid October, the members of the cabinet saw little in the Lieutenant Governor-General's plans for an Indonesian ministry and parliament. Minister of Justice Johannes R.M. van Angeren declared that the Indies' right to self-determination interfered with Dutch sovereignty. Minister of the Interior Hendrik van Boeyen saw matters in an even simpler light; describing Indonesians as children, he claimed that the Dutch had obligations to "raise" them, and could not let them down. Prime Minister Gerbrandy said he expected "nothing but accidents" from Van Mook's suggestions.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Van Mook to Gerbrandy, 2 October 1942, in: *Documenten*, V, no. 245.

<sup>64</sup> *Notes meeting*, 13 October 1942, in: *Documenten*, V, no. 270; Fasseur, *Paradijs*, 224-231.

Dutch planners eventually agreed that the Queen in her address would speak of the possibility to “reconstruct the Kingdom on the solid foundation of complete partnership.” It was decided, too, that she should mention that “no political unity nor national cohesion [could] continue to exist which [were] not supported by the voluntary acceptance and the faith of the great majority of the citizenry.” She would emphasize the will and ability of both the people of the Netherlands and the East Indies for “harmonious and voluntary cooperation.” The government in London furthermore deemed it crucial that the Queen include in her speech a line that made it clear that it was as yet “neither right nor possible” to define the precise form of the political reconstruction. Wilhelmina went on the radio in London in the evening of December 6, 1942, almost exactly one year after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and announced that a “round table conference,” symbolizing the equality of the partners, would be held after the war.<sup>65</sup> Dutch and East Indies delegates would advise on a new structure of the kingdom, in which matters of foreign policy and defense would be decided on jointly, and Indonesians would become responsible for the archipelago’s internal affairs. She thereby vaguely implied, without discussing the exact content of the reforms or indicating a date by which they would be implemented, that the Dutch government would grant increasing powers of self-rule to Indonesians.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> This speech became known as the “December 7” speech because when it was held, it was already December 7 in Indonesia. The full English text of the Queen’s speech can be found in: Cheong, 200-202.

<sup>66</sup> De Jong, XIc, 89-90.

During a dinner for the American press at the Dutch embassy in Washington on the eve of the Queen's speech, Van Mook gave journalists "off the record" comments. The speech could merely outline the proposed political reconstruction in the Indies, he explained, because detailed plans and suggestions at the present moment "would only make the people in the occupied territories resent the fact that they were being discussed over their heads and without their participation."<sup>67</sup>

The activities of "the people in the occupied territories," meanwhile, were invisible to the Lieutenant Governor-General. As intelligence missions had been a fiasco, Van Mook's temporary administration in Australia was forced to rely on Japanese radio broadcasts and a handful of accounts from eyewitnesses who had managed to flee the archipelago for information. Although the former clearly indicated a new wind was sweeping through the colony, Netherlands Indies officials stubbornly maintained that by far the larger part of the Indonesian population remained loyal to the Dutch.<sup>68</sup>

The fundamental aim of the new administration in the Indonesian archipelago, as Shigeru Sato explains, was the "Japanization" of Indonesian society: the construction of "an economic and social structure that would withstand the stress of

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<sup>67</sup> From a one-page "Background" issued by Dr. Van Mook on the eve of the Queen's broadcast, 5 December 1942, in: *Documenten*, V, no. 433.

<sup>68</sup> Lambert J. Giebels, *Soekarno, Nederlandsch onderdaan: Een biografie 1901-1950* (Amsterdam: B. Bakker, 1999), 323; Dennis, 75-77; H.J. van Mook, *Indonesië, Nederland en de wereld* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1949), 73-74.

war, and at the same time [enable] the maximum mobilization of human and natural resources for the war effort.”<sup>69</sup> This strategy included the definitive destruction of the Western presence and influence in the Indies. Batavia was renamed Jakarta, and had become a city in which Dutch could no longer be spoken in public. Dutch signs were removed from roads, shops, hotels, and restaurants. The Japanese calendar and Tokyo time were established in the islands. Governor-General Van Starckenborgh Stachouwer, his civil servant staff, and all teachers, doctors, judges, and lawyers of European descent were interned. All Dutch were forced to move to “protected” parts of large cities, which would eventually grow into civilian internment camps. From these camps the Dutch population of the Indies had no view of what was happening or of what had come to replace their paradise lost. All colonial memories were erased, every imperial symbol done away with.

The internment of the Dutch and Eurasian population opened up thousands of administrative jobs. Although the Japanese took over most of the high level positions, the educated class of Indonesians saw a rise in their socio-economic status over the course of 1942. The new administration believed that prematurely encouraging nationalist movements should be avoided, however. The local committees that had sprung up in the wake of the Japanese invasion were told that all political activities were disbanded, for instance.

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<sup>69</sup> Sato, “Japanization,” 289.

By April, the Japanese propaganda bureau in Java had established the so-called “AAA Movement,” referring to the slogan that Japan was “*Asia Cahaya, Asia Pelindung, and Asia Pemimpin,*” or the Light of Asia, the Protector of Asia, and the Leader of Asia. When the Japanese did not involve any prominent Indonesian nationalists in the movement it failed to attract a large following, and they were forced to quietly dissolve the unsuccessful organization in October. This taught the authorities that if they were to win the population of the archipelago for their cause, they would have to work with popular leaders who could attract the masses. Sukarno’s reputation as a nationalist and demagogue had been well established before his disappearance from the political arena in 1934. If he could be convinced to swear loyalty to the new regime, the Japanese thought, Sukarno might be able to rally Indonesians behind the Japanese war effort. In July, they took him out of exile in Sumatra and brought him to Jakarta.<sup>70</sup>

In January 1943, the Japanese Prime Minister Hideki Tojo announced before the Diet in Tokyo that both Burma and the Philippines, also occupied by Imperial Army forces, would soon be granted a limited form of independence. To the deep disappointment of Sukarno and Hatta, no such plans were in the making for Java and the rest of the Indonesian archipelago. As Theodore Friend and Bernhard Dahm explain, Indonesian nationalists thus learned that eventual independence was not “a

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<sup>70</sup> Rodney de Bruin, *Indonesië. De laatste etappe naar de vrijheid 1942-1945* (Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1982), 64-67; Doel, 70-72; McMahon, 35; De Jong, XIb, 194-198, 268-274.

reward for good behavior, but an expedient against danger.” The circumstances of the war, in other words, dictated to what extent the Japanese felt they needed the support of independence movements and were willing to give in to their demands for increased power and authority to spread their ideas and stir up support.<sup>71</sup>

The Japanese tried to win the sympathy and cooperation of the Indonesian people through the establishment of the *Pusat Tenaga Rakyat* (“Center of People’s Power”), or Putera. During its first mass meeting in Jakarta in the spring of 1943, the audience tore down the statue of Dutch East India Company pioneer and national hero Jan Pieterszoon Coen, after which Sukarno addressed the hundreds of thousands of people who had gathered. In a passionate tone he spoke of Indonesian nationalism and its link to the Japanese ideal of pan-Asianism. If only they would all work together, he said, they could eradicate European imperialism in all of Asia. Hatta added that Indonesia had been freed from Dutch domination, and never again wanted to be colonized.<sup>72</sup>

Putera was not an independent organization, however, and as such did not provide much opportunity for nationalist leaders to obtain political gain or executive power. It was governed by rules framed by the Japanese authorities, and they were determined not to let it attain the character of an independence movement. Putera was only allowed to produce and spread propaganda that explicitly supported the

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<sup>71</sup> Theodore Friend, *The Blue-Eyed Enemy: Japan Against the West in Java and Luzon, 1942-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 105-106; Dahm, 239-242.

<sup>72</sup> Giebels, 291.

Japanese war effort. Because Indonesians could take little initiative, enthusiasm for the movement soon dwindled, and it was disbanded less than a year after its establishment.<sup>73</sup>

In the hope of staying in clear control of any mass movement, the Japanese called into life two paramilitary organizations. Lieutenant-General Kumakichi Harada, Commander of the Japanese 16<sup>th</sup> Army in Java, established the *Keibodan* (“Vigilance Corps”) as an auxiliary police force, and the *Seinendan* (“Home Guard”) as a labor service movement made up of Indonesians in their late teens and twenties. These movements, though unarmed and often used as merely a cheap labor force, did expand to include significant numbers. It ensured numerous young Indonesians were trained in combat and indoctrinated with Japanese anti-Western ideas.<sup>74</sup>

At an Imperial Conference in Tokyo in late May, the Japanese leadership decided to change its offensive strategy in the war, which was going increasingly bad for them, to a defensive strategy. In another attempt to mobilize the densely populated Indonesian archipelago, Prime Minister Tojo announced that the inhabitants of the islands would henceforth be allowed to participate in their local administrations. This promise was crystallized in the establishment of the “Central Advisory Council” (*Chuo Sangi-in*) in late 1943. Headed by Sukarno and functioning as

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<sup>73</sup> De Jong, XIb, 277-281; Shigeru Sato, *War, Nationalism, and Peasants: Java under the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), 53-59; Muhammed Abdul Aziz, *Japan's Colonialism and Indonesia* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1955), 214.

<sup>74</sup> De Jong, XIb, 952-966; Giebels, 305.

a consultative body, the Council appeared to function somewhat like the colonial Volksraad. Because the Japanese appointed most of its 43 members and decided on its agenda it had merely an air of self-government. In his opening speech Sukarno therefore stated that the Council could only be a first step toward the much larger goal that he and his fellow Indonesians wanted to see realized.<sup>75</sup>

In Java, the Japanese decision to allow local military groups led to the creation of the *Tentara Sukarela Pembela Tanah Air* or “Homeland Defense Volunteer Army,” better known as Peta. October saw the start of the Japanese training of Peta officers, who in turn recruited and instructed the regular soldiers. Many young Javanese joined, lured by the promise of decent pay and food. At the same time, Japanese officials began rounding up millions of Indonesians to be employed as *romushas*, or “economic soldiers.” These laborers worked in often deplorable conditions to build airfield strips, lay train tracks, pave roads, and work in coalmines.<sup>76</sup>

But a new disappointment for the nationalists came in early November, when Tokyo hosted a Greater-Asia conference. Whereas China, the Philippines, Thailand, and Burma were all represented, the Indonesian islands had not been asked to send even an observer. Sukarno and Hatta were soon after invited for a long trip to Japan, however, during which they met with Emperor Hirohito.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> De Jong, XIb, 927-934; Sato, *War, Nationalism, and Peasants*, 60-71; Giebels, 294, 313; Aziz, 220-221.

<sup>76</sup> Sato, *War, Nationalism, and Peasants*, 115-200; Giebels, 304.

<sup>77</sup> Giebels, 299; Aziz, 217-218.

Nevertheless, the Japanese occupation had so far not brought the Indonesian nationalists the freedom or advances they had hoped for. The new authorities had swiftly done away with all Dutch colonial remnants, spoken of lofty anti-imperialistic ideals, promised pan-Asian greatness, and made some symbolic gestures, but in practice the nationalist movement in the archipelago had been made to serve the purposes and goals of the Japanese war and propaganda machine. To Indonesians in the countryside, the Japanese regime increasingly brought poverty, hunger, and repression similar to that of the colonial Dutch administration; the Japanese pan-Asian “Co-Prosperity Sphere,” as Sato notes, increasingly resembled a “Co-Poverty Sphere.” As the tide of the war turned against them, however, the realization dawned on Japanese policymakers in Tokyo that the Indonesian nationalist movement was a force to be taken into consideration.<sup>78</sup>

Despite its lack of substantive concessions, the Queen’s December radio address, which in any case had been meant primarily for American consumption, seemed to have accomplished its goal of diffusing tensions between the Netherlands government and the State Department. Ambassador Loudon reported to Van Kleffens that Roosevelt had called it a “very good and important speech” deserving of reading, and that Hull had referred to it as an example of “good statesmanship and

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<sup>78</sup> Sato, “Japanization,” 290; George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952), 104; J.D. Legge, *Sukarno: A Political Biography* (New York: Praeger, 1972), 149-152; Giebels, 308.

good practical sense.” With few exceptions it had been well received by the American press, too. *Time Magazine*, for example, noted that whereas mightier democracies “continued pussyfooting on postwar plans,” the Queen’s speech had made clear that the Dutch intended to give “bone, meat, and flavor” to the Atlantic Charter.<sup>79</sup> Because all signals indeed pointed to the storm of American anti-imperialism having subsided, especially where it concerned the Dutch, Netherlands planners in London advanced no new initiatives beyond the vague promise of a postwar conference. For the remainder of the war, they instead continually referred to the Queen’s speech when faced with detailed questions or anti-colonial criticism.<sup>80</sup>

Minister of the Colonies and Lieutenant Governor-General Van Mook, however, remained restless. During a trip to the United States in July 1943, his telegrams to the government in London expressed concern. Roosevelt’s exact attitude to the future of the Dutch colonial empire was unknown though did not appear to be unfavorable, he reported, Congress was too divided to form an opinion, and the people of the United States as a whole were uninformed. Believing American support essential to the restoration of Netherlands Indies authority in the archipelago, yet

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<sup>79</sup> Loudon to van Kleffens, 9 December 1942, in: *Documenten*, V, no. 443; Loudon to Van Kleffens, 17 December 1942, in: *Documenten*, VI, No. 6; *Time*, “Brave New Commonwealth,” 14 December 1942, 40.

<sup>80</sup> Pacific War Council, 21 July 1943, FDR Papers, Map Room Files, Box 168, FDR Library; William Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire, 1941-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 29-30; Dennis, 74-75, Cheong, 29-30.

unable to obtain any direct statements or promises concerning the future, Van Mook left Washington in low spirits.<sup>81</sup>

In the U.S. capital, meanwhile, policymakers planning for the postwar period attempted to find a compromise that lay between immediate independence for colonial territories and complete restoration of the European empires. The establishment of an international trusteeship scheme through the soon to be established United Nations Organization, they argued, was an option that allowed the Netherlands, France, and Britain to gradually grant independence to their colonies while increasingly linking the territories to the open market. When Secretary Hull presented the scheme to Roosevelt, he recommended that colonial administrations provide indigenous populations with opportunities to advance their general welfare, allow them a larger share in local government, and set dates by which independence would be achieved.<sup>82</sup>

When the President met with Queen Wilhelmina again in 1943 and discussed with her the future of the European empires, he pressed the point that it would be American arms liberating the colonies. He did not mention international trusteeship for the Indies, however, and settled for the Queen's equivocal promise that the Dutch

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<sup>81</sup> Foote to Hull, 15 July 1943, RG 59, 856D.01/119, NARA; Foote to Hull, 16 July 1943, RG 59, 856D.01/120, NARA.

<sup>82</sup> McMahan, 61-62; Hull, 1600.

government would grant Indonesians greater powers of self-rule.<sup>83</sup> The American president had been reassured, in other words, partly as a result of his private talks and correspondence with Queen Wilhelmina, partly because of the speech she had given, and partly perhaps because of his Dutch ancestry, that the policy plans of Netherlands officials included a gradual liberalization of imperial rule leading to eventual self-government. Roosevelt considered the Dutch, in contrast to the French, liberal colonists sincerely committed to reforming past abuses.<sup>84</sup> Roosevelt therefore increasingly held up the Queen's conciliatory promises as a model for the other colonial powers to imitate. While he could often be heard enthusiastically advocating the concept of international trusteeship in public, then, he remained vague and inconsistent when it came down to discussing the concrete specifics of the plan with Dutch policymakers. This allowed the latter, as they had previously done with the Atlantic Charter, to continue to count the Netherlands "exempt" to the trusteeship scheme.<sup>85</sup>

In February 1944, General MacArthur and Van Mook negotiated a preliminary but significant civil affairs agreement. It outlined the procedures to be adopted as American forces liberated parts of the Indonesian archipelago, and promised that the

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<sup>83</sup> Elliott Roosevelt, *As He Saw It* (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1946), 223; Louis, 437.

<sup>84</sup> Sumner Welles, *Seven Decisions that Shaped History* (New York: Harper, 1951), 150; Gary R. Hess, *The United States' Emergence as a Southeast Asian Power, 1940-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 55.

<sup>85</sup> Welles, *Seven Decisions*, 150; Christopher Thorne, *Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain, and the War against Japan, 1941-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 218-219.

full sovereignty of the Netherlands government would be restored to the area as soon as the military situation permitted it. In Brisbane, meanwhile, the Dutch authorities established a training school for civil servants for ultimate duty in the Indies, and in April, “Camp Columbia” on the outskirts of the city became the headquarters of the Netherlands-Indies Civil Administration (NICA). This Allied organization was at the disposal and under the command and responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief, and served as the link between the Netherlands Indies government and allied command. NICA officials would accompany the forces liberating the Indies, MacArthur and Van Mook agreed, and take up the task of reestablishing the administrative apparatus in the islands.<sup>86</sup>

The provisional civil affairs agreement alarmed Asian experts in Washington, however, who increasingly feared that upon the surrender of the Japanese, Indonesian nationalists would be more likely to consider themselves reconquered by the Dutch than liberated by the Allies. The State Department’s Office of Far Eastern Affairs therefore objected to American lives being sacrificed on behalf of European imperialism. The Office of European Affairs, in contrast, where most considered the Dutch an enlightened imperial power, was inclined to promise a restoration of colonial sovereignty.<sup>87</sup> This disagreement within the State Department on what the postwar policy of the United States in Southeast Asia should be deepened over the

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<sup>86</sup> “Principles Governing Arrangements for Civil Administration and Jurisdiction in Netherlands Territory in the Southwest Pacific Area,” 10 December 1944, in: FRUS, 1944, V, 1286-1298.

<sup>87</sup> For a good summary of the differences existing in the State Department at the time, see: Hess, 97-98.

course 1944, and was caused partly by a lack of credible intelligence about wartime developments in the Indies.

One of only a handful of diplomats that the State Department depended on for information on the situation in the occupied Indonesian archipelago was Consul-General Walter A. Foote, who had worked in Southeast Asia for more than a dozen years when the war broke out, and who had fled with Netherlands Indies administrators to Australia when the Japanese invaded Java. In 1942, Foote had told Secretary Hull that in his opinion, the indigenous peoples in the Indies were “docile, essentially peaceful, contented” and “happy [...] in their bamboo huts and in their rice fields.” The great masses were “entirely apathetic towards the question of independence,” the Consul-General noted.<sup>88</sup> Van Mook, he said, was known in the islands as “the Churchill of the Indies.” In 1944, Foote repeated his conviction that Indonesians were “nearly completely apathetic towards all public questions which [did] not originate in or concern directly the affairs of their *kampongs* or *desas*.” They respected “white man,” he argued, and “admired the efficiency and integrity of the average Dutch official.” “They are not ready for independence and will not be so for many years to come,” Foote concluded his rather skewed analysis.<sup>89</sup>

Both Secretary of State Hull and Undersecretary Welles held relatively liberal views, however, and worked to induce the European colonial powers to adopt

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<sup>88</sup> Foote to Hull, “Future of the Netherlands Indies,” 27 June 1942, RG 59, 856D.00/154, NARA.

<sup>89</sup> Foote to Hull, 29 January 1944, RG 59, 856D.00/166, NARA; Foote to Douglas MacArthur, 29 January 1944, RG 59, 856D.00/166, NARA.

progressive ideas about “dependent peoples” and their state of readiness for self-government. Welles thought that a continuation of the old imperial structures would “seriously endanger the peace and stability of all of the Far East.” Taken by the Queen’s speech and the promises Dutch officials had made, however, he was “inclined to believe that this problem [had] probably been solved already.” If the Netherlands and Netherlands Indies authorities faithfully carried out their pledges, “any question of international trusteeship in their case should not arise,” he noted.<sup>90</sup>

Asianists such as Laurence Salisbury, deputy assistant chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs and later acting chief of the small Division of Southwest Pacific Affairs, his successor Abbot Low Moffat, and less influential Southeast Asia expert Kenneth P. Landon were considerably more farsighted than their senior and traditional-minded colleagues in the European wing, who had always taken the lead on any proposed action in colonial matters. They argued that the civil affairs agreement MacArthur and Van Mook had made undermined plans for the trusteeship scheme, and held that the United States should play no role in the restoration of the Dutch colonial empire. Without a strong intimation that the United States wished to see a progressive improvement in the rights of indigenous peoples, Salisbury reasoned in a memo to Hull, the attitude in Asia would become one of increasing mistrust. The United States must obtain from the Netherlands government “definite commitments”

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<sup>90</sup> Sumner Welles, *The Time for Decision* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944), 302.

regarding the political and economic status of Indonesians, he advised, as well as a promise for the liberalization of the colonial economic policies toward third parties.<sup>91</sup>

The latter was important, for policymakers in Washington were not just convinced they were advancing the universal goals of democracy, liberty, and justice; American national interests included economic interests. Revitalizing the global economy a key design, and the colony an important supplier of valuable commodities, during the final years of the war the belief took hold in Washington that the task of restoring trade could best be done under stable Dutch leadership and efficient management, as long as the Netherlands government steered clear of any forms of protectionism and allowed American economic development and financial investment in the archipelago.

As the United States agreed in the late summer of 1944 to start training and equip a 7,000-man strong Netherlands marine brigade for action in Southeast Asia, Moffat summarized his concerns in memorandum that Hull forwarded to the president. Given increasing nationalist sentiments and years of intense Japanese anti-imperial propaganda, Moffat began, it was imperative for the United States to secure the goodwill of the peoples of Asia. Many American and allied lives could be saved if the British, French, and Dutch made a “dramatic and concerted announcement” regarding the future of their colonies in the region. These statements would have to clearly outline steps and include specific dates for independence or complete self-

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<sup>91</sup> Laurence Salisbury to Hull, 5 February 1944, RG 59, 856D.00/2-544, NARA.

government. “Failure of the Western powers to recognize the new conditions and forces in Southeast Asia” and attempts to reestablish outdated imperial regimes, he warned ominously, would almost certainly lead to “serious social and political conflict” and perhaps to an “ultimate [unification] of Oriental opposition to the West.”<sup>92</sup>

In the case of the Netherlands East Indies, Moffat predicted that the population of the territory would view men like Sukarno and Hatta as nationalists fighting for the political advancement of their peoples rather than as the collaborating opportunists that emerged from Dutch portrayals. Indonesian leaders would use the political concessions they gained from the Japanese as bargaining tools vis-à-vis the returning Dutch. “Western observers tend to lag behind in assessing the appeal of the idea of political independence among the masses in Asiatic countries,” the prescient expert explained. When Moffat and his colleagues urged their superiors to think long-term, however, they had something different in mind than did President Roosevelt, who in February 1945 stated at a press conference that he believed large parts of the Indonesian archipelago to be “hundreds of years” away from independence.<sup>93</sup> Not

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<sup>92</sup> Abbot Low Moffat to Hull, 8 September 1944, RG 59, 856D.01/10-544, NARA; Gerlof D. Homan, “The United States and the Indonesian Question, December 1941-December 1946,” *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 93 (1980), 45.

<sup>93</sup> Moffat to Hull, Oct 4, 1944, RG 59, 856D.01/10-444, NARA; Louis, 29-30, 424; Franklin D. Roosevelt, 23 February 1945, in: *Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Volumes 23-25 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 71-73. For similar reports from Asianists, see: 6 January 1945, “Imperialism versus an Enlightened Colonial Policy in the Area of the South East Asia Command,” RG 59, Southeast Asia US Policy 1946-1946, Records of the Philippine and Southeast Asia Division, Regional Affairs Subject Files; 26 March 1945, RG 59, Southeast Asia US Policy 1946-1946, Records of the Philippine and Southeast Asia Division, Regional Affairs Subject Files, NARA.

long after, Edward R. Stettinius, the new Secretary of State, signed the Dutch-American Civil Affairs Agreement that MacArthur and Van Mook had provisionally agreed upon the previous year.<sup>94</sup>

Where Asianists in Washington argued that the interests of the United States should push it in the direction of alignment with colonized territories, Europeanists at the same time held that the administration's overarching objective was to keep the harmony in the Western alliance. "We could not press [the colonial powers] too far," Hull observed, "in view of the fact that we were seeking the closest possible cooperation with them in Europe. We could not alienate them in the Orient and expect to work with them in Europe." As increasingly strained relations with the Soviets meant he could no longer afford disputes about colonialism to threaten collaboration between the United States and its allied imperial powers, Roosevelt postponed final decisions and avoided a confrontational policy debate on the future of the European empires.<sup>95</sup>

By the time of his death on April 12, then, Roosevelt had left his successor an ambiguous anti-imperial legacy and a confused policy for the dismantling of the European colonial powers, in which the case of the Dutch East Indies featured as perhaps the most complex. The Netherlands government had reason to assume that

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<sup>94</sup> The full text is available in: FRUS, 1944, V, 1286-1289.

<sup>95</sup> Hess, 119; Hull, 1599.

the Americans would help restore Dutch sovereignty in the East Indies, and that it could last indefinitely. It is not surprising that when the United Nations conference took place in San Francisco in late April, the Dutch showed more boldness than Washington planners had expected. Lieutenant Governor-General Van Mook, *Time* reported, “brushed aside” a suggestion that the new international organization might become involved in the political reconfiguration of the Indies and the Netherlands Kingdom. The Dutch, Van Mook stated, preferred “direct discussions” with Indonesians.<sup>96</sup>

These discussions would be based on only very general outlines, predicted Kenneth P. Landon in May 1945, mere weeks after the liberation of the Netherlands and German surrender in Europe. The Dutch postwar plans meant little in practical terms, and the new Netherlands government headed by labor party leader Willem Schermerhorn, like the governments that had preceded it, regarded the Dutch possessions as a private preserve. The events in years to come would illustrate the accuracy of Landon’s warning that the Dutch “resented bitterly any “outside” trespass in matters of [internal colonial] policy.”<sup>97</sup>

As the Combined Chiefs of Staff prepared to remove the Indies from American military jurisdiction and transfer the archipelago to the British, making Lord

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<sup>96</sup> Kimball, 151-152; Louis, 436-440; *Time*, “Indonesia: Little & Big,” 24 December 1945. For Van Mook’s vision of the future of the Netherlands East Indies and its relations with the Netherlands, see his address delivered before the members of the Institute of Pacific Relations in San Francisco on 18 May, 1945: *Past and Future in the Netherlands East Indies* (New York: Netherlands Information Bureau, 1945).

<sup>97</sup> Kenneth P. Landon, 18 May 1945, RG 49, 856D.00/5/13/1945, NARA.

Mountbatten's South East Asia Command (SEAC) responsible for the liberation of the islands, a policy paper prepared by the Acting Secretary of State Joseph C. Grew outlined the complicated strategic dilemma President Truman's administration found itself in: "A problem for the United States is to harmonize, so far as possible, its policies in regard to two objectives: increased political freedom for the Far East and the maintenance of the unity of the leading United Nations in meeting this problem." By the summer of 1945, the United States had found a temporary solution for this problem in its effective isolation from involvement in colonial matters. Although it still affirmed its belief in the rights of all peoples to eventual independence, the government at the same time intimated that in the case of the Netherlands East Indies, it was not unthinkable that the peoples in the archipelago would be happy to see the Dutch return, or at least, when compared to the Japanese occupation, view that return as "the lesser of two evils." Thus, it was anticipated and desired, but not demanded, that the Dutch implement changes in the Indies.<sup>98</sup>

Where the Americans trusted rather patiently that the Schermerhorn government and the Indonesian nationalists would be able to work things out peacefully, politicians in The Hague and Netherlands Indies administrators in Australia were hoping for a complete restoration of Dutch authority in the islands.

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<sup>98</sup> See, for instance, "An Estimate of Conditions in Asia and the Pacific at the Close of the War in the Far East and the Objectives and Policies of the United States," 22 June 1945, Grew for the Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, in: FRUS, 1945, VI, 556-580; Landon, 18 May 1945, RG 59, 856D.00/5/13/1945, NARA; Homan, 43.

They were desperately out of touch with the reality that their prestige and power in the colony had been damaged beyond repair, however. The belief that the Netherlands ranked as a great power only while in possession of its colonies was firmly planted in the minds of the Dutch; wartime Prime Minister Gerbrandy went as far as asserting that without the East Indies, the people of the Netherlands would find themselves “[pauperized] on their few acres in a corner of Europe.”<sup>99</sup>

Tens of thousands of miles away, the Queen’s December 1942 speech went unnoticed in the territory to which it was designed to apply, as listening to long-range shortwave radio broadcasts was strictly banned. If they had been able to hear it, however, Indonesian nationalists would have been sorely disappointed with her refusal to recognize outright their right to self-determination. In the archipelago, nationalist sentiment had become ever more palpable. On the break of defeat, the Japanese administration had decided to allow the population of the islands to hold political meetings and fly the red-white Indonesian flag. More and more Indonesians had appeared in important posts, and the Central Advisory Council headed by Sukarno began to resemble a cabinet. During the late summer of 1945, Tokyo once again tried to rally the people by establishing an “Investigating Committee for the Preparation of Independence,” which in August officially became the “Indonesian Independence Preparatory Committee” (PPKI). Sukarno was appointed chairman,

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<sup>99</sup> Fasseur, 233; P.S. Gerbrandy, *Indonesia* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1950), 26-27.

and Hatta vice-chairman. The Japanese finally agreed to schedule the transfer of authority to the Indonesians and proclaim the nation's independence on August 24.<sup>100</sup>

The Indonesian nationalist movement achieved significant goals during the period of Japanese occupation. The military and paramilitary formed a material basis of strength. The system of local administrative councils, in which for the first time Indonesians now held positions of real power, provided a political framework. The extended use of the Indonesian language had increased the sense of unity among millions of people spread far and wide. The swift collapse of Dutch colonial authority in 1942 had discredited the Western power, fostered the aspirations of local nationalists, and encouraged the emergence of a military elite and re-emergence of an exiled political leadership. While Indonesian identity and unity were being consolidated and strengthened, the war was also a time of unprecedented hunger and deprivation for the population of the archipelago.

The Japanese occupation, which had displaced not a legitimate indigenous regime but an already unstable and troubled imperial bureaucracy, can therefore be seen as a catalyst that had speeded up processes started in the first four decades of the century; though the Japanese had given ground to nationalists grudgingly, they had created conditions that would soon become the foundation for a national revolution. Sukarno, especially, had been brought back to the centre of political life as the formal

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<sup>100</sup> Doel, 74-77; McMahan, 38; De Jong, XIb, 979-983; 8 September 1944, RG 59, 856D.01/10-544, NARA.

and most influential representative of the Indonesian people, and had pushed his own claim to leadership while spreading and intensifying the cause of independence.<sup>101</sup>

Sukarno's ascent to power naturally caused contemporaries, and historians since, to ponder the extent to which the Indonesian leader was a collaborator, and to what extent he responded to the situation brought into being by the Japanese occupation and manipulated it to advance his goal of an independent archipelago. Kahin is of the opinion that Sukarno supported Japan only to the minimum extent necessary, whereas Legge and Giebels believe he went further; his pro-Japanese attitude was born not only out of mere opportunism, they maintain, but also out of admiration. Drawing contrasts between Sukarno and Hatta, who only sporadically voiced outright support for the Japanese, and Sjahrir, who believed that Indonesians should not cooperate with the occupiers at all, indeed leads one to think, rather unfashionably, as Harry Benda admitted, that the later president's collaboration was "more than superficial, the result of dire necessity." But when we consider the similarities between the three and a half years of Japanese occupation and the three and a half centuries of Dutch rule, and follow Anderson's advice to view the period not merely as an epilogue to the archipelago's colonial history or an ominous prologue to the revolution, but rather as part of Southeast Asian history, the simpler image of Sukarno that might be said to emerge from the complexities, and one that became

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<sup>101</sup> Legge, 178-180; Bernhard Dahm, *Sukarno and the struggle for Indonesian Independence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 232-235. W.H. Elsbree, *Japan's Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements, 1940-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), 165-167.

immensely popular in subsequent years, is of him not as a puppet, but as a puppet master.<sup>102</sup>

As the Japanese surrender seemed imminent, Sukarno, Hatta, and Sjahrir realized that the future of Indonesia was linked to the international situation, and looked to the Americans rather than the Dutch. They believed there was reason to be optimistic. “Does not the Atlantic Charter,” Hatta reasoned, “recognize the right of all peoples to live under a government of their own choice?” Did not Americans, Sjahrir similarly asked, present themselves as reformers and innovators? “In this fact lie possibilities for [Indonesians] to win a new position for ourselves,” the nationalist wrote. The end of the war would be “the beginning of their national existence as a free people.”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Kahin, 107; Legge, 106; Giebels, 308; H.J. Benda, “Decolonization in Indonesia: The Problem of Continuity and Change,” in: Benda (ed.), *Continuity and Change in Southeast Asia: Collected Journal Articles of Harry J. Benda* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1972), 218-219; Anderson, “Japan: the Light of Asia,” 30-31.

<sup>103</sup> Benedict Anderson in the introduction to Sutan Sjahrir, *Our Struggle* (Ithaca: Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1968), 11; Sjahrir, *Our Struggle*, 25; “Indonesian Aims and Ideals,” 23 August 1945, in Mohammad Hatta, *Portrait of a Patriot; Selected Writings* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972), 501-502.

## Chapter 2

### Revolution and Reconquest: August 1945 - December 1945

*“We can put the baby to sleep provided no one outside the house makes a noise.”<sup>104</sup>*

W.R. Patterson, September 1945

“We shall be with you shortly,” Lieutenant Governor-General Hubertus van Mook promised the men and women in the Netherlands East Indies when he spoke to them on the radio on August 15, 1945.<sup>105</sup> In Camp Columbia in Brisbane, Australia, Dutch and Indonesian civil administration officials had listened to Van Mook saying similar reassuring words the evening before: “you must expect to get your marching orders soon.”<sup>106</sup> Privately, Van Mook was less optimistic about an orderly and swift restoration of the Dutch colonial government in the Indies. Just days earlier, in two telegrams to Minister of the Colonies J.H.A. Logemann in The Hague, he had expressed his concern; in the event of a sudden Japanese surrender, he warned, the gross shortage of Allied men and material in the region could prove problematic.

Although he expected to be able to put to work many of the newly liberated prisoners

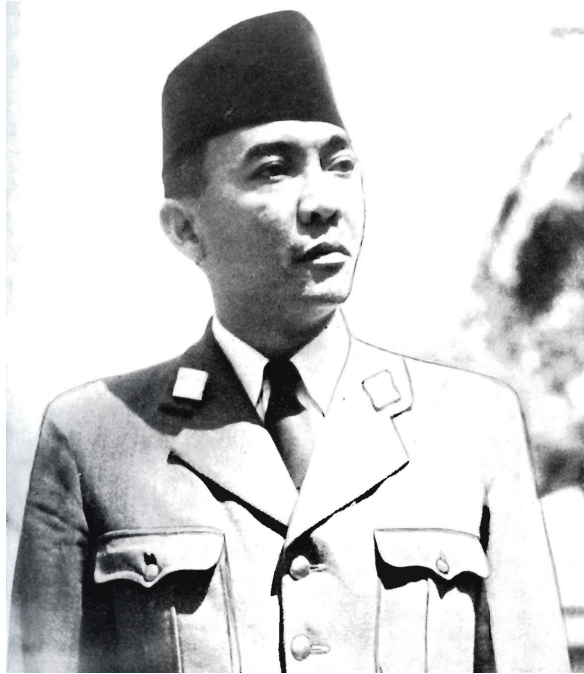
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<sup>104</sup> Rear Admiral W.R. Patterson quoted in a personal signal to Admiral Lord Mountbatten, in: C.W. Squire, *Britain and the Transfer of Power in Indonesia, 1945-46* (Unpublished dissertation. Londen, 1979), 72.

<sup>105</sup> Radio speech Lieutenant Governor-General Hubertus J. van Mook, 15 August 1945, in: S.L. van der Wal, P.J. Drooglever and M.B.J. Schouten (eds.), *Officiële Bescheiden Betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische Betrekkingen 1945-1950* (hereafter NIB) 20 volumes (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971-1996), I, p. 42, note 2; Van Mook, 15 August 1945, Archive of the Dutch Embassy in Washington, Folder 3119, Dutch National Archives (hereafter DNA).

<sup>106</sup> Aneta press report, 14 August 1945, Archive of the Dutch Embassy in Washington, Folder 3119, DNA.

of war and internees, among whom dozens of administrators and tens of thousands of Royal Dutch East Indies Army (*Koninklijke Nederlands Indisch Leger* or KNIL) soldiers, he urged Logemann to arrange for all available manpower and equipment to be shipped to Southeast Asia as quickly as possible.<sup>107</sup>



3. Sukarno

During the six weeks that followed Van Mook's promises and pleas, Indonesian nationalists and the triumvirate of Republican leaders Sukarno, Mohammad Hatta, and Sutan Sjahrir would proclaim and breathe life into the independent Republic Indonesia. This period would moreover see the Supreme Allied Commander of the South East Asia Command (SEAC) Admiral Lord

Mountbatten grow increasingly worried about the involvement of British and British-Indian troops in the complicated internal affairs of another country. Dutch authorities, finally, spent those days fretting about not being able to land significant numbers of soldiers or administrative personnel in the Netherlands East Indies. This chapter investigates the last four months of 1945. What were the early attitudes of

<sup>107</sup> Van Mook to Minister of the Colonies J.H.A. Logemann, 11 August 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 6; Van Mook to Logemann, 12 August 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 8.

officials in Jakarta and politicians in The Hague towards the revolution in the islands, and how did these set the stage for what would be four difficult years? What was the influence of the rapid readjustments in British policy that Mountbatten forced Whitehall to make when faced with circumstances beyond his control? And how did the young Republic and the Indonesian nationalists who supported it plan to convince both friend and foe that their struggle for independence was not to be repressed? Throughout, this chapter argues that the existence of a brief political and military vacuum crucially shaped the events to follow; by the end of the year, it was clear that there would be no smooth and orderly transition from wartime to peacetime in the Indonesian archipelago.

“I feel as if I caught something like a big stone in my throat.”<sup>108</sup> He had only just returned from a visit to the Japanese Asia Headquarters, but the news of Emperor Hirohito’s capitulation came as a surprise to Sukarno. He and Mohammad Hatta had traveled to Saigon in early August to discuss the preparations for Indonesian independence with the Japanese Commander-in-Chief, Count Hisaichi Terauchi.<sup>109</sup> As we have seen in Chapter 2, the nationalist leaders wished to avoid bloodshed; they had spent the last months of the war hoping that a Japanese defeat would occur after a

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<sup>108</sup> Sukarno quoted in: Benedict O’G R. Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944-1946* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), 68. Sukarno is quoted as saying this to Shigetada Nishijima, assistant to the Japanese Admiral Tadashi Maeda.

<sup>109</sup> Charles Wolf Jr., *The Indonesian Story: The Birth, Growth, and Structure of the Indonesian Republic* (New York: J. Day Co., 1948), 9.

tidy transfer of power to an independent Indonesian regime, and had worked with Japanese officials to make this a reality.

Sutan Sjahrir, the third leading Indonesian nationalist, had continually objected to Sukarno and Hatta's plans, noting that neither the Dutch nor any of the bigger allied powers would want to recognize the new Republic if Japanese authorities had helped it come into being. He

demanded instead an immediate declaration of independence, to be issued without taking into account the wishes of the current occupiers.

Sjahrir was supported in his opinion by a large number of politically active young Indonesians who were

similarly disturbed by Sukarno and

Hatta's wartime cooperation with the

Japanese. These *pemudas*, who during the summer of 1945 had rapidly become an

influential organized formation of militant leaders of the younger generation, urged

Sukarno to declare Indonesia independent on August 15, the very day of the Japanese



4. Mohammad Hatta

surrender.<sup>110</sup> To push the more cautious statesmen Sukarno and Hatta into immediate action, a group of *pemudas* kidnapped the two the next morning and threatened a mass armed uprising. They were released that same evening, after the Japanese Admiral in Jakarta, Tadashi Maeda, had announced that his forces would not fight a declaration of independence and the two captives had agreed to write a proclamation overnight.<sup>111</sup>

Sukarno and Hatta swiftly crafted the declaration at the residence of Admiral Maeda and proclaimed the independent Republic of Indonesia in the front yard of Sukarno's residence in Jakarta at 10 am on August 17. The short declaration, made in the name of "all brothers and sisters" of the Indonesian people, was immediately broadcast on the radio and telegraph network, and during the next few weeks local authorities in the smaller villages on Java spread the message.<sup>112</sup> After this, the new leadership embarked with great alacrity on the task of constructing a government apparatus.

Within a week of the proclamation, the "Independence Preparatory Committee" (*Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia*, or PPKI), hastily established by the Japanese on August 7, had convened and declared Sukarno president of the young

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<sup>110</sup> *Pemuda* literally means "youth" in Bahasa Indonesia. John R.W. Smail, *Bandung in the Early Revolution: A Study in the Social History of the Indonesian Revolution* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Dept. of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1964), 17.

<sup>111</sup> H.W. van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indië: De val van het Nederlandse imperium in Azië* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2000), 84-86; George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952), 134-136. For a very detailed sequence of events leading up to the declaration of independence, see Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, 66-84.

<sup>112</sup> Anderson, 125; George McTurnan Kahin, "Sukarno's Proclamation of Indonesian Independence," *Indonesia* 69, (April 2000), 2.

Republic. Hatta became vice-president. A final draft of the national constitution, already largely written during the last month of the occupation, was completed, ratified, and then promulgated throughout the archipelago. The PPKI also appointed trusted colleagues of Sukarno and Hatta to take control of the various government ministries, and set up an administrative blueprint in which the Republic was divided into eight regions or provinces, each with a governor appointed by Sukarno and semi-autonomous sultanates.



**5. Sutan Sjahrir**

To further cement the government's authority, Sukarno then dissolved the PPKI, and replaced it with the "Central Indonesian National Committee" (*Komit  Nasional Indonesia Pusat*, or KNIP) on August 29. This committee had legislative power and was to be responsible for advising the president and his cabinet of twelve ministers on state policy. It was composed of 135 prominent men chosen by Sukarno and

Hatta, and represented all shades of nationalist opinion. Because that many representatives were unlikely to be able to convene frequently, a smaller body was

established: the Working Committee of the KNIP, of which Sjahrir became chairman.<sup>113</sup>

The KNIP set up an auxiliary police force, using the youth organizations created by the Japanese as its base. This “People’s Security Force” (*Badan Keamanan Rakjat* or BKR, the precursor of the *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* or TNI, the Indonesian National Army) consisted of autonomous constituent groups and joined the struggle by occupying the government buildings of the Japanese authorities.<sup>114</sup> Taking some direction from the KNIP in Jakarta, dozens of loosely structured national committees (*Komit  Nasional Indonesia*, KNIs) sprung up across Java to assist the governors in the provinces. Though with no precisely defined tasks as of yet, their very existence helped spread the revolution and further galvanized the people of Indonesia into action.<sup>115</sup> Young Indonesian nationalists in particular embraced the ideal of *merdeka* (freedom). Forming a sort of “wildcat army,” these dedicated, coordinated, and self-disciplined guerillas had no other goal than to prevent the return of a Dutch colonial regime.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Wolf, 16-17; Anderson, 87-91; McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1945-1949* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 84; Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 138-140. The new Republic was to consist of eight provinces: Sumatra, Borneo (now Kalimantan), West Java, Central Java, East Java, Sulawesi (referred to by the Dutch as Celebes), Maluku, and the Lesser Sundas.

<sup>114</sup> Anderson, 103-105; Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 141-141.

<sup>115</sup> Anderson, 115; William H. Frederick, *Visions and Heat: The Making of the Indonesian Revolution* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989), 187-191; Anton Lucas, *One soul one struggle: Region and revolution in Indonesia* (Sydney: Asian Studies Association of Australia in association with Allen and Unwin, 1991), 69, 89-93; Smail, 39-44.

<sup>116</sup> Frances Gouda and Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia, 1920-1949* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002), 121-123.

After having played a clear advising role in the weeks leading up to the declaration of independence, the Japanese military commanders, waiting to surrender to Allied victors, found themselves facing a dilemma. Mountbatten's South East Asia Command had explicitly ordered them to maintain not only law and order but also the political status quo in Indonesia until the arrival of British troops, whom the nervous Japanese, like the feverishly working nationalist leaders, knew would come sooner or later.<sup>117</sup> While attempting to uphold order among the Indonesian nationalists, they at the same time wanted to avoid a head-on collision with the revolution whose spirit by now had cities beginning to buzz with excitement. On August 19, Terauchi announced that the Japanese would henceforth leave the government of Java in the hands of Sukarno.<sup>118</sup>

As a result, Japanese policy during the six-week interval between theoretical capitulation and physical surrender was uncertain and compromising. Clashes between Indonesian nationalists and Japanese authorities over the control of government buildings and weapons increased during September, with considerable areas of the cities of Jakarta, Surabaya, and Semarang beginning to pass to Indonesian armed groups.<sup>119</sup> By the end of that month, the new government had been consolidated and

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<sup>117</sup> Anderson, 94-98.

<sup>118</sup> Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 138; Smail, 20; Gouda and Zaalberg, 125; Mountbatten to British Chiefs of Staff, 5 September 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 52.

<sup>119</sup> Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 137-141.

given visible institutional form, and the red-white Republican flag was flown from almost all public buildings in Java.<sup>120</sup>

Indonesian nationalists, recognizing the temporary political and military vacuum that would evaporate with the arrival of Allied troops, had taken the initiative and seized control, setting up a functioning and relatively stable new government during a period of emergency and chaos. This shocked not only the many Dutch and Eurasian internees who were beginning to leave Japanese imprisonment camps to return to their prewar homes, but also the Allied forces.<sup>121</sup> When British troops finally landed in the Netherlands East Indies on September 29 and reliable reports of internal conditions began to reach Brisbane, London, Washington, and The Hague, the outside world was astonished, and the Netherlands government displeased.

This bewilderment was in large part due to a general inability to gather sufficient unbiased intelligence in the Japanese-occupied East Indies. Only a small handful of Indonesia specialists worked in the U.S. State Department's Research and Analysis Branch of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and they had been producing reports without being able to rely on actual contacts in the islands. Analysts based their findings on information from Dutch "experts" on the Indonesian archipelago: Westerners who had lived in the East Indies before the occupation and

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<sup>120</sup> Smail, 52, 54.

<sup>121</sup> See Frederick, 193-194 for a brief discussion of the experience of former prisoners of war and internees. For longer discussions, see: D. van Velden, *The Japanese Civil Internment Camps during the Second World War* (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1963); Wim Willems and Jaap de Moor (eds.), *Het Einde van Indië: Indische Nederlanders tijdens the Japanse Bezetting en de Dekolonisatie* (The Hague: SDU, 1995); De Jong, *The Collapse of a Colonial Society: The Dutch in Indonesia during the Second World War* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002).

were spending the war Australia, where they fed “facts, insights, and frequently fantasies about the situation of the Netherlands East Indies” to British and American officials who were stationed there.<sup>122</sup> Most could not imagine that the people of the Indies did not look forward to their return, and they had spent the war attempting to convince the American foreign policy establishment of the enduring affection of Indonesians toward their colonial masters.

Early in the war, as we have seen in Chapter 2, General Douglas MacArthur’s Southwest Pacific Area Command (SWPA) had assumed the responsibility of liberating the entire Indonesian archipelago except Sumatra. An alteration in the Allied command structure made at the Potsdam Conference at the end of July 1945, however, transferred this responsibility from the Americans to British Admiral Lord Mountbatten and his South East Asia Command. The origins of this decision lay partly in the longstanding wish at Whitehall to assume a greater share of strategic decisions in Southeast Asia, even as Attlee’s Foreign Affairs Secretary Ernest Bevin feared this might overburden the British economy. American officials, initially opposed to any changes, had come around to the idea in the summer of 1944. The Dutch were only nominally consulted. Divisions in the Netherlands government between Lieutenant Governor-General Van Mook, who had realized that the Americans were better equipped than the British, and wartime Prime Minister Pieter S. Gerbrandy, of the opinion that the British were more likely to stand up for an allied

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<sup>122</sup> Gouda and Zaalberg, 116-117.

colonial power, had prevented the Dutch from making a clear argument either way. The consequential decision to transfer the task of liberating the Netherlands East Indies from the Americans to the British was thus made mere weeks before the Japanese surrender.<sup>123</sup>

During the three-week interval between the announcement of the transfer of the Netherlands East Indies to SEAC and the collapse of the Japanese, the Netherlands government complained that it had not been consulted. Van Mook noted that this was another example of the way the smaller powers had been ignored during the war. Fearing that everything that had been agreed upon with General MacArthur under the lend-lease program now would have to be renegotiated with Mountbatten, which he assumed would lead to severe delays in shipping well-equipped Dutch troops and administrators to the Netherlands East Indies, he urged his colleagues in The Hague to discuss Dutch interests in Southeast Asia with British and American representatives.<sup>124</sup>

For the American government, which as we have seen had played both sides of the colonial issue during the war, the transfer meant not only that more resources would become available for the fight against Japan, but also that the country would avoid direct involvement in the restoration of the old colonial powers. After the

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<sup>123</sup> McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 75-81; Memoranda sent between the American and British Chiefs of Staff, 17-20 July 1945, in: *Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), *Conference of Berlin (Potsdam)*, Volume II, 1313-1318. Hereafter this series will be cited as FRUS, followed by the year and volume. Alan Bullock, *Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary, 1945-1951* (New York: Norton, 1983), 32-33.

<sup>124</sup> Van Mook to Logemann, 2 August 1945, Folder 3, Idenburg Papers, DNA.

Japanese surrender, most planners in Washington felt there was no military reason for the United States to continue to involve itself actively in the affairs of SEAC, and there was every political reason to remain aloof from the chaos that might soon erupt in Southeast Asia.

For the British, the transfer came at a time when the government in London was beginning to question whether it had the necessary resources to take on this task of considerable magnitude. Besides the Dutch East Indies, SEAC's expanded theater of operations now also included Thailand (Siam) and the southern half of Indochina. Another 70 million people and 750,000 square miles of land area were to be liberated by the British in the Indonesian archipelago alone. In spite of this, SEAC's top priority remained the swift occupation of the British colonies of Malaya and Singapore. Beyond those territories, Mountbatten was planning to capture a handful of strategic locations such as Saigon, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Jakarta, and Surabaya.<sup>125</sup>

In July, a new Labour government had been brought into power in Britain with Clement Attlee's resounding victory over Winston Churchill's Conservative Party. The new Prime Minister and his cabinet promised to rebuild the war torn country and institute social reform. The generally forward thinking Attlee nevertheless believed that the British Empire was an institution and power for good in the world. The primary influences on policymaking in Whitehall were therefore the wish to recover

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<sup>125</sup> Peter Dennis, *Troubled days of peace. Mountbatten and South East Asia Command, 1945-46* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 13-23; Doel, 82.

Britain's colonies in Southeast Asia and the importance of good relations with neighbors in Western Europe, especially in the face of American criticism on imperialism. Bevin agreed that in order to keep her position of influence in postwar Southeast Asia, Britain should support other European colonial powers in reestablishing their authority in the region's colonies.<sup>126</sup>

That the British had no moral objections to the restoration of Dutch rule in the Indies became clear also when the two nations made a "civil affairs" agreement on August 24. This agreement outlined the principles that would govern questions of civil administration and jurisdiction in the Netherlands Indies territory liberated by Allied forces under SEAC. Bevin reassured the Netherlands ambassador in London, underlining that the arrangements in no way affected Dutch sovereignty in the Indies; it was agreed that the Netherlands Indies government would "resume as rapidly as practicable full responsibility for the civil administration" of the archipelago.<sup>127</sup>

In the Netherlands, a government consisting of a national cabinet "for restoration and renewal" had been in power since late June 1945. It was a royal cabinet, meaning it had come into existence through appointment by the Queen rather than general elections. New Prime Minister Willem Schermerhorn, an intellectual from a protestant family of farmers and a member of what the following year would become the labor party PvdA, led this government together with the

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<sup>126</sup> Bullock, 151-153.

<sup>127</sup> Bevin to Netherlands Ambassador (Michiels van Verduynen), 24 August 1945, Colonial Office Files (CO) 968/147, British National Archives, London (hereafter cited as BNA).

matter-of-fact administrator Willem Drees, who was of the same political orientation, as the Minister of Social Affairs. Minister of Overseas Territories in this cabinet was J.H.A. Logemann, a progressive man who before the war had been professor of law in what was then known as Batavia, and a good friend of Lieutenant Governor-General Van Mook. When Schermerhorn presented his government on June 27 and unfolded his plans for the future of the Netherlands East Indies, he announced that he and his colleagues would continue with the preparations for an “Imperial Conference” (*Rijksconferentie*) as announced by Queen Wilhelmina in her radio address of December 7, 1942.

The Japanese capitulation came on the exact day that the transfer of the Netherlands East Indies to the British was made official. The first Allied troops, however, were not scheduled to land in Java until late September or early October. Lieutenant Governor-General Van Mook’s first reports mentioning the proclamation of the Republic Indonesia arrived in The Hague on August 20, when he indicated to Logemann that intelligence information told him, erroneously, so he later discovered, that the Japanese Commander-in-Chief had made the declaration, and that it was he who had appointed Sukarno and Hatta. Van Mook did not expect the establishment of the Republic to cause many problems for the occupation forces, as the “so-called Sukarno government” was set up by collaborators and without popular support, and

would be dissolved by Allied troops immediately after their arrival. His main concern was instead the plight of the newly liberated prisoners of war and internees. Some 100,000 of them in Java alone were concentrated in areas around Jakarta, Buitenzorg (Bogor), Bandung, Semarang, Magelang, and Surabaya, in urgent need of care, protection, and eventually, evacuation.<sup>128</sup>

Although suspecting the British high command of setting the wrong priorities and anxious for Dutch officials to arrive in the East Indies as soon as possible, the Netherlands government exhibited little apprehension about the political and military consequences of the impending vacuum in the Indonesian archipelago.<sup>129</sup> No sooner than on August 30 did the Netherlands government form a research committee to find out and report on “what opinions lived in the Indies.”<sup>130</sup> It took Prime Minister Schermerhorn even longer to explicitly raise concerns regarding the difficulties in the Dutch Indies and the quandary in which the Netherlands could find itself if the British government did not commission Mountbatten to take action against the Republic Indonesia.<sup>131</sup>

In early September, Van Mook traveled to Kandy in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), to meet Mountbatten at the latter’s headquarters. Although the British commander was

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<sup>128</sup> Van Mook to Logemann, 20 August 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 26; Van Mook to Logemann, 20 August 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 27.

<sup>129</sup> During the first meeting after Van Mook’s telegrams announcing the Indonesian declaration of independence, held on August 22, the proclamation is not even mentioned. Report meeting, 22 August 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 30. Minutes meeting, 17 September 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 73; Report meeting, 26 September 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 106.

<sup>130</sup> Memorandum Logemann, 30 August 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 43.

<sup>131</sup> Report meeting, 26 September 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 106.

already aware of the existence of what he had called in his diary a “local resistance movement in Java [...] which [would] require very careful handling,” the discussion between the two focused on the manner in which Dutch authority would be restored in the Netherlands East Indies.<sup>132</sup> In his reports to the Supreme Commander, the Lieutenant Governor-General outlined the Japanese sponsorship of the Indonesian administration and Sukarno’s collaboration during the occupation, summarizing the new Republic as “a one man government along Japanese lines” and “a puppet regime.”<sup>133</sup> Van Mook was not deliberately attempting to deceive his superiors, as the Republic had certainly come about with Japanese assistance, but his emphatic insistence that it was doubtful whether it had any large following at all illustrates the Lieutenant Governor-General’s patronizing attitude and limited understanding of Indonesian nationalist sentiment.

Van Mook suggested that British troops carefully avoid dealings with “Sukarno *cum suis*,” and that Mountbatten instead reinforce the responsibility of the Japanese military to maintain the status quo in the archipelago. Even a purely indirect and de facto recognition of this “last-minute organization,” he noted, would create “the greatest difficulties and bring confusion in the minds of all law-abiding

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<sup>132</sup> Philip Ziegler (ed.), *Personal Diary of Admiral The Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, 1943-1946* (London: Collins, 1988), 239-240; Memorandum Van Mook to Mountbatten, 3 September 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 49; Report meeting, 4 September 1945, in: *ibid*, I, no. 50; Mountbatten to British Chiefs of Staff, 5 September 1945, in: *ibid*, I, no. 52; Van Mook to Logemann, 5 September 1945, in: *ibid*, I, no. 53.

<sup>133</sup> Memorandum Van Mook to Mountbatten, 3 September 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 49.

Indonesians.”<sup>134</sup> Van Mook called upon Mountbatten to issue a general directive that the Republic Indonesia was not to be recognized. The latter, unable to “entirely divorce himself from his British nationality,” declined. Afraid that a political statement in his own name would commit His Majesty’s Government, and realizing that the British were likely to be faced with a similar situation in French Indochina, the commander instead told Terauchi that the Japanese would be held responsible for the maintenance of law and order until the occupation forces arrived. He moreover urged the Dutch government to issue a public statement relating to the internal political situation in the East Indies.<sup>135</sup>

During the month of September, it slowly became evident to the Dutch that the situation in the Netherlands East Indies was more serious than had been expected. They continued to be carefully optimistic, supposing that limited but decisive Allied action would quell the revolution. On September 15 two cruisers, the British HM Cumberland and the Dutch HM Tromp, moored in the docks of Jakarta for a preliminary visit ahead of the landing of British troops, which was scheduled for the end of the month. On board were Mountbatten’s Rear Admiral W.R. Patterson and Netherlands Indies administrator Charles O. van der Plas, a senior civil servant and former Governor of East Java who had worked with Van Mook in Brisbane during the war, and who was expected to make preparatory arrangements for the arrival of

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<sup>134</sup> Memorandum Van Mook to Mountbatten, 3 September 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 49.

<sup>135</sup> Mountbatten to British Chiefs of Staff, 5 September 1945, Cabinet Papers 121/697, BNA; Denning to Foreign Office, 6 September 1945, Cabinet Papers 121/697, BNA.

Dutch Indies administrative personnel. After speaking with former internees and prisoners of war, Van der Plas reported to Van Mook that the effect of Japanese anti-Dutch propaganda, especially on the younger generation, had been underestimated, and that Republican flags could be seen flying everywhere he went. He hoped that with a timely arrival of troops, however, and the arrest and isolation of leading nationalists, the fire of the revolution could be swiftly extinguished.<sup>136</sup> Patterson in his reports to Mountbatten similarly noted that the circumstances had been different than foreseen. He too, nevertheless confidently concluded that the British could “put the baby to sleep provided no one outside the house [made] a noise.”<sup>137</sup> That a real revolution was taking place in Java neither Van der Plas nor Patterson seemed to appreciate.

Mountbatten, however, was about to reassess events in the archipelago. The reports he sent to the British Chiefs of Staff in London at the end of September would influence policymaking in a way that severely affected Dutch-British relations. On September 26, the commander received disturbing information from his wife Edwina, who after a tour of some of the prison camps in the Indies had met Lieutenant-Colonel Laurens van der Post. Van der Post was a British intelligence officer from South Africa who had spent the war as an internee on Java, from where

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<sup>136</sup> Charles O. van der Plas to Van Mook, 18 September 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 78.

<sup>137</sup> Patterson quoted in a personal signal to Mountbatten in Squire, 69-72.

he had tried as best as he could to follow political events in the archipelago. He told Lady Louis Mountbatten about a functioning indigenous government in Indonesia that received broad support from the population. When she relayed this information as well as her own eyewitness testimony to her husband, he formulated a new Allied policy and summoned Van der Plas to Singapore to discuss with him what he had heard.<sup>138</sup> Mountbatten made clear that there was only one option open to the Netherlands government, and that was for the Dutch to initiate talks with Sukarno and Hatta. When Van der Plas protested that his colleagues in The Hague would surely object, the commander's unequivocal reply was: "I am telling you that you will be gambling away the Indies."<sup>139</sup>

Within hours, the meeting between the two had triggered a major policy debate. Both Mountbatten and Van der Plas sent urgent telegrams to Van Mook in Brisbane. The former told the Lieutenant Governor-General that he now believed the situation in Java to be "very different" from what had been believed. The lack of contact between the Dutch authorities and the Indonesian nationalists was aggravating the trouble, and to avoid bloodshed it was imperative for the Dutch to meet with all political leaders on the island. Mountbatten bluntly suggested that the Netherlands government issue an immediate pronouncement for "some degree of

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<sup>138</sup> Doel, 93-95.

<sup>139</sup> Squire, 73-74; Notes Van der Plas of meeting with Mountbatten, 2 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 133.

independence” for its colony in Southeast Asia, including a time by which that status would be attained.<sup>140</sup>

Van der Plas in his telegram to Van Mook relayed the same meeting, adding that the Supreme Commander had made it clear that Britain would on no account be drawn into internal troubles of the Dutch, and “British soldiers would not be used for putting down any revolts or riots.” The decision, he warned, had been an irrevocable one. At Mountbatten’s urging, Van der Plas further told the Lieutenant Governor-General that he would go ahead and begin discussions with all influential Indonesians, including Sukarno and Hatta, unless he received an order to the contrary.<sup>141</sup>

An alarmed Van Mook in turn cabled Van der Plas, Mountbatten and The Hague. The first he told that the British position made the Dutch subject to “unlimited blackmail” and that discussions with Indonesian nationalists were only possible on the basis of an official recognition of the legal Dutch government, and non-recognition of the Republic.<sup>142</sup> Van Mook then told Mountbatten he “[did] not fully understand” his position on the reoccupation of Java. He was willing to have discussions with non-extremist political leaders, but not with the collaborators Sukarno and Hatta, he said, and only as long as that did not imply direct or indirect recognition of the Republic, since that would leave no base for discussion at all. He

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<sup>140</sup> Mountbatten to Van Mook, 28 September 1945, Cabinet Papers 121/697, BNA; Mountbatten to British Chiefs of Staff, 29 September 1945, Cabinet Papers 121/697, BNA.

<sup>141</sup> Van der Plas to Van Mook, 28 September 1945, in: NIB, I, p. 182, note 2.

<sup>142</sup> Van Mook to Van der Plas, 29 September 1945, in: NIB, I, p. 182, note 2.

also repeated to Mountbatten his conviction that “resolute action” could prevent complete chaos.<sup>143</sup>

In a third hastily composed telegram the Lieutenant Governor-General informed Logemann, Schermerhorn, and Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Eelco N. van Kleffens that he believed the British were backing out of the previously agreed upon “civil affairs” arrangement; they would merely restore law and order in the archipelago to the extent that it was necessary to disarm the Japanese and protect released internees until the Dutch arrived. To do so, Mountbatten’s troops were instructed only to occupy strategic areas in the cities of Jakarta and Surabaya. The British, in other words, would not intervene in political matters, arrest nationalist leaders, or disband the government of the Republic. The Dutch were completely reliant on the British, Van Mook warned, and although decisive action might still quell the revolution, talks with a select group of moderate Indonesian leaders might be necessary to create order. The Lieutenant Governor-General ended his telegram with the suggestion that a declaration on the future of the Dutch East Indies be made by the Netherlands government, promising the Indonesians an equal partnership within the Kingdom and an independent government, a status to be reached in 25 years time.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Van Mook to Mountbatten, 29 September 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 118.

<sup>144</sup> Van Mook to Dutch Embassy in London (where Logemann, Schermerhorn, and Van Kleffens were currently staying), 29 September 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 117.

Shocked and dismayed by Van Mook's news, Logemann, Schermerhorn and Van Kleffens, currently in London for a meeting with the British government, announced to the press that they objected to Van der Plas meeting with Sukarno, and had advised him not to make decisions in this regard without their explicit authorization.<sup>145</sup> They then reminded Foreign Secretary Bevin of the Allied promise "that every inch of the Kingdom of the Netherlands would be given back to Queen Wilhelmina." The Sukarno government in Java was not the outcome of a spontaneous and widespread popular movement, as Mountbatten might have begun to believe, but represented a Japanese attempt to continue the war in the Netherlands East Indies under another guise, they argued.<sup>146</sup>

The urgent situation in the Indonesian archipelago led to an emergency meeting of the Dutch cabinet on September 29. At this meeting was also present the Governor-General of the Netherlands East Indies, Dutch nobleman A.W.L. Tjarda van Starkenborgh Stachouwer. Interned by the Japanese when the islands fell in March of 1942 and only recently liberated by the Russians from a prisoner of war camp in the Chinese city of Shenyang (Mukden), Stachouwer knew little about the internal conditions or political reality in the Dutch colony. He nevertheless asked the

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<sup>145</sup> Demarche, 29 September 1945, in: NIB, I, p. 183, note 1.

<sup>146</sup> Memorandum to Bevin, 29 September 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 116.

Prime Minister to implore the British to keep their word, and to principally refuse to negotiate with the “unprincipled Quisling” Sukarno.<sup>147</sup>

The situation got even worse for the Dutch the next day. Just before leaving with his troops for Jakarta, outspoken Lieutenant General Sir Philip Christison, Corps Commander of the Allied Forces in the Netherlands East Indies, told reporters at a press conference in Singapore that the Republican government would not be expelled, and that no Dutch troops would be landing because of Indonesian opposition to this idea. He also announced his plan to meet with the leaders of the nationalist movement to try and bring them together at a round table conference with Dutch representatives.<sup>148</sup> Christison’s words were a rather liberal translation of the directive he had received from Mountbatten not 48 hours earlier, in which the Supreme Commander had ordered him “to avoid clashes with the local population and to refrain from intervening in political matters.” Upon hearing of the press conference, however, Mountbatten at once sent new instructions to Christison, who, so the supreme commander reassured the Dutch, “no doubt had been misquoted.” Christison was to issue an immediate correction that stated that SEAC recognized only the Dutch government in the Netherlands East Indies, that Dutch troops would

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<sup>147</sup> Report meeting, 29 September 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 114; Report meeting, 30 September 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 121. The term “Quisling” was coined by the British during the war to refer to fascist and collaborationist parties and persons, after the Norwegian Vidkun Quisling, who assisted the Germans as they conquered his country so that he could rule the collaborationist Norwegian government they would set up.

<sup>148</sup> Denning to the Foreign Office, citing Ceylon Press, which published a Reuter report from Singapore, 30 September 1945, Cabinet Papers 121/697, BNA; Anderson, 135-136.

come as soon as they were ready, and that he would of course bring a Dutch representative when he met with Indonesian leaders to discuss future negotiations.<sup>149</sup>

Van Mook, however, had already telegraphed Mountbatten to say that he could “hardly believe” that this gesture, which in his eyes amounted to *de facto* recognition of the Republic Indonesia, was made with his consent and without previous notice to the Dutch.<sup>150</sup> Mountbatten in turn repeated that the British were “willing to help the Netherlands government to its lawful position,” but at the same time insisted that his forces could not “get involved in civil war as a consequence of an internal policy which seems unsuitable to them.” Increasingly uneasy with the difficult situation in which he found himself, Mountbatten then urged the British Chiefs of Staff: could not the matter of whether Sukarno and his associates truly were untrustworthy collaborators or rather suitable representatives be ironed out with the Netherlands government? Pessimistic about the chance of the Dutch and the British seeing eye to eye on this, however, he stated to his superiors that in his opinion, non-intervention would be the only safe course to pursue “both from the point of view of [the British] position in the Far East and of world opinion.”<sup>151</sup>

Christison was also subjected to a great deal of criticism and recrimination in the Netherlands, where the Dutch government, infuriated and disappointed, sent a

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<sup>149</sup> Ceylon press report on Christison’s statement and corrective instructions from Mountbatten, 30 September 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 123.

<sup>150</sup> Van Mook to Mountbatten, 30 September 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 120.

<sup>151</sup> Denning to Foreign Office, 29 September 1945, Cabinet Papers 121/697, BNA; Mountbatten to British Chiefs of Staff, 30 September 1945, Cabinet Papers 121/697, BNA; Minutes of meeting, 30 September 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 122.

statement to the press saying it refused to have discussions with “the so-called Sukarno government,” describing the Republican president as a man “with fascist tendencies” who had “systematically preached hatred against the Allies,” and “who may have certain demagogic gifts, but who had proved to be a mere opportunist in choosing the means to attain his end.” Any negotiations should be carried out with moderate Indonesians only, and the continuing unity of the Kingdom would be the foundation for such discussions, the statement concluded.<sup>152</sup>

The arrival of British troops and reinforcements in Jakarta on September 29 marked the start of what the Dutch later called the *Bersiap* period.<sup>153</sup> Combined with the return of internees to their homes and the steady deterioration of Japanese authority, the build up of a British military presence before the actual arrival of Dutch troops created chaotic, volatile, and often violent conditions. Local groups of *pemudas*, who began to obtain weapons and organize themselves in late August, grew hostile toward white residents, all of whom they saw as adversaries. Revolutionary propaganda, which could be seen around the city of Jakarta not only in Indonesian but also in English, so that the arriving Allied troops could read it as well, became aggressive. Murder, kidnapping, looting, the ambushing of supply columns,

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<sup>152</sup> Declaration, 3 October 1945, in: NIB, I, p. 221-222, note 3.

<sup>153</sup> “Bersiap” in Indonesian means “get ready” or “get prepared.” It was the battle cry of the Indonesian revolution, aimed at mustering the population to “wake up” and prepare to fight. The *Bersiap* period is generally understood to refer to the period between August 1945 and late 1946.

intimidation, and “numerous acts of barbarism” were the order of the day, Mountbatten reported to London.<sup>154</sup>

A violent confrontation between the armed nationalists and the Dutch appeared increasingly inevitable, especially since trigger-happy soldiers from the Royal Dutch East Indies Army, released from prison camps and back in uniform, also reorganized and took it upon themselves to forcefully restore law and order in the absence of Dutch authority. British Major General H.E. Pyman, who visited Java in early October, came away disturbed by the behavior of both these troops and former internees. They were acting “like reactionary exiles or neurotic prisoners of war and internees,” he wrote in his diary. “The former,” he went on, “[refused] to admit that Indonesians did declare their independence and assumed power on August 17, the latter [were] hysterically frightened that they [would] all be massacred” unless something was done at once.<sup>155</sup> The first major clash came on September 19 in Surabaya in east Java, where a group of rowdy and belligerent Dutchmen raised the red-white-blue flag above Hotel Orange, which had been designated as Allied headquarters. The limited Japanese police force present was helpless and could not stop angry *pemudas* from storming in and tearing the blue band off the piece of cotton, leaving an improvised Republican red-white flag instead. The “flag incident” cost one

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<sup>154</sup> Mountbatten to British Chiefs of Staff, 17 December 1945, Cabinet Papers 120/647, BNA.

<sup>155</sup> Pyman diary entry, 5 Oct 1945, quoted in Dennis, 107; Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 143.

person his life, and was heavily mythologized afterwards as a landmark incident in the Indonesian revolution.<sup>156</sup>

In early October, nationalists started rounding up Dutch and Indo-European civilians suspected of preparing and aiding the return of the Netherlands Indies colonial regime, and hundreds of them were imprisoned, tortured, or killed. On the other side, soldiers from the Dutch East Indies Army carried out atrocities, too, arresting those Indonesians they believed were leading the revolution. During this period, the cities of Bandung, Semarang, Magelang, and Surabaya became scenes of heavy fighting between Republican forces, Dutch soldiers, and the Japanese military. Suspected anti-revolutionaries included not only the white population, but also those groups that had traditionally been seen as loyal to the Netherlands government: Chinese Indonesians, Christian Indonesians, and Indonesians from Ambon, for example.<sup>157</sup>

The consequences of the violence of the *Bersiap* period are difficult to overestimate. The perceived wrongdoing of the nationalists hardened political and public opinion in the Netherlands, where most people found it almost impossible to imagine the reality of the situation in the East Indies. The Dutch were themselves severely punishing those who had collaborated with the German regime, and in their eyes the unrecognized and illegal Republic of Indonesia and its “Quisling” leaders

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<sup>156</sup> Doel, 92; Frederick, 200-201.

<sup>157</sup> Doel, 100-101.

Sukarno and Hatta were solely to blame for the chaos.<sup>158</sup> On the other side, Indonesian leadership attempted to unify the new Republic and its people under the revolutionary spirit, while at the same time attempting to regulate the chaos and quell the violence that impeded international recognition of that Republic. In pleading letters to General Christison and Brigadier General King, in charge of Jakarta, Sukarno and Hatta underlined that the Indonesian “quarrel” was only with the Dutch. The latter had lost face, owed their foothold to British support, and were trying to “recover lost prestige,” the politicians argued in the hope that London would clarify its position regarding the Indonesian struggle for independence.<sup>159</sup>

After six weeks of having to look passively on from the sidelines in Australia or Singapore, and of reporting on the political, economic, and military conditions in the East Indies to his colleagues in The Hague without being able to assess the situation with his own eyes, Van Mook finally arrived at Jakarta’s airport on October 2. After reuniting with his wife and children, who had spent the war in a Japanese internment camp, he moved into the deserted palace of Governor-General Tjarda Van Starkenborgh-Stachouwer. There he surrounded himself with other newly liberated Dutch as well as officials he had brought from Brisbane. Immediately he took to writing to The Hague about what he had encountered in Jakarta. The situation in the

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<sup>158</sup> Doel, 99-101.

<sup>159</sup> Sukarno to Christison, 9 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 160; Hatta to Brigadier General King, 11 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 170; Hatta to Christison, 9 November 1945, in: NIB, II, no. 4.

city was unimaginable, he noted, correctly, in the opening sentence of his first telegram. The administration of the whole town was in the hands of nationalists, something that the British troops present, wishing to stay neutral and lacking sufficient strength in numbers and material, had decided to accept. Among the Dutch Van Mook detected an atmosphere of tension and disappointment. “If everything weren’t so dramatic, it would have reminded me of an operetta,” he remarked dryly.<sup>160</sup>

The first long telegram detailing the political situation on Java the Lieutenant Governor-General sent to The Hague on October 6. There was reason, he warned, to be concerned; although the masses were concerned with daily matters and longed for the old days, intellectuals and “semi-intellectuals,” as well as the population in the cities, was actively supporting the revolution.<sup>161</sup> In his reports to the Dutch government Van Mook began making distinctions between “moderate” and “extremist” Indonesian nationalists. Extremists, the label he put also on Sukarno and Hatta, were to be dealt with forcefully and not to be negotiated with under any circumstances. Moderates, he advised Minister Logemann, could be worked with once the Dutch had restored law and order and reclaimed authority.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Van Mook to Blom (head of the Council of Justice), 4 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 139; Van Mook to Logemann, 22-31 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 219. The latter is a long personal letter, written over a period of nine days, in which Van Mook looks back on his arrival and first days in Jakarta.

<sup>161</sup> Van Mook to Logemann, 6 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 145.

<sup>162</sup> See for instance: Van Mook to Logemann, 17 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 205; Van Mook to Logemann, 19 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 213; Van Mook to Logemann, 27 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 251; Van Mook to Logemann, 1 November 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 283; Van Mook to Logemann, 3 November 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 293.

Although the nationalist movement in Indonesia did indeed include a large variety of people with different motives, the one goal they had in common was the ideal of complete independence from the Netherlands. Administrators and officials, who for decades had described Indonesians as “passive people” who were generally peaceful-minded and little interested in political affairs, failed to see that in the eyes of the population, once the Republic had been established, the internal issue of collaboration was a moot point. The Dutch image of the revolution was one in which a small group of aggressive and extremist leaders sought to stir up the masses and motivate them towards action. Van Kleffens’ words illustrated this top-down perspective when he said that there existed in the archipelago a very small nucleus of “misguided” political aspiration, which was accompanied by “an outburst of hooliganism and opportunistic license” on the part of people who “[enjoyed] themselves in an orgy of demonstration, unlawful exercise of self-assumed and self-directed authority.”<sup>163</sup>

The Indonesian people, however, were not but recipients of the nationalist message. The spread of the revolution was not a one-way street, even as charismatic figures such as Sukarno utilized national symbols, the vernacular press and the radio, leaflets and pamphlets, speeches and slogans to appeal to the heterogeneous population of the islands. Large numbers of mobilized *pemudas* were pushing the

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<sup>163</sup> United States Ambassador in The Hague Stanley K. Hornbeck to Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, 14 October 1945, RG 59, 856D.00/10-1445, U.S. Department of State Records, National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as NARA).

leaders of the independence movement not to compromise their ideal of “100% *merdeka*,” for instance, as we will see also in chapters to come. In reality, then, even those Van Mook labeled “moderates” were unlikely to compromise their dream for the meager promises the Dutch government was willing to make with regards to the future of Indonesia: increased independence in internal affairs, with no clear timeline for this to be accomplished but with a return of some form of colonial administration. Van Mook’s distinction was a wistful sign of the wishful thinking both Netherlands Indies and Dutch politicians engaged in during the last months of 1945.

The Dutch felt abandoned by the British, whom they had counted on for support after they took over the responsibility for the restoration of law and order in the archipelago from the Americans in late July. By virtue of the fact that the British and Dutch governments had been wartime allies, decisionmakers in The Hague anticipated their colleagues in London to sympathize with their point of view, not push them to negotiate with “collaborators” like Sukarno. And had not the British colonial government, after Mahatma Gandhi’s call for immediate independence in August of 1942, imprisoned for the remainder of the war practically the entire Indian National Congress? That the British had neither the capacity, nor, increasingly, the will to assist the Dutch in the manner and to the extent expected did not dissuade the

Netherlands leadership from its point of view, nor did the presence of a viable and broadly supported nationalist government on the ground in Indonesia.<sup>164</sup>

On October 4 Minister of Foreign Affairs Van Kleffens again went to London, and, accompanied by the Dutch ambassador in Britain, Edgar Michiels van Verduynen, visited Foreign Secretary Bevin. Announcing his regret to have to discuss this “painful” subject, Van Kleffens told his colleague of the deep disappointment and discontent of both the Dutch government and the Dutch public with the British. After urging Bevin to speed up the transportation of Dutch troops to the Netherlands East Indies, he concluded by stating that, if anything happened to the former internees in the archipelago, he would have to hold the British accountable. Bevin, perplexed and embarrassed, according to Van Kleffens’ memorandum about the conversation, was eager to stress that he was doing everything he could to assist the Dutch.<sup>165</sup>

The straightforward directive that the British government had issued for its forces, namely, to disarm the Japanese and release prisoners while not getting involved in local politics or confrontations between the Indonesians and the Dutch, proved unworkable once it became clear that a functioning Republican government had been installed before their arrival. There was no clear British policy regarding Indonesia, and no easy answer to the question whose law and order it was, precisely,

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<sup>164</sup> Doel, 97.

<sup>165</sup> Memorandum of conversation Van Kleffens and Bevin, 4 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 140.

that SEAC had to restore and protect. As a result of this lack of direction from London, Mountbatten and his political assistant Esler Dening were left to themselves to interpret what they saw and make suggestions to Whitehall. On October 5, Dening gave his opinion on the independence movements in Asia more broadly. Advising his superiors that the nationalists should be treated “with sympathy and understanding” in order to avoid “the end of Europe in Asia,” he nevertheless called them “half-baked” and, if treated in the proper manner, “not very terrifying.” With regard to the Dutch, whose present attitude he did not find encouraging, Dening called on his colleagues to “stand no nonsense,” noting that it was British troops who were liberating the territories, and it was the British taxpayer who was paying for it.<sup>166</sup>

Frustrated with the inadequate and unclear instructions from London, Mountbatten on that same day wrote a memo outlining the two major courses he considered open to the British. The first option was to continue with the limited policy goals of disarming the Japanese, releasing their prisoners, and maintaining law and order within key areas such as Jakarta and Surabaya. This would mean occupying just those regions while leaving the responsibility for the rest of the archipelago to the Dutch. Option two was to take over responsibility for law and order throughout the country. In this case, Mountbatten explained, the British must either pressure the Dutch to come to an arrangement with the Indonesians so that the three groups could

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<sup>166</sup> John Saville, *The Politics of Continuity: British Foreign Policy and the Labour Government, 1945-46* (London: Verso, 1993), 261, note 46; Dening to Foreign Office, 5 October 1945, Foreign Office Files (FO) 371/F46353, BNA.

work in amity, or be willing to significantly expand the number of British forces.

Although he did not give a recommendation either way, Mountbatten told his superiors that in his opinion, the military implications of the second course would be “most serious.”<sup>167</sup> In the late afternoon of October 10, the British Defense Committee met and instructed Mountbatten to limit his task to Japanese disarmament and humanitarian relief.<sup>168</sup>

That same day, Mountbatten and Christison met with Van Mook and Van der Plas in Singapore. The Lieutenant Governor-General charged that recent British actions had been interpreted by Indonesian nationalists, among whom *pemudas* “comparable to the *Hitler Jugend*,” as a recognition of what he again described as a “fascist” and “terrorist” Republican government. The long delay in re-occupation, Van Mook accused, had rapidly deteriorated a situation which had “contained dangerous elements but which would not, in itself, have been serious if quick action could have been taken.” Mountbatten replied by stating that it was the particular desire of the British government not to allow British, and especially British-Indian forces to become involved in the internal affairs of other countries; leaders of the independence movement in New Delhi, where the British had begun negotiations about dominion status for India, strongly protested the use of these forces to suppress Indonesian nationalism. Mountbatten assured Van Mook, however, that he was doing

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<sup>167</sup> Mountbatten to British Chiefs of Staff, 5 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 144.

<sup>168</sup> Squire, 101-103.

everything in his power to expedite the arrival of Dutch forces in Java. The repudiation of Van der Plas's conciliatory broadcast of September 29 by his own government in the Netherlands, Mountbatten in turn accused the Dutch, had wrecked his plan for friendly discussions with the Indonesian Republic.<sup>169</sup>

Genuine Dutch efforts to reach some form of agreement with the nationalists, the commander argued, were an essential prerequisite to any change of policy he might be able to persuade the British government to take. "Working on [Van Mook] like mad" during the dinner that followed the meeting, Mountbatten further told the Lieutenant Governor-General that Sukarno and Hatta were "the right men with whom to deal." When the group parted at the end of the evening, it was agreed that the Dutch would initiate a discussion with such political leaders as Van Mook deemed necessary, and that Mountbatten would ask the British government to broaden his directive so as to be able to provide a greater measure of military support.<sup>170</sup> In the days that followed, Van Mook attempted to stop his government from outrightly opposing talks with Sukarno. In a personal letter to Logemann, Van Mook advised that it might be best not to condemn Sukarno and the independence movement in

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<sup>169</sup> Report meeting, 10 August 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 151. For an account of the involvement of British-Indian forces in the Indonesian revolution, see: A.J.F. Doulton, *Fighting Cock: Being the History of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Indian Division, 1942-1947* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1951), 230-305.

<sup>170</sup> Notes 34th meeting SEAC, 10 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 164; Mountbatten to British Chiefs of Staff, 11 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 168; Notes 36th meeting SEAC, 15 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 187; Ziegler, *Personal Diary*, 259.

words that were too strong. Most of all, he warned, the moderate and extremist nationalists should not be treated with the same brush.<sup>171</sup>

In his response the minister nevertheless forbade Van Mook to talk to Sukarno or other “irreconcilables,” assuring him, too, that the Dutch government was not afraid of the negative British reaction to this stance. Anti-British sentiment in the Netherlands was growing, Logemann stated boldly.<sup>172</sup> In a packed meeting of the Dutch Lower Chamber in the early afternoon of October 16, the minister openly spoke of his disappointment with the “questionable” decision of the British to occupy only Jakarta and Surabaya, and reassured parliamentarians that talks with Sukarno were out of the question. All future discussions would have to be based on the Queen’s December 1942 speech, which had made clear already that the old colonial regime would not return but that changes would have to be made in mutual agreement. After ending his speech by saying that the Netherlands would act forcefully to restore order, security, and prosperity, and that the Indies were blessed to be part of the Dutch Kingdom, Logemann was lauded with applause.<sup>173</sup>

In Jakarta, meanwhile, Van Mook attempted to initiate a conversation with moderate nationalists, and held a press conference to announce this decision. When Reuters reported that the Dutch were prepared to negotiate with any and all

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<sup>171</sup> Van Mook to Logemann, 13 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 180; Van Mook to Logemann, 21 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 215.

<sup>172</sup> Logemann to Van Mook, 13 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 183. For another reference to increasing anti-British sentiments in the Netherlands, see a telegram from Van Kleffens to Dutch Ambassador in London Michiels van Verduynen, 13 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 184.

<sup>173</sup> Handelingen der Staten Generaal, Tweede Kamer, Tijdelijke Zitting 1945, II, 81-86; Doel, 106.

Indonesian leaders, the Dutch government quickly corrected this impression, insisting that it believed there must have been a misunderstanding as it had explicitly ruled out talks with Sukarno.<sup>174</sup> Relations between Van Mook and The Hague thus became increasingly strained when it appeared that the Lieutenant Governor-General was ignoring instructions and pretending to have been given the authority to meet with any Indonesian nationalist. The British added they were greatly disappointed that Van Mook's discretion had been fettered in this way, especially since their forces were scheduled to expand their positions and occupy the cities of Buitenzorg (now Bogor), Bandung, Semarang, and Surabaya in the days that followed.<sup>175</sup>

But the Indonesians were also being pressed. In the second half of October, Denning admitted to London that support for the Republic was “very widespread and of a nature to be almost frightening.”<sup>176</sup> He still believed, however, that it would be “unwise to exaggerate the strength and depth” of the Indonesian independence movement; “if sympathetically handled” it was “not sufficiently potent to constitute a menace.” Nevertheless, he had concluded, there was little doubt that nobody in the Indies wanted “the old gang” back, and there was “far too much evidence” of a “die-hard and uncompromising spirit” among Netherlands Indies officers and officials.

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<sup>174</sup> Reuters report, 15 October 1945, in: NIB, I, p. 370, note 2.

<sup>175</sup> Michiels van Verduynen to Van Kleffens, 15 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 189.

<sup>176</sup> Denning to Foreign Office, 21 Oct 1945, FO 371/F46395, BNA.

Only categorical orders from The Hague, Dening ominously warned, would “prevent them from putting into practice their conviction that shooting is the cure.”<sup>177</sup>

On October 23, Mountbatten’s adviser met informally with Sukarno, Hatta, and the Republican politicians leading the newly established Indonesian government departments. Dening explicitly stated he was not an intermediary between the Dutch and the Indonesians; the purpose of the meeting was solely to explain the attitude and actions of the British forces in Java. He echoed what the Dutch had been telling the British, namely that the Republic had been set up with the help of the Japanese as an endeavor to create trouble for the Allies. As such, he explained, it was “unlikely to find favor in the world.” He pressed upon Sukarno, whom he had described only ten days previous as “no very significant figure,” to use his influence with the revolutionaries to prevent violent clashes. If the extreme nationalist elements were not controlled, he argued, the Republican leadership would “earn universal condemnation.” The Netherlands government truly wished to implement internal reforms that met the legitimate aspirations of Indonesians, Dening concluded.<sup>178</sup> A day after his meeting with Republican politicians, he who had advised Netherlands Indies officials to use “tact” with Indonesians reported to London that he felt he had “bullied [them] as far as [his] conscience would allow.” Some of the Indonesian suspicions toward the Dutch were not entirely unfounded, he again told his

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<sup>177</sup> Dening to Foreign Office, 11 October 1945, Prime Minister’s Papers (PREM) 8/71, BNA.

<sup>178</sup> Michiels van Verduynen to Van Kleffens, 25 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 241; Dening to Foreign Office, 14 October 1945, PREM 8/71, BNA.

colleagues; the Dutch resisted “the truth that the East [had] changed and changed radically as a result of the war.”<sup>179</sup>

Van Mook believed that their meeting with Dening had made the Indonesians more willing to negotiate with the Dutch. Because of the growing tensions and dangers, the Lieutenant Governor-General once more explained to Logemann, it was imperative that the Dutch government declared the guidelines that would form the basis of such negotiations. As it would be obvious who would accept and who would decline these foundations, such an announcement could moreover serve to separate the Indonesian extremists from the moderates, Van Mook thought. He had gradually come to the realistic conclusion that excluding Sukarno from discussions *a priori* would inevitably lead to a fruitless meeting, but suggested to privately make it known to Sukarno that he was unacceptable as a negotiator in the hope that he would not come.<sup>180</sup> The first direct meeting between the Dutch and Indonesians took place on October 31 at the house of General Christison. Present were Van Mook, Van der Plas, and P.J.A Idenburg (the former head of the Lieutenant Governor-General’s cabinet), and, on the Indonesian side, Hatta, the aged political adviser and long-time nationalist Haji Agus Salim, Sjahrir’s colleague and Minister of Defense Amir

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<sup>179</sup> Dening to Foreign Office, 24 October 1945, FO 371/F46396, BNA; Dennis, 138-139.

<sup>180</sup> Van Mook to Logemann, 25 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 242.

Sjarifuddin, and, despite Van Mook's scheme to exclude him, Sukarno. The parties exchanged views during a quiet conversation but achieved little of substance.<sup>181</sup>

The British nevertheless regarded the meeting as a major breakthrough. From the Dutch point of view, however, Van Mook had committed nothing less than treason. In his memorandum to Logemann, sent only hours after the discussion had taken place, the Lieutenant Governor-General explained that Sukarno's presence had been inevitable. The lack of contact between the Dutch and Republicans, so he wrote, had resulted in a breakdown of insight and understanding. His impression was that the Indonesian leaders were suspicious of Dutch intentions but trapped in an impasse, as the British kept them responsible for any violent acts committed by the extreme flank of the movement. In the superciliously paternalistic tone typical of him, he added that the level of "independent thought" the nationalists exhibited had surprised him, though it could be explained, he admitted, by their having been forced by the circumstances of the war to go their own way for three and a half years.<sup>182</sup> In yet another telegram to Logemann the next day, Van Mook stated that it had been a tactical mistake on the part of the Dutch to concentrate on Sukarno as a collaborator; it had driven moderate nationalists into an anti-Dutch corner. None of the Indonesians in attendance, he underlined, had been aggressive or rude, and the

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<sup>181</sup> Doel, 107.

<sup>182</sup> Van Mook to Logemann, 31 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 277.

conversation had, without hesitation, taken place in “very good” Dutch. He had always insisted that the meeting served as a mere “orientation,” and had emphasized that the continued existence of the Republic was impossible.<sup>183</sup>

But in The Hague, Prime Minister Schermerhorn insisted that Van Mook had acted without authorization. His cabinet even advocated firing the Lieutenant Governor-General, but realized that the circumstances prevented this course of action; Van Starckenborgh-Stachouwer, of the opinion that no concessions whatsoever should be made to the Indonesians and disagreeing with what he saw as a far too accommodating Dutch policy, had already asked to be relieved of his duties, and the Netherlands government could not do without both men.<sup>184</sup> After Van Kleffens sent out a press declaration in which it was made clear that Van Mook had acted against the explicitly stated wishes of the government, both Logemann and Schermerhorn proceeded to London, where Queen Wilhelmina was, to discuss with her Van Mook’s future. The Lieutenant Governor-General, meanwhile, was sent a telegram that instructed him to immediately break off all contact with Sukarno.<sup>185</sup>

Schermerhorn and Logemann also visited Bevin, who declared himself “distressed” about the reaction of the Dutch government to Van Mook’s meeting,

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<sup>183</sup> Van Mook to Logemann, 1 November 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 284.

<sup>184</sup> Tjarda van Starckenborgh Stachouwer to Logemann, 11 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 166.

<sup>185</sup> Minutes meeting, 1 November 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 282; Logemann to Van Mook, 1 November 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 283; Declaration, 1 November 1945, in: NIB, I, p. 506, note 2.

and feared it would have repercussions on the course of events in Indonesia.<sup>186</sup> The British politician stressed that the Dutch should not be “stubborn” by wanting to return to 1939 rather than look forward to 1946. Bevin reasoned that what could have been done in August was no longer possible in October, and that in January it would not be possible to accomplish what could still be achieved in October.<sup>187</sup> Denning was similarly afraid that the Netherlands government might “wreck” the negotiations and thereby put British troops in danger. “They may be entitled to jeopardize their own position but they are not entitled to jeopardize ours,” he wrote.<sup>188</sup> The Queen was no more eager to dismiss Van Mook. Apart from the fact that a replacement would be difficult to find, she did not want the Lieutenant Governor-General, although he had made a severe mistake, to have to resign at this moment of peril. The cabinet could react in any way it pleased, she stated, but it could not fire him.<sup>189</sup>

Van Mook himself, however, threatened to quit if he did not receive the support of the government and be allowed to meet with Sukarno. In a number of frustrated and desperate telegrams to Logemann, in which he again underlined that no one in the Netherlands could imagine the current conditions in Indonesia, he laid out the weak position of the Dutch.<sup>190</sup> On November 6, the Minister of the Colonies

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<sup>186</sup> Michiels van Verduynen to Van Kleffens, 2 November 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 289.

<sup>187</sup> Memorandum of conversation with Bevin, 3 November 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 292.

<sup>188</sup> Denning to Foreign Office, 3 November 1945, FO 371/F46397, BNA.

<sup>189</sup> Minutes meeting, 4 November 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 295.

<sup>190</sup> Van Mook to Logemann, 4 November 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 297; Van Mook to Logemann, 6 November 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 307; Van Mook to Logemann, 6 November 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 311; Van Mook to Logemann, 7 November 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 318.

finally gave Van Mook permission to meet with Sukarno. In a long personal letter to the Lieutenant Governor-General he tried contextualize the extremely negative Dutch response to his inclusion of Sukarno in the negotiations. The national pride of the people, Logemann said, was deeply hurt by the revolution in the Indies. The stories about the suffering of the Dutch internees had created an atmosphere and psychology in which Sukarno had become a symbol of the injustice that had been brought upon the Netherlands. As far as the Dutch government could see, Van Mook had made a 180-degree turn without warning when he agreed to meet with him, Logemann explained.<sup>191</sup>

Meanwhile, in Surabaya in east Java especially, the British military was in trouble. The young nationalists and local Republican army in the city had defeated the Japanese in early October, and had taken hold of large stockpiles of weapons. A note had been delivered to the office of the Japanese resident that said that the time had arrived for Indonesians to “run every aspect of the government;” all administrative functions would now be under their control, and all matters of concern to the Allies must be negotiated with them.<sup>192</sup> British Brigadier General A.W.S. Mallaby, under the impression that, because there were no Dutch officials present to complicate matters, bringing law and order to Surabaya would be a relatively straightforward task, led his

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<sup>191</sup> Logemann to Van Mook, 9 November 1945, in: NIB, II, no. 1.

<sup>192</sup> Frederick, 211-218.

4,000 men strong 49<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Brigade into the harbor of Surabaya on October 25. Once in the city, however, he was unable to ignore that Indonesians controlled it and had to be negotiated with. He tentatively agreed with them that his troops were there solely to disarm and evacuate the Japanese, and let the Indonesians keep the weapons they had already acquired.<sup>193</sup>

Three days later, however, the situation got out of hand. Tens of thousands of Republican troops and nationalists who saw the arrival of the British as a sign of the impending return of a Dutch colonial administration started attacking their posts in the city, setting fire to buildings and killing some 250 British Indian troops.<sup>194</sup> Mallaby signaled for support from Jakarta, where Sukarno was asked to try and control the mass of angry people in Surabaya. During the morning of October 29, after arriving in the city on a British plane, Sukarno spoke over the radio and asked the population to stop the attacks, describing their influence on the success of the revolution as “a grain of arsenic in a clear glass of water.”<sup>195</sup> The next day a ceasefire was signed, and the British agreed to withdraw to the harbor. Scattered fighting continued, however, and when Mallaby himself tried to enforce the armistice he was killed by a mass of people who stopped his vehicle and started firing.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Frederick, 255-263. For a more detailed account of Mallaby's entrance into Surabaya, see Anderson, 158-159.

<sup>194</sup> Doel, 113.

<sup>195</sup> Sukarno quoted in Frederick, 265.

<sup>196</sup> Frederick, 259-263; Anderson, 161-165.

Christison demanded that those guilty of the murder surrender to the British army. To show that he was serious, he ordered the complete 5<sup>th</sup> Indian Division to Surabaya. In a proclamation sent out on October 31, the commander threatened to “bring the whole weight of [his] sea, land, and air forces and all the weapons of modern war against them until they [were] crushed.”<sup>197</sup> In a letter to the Hague, Van Mook dejectedly stated that the British had first ruined the situation by appearing weak and unresolved, and now blamed the Dutch for the difficult position they found themselves in.<sup>198</sup> Sukarno again had to be called upon to order his countrymen to lay down their arms. During the ceasefire that followed, the British evacuated large numbers of Dutch internees as well as their own wounded men, and reinforced their position by bringing in more troops and material. On November 9, they sent the Republican authorities in Surabaya an impossible ultimatum. If all armed Indonesians did not surrender within 24 hours, the 5<sup>th</sup> Division would open hostilities. Instead of preparing to surrender, the nationalists in the city prepared to fight. The battle that started the next day would last until late November. The important lesson it taught the British, so Van der Post later noted, was that Indonesian nationalism “was not a shallow, effeminate, intellectual cult but a people-wide, tough and urgent affair.”<sup>199</sup> The Battle of Surabaya was a symbolic rallying cry of “hysterical ferocity” that made clear that the military power and determination of Republicans was considerable.

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<sup>197</sup> Declaration Christison, 31 October 1945, in: NIB, I, p. 488, note 2.

<sup>198</sup> Van Mook to Logemann, 31 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 276.

<sup>199</sup> Laurens van der Post, *The Admiral's Baby* (London: John Murray, 1996), 223.

Fierce fighting was moreover also breaking out in Semarang and Magelang in central Java, where thousands of Dutch internees were waiting to be evacuated and small groups of British troops were trying to keep order. The Allied position on the island was rapidly weakening.<sup>200</sup>

These worrying developments did not go unnoticed by the Australian government in Canberra. As part of Mountbatten's South East Asia Command, Australian troops had liberated the island of Borneo and the eastern parts of the Indonesian archipelago relatively effortlessly over the course of the previous months. Netherlands Indies administrators had quickly followed these forces and reestablished Dutch authority; they had soon consolidated their position and controlled, despite some resistance most notably in south Celebes (Sulawesi), most of the region. As such, the post surrender situation in Java was at first not of great interest to the Australian government, as Margaret George also notes.<sup>201</sup> As the prospects in Java became gloomy, however, the leadership in Canberra moved from its previously neutral position to one of open sympathy for the Republican cause. "In view of the vital Australian interests in a satisfactory and enduring settlement, guarantee of political stability, social progress, and our own military security in the area," officials from the Department of External Affairs warned the Foreign Office in London in

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<sup>200</sup> David Wehl, *The Birth of Indonesia* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1948), 67.

<sup>201</sup> Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, *From the Formation of the State of East Indonesia towards the Establishment of the United States of Indonesia* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1996), 1-3; Margaret George, *Australia and the Indonesian Revolution* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1980), 35, 46.

early November, “we shall now consider our attitude more tenable.” The best hope of a compromise solution, the Australian government noted, lay in negotiations between the Indonesians and the Dutch, the latter of whom were advised to take independence movement very seriously.<sup>202</sup>

Van Mook, meanwhile, spent early November outlining a new policy. The continued fights in Java and the difficulties the British encountered made him realize that the Indonesian nationalists were in a much better position, and received much broader support, than anyone had previously thought. To restore Dutch authority in the Indies, at least 75,000 troops would be necessary, he calculated. That was many more than were currently available, and many more, too, than could reasonably be expected to be brought over from the Netherlands in time to make a difference. This led Van Mook to conclude that it was impossible for the Netherlands to reoccupy the whole of the archipelago using only its own forces. The Hague, he reasoned, should adjust its military and strategic goals, accommodating both the British and the different circumstances in the various parts of the archipelago.<sup>203</sup> Perhaps it was best to give up on Java for the time being, he reasoned, and instead focus on the reoccupation of the islands of Bangka and Belitung (Billiton), the Riau Islands,

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<sup>202</sup> Australian Department of External Affairs via Mountbatten to Foreign Office in London, 3 November 1945, PREM 8/67, BNA.

<sup>203</sup> P.M.H. Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen: Het Nederlands militair-strategisch beleid in Indonesië 1945-1950* (The Hague: Sdu, 1991), 35-37.

Borneo (today Kalimantan), and the eastern islands of Indonesia, where the fire of the revolution had not yet set the sky ablaze. The current failures on Java meant the prestige of the Dutch in these outer regions was at risk of crumbling. It would be relatively easy to restore Netherlands Indies authority in those economically important and more benevolent regions, Van Mook explained to Logemann, and successes there would give a much-needed boost to Dutch morale.<sup>204</sup>

The Lieutenant Governor-General called in two of the most prominent Dutch military leaders to discuss his proposals. Van der Post later described Lieutenant General Ludolph H. Van Oyen, Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army, as a “handsome ripened air-force officer” who was universally disliked by his countrymen, and said of Admiral Conrad E. Helfrich that he “had never been known to voice a political opinion more subtle or progressive than: “Shoot the lot.””<sup>205</sup> Helfrich and Van Oyen, both of whom had been stationed in the Netherlands Indies at the time of the Japanese invasion but avoided capture, were archconservative representatives of the old colonial guard, unable to accept that new conditions made it necessary to reevaluate older policies. They were of the opinion that the uncontrolled Javanese “bands of thugs,” as they called them, would be easily put down by forceful action, and that ninety percent of the population of the

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<sup>204</sup> Van Mook to Logemann, 6 November 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 307; Van Mook to Logemann, 10 November 1945, in: NIB, II, no. 7.

<sup>205</sup> Post, 220. Van der Post’s overview of British involvement in Indonesia was sent to Bevin in late January 1947, and is reprinted in full in: *The Admiral’s Baby*, 207-282.

archipelago was pro-Dutch and would not resist.<sup>206</sup> “When dealing with native rabbles the most profitable way is to hit immediately and hit hard,” Helfrich explained to Mountbatten during a SEAC meeting in early December.<sup>207</sup> The officers believed that once law and order were restored in Java, peace and quiet would return to the whole of the archipelago; they believed the policy proposed by Van Mook amounted to abandonment and appeasement and was therefore “unacceptable.”<sup>208</sup>

Helfrich and Van Oyen were immensely disliked by the British, who questioned the abilities of the high-ranking wisecracks. Even Van Mook told Logemann he had found them too old and sentimental, and not resourceful or imaginative enough to provide him with clear insight.<sup>209</sup> The Lieutenant Governor-General therefore also asked the opinion of Van der Plas, the Dutch troop commander on West Java Major General W. Schilling, and his aide P.J.A. Idenburg, who had spent the war in a Japanese prison camp. All three believed the people of Java did not wish to see the Dutch colonial authorities return, and came to the conclusion that a large-scale military solution to the political problems was impossible. In a lengthy memo to Van Mook, Idenburg opined that given the weak position of the Dutch, an inflexible attitude would be a serious mistake. He told his supervisor that the Republic was supported by intellectuals, extremists, young people, and a conglomerate of

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<sup>206</sup> Groen, 30-31.

<sup>207</sup> Notes 301<sup>st</sup> meeting SEAC, 6 December 1945, in: NIB, II, no. 161.

<sup>208</sup> Helfrich and Van Oyen to Van Mook, 6 November 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 308.

<sup>209</sup> Dennis, 153-155; Van Mook to Logemann, 4 December 1945, in: NIB, II, no. 150.

“developed” people who had been infected by the others. It was of no relevance, Idenburg argued, that the Indonesian leaders themselves found it difficult to manage and direct the nationalist feelings of the population; a revolution had succeeded, he said, once the masses had been moved and the existing authorities had lost control of the situation. The Dutch should proclaim their intent to “renew” rather than “restore” in the East Indies, he advised, especially with an eye to international opinion.<sup>210</sup> Van der Plas pointed out to Van Mook that the Dutch government’s hope to keep the conflict from attracting worldwide scrutiny and criticism was little more than “wishful thinking.” The situation in Indonesia would be discussed in the United Nations, he cautioned, and this would have negative consequences for the Netherlands.<sup>211</sup> General Schilling looked at Van Mook’s problems from a military standpoint, stated that a quick defeat of Indonesian nationalism seemed impossible, and posed the question whether the Dutch public was prepared to take on the task of waging a long war to restore colonial authority in the Indies. Reoccupying the whole archipelago, he concluded, would surmount the powers of the Dutch.<sup>212</sup>

All three advised Van Mook that the Dutch had to try to find a political solution to the conflict in the Netherlands East Indies. Strengthening colonial authority in places other than Java would solidify the Dutch position at the negotiation table, they agreed. The debate in Dutch policy circles regarding the long-

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<sup>210</sup> Memorandum Idenburg, 10 November 1945, in: NIB, II, no. 9.

<sup>211</sup> Memorandum Van der Plas, 18 November 1945, in: NIB, II, no. 51.

<sup>212</sup> Memorandum Schilling, 25 November 1945, in: NIB, II, no. 87; Groen, 46-48.

term military, political, and strategic goals therefore took a turn. On November 25, Van Mook informed Logemann that a drawn-out war would place an “unacceptable burden” on the Netherlands. Were the Dutch and Indonesians, like two tired and increasingly exhausted boxers, to continue the fight round after round without an end in sight, the spectacle would moreover be ended in a drastic manner through the involvement of the international community, Van Mook analogized.<sup>213</sup> The Lieutenant Governor-General instead proposed the idea of a federal construction; an Indonesian “commonwealth” or “United States of Indonesia” would enhance the authority of the Dutch in the rest of the archipelago, while Republicans could shape the administration in Java. This federal Indonesia would then, after a transition period, be given the status of equal and self-governed partner of the Netherlands while remaining within the Kingdom. The Dutch could continue to play a role in Southeast Asia that would bring prestige to the Netherlands in the eyes of the world, Van Mook concluded.<sup>214</sup>

In Jakarta, meanwhile, Sukarno had appointed Sutan Sjahrir as Prime Minister. The President remained the ceremonial head of state, and although Sukarno stepped out of the limelight, he retained the right to dismiss ministers or to fall back upon the provisions of the original constitution, which if needed could grant him all powers of

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<sup>213</sup> Van Mook to Logemann, 25 November 1945, in: NIB, II, no. 89.

<sup>214</sup> Memorandum Van Mook, 25 November 1945, in: NIB, II, no. 88.

government.<sup>215</sup> Sjahrir's quiet demeanor and perceived integrity during the war, when he had refused to cooperate with the Japanese administration, made him a far more suitable negotiator to the Dutch than the flamboyant Sukarno. The Western-educated, refined Sjahrir and his new cabinet of ministers moreover fit with the Republic's purpose to seek international acceptance, while the Prime Minister's popularity with the young *pemudas* at the same time helped forge a sense of national unity. The Dutch, despite labeling Sjahrir "gifted" and "courageous" and describing the ministers in his cabinet as "moderate" and "of excellent intelligence," remained cautious. In late November, for instance, the BBC aired a broadcast in which Logemann was quoted as having said that the Dutch were prepared to use force in order to maintain the Netherlands East Indies as part of the Kingdom.<sup>216</sup>

Schermerhorn and his ministers discussed the possibility of changing course in Indonesia just before Christmas 1945, after Van Mook had arrived in the Netherlands to further explain his proposals. Although the two had recently found themselves at loggerheads more often than usual, Logemann supported his friend, emphasizing that Indonesia, in the end, must be able to determine its own fate. Some of the minister's colleagues, most notably Minister of Finance Pieter Liefstinck, took exception to this. It was not clear, the opposition argued, which moderate Indonesians would be open

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<sup>215</sup> For more on the KNIP, see: P.J. Drooglever, "The KNIP and Internal Politics within the Republic Indonesia, as Seen by Dutch Observers," *Konferensi Internasional Revolusi Nasional*, Jakarta, July 1995.

<sup>216</sup> Notes of Van Asbeck's (Van Mook's assistant) journey to Jakarta, 10-30 November, in: NIB, II, no. 111; McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 106-107; Dennis, 147.

for discussions with the Dutch. And within the proposed Indonesian federation, what exactly would remain of the role and influence of the Netherlands? Van Mook had neglected to mention to Republicans, Lieftinck argued, that the unity of the Kingdom came first and foremost. He had focused too much on the need for separation and too little on the possibility of a continued connection, others said. The principle question, Van Mook responded, was whether the Dutch government wished the Indies to remain subordinate to the Netherlands, or whether it would allow the colony, after a transition period of perhaps 25 to 30 years, to choose its own course. Logemann added that the Dutch must free themselves of the assumption that they had a say in this matter at all; the struggle of the Indonesian nationalists, Logemann and Van Mook argued together, had during the last four months become a worldwide symbol for the ideology laid down in the Atlantic Charter.<sup>217</sup>

Although the revolution in Indonesia constituted the first major challenge to the administration's plans for postwar Southeast Asia, few Americans lay awake thinking about the issue in late 1945. A State Department paper had nevertheless recognized the problem the United States would soon come to face: how was it to harmonize the two policy objectives of increased political freedom for the Far East

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<sup>217</sup> Minutes meeting, 21 December 1945, in: NIB, II, no. 211.

and the maintenance of the unity of the leading United Nations?<sup>218</sup> The transfer of the responsibility for the liberation of the Netherlands East Indies from MacArthur to Mountbatten in July 1945 had allowed the United States to focus on the war with Japan. It also enabled policymakers in Washington to steer clear of committing America to the position of mediator between the colonial powers and European allies on the one hand, and the developing nations fighting for self-determination on the other. After the Japanese surrender, in other words, the United States had been able to remain aloof from the controversies surrounding the reoccupation of Southeast Asia. American eyes fixed instead on Europe, which after a sober calculation was determined to be the area of priority. Despite the warnings of a few astute State Department officials that the war would lead to intensified nationalist sentiment, as we have seen in Chapter 2, most in government circles were not prepared for the intensity of the nationalist rebellions throughout Southeast Asia nor the establishment of a popular local government in Indonesia.<sup>219</sup>

In the early phase of the revolution, Indonesian nationalists had been inspired by traditional American ideals such as freedom, democracy, and self-determination; many of the statements and slogans scrawled on the walls of public buildings in

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<sup>218</sup> Department of State Policy Paper, "An Estimate of Conditions in Asia and the Pacific at the Close of the War in the Far East and the Objectives and Policies of the United States," 22 June 1945, in: FRUS 1945, VI, 557-558.

<sup>219</sup> Robert J. McMahon, "Toward a Post-Colonial Order: Truman Administration Policies toward South and Southeast Asia," *The Truman Presidency*, ed. Michael Lacey (New York: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1989), 343; George McTurnan Kahin, "The United States and the Anticolonial Revolutions in Southeast Asia, 1945-50," in: *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia*, Yonosuke Nagai and Akira Iriye, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 339.

Jakarta and Surabaya were in English, proclaiming their fight one “for [their] inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” for instance.<sup>220</sup> The Dutch were worried about American intentions, suspecting that the real objective of the United States was “to elbow them out in order to take over their economic stakes.”<sup>221</sup> The Netherlands government need not have been concerned. Apart from politely urging the colonial powers to pledge eventual self-government for the indigenous peoples of Southeast Asia, the United States provided no tangible support to the revolutionary nationalists. Also, since no American troops were involved in the liberation of the territory, news coverage of the increasingly violent conflict in the Netherlands East Indies was minimal. The *New York Times* tellingly misspelled Sutan Sjahrir and Sukarno’s names as late as October 1945.<sup>222</sup>

Under the lend-lease program, however, the Netherlands received large amounts of American arms that had been brought over to the region for use in the Allied assault on Japan. When the Dutch began to deploy them as they saw fit, and perhaps as a way to make it appear as if they enjoyed full American backing, the Truman administration disassociated itself; in mid October, Secretary of State James F. Byrnes ordered that all United States insignia be removed from American equipment in Indonesia, since “a use of [material] marked in any way to identify the

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<sup>220</sup> McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 56.

<sup>221</sup> Kahin, “The United States,” 346.

<sup>222</sup> Gouda and Zaalberg, 128; Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout (assistant to Ambassador Loudon in Washington) to Van Kleffens, 3 October 1945, in: NIB, I, no. 134.

United States with activities of the user might be misunderstood.” This gesture did little to stem growing Indonesian misgivings about Washington supplying the Dutch with the arms and resources that made their anti-revolutionary efforts possible.<sup>223</sup>

Around the same time the director of the State Department’s Office of Far Eastern Affairs, John Carter Vincent, caused a stir in his lecture to the Foreign Policy Association in New York when he hinted at an American offer to mediate in the conflict between the Dutch government and the Indonesian nationalists. “It is not our intention,” he stated, “to assist or participate in forceful measures for the imposition of control by the territorial sovereigns,” he said, but the United States would be “prepared to lend [...] assistance, if requested to do so, in efforts to reach peaceful agreements.” Sukarno, appealing to the United States to act as mediator, noted that the statement was “in confirmation with [the Indonesian] national aspiration” and would “contribute to the establishment of peace and order in the Far East.”<sup>224</sup> When the Dutch demanded a clarification, Washington policymakers, suspecting that Vincent’s remarks had strengthened the Republicans in their stance, replied that the Indonesian reference to a declaration from the State Department was an attempt to

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<sup>223</sup> Kahin, “The United States,” 355-356; United States Secretary of State James F. Byrnes to United States Ambassador in London John Gilbert Winant, 13 October 1945, RG 59, 856E.00/10-1345, NARA; Memorandum Vincent, 22 October 1945, RG 59 856D.00/10-2245, NARA; McMahon, “Toward a Post-Colonial Order,” 344. See also the letters on this issue that Sukarno sent to Truman, the UN Security Council, Attlee, and MacArthur: Mountbatten to Foreign Office, 10 November 1945, Cabinet Papers 120/647, BNA; Mountbatten to Foreign Office, 12 November 1945, Cabinet Papers 120/647, BNA; Mountbatten to Foreign Office, 22 November 1945, Cabinet Papers 120/647, BNA.

<sup>224</sup> Van Kleffens to Byrnes, 24 October 1945, RG 59, 856D.00/10-2445, NARA; Charles Yost to Byrnes, 26 October 1945, RG 59, 856D.00/10-2645, NARA.

distort the facts; the speech marked no new departure from old policy, and the United States would entertain requests for mediation “only from the territorial sovereign.”<sup>225</sup>

It slowly became apparent during the last months of 1945 that the return to imperial rule in Southeast Asia as projected by the United States would be neither smooth nor orderly, but it would take still longer for American planners, relying on only a handful of officials in the Netherlands East Indies, to reassess the changing political conditions in the region. When American Consul-General Walter A. Foote, who had spent twelve years in the Netherlands East Indies before the war and had stayed with the Dutch in exile in Brisbane, arrived back in Jakarta in mid October, his sympathy for the Dutch jumped from the pages of his resumed telegrams to Washington. As late as December 30, for instance, he made statements similar to those made by Van Mook in early October: “ninety-eight percent of people [in Indonesia] are apathetic towards politics and want peace above all.”<sup>226</sup>

With Southeast Asia not yet considered a likely trouble spot, the United States, uncertain and uninformed, was under little pressure to confront the issues raised by the dispute in Indonesia. In mid October Abbot Moffat, chief of the State Department’s Division of Southeast Asian Affairs, emphasized in a memo to Vincent

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<sup>225</sup> U.S. *Department of State Bulletin*, 13 (October 21, 1945), 644-648; McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 101-102; Byrnes to United States Consul-General in Jakarta Walter A. Foote, 31 October 1945, RG 59, 856E.00/10-2845, NARA.

<sup>226</sup> Foote to Byrnes, 30 December 1945, RG 59, 856E.00/12-3045, NARA; Paul F. Gardner, *Shared Hopes, Separate Fears: Fifty Years of U.S.-Indonesian Relations* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 25-26; Gouda and Zaalberg, 169.

that it was important to avoid any entanglement in the colonial problems of the Dutch “unless essential to protect American security interests from some threat not presently visible.” The United States thus continued expecting that the Dutch would be wise enough to eventually grant some measure of authority to a West-leaning indigenous Indonesian government.<sup>227</sup>

Throughout the last months of the year the increasingly harried British repeatedly asked the American government for a policy statement regarding the situation in Indonesia.<sup>228</sup> On December 19, the State Department responded: “The United States government has viewed with increasing concern recent developments in the Netherlands East Indies,” the announcement read. Urging the Dutch and Indonesians to negotiate, it declared the American hope that an agreement could be reached between “the Netherlands authorities, as representatives of the territorial sovereign, and the Indonesian leaders.” The statement did not mention the principles of self-determination or a willingness to mediate in the dispute, but neither did it alienate either of the parties.<sup>229</sup>

The British, after months of close cooperation with the Dutch both in the Netherlands East Indies and in Europe, were less optimistic about the future. They

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<sup>227</sup> Moffat to Vincent, 12 October 1945, File: “N.E.I. Arms-Surplus Property Disposal,” Box 11, Philippines and Southeast Asia Affairs Division (PSAA) Records, NARA; Gouda and Zaalberg, 148.

<sup>228</sup> See for instance Winant to Byrnes, 24 November 1945, RG 59, 856E.00/11-2445, NARA; Winant to Byrnes, 1 December 1945, RG 59, 856E.00/12-145, NARA; Memorandum of conversation, Byrnes, 10 December 1945, RG 59, 856D.00/12-1045, NARA.

<sup>229</sup> *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* 13 (December 23, 1945), 1021-1022. See also Dean Acheson (Acting Secretary of State) to Foote, 19 December 1945, RG 59, 856E.00/12-1945, NARA; McMahon, 111.

had initially found it difficult to get a real sense of the Indonesian revolution, and had been willing to support a colonial ally. Once the Republican government proved more viable than expected politicians in London, however, and at Mountbatten's urgent and influential advise, the government had come to the realization that it did not have the means to take on a full scale war. The Indonesian question was doubly complicated because it was a matter of "non-British colonial possessions being reclaimed by British troops in the name of other masters,"<sup>230</sup> something the delicacy of which the Dutch failed to grasp when they blamed Whitehall for the collapse of the Dutch empire.

Despite changed circumstances, inflexible Dutch policymakers insisted that the British abide by the civil affairs agreement. This accord had envisioned Mountbatten's forces restoring and maintaining law and order "until a lawful government of the islands was able to function." The Netherlands Indies administration, Dutch officials argued, was *the* lawful government.<sup>231</sup> They did not appreciate, then, that the Supreme Commander's pragmatic recognition of Sukarno and Hatta as important representatives of the nationalist movement and his acceptance of them as leaders with clear visions as well as broad support from the population, was an attempt to deal with a new reality. Mountbatten believed his forces were under no obligation to

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<sup>230</sup> Dennis, 17.

<sup>231</sup> British embassy in The Hague to Foreign Office, 6 October 1945, Cabinet Papers 121-697, BNA.

reconquer the islands and suppress the Indonesian revolution in order to restore Dutch authority, but nevertheless saw his original task widely expanded.<sup>232</sup>

Other major headaches were the restoration of law and order in French Indochina, Malaya, and Burma, for which Mountbatten's South East Asia Command was also responsible. In Indochina, the revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh had seen the Japanese occupation as an opportunity to end French colonial presence. Much like the Indonesian *pemudas*, the fighters in his Viet Minh independence movement had taken over public buildings and weapons from the defeated Japanese, and during the second half of August a guerilla army had entered Hanoi. On September 2, Ho Chi Minh had proclaimed Vietnam's independence. As some 200,000 Chinese troops sent by Chiang Kai-shek occupied the north of the country to officially accept the surrender of Japanese forces, a small Franco-British task force entered Saigon in the south. In early October, General Philippe Leclerc arrived with more troops. Over the course of the last months of 1945, his orders were to wait for reinforcements, which soon arrived in great numbers, before negotiating with Viet Minh officials. In Malaya, meanwhile, the population resisted British plans to create a Malayan Union, and tensions between Malays and the economically dominant ethnic Chinese were on the rise. Burma, finally, had been a major battleground during the war and was devastated. Towards the end of the year, with British casualties in Java already numbering over

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<sup>232</sup> See also: Mountbatten, *Post Surrender Tasks: Section E of the Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff by the Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia, 1943-1945* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1969), 281-323.

one thousand and a looming danger of military and financial overextension, London increasingly hoped that successful negotiations could lead to a quick settlement in the Indonesian archipelago.

This inevitably brought planners in Whitehall into conflict with the Dutch, who only grudgingly accepted the inevitability of discussions with Republicans, and certainly could not consent to moving forward with what they felt was improper haste. While abroad he was accused of being unable to recognize the changed conditions of the postwar world, politicians in The Hague regularly branded Van Mook too willing to compromise. According to Van der Post, the Lieutenant Governor-General could sometimes be found “in the depths of despair, bleary-eyed, red-nosed, chain-smoking endless American cigarettes that his trembling hands could hardly light” and saying he was going to resign, only to be encountered later in the day “rubbing a pair of steadied hands, his eyes cleared and with a smile on his face, asserting gleefully that things had never gone better.”<sup>233</sup> Upon his return to the archipelago, Van Mook had gradually changed his view of the Republic; at first he believed it to be nothing but a Japanese puppet regime, but eventually he had to admit that it had a genuine following among part of the population. Even as he realized that the Dutch government’s attitude towards Sukarno played straight into the hands of extremist nationalists, facing the reality of the nature of the Indonesian revolution remained difficult. In the years that followed, as we will see in the chapters to come,

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<sup>233</sup> Post, 221.

the Lieutenant Governor-General would maintain his conviction that the Republican government was not truly representative of the majority of Indonesians.

Van Mook was stuck between revolutionary Indonesians and archconservative Dutch military men in Jakarta, but found he was most hampered by his colleague politicians in The Hague who refused to accept that the Dutch were helpless not only because of the lack of men and material, but also because they had lost authority and control. Van Mook's typically Dutch description of the situation in late 1945 seems apt: the fragile promise of negotiations, he mused, was like a "small dike of cooperation, weak and soggy, in the midst of violently swirling water on both sides."<sup>234</sup>

After declaring the independent Republic Indonesia on August 17, Sukarno, Hatta, Sjahrir, and other revolutionary leaders faced two challenges. The first was to gain international recognition of the Indonesian right to self-determination and the legality of the new state, the second was to bring together in spirit 70 million people on over 17,000 islands and forge the internal conditions of peace that would allow for a functioning governing apparatus to be established. In the first few months after the declaration, pursuing both goals simultaneously seemed an almost insurmountable task. To the world, the leaders needed to appear calm, composed, diplomatic, and unified. To their fellow Indonesians, most notably the large groups of *pemudas*, this attitude made it seem like their ideal of immediate and complete independence from

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<sup>234</sup> Hubertus Van Mook, *Indonesië, Nederland en de Wereld* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1949), 108.

the Netherlands, “100% *merdeka*,” was being compromised. The change in Indonesian leadership in the shape of a cabinet of moderate officials and intellectuals and Sjahrir as Prime Minister in mid November, then, gave some hope to all involved.

After the last meeting between the Dutch and the British in 1945, held at the country residence of British Prime Minister Attlee on December 25, the two governments issued a joint

statement that was meant

to illustrate Dutch

willingness to enter into

constructive negotiations

with the Republicans. On

that Christmas Day, too,

Prime Minister Sjahrir sent



**6. Hoisting of the Indonesian flag**

a telegram to President

Harry Truman in which he expressed the hope that the United States, always having

been “in the forefront of the fight for liberty, justice, and self-determination,” would

begin to use its influence to assist the Indonesians in “the greatest struggle for

national existence.”<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Report meeting at Chequers on 27 December 1945, in: NIB, II, no. 242, Annex III; Sjahrir to Truman, 25 December 1945, RG 59, 856E.00/12-2545, NARA.

## Chapter 3

Negotiation: January 1946 - December 1946

*“Over there they live under facts and here we live under principles.”*<sup>236</sup>

J.A. Jonkman, November 1946

“The Dutch are living in a dream world bounded by their prewar prejudices,”

Australian representative in Jakarta A.D. Brookes cabled Canberra in May of 1946.

“In the main their senses are so warped,” he continued, “that although they are a [defeated] nation both at home and in the Indies, they seem unable to appreciate and recognize the rise of eastern nationalism.”<sup>237</sup> Yet as 1945 drew to a close, and the

Dutch government agreed to resume negotiations with Republicans, planners in

London and Washington believed that their colleagues in the Netherlands were

beginning to see reason, and hoped that a swift settlement to the troubles in the

Indonesian archipelago might be found. Minister of the Colonies J.H.A. Logemann in

The Hague further fueled this conviction when he publicly admitted that the Dutch

had been “rowing against the tide” and that the colonial relationship in its present

form was “outdated.” He realized that the world expected his countrymen to “steer

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<sup>236</sup> Minister of the Colonies J.A. Jonkman in a meeting with his chiefs of staff, 8 November 1946, in: S.L. van der Wal, P.J. Drooglever and M.B.J. Schouten (eds.), *Officiële Bescheiden Betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische Betrekkingen 1945-1950* (hereafter NIB) 20 volumes (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971-1996), VI, no. 71.

<sup>237</sup> Representative of Australian government in Jakarta A.D. Brookes to Secretary of the Department of External Affairs W.E. Dunk, 14 May 1946, in: Philip Dorling (ed.), *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1994), Volume IX, no. 245.

[a] new course,” so Stanley K. Hornbeck, the American ambassador in the Netherlands, optimistically reported to Secretary of State James Byrnes in early 1946.<sup>238</sup>

This chapter examines the crucial early period of negotiations between the Dutch and Indonesians, so often glossed over by historians, leading up to the initialing of the Linggadjati Agreement in November. To what extent might we argue that the year 1946 was when the best opportunities for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the archipelago were missed? How did the policy of Mountbatten in Singapore and of Whitehall in London, set on withdrawing British troops from the region as soon as possible, influence the course of events? What can the troubled relationship between the government in The Hague and its Commission General, sent to Jakarta to assist in finding a solution, tell us about Dutch intentions? And what were the consequences, both within the archipelago and outside, of Republican Prime Minister Sutan Sjahrir’s decision to employ a strategy of diplomacy over armed struggle in the search for international recognition?

In early January of 1946, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, and Lieutenant Governor-General Hubertus van Mook decided that the essential preliminary for the launch of talks between the Dutch and

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<sup>238</sup> Ambassador Stanley K. Hornbeck to Secretary of State James Byrnes, 17 January 1946, in: *Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 1946, VIII, 797. Hereafter this series will be cited as FRUS, followed by the year and volume.

Indonesians was the establishment of a safe area. Attlee again emphasized that the British objectives in the region were limited and included only helping to evacuate former prisoners of war and internees and enabling the start of constructive negotiations. It was imperative, he stated, that the withdrawal of British troops could get underway. The replacement of these forces by properly trained and equipped Dutch soldiers was projected to be complete by late 1946.<sup>239</sup>

To assist the parties in their efforts to reach a settlement, Attlee appointed two political advisers. He transferred to the archipelago his top diplomat from the British embassy in Moscow, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, and announced that Lord Killearn, the ambassador to Egypt, would take the post of special commissioner for Southeast Asia in Singapore. Supreme Commander Mountbatten was due to leave Singapore and the Southeast Asia Command (SEAC) in mid 1946.<sup>240</sup> The Dutch government in The Hague, meanwhile, was to draft proposals that Van Mook could take back to Jakarta. These should clearly outline the boundaries within which the Lieutenant Governor-General was authorized to negotiate during his talks with Republican Prime Minister Sutan Sjahrir. Foreseeing trouble, both the Netherlands ambassador in London, Edgar Michiels van Verduynen, and the British ambassador in The Hague, Sir Nevile Bland, pressed Bevin to put pressure on the Indonesians. The Dutch cabinet was having a

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<sup>239</sup> Report meeting at Downing Street, 9 January 1946, in: NIB, III, no. 36.

<sup>240</sup> Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin to Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, 25 January 1946, in: NIB, III, no. 116.

difficult time defending itself in parliament, they argued, where conservative members were becoming increasingly critical of the government's Indonesia policy.<sup>241</sup>

On the ground in the archipelago, too, changes were affected in early 1946. To the delight and satisfaction of the Dutch, Attlee replaced General Sir Philip Christison, who, as we have seen in Chapter 3, upon his arrival in Java had so unwisely stated his belief that Van Mook should meet with Sukarno. The Dutch, for their part, called back Admiral C.E.L. Helfrich and Commander L.H. van Oyen, whose conservative attitudes and unwillingness and incapability to control their “trigger happy” troops had made them increasingly unpopular with the British. Commander of the Navy A.S. Pinke and army General S.H. Spoor took their posts.<sup>242</sup>

Continuing unrest in Jakarta in the form of Dutch ambushes and raids on buildings and offices used by Indonesian nationalists nevertheless led to the relocation of the entire Republican government, except Prime Minister Sjahrir, to Yogyakarta in Central Java. With no Dutch or British troops present to restrict republican activities, independence seemed a reality in this city. Yogyakarta quickly became the center of the revolution. Increased freedom meant that President Sukarno, for instance, could

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<sup>241</sup> Minutes meeting council of ministers, 2 January 1946, in: NIB, III, no. 2; Bevin to Ambassador Neville Bland, 18 January 1946, Foreign Office 371/F1202, British National Archives, London (hereafter cited as BNA); Bland to Foreign Office, 6 January 1946, Foreign Office 371/F310, BNA; Bland to Foreign Office, 6 January 1946, Foreign Office 371/F311, BNA.

<sup>242</sup> Report meeting, 23 December 1945, in: NIB, II, no. 223; Prime Minister Clement Attlee to Admiral Lord Mountbatten, 18 January 1946, Prime Minister's Office (PREM) 8/265, BNA; Ambassador Edgar Michiels van Verduynen to Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Van Roijen, 17 January 1946, in: NIB, III, no. 71; Peter Dennis, *Troubled days of peace. Mountbatten and South East Asia Command, 1945-46* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 180-183, 187.

go on political speaking tours. It also allowed the political parties of the prewar era to be resurrected. The three major parties, the *Partai Nasional Indonesia* (PNI), the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI), and Sjahrir's *Partai Sosialis* (PS), supported the principle of "100% *merdeka*:" immediate and complete independence. Sjahrir had to juggle this popular demand with Dutch and British pressures for a compromise agreement. The Prime Minister had formed his cabinet with an eye toward discussions with the Dutch and therefore placed much importance on the image of the young Indonesian Republic as a stable democratic society. Not everyone in Yogyakarta backed his policy of cooperation and *diplomasi*, however; Sjahrir was becoming increasingly unpopular with radical nationalists, young *pemudas*, and military groups, most of whom favored a violent but quick struggle over prolonged discussions and possible concessions to Netherlands East Indies authorities.<sup>243</sup>

Despite Sjahrir's continued insistence that only a Dutch recognition of the right of Indonesians to full self-governance could serve as a basis for negotiations, Van Mook expressed his belief that a solution could be found.<sup>244</sup> Netherlands planners in The Hague, however, still found the precarious situation that the Lieutenant Governor-General had found himself in after his return to Jakarta in September 1945 unimaginable. They maintained their argument that the Republic was wholly a

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<sup>243</sup> Benedict O'G R. Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944-1946* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), 300-302; H.W. van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indië: De Val van het Nederlandse Imperium in Azië* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2000), 129-132.

<sup>244</sup> Declaration Prime Minister Sutan Sjahrir in NIB, II, pp. 259-260, note 6.

Japanese creation and could not possibly find a following among the population of the islands. Focusing on Sjahrir's weak political position and wavering support, they reluctantly accepted Van Mook's most recent proposals. His suggestion to create a federal Indonesian state made up of "areas with varying degrees of autonomy" was approved only after provisions were made for a 25-year transition period before independence. This plan therefore did hardly constitute a new course in the Dutch government's Indonesia policy, and contained few concrete points to offer those Republican decisionmakers willing to give Sjahrir's policy of *diplomasi* a chance. Realizing this, British officials in Southeast Asia were growing skeptical of Dutch behavior. Their assumption that the Netherlands would "behave with good sense" might have been premature, Mountbatten's political adviser Esler Denning warned in early 1946. To secure the quick settlement that would allow British troops to leave the troubled archipelago, perhaps the new United Nations Organization should assume responsibility for the area?<sup>245</sup>

The international community indeed discussed an intervention. In mid January, during the very first session of the Security Council, the delegate for the Ukraine indicated he wanted the UN to examine the threat to world peace posed by British operations in the Indonesian archipelago. The question was debated again in early February, when the Russian representative claimed that the British and Japanese had been suppressing an authentic revolt of the Indonesian people against their colonial

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<sup>245</sup> Denning to Foreign Office, 22 January 1946, Foreign Office 371/F1250, BNA; Doel, 135-136.

oppressors. Although unwilling to accept this characterization of his government's policy, and keen to point out that the Dutch were internationally recognized as the sovereign power in the territory, Bevin nevertheless promised that British troops would withdraw from the region as soon as possible. The motion soundly defeated, and criticism of Dutch policy momentarily stifled, pressure for a satisfactory settlement nevertheless increased.<sup>246</sup>

After weeks of lobbying in The Hague, Van Mook returned to the Indonesian archipelago in late January. The situation he encountered there did not increase his hopes. A large number of Royal Dutch Indies Army troops present had been interned in Japanese prison camps during the war and was still weak. They lacked food, technical equipment, and reliable lines of communication. Not a day passed without small skirmishes or more significant fighting breaking out between Dutch soldiers and groups of Indonesian fighters. Oftentimes, the British had to be called in to help restore a tense quiet. Talks between the Dutch and Republicans nevertheless resumed on February 10 under the watchful eye of diplomat Clark Kerr.

At this point, the Lieutenant Governor-General unfolded the unimaginative proposal drawn up by the Dutch government. It called for the creation of a federal

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<sup>246</sup> *United Nations Security Council, Official Records, 1<sup>st</sup> year*, Supplement no. 1, Annex 4, p. 76; *Ibid.*, 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, 7 February 1946, p. 180; *Ibid.*, 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, 10 February 1946, pp. 205-206; Robert J. McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1945-1949* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 115-117.

Indonesian state, but it did not mention the Republic *per se*, and implied continuing Dutch control over Indonesian internal and external affairs. A transfer of greater powers to Indonesian representatives was to be gradual and remained a prospect only for the distant future. In a meeting with the American Consul-General in Jakarta, Walter Foote, a disappointed Sjahrir confessed that the proposal was unacceptable to the extent that it was impossible for his delegation even to discuss its details. He had no hope whatsoever for the negotiations to succeed, the Prime Minister intimated, and feared that they might lead to the fall of his government.<sup>247</sup>

Privately, Van Mook, too, complained. His colleagues in The Hague and the people of the Netherlands, he told Clark Kerr, lacked imagination. The Lieutenant Governor-General illustrated his own muddled thinking when he insisted that Indonesian nationalists lived in “a dream world of independence,” yet at the same time maintained that the only difference between moderate Indonesians and the Dutch government in The Hague was “the impossible and the possible way of realizing the same ideal.” Echoing Van Mook’s convictions, Clark Kerr warned Sjahrir that insisting on an official recognition of the Republic would persuade the world that the nationalists were foolish and unreasonable, and moreover would cost them the

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<sup>247</sup> Department of State, Office of Research and Intelligence, “Netherlands Proposals for the Future Status of Indonesia,” 3507A, 15 March 1946, U.S. Department of State Records, National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as NARA); Foote to Byrnes, 14 February 1946, in: FRUS, 1946, VIII, 810-811; Dennis, 188-189. A full English translation of Van Mook’s introductory remarks and the official proposals made on February 10 can be found in: David Wehl, *The Birth of Indonesia* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1948), 109-111, and (in Dutch) in: NIB, III, appendix no. 2, pp. 703-704.

sympathy they now enjoyed.<sup>248</sup> The Prime Minister countered by explaining that many in Yogyakarta, among whom President Sukarno and Vice-President Mohammad Hatta, were opposed to any form of Indonesian “apprenticeship.”<sup>249</sup>

Within days of the reopening of negotiations, then, momentum had dissipated and discussions between the Dutch and Republicans were once again bogged down. By late February, both Indonesian and Netherlands Indies officials envisaged the possibility of bloodshed as their eventual outcome.<sup>250</sup> Nationalists in Yogyakarta called on Sjahrir to reject Van Mook’s proposals, and not to make any concessions that would jeopardize their ideal. With no room to maneuver and increasing domestic opposition, the Prime Minister had no option but to resign.<sup>251</sup> Despite the fall of his government, Sukarno asked Sjahrir to form a new cabinet. When this cabinet was announced on March 12, it was clear that both its members and perspectives had stayed much the same. Sjahrir himself continued as Prime Minister, having survived, as Van Mook described it, an attack on his moderation by “the wilder elements in the

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<sup>248</sup> The *New York Times*, for instance, had just reported that the Dutch had made the “generous” offer of “self-determination in our time,” *New York Times*, 17 February 1946, p. 74. For similar articles, see *New York Times*, 11 February 1946, p. 1, and *New York Times*, 12 February 1946, p. 24.

<sup>249</sup> Lieutenant Governor-General Hubertus Van Mook to Clark Kerr, 25 February 1946, in: NIB, III, no. 223; Van Mook to Minister of the Colonies Johann Logemann, 13 February 1946, in: NIB, III, no. 187; Van Mook to Logemann, 27 February 1946, in: NIB, III, no. 229; Clark Kerr to Foreign Office, 23 February 1946, Foreign Office 371/F2887, BNA; Foote to Byrnes, 26 February 1946, RG 59, 856E.00/2-2646, NARA.

<sup>250</sup> Department of State, Office of Research and Intelligence, Division of Far East Intelligence, Situation Report, Southern Areas, 3480.4, 20 February 1946, NARA.

<sup>251</sup> Foote to Byrnes, 26 February 1946, RG 59, 856E.00/2-2646, NARA; Anderson 304-306; Dennis, 191-193. For an example of the pressure put upon Sjahrir not to compromise Indonesian ideals, see Tan Malaka’s speech in: George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952), 173.

interior.”<sup>252</sup> The powers of Sjahrir’s second government were increased and clarified, and its fresh mandate included discussions with the Netherlands on the basis of recognition of the Republic.<sup>253</sup>

Talks between the delegations thus resumed on March 13, when Sjahrir officially presented his counterproposal. Rejecting any transitional period or federal structure that preceded independence, he instead called for the immediate acknowledgement of the right of Indonesians to complete self-determination and the sovereignty and integrity of the Republic. He moreover argued for the prompt withdrawal of Dutch troops from the archipelago upon the conclusion of an agreement.<sup>254</sup> Although Van Mook’s directive did not allow him to accept these proposals, he told Minister of the Colonies Logemann that he believed Sjahrir sincerely wished to come to an agreement and was putting his own position at stake. The Indonesian Prime Minister was convinced of the necessity of continued cooperation with the Dutch, Van Mook indicated; he was their best chance.<sup>255</sup>

No easy compromise could be found during the first few months of 1946, however. Where the Indonesian delegation underlined that the Republic embodied the deeply felt idea and ideal of independence, the Dutch negotiators insisted that

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<sup>252</sup> H.J. van Mook, *The Stakes of Democracy in Southeast Asia* (New York: Norton, 1950), 213.

<sup>253</sup> Kahin, 176-177.

<sup>254</sup> Meeting British-Dutch-Indonesians, 13 March 1946, in: NIB, III, no. 303; Taylor, 20.

<sup>255</sup> Van Mook to Logemann, 15 March 1946, in NIB, III, no. 311.

even using the word “Republic” would counter resistance and be viewed as capitulation in the Netherlands.<sup>256</sup>

Fearing a complete deadlock, the Lieutenant Governor-General attempted to break this impasse on March 25. During a private meeting with the Indonesian Prime Minister, Van Mook produced a draft treaty he had written and that was inspired by the agreement the French authorities had recently reached with Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam, in which the French recognized the Republic of Vietnam as a free state within a *Fédération Indo-Chinoise*, and Ho Chi Minh’s forces agreed to the return of the French army to the region. Van Mook noted that his suggestions did not have the weight of an official proposal because no prior consultation with The Hague had taken place, and explained that any agreement reached would still have to be discussed and approved by the Dutch government. In the hope that it would make subsequent talks more fruitful, Van Mook nevertheless proposed that the Dutch would recognize the Republic’s *de facto* authority in Java, except for the zones secured by allied troops. In return, the Republic would cease hostilities, join in deliberations to determine the future political structure of Indonesia, and commit to cooperation with Netherlands and Netherlands Indies authorities to establish a federal Indonesian state, in which the Republic would become a partner.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Summary meeting Dutch-Indonesians, 17-18 March 1946, in: NIB, III, no. 323.

<sup>257</sup> Notes meeting Van Mook and Sjahrir, 25 March 1946, in: NIB, III, no. 347 (see appendix pp. 652-653 for Van Mook’s draft proposal).

This was, of course, merely a recognition of the current state of events and factual reality. The proposal however also signified the reintroduction of the Lieutenant Governor-General's plan of late November 1945. At that time, he had suggested to his colleagues in The Hague that the Netherlands government give up for the time being trying to reestablish Dutch authority in Java and Sumatra, and instead focus on gaining control in the *buitengewesten*, or outer islands in the archipelago. Although obviously eager to push his own design, in adapting the Franco-Vietnamese agreement to the situation in the Indies Van Mook showed at least some willingness to compromise and be imaginative, two skills he believed most politicians in The Hague lacked. The plan also clearly went further than the February declaration approved by the Dutch government.<sup>258</sup>

Sjahrir and his aides were interested in Van Mook's initiative. In their counterproposal they settled for a Dutch acknowledgement that the Republic exercised *de facto* authority in parts of the Indonesian archipelago. The Prime Minister was willing to make this vital concession because he realized that the offers the Dutch had made since the start of the year improved their diplomatic position. In Britain and the United States, especially, they had reshaped the view of Netherlands policymakers

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<sup>258</sup> Charles, Jr. Wolf, *The Indonesian Story: The Birth, Growth, and Structure of the Indonesian Republic* (New York: J. Day Co., 1948), 37; Foote to Byrnes, 28 March 1946, in: FRUS, 1946, VIII, 817-818; H.J. van Mook, *Indonesië, Nederland en de Wereld* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1949), 126.

as reasonable and generous negotiators after all.<sup>259</sup> The Indonesian delegation did demand of Van Mook that Sumatra be included in the Republic, however. The Lieutenant Governor-General agreed to this, and Sjahrir was satisfied.<sup>260</sup>

Van Mook was now to notify the government in The Hague of the draft treaty. He proposed that some Indonesian delegates accompany him to the Netherlands to inform the Dutch cabinet of the new course in negotiations. Clark Kerr presciently remarked that it all seemed almost too good to be true. The inclusion of Sumatra in the recognition of the Republic's *de facto* authority might become a "severe political headache" for the Dutch, the British diplomat predicted. A sense of optimism prevailed in Washington, however, as Consul-General Foote reported from Jakarta that "much had been achieved" and only "loose ends now [remained] to be tied up at The Hague."<sup>261</sup>

Van Mook left for Europe on April 4. With him were Mr. Suwandi, Dr. Sudarsono, and Mr. A.K. Pringgodigdo, all confidants of Prime Minister Sjahrir. A meeting of the Dutch cabinet soon after the delegation's arrival showed that Clark

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<sup>259</sup> McMahon, 123; Idrus Nasir Djajadiningrat, *The beginnings of the Indonesian-Dutch negotiations and the Hoge Veluwe talks* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958), 56-59.

<sup>260</sup> Summary meeting Dutch-Indonesians, 27 March 1946, in: NIB, III, no. 355; Taylor, 21.

<sup>261</sup> Van Mook to Logemann, 28 March 1946, in: NIB, III, no. 361; Meeting British-Dutch-Indonesians, 30 March 1946, in: NIB, III, no. 364; Clark Kerr to Foreign Office, 21 March 1946, Foreign Office 371/F4362, BNA; Foote to Byrnes, 27 March 1946, RG 59, 856E.00/3-2846, NARA; Foote to Byrnes, 31 March 1946, in: FRUS, 1946, VIII, 818; Dennis, 193-197.

Kerr's caution had been well founded; Van Mook's proposal and the compromise he and Sjahrir had reached were unacceptable to the Netherlands government.

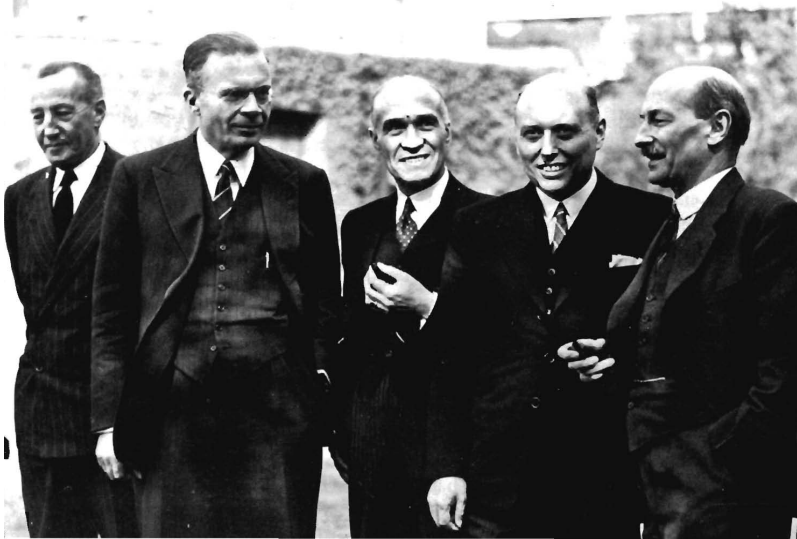
The main objections were twofold. Dutch Prime Minister Willem Schermerhorn pointed out that including the island of Sumatra in his government's *de facto* recognition of the Republic's authority was out of the question, as there was no convincing evidence, he claimed, that Indonesian nationalists had a large following there. Although apart from this issue, he found the larger part of Van Mook's proposal not objectionable, its form was problematic. Recognition, he stated, could not come in the form of a treaty between the Netherlands and the Republic, because the latter was not the lawful authority in the area, and Dutch law stipulated that treaties could only be made with sovereign foreign powers. He suggested instead that two declarations, simultaneously issued by both parties, could make public any agreed-upon objectives. Van Mook and Logemann countered that the Dutch must give the Indonesians something with which Prime Minister Sjahrir could convince both the less-moderate wing in Yogyakarta as well as the people at large.<sup>262</sup>

On April 12, the Dutch Prime Minister and his closest aides left for London to confer with British decisionmakers. Prime Minister Attlee agreed with Schermerhorn that the "so-called" Republic in Java "could hardly be considered as a government capable of sound administration." Not breathing a word of their rejection of

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<sup>262</sup> Secretary to all members council of ministers, 10 April 1946, in: NIB, IV, no. 33, appendix 1; Minutes meeting council of ministers, 10 April 1946, in: NIB, IV, no. 34; Minutes meeting council of ministers, 11 April 1946, in: NIB, IV, no. 37.

Sumatra's inclusion in the Republic, the Dutch insisted that their objections to Van Mook's latest proposal were purely a matter of form, not of substance. They were confident, they said, that it would be possible to make the plan acceptable to both the people of the Netherlands and the people in Indonesia. This was of paramount importance, Schermerhorn added, because the situation in Indonesia could not be



7. London, 12 April 1946

allowed to become the major issue in the campaign for the first post-war Dutch general elections, to be held on May 17.

They then proceeded to discuss military matters.

There were now some 46,000 British troops in Java, and another small division in Sumatra. By the end of May, Attlee explained, there should be 19,000 British and 21,000 Dutch soldiers, the latter having replaced more than half of the British troops. By the end of the year, 40,000 Dutch soldiers would be present, allowing the British to withdraw from the archipelago completely. The British Prime Minister promised that his soldiers would until then continue to hold the territory they now held, including the largest cities of Western Java, as a base from which Netherlands forces could operate if they so

desired. The Dutch offer of *de facto* recognition in Java only, in other words, had won the government an extended British military commitment.<sup>263</sup>

This boost led directly to the Dutch negotiators taking a hard line during subsequent talks with the Indonesian delegation, which resumed at Hoge Veluwe, a secluded holiday resort in the east of the Netherlands, on April 14. The two stumbling blocks were the unwillingness of the Netherlands government to acknowledge the Republic's authority in Sumatra, and the conversion of the form of the agreement from a treaty to a protocol. The Indonesian representatives quickly pointed out that it would be overstepping its mandate and endangering Sjahrir's government if it compromised on these matters. Besides the substance of the agreement, its form was important to the Indonesian people too, the delegates stressed. The Dutch countered by positing that the difference between a treaty and a protocol was, after all, subtle. At the same time, however, Schermerhorn argued he would not be able to call the agreement a treaty and expect to receive the support of the Dutch public.<sup>264</sup>

Both parties met thrice more after this initial conversation, but were unwilling to alter their standpoints. The Dutch government acknowledged that an Indonesian administration and army had a tangible presence in Sumatra, but held firm that they could not definitively leave the island in the hands of the Republic. The Van Mook

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<sup>263</sup> Sterndale Bennett to Foreign Office, 25 March 1946, Foreign Office 371/F4879, BNA; Record of meeting held at Downing Street, 12 April 1946, PREM 8/263, BNA.

<sup>264</sup> Minutes meeting at Hoge Veluwe, 14 April 1946, in: NIB, IV, no. 44.

proposals already constituted a revolutionary revision of the government's original plan, especially in the minds of those Dutch parliamentarians who disapproved of accepting the Republic as a party to any agreement. The Indonesian delegation, in turn, had been instructed by Sjahrir to strictly adhere to the draft treaty he had agreed upon with the Lieutenant Governor-General and not compromise on the essentials.

On April 24 then, after merely exchanging widely divergent views, the disillusioned Indonesians returned home with nothing more than vivid impressions of the Netherlands and its stubborn politicians. At Hoge Veluwe, Dutch negotiators had shown a readiness to acknowledge *a* Republic in Indonesia, but not *the* Republic of Indonesia. It was too little, too late; the Republican delegation was dissatisfied with the exclusion of Sumatra, and rightly interpreted the devaluation of the agreement from a treaty to a mere protocol as a lower level of political recognition. The British fear that a "Dutch propensity for legalistic interpretation" would throw up insurmountable obstacles proved justified.<sup>265</sup>

When we interpret the developments of early 1946, it becomes clear that the Netherlands government believed that a Republican "free state" was only acceptable in the context of a federative whole that remained under the Dutch crown. When Mountbatten mentioned he was going to see Sjahrir for drinks in late April, for

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<sup>265</sup> Minutes meeting at Hoge Veluwe, 21 April 1946, in: NIB, IV, no. 58; Minutes meeting council of ministers, 23 April 1946, in: NIB, IV, no. 62; Djajadiningrat, 61-75; Dennis, 197-198; Wehl, 123.

instance, the Dutch official he notified of his plan “practically [had] an apoplexy;” the Netherlands authorities, in other words, were unduly sensitive about any actions that were not blatantly pro-Dutch.<sup>266</sup> This attitude greatly frustrated British officials in the archipelago and in London, who feared that many of their colleagues in the Netherlands envisioned a return to Dutch imperialistic rule in Indonesia, and could not be convinced that attempts to trample on the nationalist movement would only hinder an agreement being reached. Failure to meet the natural aspirations of Indonesians, Attlee was convinced, would only encourage disorder and lose the Dutch goodwill.<sup>267</sup>

An Indonesian federation would allow the Netherlands to continue to play a role in the Indies for decades to come, Van Mook reasoned. But what of the parts of that federation that were not Java or Sumatra? Most of the *buitengewesten* or outer islands of the archipelago had been liberated by Australian forces. In Borneo (today called Kalimantan) and East Indonesia, the umbrella term Dutch officials used to refer to all the islands east of Borneo and of Java (the island groups of Celebes (now Sulawesi), the Moluccas (also known as Maluku islands), and the Lesser Sundas), small teams of Netherlands Indies administrators had followed the allied troops and with relative success reestablished a form of Dutch authority. Although part of the

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<sup>266</sup> Philip Ziegler (ed.), *Personal diary of Admiral The Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, 1943-1946* (London: Collins, 1988), 322-324. Mountbatten also noted that upon meeting the Indonesian Prime Minister, he “took a great fancy” to him. “Archie [Clark] Kerr’s description of him as a spaniel whom one expects to jump on one’s lap and lick one’s face,” he wrote in his diary, “cannot be bettered.”

<sup>267</sup> Clement R. Attlee, *As It Happened* (New York, Viking Press, 1954), 266-267.

population there was supportive of the Indonesian Republic and sympathetic to its aims, the fire of the revolution and news about events in Java and Sumatra had not quite spread to these distant islands. Resistance to the restoration of Dutch rule here could, with some imagination, be called minimal.<sup>268</sup>

In the early decades of the twentieth century, these remote and less developed eastern sections of the archipelago had not seen a powerful nationalist movement. Here too, however, the war had left its traces. The Japanese occupiers had removed the traditional local leaders through whom the colonial Dutch administration had projected its authority to the Indonesian people, and those who had managed to hold on to their positions had at least lost power and prestige. As in Java and Sumatra, elements reminding the population of the Netherlands Indies authorities had been removed from view. As alternatives to colonial rule had manifested themselves, in other words, reclaiming Dutch authority would not be straightforward in Borneo or East Indonesia either. These parts of the planned federation desired increasing powers of self-government as well, even if this did not mean radical independence and the complete cutting of any bond with the Netherlands. It did not appear that way to Dutch officials in late 1945, however; Van Mook was positive that his federal structure would more than satisfy local demands.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> Djajadiningrat, 65.

<sup>269</sup> Overview of situation in Borneo and East Indonesia, 16 March 1946, in: NIB, III, no. 320; Report of visit to the Moluccas by government official, 25 March 1946, in: NIB, III, no. 346; Doel, 152-156. In March and April of 1946, a parliamentary commission instated by the Dutch government had made a tour of the

In late April, the British ambassador in The Hague underlined the extent of the political deadlock between the Dutch and Indonesians. “The Netherlands Government,” he summarized, were “not (repeat not) very forthcoming” about their future intentions. In no hurry to make controversial and perhaps irreversible decisions, conservative opinion in the Netherlands wished to postpone the debate on Indonesia until after the public had voted. Dutch policymakers had got cold feet, Bland wrote, “and having let affairs drag on until so near the elections [now wanted to] leave it to their successors to take the next big step.” Even after the general election, he prophesized, the only options open to the Netherlands government were a swift compromise or a lengthy colonial war of destruction.<sup>270</sup>

Progress in negotiations was at a standstill during the late spring. Prime Minister Schermerhorn’s interim cabinet had not been elected, but appointed by the

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Indies. At its head was Max J.M. Van Poll, the “Indies specialist” of the Catholic Party (Katholieke VolksPartij, or KVP). Son of a captain in the Royal Dutch Indies Army and trained as a journalist, Van Poll had closely followed Schermerhorn’s policy, which he feared threatened the unity of the Dutch empire. While visiting Indonesia, the commission stayed only in Dutch occupied territory, and interviewed only those individuals that had remained loyal to the crown. It had, in other words, only heard what it wanted to hear. When the commission published its final report mere weeks before the May general election, it repeated the belief that the Indonesian Republic was of Japanese making, had no real power, and did little but terrorize the public. The nostalgic wish to return to the prewar past jumped from the pages, and influenced the thinking of conservative policymakers in The Hague. The spring of 1946 also saw the publication of a little booklet by Dr. Carel Gerretson, a professor in Dutch colonial history, staunch nationalist, and supporter of the empire. Arguing that the interests of the Netherlands were not in safe hands with Van Mook, who after all was not a “real Dutchman,” he set out to prove that losing the Indies would lead to the downfall of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and advocated a policy that could “save what might still be saved.” (See: Jan Bank, *Katholieken en de Indonesische Revolutie* (Baarn: Amboboeken, 1983), 60-61; C. Gerretson, *Indië onder Dictatuur. De Ondergang van het Koninkrijk uit de Beginselen Verklaard* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1946); *Rapport Commissie-Van Poll aan de Staten-Generaal, 1 mei 1946* (Den Haag: Parlementaire Commissie Nederlandsch-Indië, 1946)).

<sup>270</sup> Bland to Foreign Office, 30 April 1946, Foreign Office 371/F6484.

Queen after the German surrender in May 1945. Without a popular mandate, it had little room to maneuver or make important decisions on sensitive issues such as the conflict in the archipelago. The installation of a new Dutch government, it was therefore hoped, might result in more decisive policymaking with regard to the conflict in the Netherlands colony. In May 17, the Catholic KVP and labor party PvdA became the biggest political parties, each taking approximately 30% of the vote. Two smaller protestant parties combined won around 20% of the seats in parliament, and the Dutch communist party captured a historic 10%. The issue that had dominated the election campaign was not the ongoing unrest in Indonesia, but rather the question whether the secular labor party could spectacularly come out on top over the established religious parties. It turned out that it could not.

The future of Indonesia became a central point of contention during coalition discussions between the labor party and Catholic KVP. The conservative Catholics avidly supported the unity of the kingdom and empire, whereas the progressive social democrats advocated the principal right of Indonesians to independence. In the government program that the new political leaders of the Netherlands drew up, they ultimately settled on a specific pledge to organize a roundtable conference where the political future of the archipelago could be discussed. The recognition of an

Indonesian Republic, the program made clear, would depend on the willingness of nationalist representatives to continue to support the unity of the kingdom.<sup>271</sup>

With final discussions on a coalition government still ongoing, no resumption of official negotiations between the Dutch and the Republic was in sight. On May 19, Van Mook intimated to Sjahrir that the longer the Indonesian Prime Minister delayed his acceptance of the Dutch plan for a federation and *de facto* recognition of the Republic's authority in Java only, the less he would get. Although the proposal he then handed over was much the same as the original Dutch plan with which he had returned to Indonesia in early February, the Lieutenant Governor-General warned that it constituted his final offer. After visiting Yogyakarta and presenting the proposal once more to his cabinet, Sjahrir, his optimism already lessened by the election victory of the conservative Catholics in the Netherlands, dismissed the plan as "a definite step backward."<sup>272</sup>

The situation in the Indonesian archipelago had come dangerously close to a breaking point. The Netherlands delegation was dragging its feet in making concrete commitments to the Republic and used the time it took to form a new government in The Hague to consolidate Dutch control in the outer territories. Indonesian representatives, a small majority of whom had desired a peaceful settlement during the

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<sup>271</sup> Doel, 174-175, 179-181.

<sup>272</sup> Foote to Byrnes, 27 May 1946, RG 59, 856E.00/5/2746, NARA; *New York Times*, 26 May 1946, p. 15. Van Mook's latest proposal included the Dutch "taking cognizance" of the Republic's claim of *de facto* authority over Sumatra.

early months of 1946, were growing increasingly determined to fight if necessary. As the diplomatic climate deteriorated and a steady flow of Dutch troops began replacing British forces, many began to think that war was inevitable. In a momentous meeting with Van Mook on May 25, Mountbatten, scheduled to leave SEAC and return to London before the month's end, therefore tried to curtail British involvement. His two proposals, accepted by the Lieutenant Governor-General, transferred the responsibility of all of the Netherlands East Indies except Java and Sumatra back to the Dutch by mid July at the latest. After that date, the Supreme Commander explained, Netherlands forces would be allowed to conduct whatever military operations they saw fit outside of the allied zones in Java and Sumatra, on the strict understanding that they could expect no British assistance if things went awry.<sup>273</sup>

After having consulted the Indonesian government in Yogyakarta about Van Mook's "final offer," Sjahrir's counterproposal underlined the absolute need for the Dutch to recognize the Republic in the whole of the archipelago. The draft further suggested that both sides agree not to extend their military positions or further increase their number of troops, and spoke of the Indonesian Republic entering voluntarily and as an independent state into an alliance with the Netherlands.

Although the Prime Minister claimed that this conformed closely to the terms of the

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<sup>273</sup> Mountbatten to Foreign Office, 25 May 1946, PREM 8/263, BNA; Department of State, Office of Research and Intelligence, Division of Far East Intelligence, Situation Report, Southern Areas, 3480.11, 5 June 1946, NARA; Dennis, 204-205.

draft treaty he had agreed upon with Van Mook at the end of March, the alterations and additions reflected a hardening of the Indonesian line. New British Consul-General Sir Gilbert MacKereth, who had replaced Sir Clark Kerr, nevertheless stressed the need to find a solution. The British government, he explained as he relayed Sjahrir's draft agreement to the Lieutenant Governor-General, did not wish to become involved as mediators in what was an increasingly embarrassing situation.<sup>274</sup>

Van Mook expressed his doubts as to whether the Dutch government would even consider the new proposals. "We are at an absolute low-point," the Lieutenant Governor-General sighed in a letter to Logemann, and the current delay caused by the cabinet formation in The Hague merely served to paralyze all involved. With the announced roundtable conference now only a distant possibility, Van Mook again proposed making headway with the federal construction of the relatively peaceful parts of the archipelago. To this purpose, he suggested organizing a conference in the small hill town resort of Malino in South Celebes, where representatives of the outer islands might discuss their political future. Even if he went ahead as planned, the Lieutenant Governor-General lamented, the Dutch adherence to "strict constitutionalism" might throw a spoke in the wheel.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> British Consul-General Gilbert MacKereth to Van Mook, 17 June, in: NIB, IV, no. 239; Foote to Byrnes, 5 June 1946, in: FRUS, 1946, VIII, 826; Hornbeck to Byrnes, 20 June 1946, in: FRUS, 1946, VIII, 830-831; E. Lambert in response to parliamentary question, 22 June 1946, FO 371/F9574, BNA.

<sup>275</sup> Van Mook to Logemann, 19 June 1946, in: NIB, IV, no. 248; Van Mook to Logemann, 21 June 1946, in: NIB, IV, no. 256; Van Mook to Logemann, 21 June 1946, in: NIB, IV, no. 259; Van Mook to Logemann, 23 June 1946, in: NIB, IV, no. 268.

In late June, parts of Sjahrir's secret counterproposal were leaked to the Dutch press and it became public knowledge in Indonesia that the Prime Minister would accept as the basis for a settlement a Dutch recognition of merely *de facto* authority, and that he would agree to a Republic that comprised only the islands of Java and Sumatra. This unleashed an intensified campaign against Sjahrir's policy of *diplomasi*, which radical nationalists felt betrayed their ideal of "100% *merdeka*." A coalition of disaffected army leaders, political parties, and radical youth groups wanted to force Sjahrir and his cabinet out of power. On June 27, a group of men led by General Sudirman, the charismatic and courageous young military commander of the Indonesian forces, kidnapped the "traitor" Prime Minister while on a political visit in Surakarta (also known as Solo). President Sukarno brusquely declared a state of emergency, and, as provided by the Indonesian constitution, assumed all government powers. On June 30, the President held a stirring radio speech in which he warned that the incident was harmful to the Republican cause, and demanded Sjahrir's immediate release.<sup>276</sup> The Prime Minister was promptly let go. Convinced that the policy of *diplomasi* was necessary, and that Sjahrir was the most acceptable person to negotiate with the Dutch, Sukarno thus refused to give in to demands that he dismiss the Prime Minister's cabinet and reverse its policy. The failed coup made apparent the Republic's internal divisions, and strengthened Dutch policymakers in their belief that

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<sup>276</sup> Full text of Sukarno's speech can be found in: Osman Raliby (ed.), *Documenca Historica: Sedjarah Dokumenter dari Pertumbuhan dan Perjuangan Negara Republik Indonesia* (Jakarta: Bulan-Bintang, 1953), 324-332.

the Republican government was unstable, but Sukarno himself emerged from the crisis as a powerful symbol of unity.<sup>277</sup>

On July 3, a new cabinet was installed in the Netherlands. Prime Minister L.J.M. Beel, a Catholic who had never set foot in Southeast Asia, appointed the rather verbose J.A. Jonkman from the labor party as his Minister of the Colonies. The latter had had a seat in the administrative body of the Indies, the Volksraad, before the war, and had spent the war itself in a Japanese prison camp. Schermerhorn later described him as containing within him a curious combination of old colonial sentiment and progressive politics.<sup>278</sup>

The relationship between Van Mook and Jonkman, in contrast to the one the Lieutenant Governor-General had maintained with Logemann, was not a warm one. In his first meeting with his section chiefs, Jonkman outlined his imperial ambitions and defended the Dutch calling in the Indies. The Dutch government must always and fully maintain its traditional task in the archipelago, the Minister noted, irrespective of the mistakes that might have been made in the past. Confessing himself convinced of the good that the colonial Netherlands Indies administration

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<sup>277</sup> The Third July Affair, as it came to be known, is extensively covered in Anderson, 370-403. See also: Bank, 186-189; Bernard Dahm, *History of Indonesia in the Twentieth Century* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1971), 124; Kahin, 188-192; Rudolf Mrázek, *Sjabrir: Politics and exile in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1994), 316-321; Anthony Reid, *The Indonesian National Revolution, 1945-1950* (Hawthorn: Longman, 1974), 94-95.

<sup>278</sup> MacKereth to Foreign Office, 2 July 1946, FO 371/F9778; W. Schermerhorn, *Het Dagboek van Schermerhorn* (Utrecht: Nederlands Historisch Genootschap, 1970), 262.

had brought to the islands, Jonkman explained to his subordinates that the Netherlands had been a world empire in the past and, notwithstanding the “justified and understandable” Indonesian desire for increasing self-reliance and independence, must remain one in the future.<sup>279</sup>

Van Mook’s federal Malino conference, meanwhile, started on July 16, just two days after the British officially returned the *buitengewesten* to Dutch authority, and until lasted until July 24. During an opening ceremony, the Lieutenant Governor-General outlined first in Malay, then in Dutch, the policy of the government in The Hague; the Dutch, he stated, wanted to form a self-governing Indonesia as soon as possible, yet hoped that the bond between the new state and the Netherlands would continue to exist until “the end of days.” The current separation from Java and Sumatra was regrettable but artificial, Van Mook went on, but the nationalists might realize from the progress made in Malino that peaceful means of cooperation existed, and that open discussion could be as fruitful as revolution.<sup>280</sup>

The thirty-nine Indonesian representatives present at Malino had in most cases not been democratically elected, however; they had been appointed by local civil service officials associated with the Netherlands Indies administration, and the

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<sup>279</sup> Speech Jonkman, 22 July 1946, in: NIB, V, pp. 59-61, note 2.

<sup>280</sup> Van Mook to Jonkman, 14 July 1946, in: NIB, IV, no. 349; Van Mook, *Indonesië*, 142-147. For reports of meetings at Malino conference, see: Short report of meeting at Malino conference, 17 July 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 4; Short report of meeting at Malino conference, 20 July 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 14; Report of meeting at Malino conference, 20 July 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 15; Short report of meeting at Malino conference, 20 July 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 16; Report of meeting at Malino conference, 22 July 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 23; Report of meeting at Malino conference, 23 July 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 25.

Lieutenant Governor-General himself had made the final selection. It meant that the party largely consisted of members of the traditional indigenous elite and feudal nobility that the colonial authorities had worked with in the prewar era. This aristocracy was not avidly pro-Republican, had generally been supportive of a return of Dutch authority, and stood much to lose if nationalists took over in the entire archipelago. Republican officials therefore questioned to what extent the participants at Malino were representative of the opinions that lived among the Indonesian people, and criticized the conference as a marionette-play stage-managed by puppeteer Van Mook. Vice-President Hatta remarked in a radio speech broadcast from Yogyakarta that the meetings had been brought about with the Indonesian participants from the *buitengewesten* “held at gunpoint.”<sup>281</sup> The Republican newspaper *Merdeka* likened the conference to a train that had allowed Indonesians to board, but which moved along a track of rails already laid down by the Dutch. It was the participating delegate from South Celebes, the later premier of the federal state of East Indonesia Nadjamoeddin, however, who voiced the most pointed objections to the Lieutenant Governor-General’s proposals. In his conference speech before the representatives he called the notion that a small country on the North Sea could decide the fate of the vast Indonesian archipelago “absurd.” He nevertheless echoed Van Mook’s ideas when he

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<sup>281</sup> Vice-President Mohammad Hatta quoted in: NIB, V, p. 76, note 1.

advocated a free federative Indonesian state that would enter voluntarily into a relationship with the Netherlands.<sup>282</sup>

Most delegates responded similarly to the Lieutenant Governor-General's proposal. Although Van Mook had subtly postponed decisions on sensitive questions such as the length of the transition period and the usage of nationalist symbols including the red-white Republican flag and the anthem "*Indonesia Raya*," he looked back on the conference with satisfaction, believing it to have been the first practical step toward the development of a federative Indonesia. Disregarding a recent report that had described the situation in the outer islands as "controlled unrest," he chose to emphasize the fact that there had been no strong objectives or differences of opinion that could not be bridged.<sup>283</sup> He urged his colleagues in The Hague to act on his achievements, and, pushing ahead, suggested that the next meeting of Indonesian federalists could take place in the town of Denpasar on the island of Bali. It was imperative, the Lieutenant Governor-General stated emphatically in telegrams to Jonkman in late July and early August, that the Dutch government as soon as possible

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<sup>282</sup> Nadjamoeddin Daeng Malewa, *Algemeene beschouwingen voor Malino* (Makassar: s.n., 1946), 2-6; the article in *Merdeka*, 26 July 1946, is quoted in: Yong Mun Cheong, *H.J. van Mook and Indonesian Independence: A Study of His Role in Dutch-Indonesian Relations, 1945-48* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 88.

<sup>283</sup> Political report of Commission General about Borneo and East Indonesia for July, in: NIB, V, no. 54.

and without reservations acknowledge and affirm the political conclusions drawn at Malino.<sup>284</sup>

It took Minister Jonkman almost three weeks to reply to Van Mook and say that the results of the conference at Malino were “acceptable.” The goal of the Dutch government, he stressed, could only be to secure some form of permanent cooperative bond with Indonesia, and this would not support complete independence. During a meeting of the council of ministers in late August, Jonkman repeated that the talks at Malino had been merely preliminary, and that the Dutch government had yet to deliberate on them.<sup>285</sup>

The delays caused by the formation of the Dutch cabinet had not gone unnoticed in the United States, where policymakers became increasingly concerned about the conflict in Indonesia and the continued lack of a settlement. After the initial Ukrainian request to discuss the matter in the UN Security Council in January, a growing number of Russian press and radio comments regarding the situation in the archipelago hinted at the possibility that the USSR might try to reintroduce the question. In early August, Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson warned both Consul-General Foote in Jakarta and ambassador Hornbeck in The Hague that the

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<sup>284</sup> Van Mook, *Indonesië*, 142-147; Van Mook to Jonkman, 25 July 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 33; Van Mook to Jonkman, 29 July 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 45; Memorandum Van Mook, 5 August 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 64; Dahm, 124-125; Wehl, 128-130.

<sup>285</sup> Jonkman to Van Mook, 15 August 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 95; Minutes of meeting council of ministers, 26 August 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 116.

United States wished to avoid the subject again being brought before the international body, but that in order to do so the Netherlands government must expedite parliamentary action and make a significant public announcement regarding its policy. If the Dutch cabinet did not resume negotiations as soon as possible, any measures taken to block the Russians in New York “might prove embarrassing,” Acheson warned.<sup>286</sup>

Increased pressure from both London and Washington, combined with the belief that the Netherlands did not have the military capabilities needed for an extended campaign or colonial war, resulted in the realization in The Hague that for both national and international reasons, a peaceful settlement would have to be reached in the Indies. The Dutch government therefore decided to establish an official “Commission General,” which would travel to the archipelago to help break the current impasse and lighten the Lieutenant Governor-General’s task. At the same time, it might function to reign in Van Mook; several members of the new cabinet frowned upon the Lieutenant Governor-General’s ambitious initiatives and the alacrity with which he was working towards their implementation. Suspecting his colleagues in The Hague of exactly these ulterior motives, Van Mook demanded a role in the commission as an advising member.<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson to Consul-General Walter Foote, 8 August 1946, in: FRUS, 1946, VIII, 841-842; Acheson to Hornbeck, 5 August 1946, in: FRUS, 1946, VIII, 840.

<sup>287</sup> Van Mook to Jonkman, 11 July 1946, in: NIB, IV, no. 339; Van Mook to Jonkman, 12 July 1946, in: NIB, IV, no. 344.

After weeks of debates on its precise instructions and mandate, the Commission General was finally appointed on September 2, and left for the Indonesian archipelago two weeks later. Although the commission was fully authorized to try and reach a settlement, its directive clearly referred to the Queen's speech from December 1942 and to the Dutch declaration of February 10, and stipulated that any agreement reached at would have to be voted on by Dutch parliament.<sup>288</sup> Former Prime Minister Schermerhorn headed the Commission. Its other two members were Feike de Boer and M.J.M. van Poll. The former, director of the Netherlands Steamship Company and the first postwar mayor of Amsterdam, did not belong to any political party but was understood to speak for Dutch industrial interests and protestant opinion. The latter had headed an investigatory commission to the Indies earlier in the year,<sup>289</sup> was an ardent supporter of the unity of empire, had previously declared the February 10 declaration unacceptable, and represented the Catholic party. When Van Mook gave Lord Killearn the "low down" on the three characters, he described Schermerhorn, who had recently professed his frustration by comparing Dutch government policy on the Indies to "arriving at any station five

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<sup>288</sup> In the end, the council of ministers gave the Commission extensive powers in the hope that this might expedite an agreement, but ultimate responsibility would reside with Minister Jonkman, and the Dutch government was not obligated to follow the Commission's advice. See: Minutes meeting council of ministers, 9 September 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 141; Doel, 176-178; Wehl, 134-137.

<sup>289</sup> See footnote 320.

minutes late,” as “admirable.” Van Poll, the Lieutenant Governor-General warned the British diplomat, was the group’s “problem child.”<sup>290</sup>



**8. Killearn and Sukarno**

As he awaited the arrival of the Commission General, Lord Killearn reflected on the role of the British in the Dutch-Indonesian conflict. He hardly supposed, he lamented, that they should be used “merely as a sort of conductor of the overture, and then consigned to the

outer darkness till the grand finale of the last set,” as the Dutch seemed to prefer. The impression the diplomat had formed was that Netherlands Indies officials wanted the British to “do all the donkey work and then leave it to them, alone and unaided to make a mess of things.” As the moment of the withdrawal of British forces drew near, Killearn suspected the Dutch were playing for time on the assumption that when the troops had gone, they would be able “to steamroller Indonesian resistance.” This idea was not unfounded; during the summer of 1946, the belief that the prospects for a political settlement were deteriorating had gained followers in The Hague. During a war council meeting in mid June, for instance, those present discussed whether an

<sup>290</sup> Killearn to Foreign Office, 21 September 1946, FO 371/F13815, BNA; Minutes from meeting council of ministers, 15 July 1946, in: NIB, IV, no. 354; Schermerhorn to Van Kleffens, 9 July 1946, in: NIB, V, pp. 233-234, note 2; Bank, 190-193; Wehl, 134-137; Cheong, 84-85.

attack against the Republic was militarily and financially feasible, whether it could be justified to the Dutch people, and whether the UN would allow it to take place without intervening. Although Van Mook emphatically told Killearn that the Netherlands government was “wholly opposed to any policy of force,” and that he for one “would be no party to it,” therefore, the truth was that policymakers were at least considering a military confrontation.”<sup>291</sup>

Almost immediately after disembarking in Jakarta, Schermerhorn and his colleagues were confronted with the report from yet another, semi-official commission. At the invitation of the Indonesian leadership in Yogyakarta, and as an attempt to substantiate its claims that the Republican administration’s rule was secure, a group led by one of Van Mook’s aides named P.J. Koets had taken an exploratory weeklong trip through the interior of Java. As Republican territory had up until then been visited by only a few newspaper correspondents, Koets was one of the first in the position to make unbiased and accurate estimations of the situation in those zones.

Koets’ reports gave a highly favorable impression of the area. During a meeting with press reporters, he described the Republic as a viable reality that was supported by the masses. “The general picture we saw,” he summarized, “was that of a society

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<sup>291</sup> Report meeting council of war, 19 June 1946, in: NIB, IV, no. 250; Killearn to Foreign Office, 17 August 1946, FO 371/F53808, BNA; Killearn to Foreign Office, 29 August 1946, FO 371/F53810; Killearn to Foreign Office, 2 October 1946, FO 371/F14463.

which was not in the course of dissolution but which [was] being consolidated.” This clearly contradicted the prevalent Dutch notion that the Indonesian Republic was falling apart and that its government had little support among the population.

Schermerhorn lauded the findings as a turning point and stated they were a solid basis for a start to negotiations. Koets’ presentation prompted one attendee at the press conference to exclaim: “gentlemen, you have been present at the funeral of the Dutch colonial administration.”<sup>292</sup>

In the weeks following, Schermerhorn began to appreciate the problematic aspects of the relationship between the Dutch administration in the Indies and the government in the Netherlands, and his respect for Van Mook grew accordingly. When the Republican delegation intimated that it was considering Sukarno as their principal negotiator, the commission was faced with a difficult decision, and one that the Lieutenant Governor-General had had to deal with a year previous. Interpreting it as a sign that their mission was being taken seriously, the committee members realistically decided that meeting the President was unavoidable if any results achieved were to be realized. They would try, however, to conduct the first round of discussions with other Republican representatives.<sup>293</sup> After Sjahrir became Prime

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<sup>292</sup> Van Mook to Jonkman, 2 September 1946, in: NIB, V, no 128; Schermerhorn, 1-3; Wehl, 140-141; Wolf, 41-43. Full text of Koets’ report in: W.H. van Helsdingen, ed., *Op weg naar een Nederlandsch-Indonesische Unie. Stemmen van hier en ginds* (Den Haag: W. van Hoeve, 1947), 199-213; Killern to Foreign Office, 21 September 1946, FO 371/F13871, BNA.

<sup>293</sup> Minutes meeting Commission General, 21 September 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 171; Minutes meeting council of ministers, 23 September 1946, in NIB, V, no. 174; Schermerhorn to Jonkman, 30 September 1946,

Minister of a new Republican cabinet for the third consecutive time in early October, Schermerhorn stated he was optimistic about the chances of reaching an agreement with the Indonesian nationalists. He did, however, predict that in this strange world that seemed to him almost “operetta-like,” there would be “no lack of blood and tears” in the process.<sup>294</sup>

In an improved atmosphere, the Dutch and Indonesian delegations resumed formal talks under the chairmanship of Lord Killearn. In his opening speech on October 7, Sjahrir said he thought both parties were “on the threshold of [...] a solution.” Indonesians were nevertheless watchful, he reminded the Dutch Commission General. Schermerhorn in turn assured the Republican delegation that the commission’s extensive powers would make it possible to conduct discussions “along



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in: NIB, V, no 202; Memorandum Van Mook for Commission General, 27 September 1946, in: NIB, V, no 191; Schermerhorn, 45.

<sup>294</sup> Schermerhorn to Prime Minister Louis Beel, 11 October 1946, in: NIB, V, no 244; Kahin, 194-195; Mrázek, 321-323.

direct and straight lines, with clear and simple proposals, without hidden loopholes and without reservations.”<sup>295</sup> The stakes were high for Sjahrir as well as Schermerhorn. The latter noted in his diary that he believed them both to be ahead of the populations and governments they represented. This was a potentially dangerous but at the same time possibly fruitful situation, he observed.<sup>296</sup>

The first matter on the table was the conclusion of a ceasefire. A balance had to be reached between Dutch and British troops on the one hand and Indonesian forces on the other. With some 40,000 British soldiers present, all to be withdrawn by November 30, Sjahrir’s delegation allowed incoming troops from the Netherlands to replace the outgoing British forces, which meant that the number of Dutch troops, made up of conscripts from the Netherlands and *Royal Netherlands Indies Army* (KNIL) volunteers, would rise from 55,000 to 91,000. The Republicans, meanwhile, would keep what they claimed were an estimated 140,000 soldiers currently in Java as well as some 60,000 stationed in Sumatra. By October 14, Schermerhorn signaled to Minister Jonkman in The Hague that the two parties had signed a truce. Sjahrir had insisted that their present military strength would be considered a maximum, to be reduced as the political situation improved. Although the Indonesian Prime Minister privately told Killlearn that he still saw major hurdles ahead, the first barrier had been broken.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> Minutes meeting, 7 October 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 228.

<sup>296</sup> Mrázek, 317-318; Schermerhorn, 53.

<sup>297</sup> Commission General to Jonkman, 9 October 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 231; Commission General to Jonkman, 11 October 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 242; Commission General to Jonkman, 14 October 1946, in:

By the fourth week of October, then, the delegates readied themselves to discuss the details of a political agreement. Despite a careful reminder from Minister Jonkman's to the commission that delaying a settlement until after the British withdrawal on November 30 might have its benefits, Van Mook suggested to his colleagues that they should lay all their cards on the table, clearly setting out their end goal from the very beginning. Soon objections could be heard from The Hague. Jonkman issued Schermerhorn a warning not to let his commission be hurried. This round of negotiations, he said, required much reflection and should not be conducted in haste, no matter how much pressure the British put on them.<sup>298</sup>

Killearn, who had found Schermerhorn a man of broad outlook and enlightened views, had indeed urged both the Commission General and the Indonesian Prime Minister to seize the moment. In mid October, he had told Sjahrir: "now the ball was rolling so fast, it should be kept in play, especially with two such excellent forwards as he and Schermerhorn playing on the same side with their own effective technique in passing the ball to one another right up the field. Everyone was [...] standing by on the side lines to cheer when they jointly landed it neatly in the net," the British diplomat encouraged. Killearn failed to appreciate, however, that forwards generally cannot operate alone, and need their respective teams for support. He might be able to coach Sjahrir and Schermerhorn in Jakarta, but a rejection of the

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NIB, V, no. 255; Killearn to Foreign Office, 15 October 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 256; Bank, 195; Wehl, 134, 139-140.

<sup>298</sup> Jonkman to Commission General, 24 October 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 297.

tactics by the benches in Yogyakarta and The Hague could only result in a valueless victory.<sup>299</sup>

Annoyed and offended by the continued cold tone of the minister's telegrams to Jakarta, Schermerhorn assured him in a personal letter that it was the commission's own conviction that an agreement needed to be reached before the end of November. This phase would not tolerate incessant hesitation, he argued; it was imperative for the international stature of the Netherlands that its government make a generous gesture to the Indonesians. The atmosphere in Jakarta was excellent, Schermerhorn added, but it seemed that the person editing the minister's communications from The Hague was continually grumpy? If Jonkman wanted a competition in mordacity, the head of the commission warned, he would come out the loser. It was time that he showed an understanding of the commission's difficult work; if the "aesthetic aspect" of their correspondence did not improve, Schermerhorn threatened, the minister's telegrams might be ignored completely.<sup>300</sup>

By the fall of 1946, then, the members of the Commission General were working towards the definitive solution they believed their instructions called for. Schermerhorn presented the Dutch plans to the Indonesian delegation on October 24. The Netherlands would recognize the Republic in both Java and Sumatra in return

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<sup>299</sup> Killlearn to Foreign Office, 15 October 1946, FO 371/F15081, BNA.

<sup>300</sup> Schermerhorn to Jonkman, 25 October 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 317.

for the creation of a federative “United States of Indonesia,” of which the Republic would be one constituent state. This federation would join the Netherlands into a “Netherlands-Indonesia Union,” a body that would oversee areas of common interest including foreign relations, defense, and economic and cultural matters. At the head of this union would be the Dutch crown.

For the Republican representatives, who wanted only a temporary political, military, and economic bond, the notion of a permanent union was too vague. Was this union to become a sort of super state? And why should the Dutch crown head it? Fully aware that The Hague would not allow a compromise on this point, the commission stated that the question of the crown was a *sine qua non*. Despite stubborn Indonesian objections, Schermerhorn felt that they were very close to a lasting solution.<sup>301</sup>

It was a case of too much, too fast for Dutch policymakers, however. Jonkman complained that the Commission General was straying from its original instructions, which, he noted, had specifically mentioned an imperial roundtable conference. The council of ministers shared his belief that Schermerhorn was forcing the pace and treating the issue of the crown far too lightly, and prompted him to ask for clarification. Was the position of the monarch in the new proposals merely ornamental? What exact form would the Netherlands-Indonesian Union take? Could

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<sup>301</sup> Minutes meeting Commission General, 28 October 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 328; Bank, 194-198; Doel, 180-181; Schermerhorn, 71, 73, 79-81.

the commission members return home and give explanation on these points?

Jonkman reminded Schermerhorn, too, that the changes to the constitution needed for the formation of a new political structure like the Union required a two-thirds majority in parliament. He concluded that at best, he could view any draft agreement the commission might soon succeed in securing as “a contribution to the current discussion,” not as the official or final proposal from the Dutch government.<sup>302</sup>

Schermerhorn and his colleagues now knew exactly how important the Netherlands-Indonesia Union was to the Dutch leadership in The Hague. They therefore returned to the negotiation table to try and convince the Republican delegation that that Union signified a special bond shared between equals, something that was more than a treaty that any two states could sign. They urged them to see the crown not as a symbol of Dutch domination, but rather as a stabilizing factor. Sjahrir nevertheless insisted that in its current form, the draft agreement would be difficult to defend to his people. When he asked Schermerhorn if they could come to an agreement without the Netherlands-Indonesia Union, the latter replied simply: “no, in that case we go home.” In response to Jonkman’s inquiry, however, the former Prime Minister stated emphatically that the commission could not return home until an

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<sup>302</sup> Minutes meeting, 24 October 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 303; Commission General to Jonkman, 26 October 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 318; Commission General to Jonkman, 26 October 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 317; Minutes meeting council of ministers, 28 October 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 327; Jonkman to Commission General, 28 October 1946, in: NIB, V, no. 322; Minutes meeting council of ministers, 31 October 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 20; Jonkman to Commission General, 31 October 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 18.

agreement was signed. Schermerhorn also rather sharply told the minister that he was doing rather more than merely “contributing to the discussion.”<sup>303</sup>

The most important complaint politicians voiced in The Hague was that Schermerhorn presented them with a *fait accompli*, that he expected them to follow his policy “like obedient children,” and that the commission’s work signaled the beginning of the end of the Dutch empire. It even seemed to them as if Schermerhorn, De Boer, and Van Poll in Jakarta were not so much negotiating with the Indonesian delegation, but rather cooperating with the Indonesian delegation in its negotiations with the Dutch government. Why, Netherlands policymakers wondered, did the commission make such haste when, after months of relative weakness, the Dutch position in the archipelago was finally getting stronger? They did not call back the commission, however, nor did they explicitly tell it to break off discussions.<sup>304</sup>

In early November, Sjahrir spontaneously proposed a meeting between the Commission General and President Sukarno and Vice-President Hatta. Jonkman gave Schermerhorn permission to continue talks in Cheribon (now Cirebon), a small harbor town on the north coast of Java roughly halfway between Jakarta and Yogyakarta. In Cheribon, the Republican delegates rejected a Dutch-dominated union

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<sup>303</sup> Minutes meeting, 1 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 25; Commission General to Jonkman, 3 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 37; Minutes meeting, 4 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 44; Schermerhorn, 84-85, 88-91.

<sup>304</sup> Notes from Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Minister of Foreign Affairs C.G.W.H. Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, 4 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 40; Minutes meeting council of ministers, 4 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 41; Bank, 214-215;

headed by the crown. It implied, they argued, a return to the old colonial relationship. They preferred the union to be made up of two completely sovereign states that entered into it freely. Sukarno moreover stipulated that within the federative United States of Indonesia, the Republic's status could not be lowered to that of an inferior province. Any settlement with the Dutch, Hatta summed up, had to be formulated such that it was clear what a significant and precious gift the Netherlands was giving the people of Indonesia. Schermerhorn, aware that "100 % *merdeka*" had been his discussion partners' slogan for a year, understood these difficulties.<sup>305</sup>

Then, on November 13, after a day of tedious discussions ending in an apparent deadlock, a sudden breakthrough occurred at what was to be merely an informal meeting over dinner. At Van Mook's suggestion, Schermerhorn suggested that the draft agreement might speak of the Republic as a "sovereign state" rather than a "free state." To his surprise, Sukarno and Hatta could agree to this. Sjahrir, who had felt sick and did not attend dinner that evening, had only just gloomily told Lord Killearn that his delegation had so far not found any of the commission's formulas acceptable, and that the Dutch possessed "many fine qualities but [...] [were] sometimes lacking in perspicuity." The Prime Minister, therefore, was taken aback at the news that a basic settlement had been reached without his prior

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<sup>305</sup> Commission General to Jonkman, 5 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 47; Commission General to Jonkman, 7 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 61; Van Mook to Jonkman, 7 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 62; Jonkman to Schermerhorn, 6 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, p. 123, note 2; Schermerhorn, 91, 95, 100-102, 110-117.

consultation. He raised no major objections to the peculiar course of events, however.<sup>306</sup>



**10. Sjahrir and Schermerhorn**

The two delegations returned to Jakarta and initialed the draft agreement of Linggadjadi (now Linggajati), as it came to be known, on November 15.<sup>307</sup> Sjahrir, at whose house the small ceremony took place, reminded those present that the agreement was not a “magic key,” and

Schermerhorn, in turn, told Jonkman that they had reached the best possible agreement, but that it was imperative that the Dutch government come to a quick decision regarding its acceptability.<sup>308</sup> Ambassador Bland signaled London that the final ratification of the new relationship between the Netherlands and the proposed United States of Indonesia required changes to the constitution and therefore could not be expected until 1949. “The Dutch are slow,” he dryly remarked, “but I never imagined they would be as slow as that.”<sup>309</sup> He nevertheless maintained that the Dutch had swallowed much of their pride. The Foreign Office in London agreed with

<sup>306</sup> Minutes meeting, 12 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 88; Minutes meeting, 12 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 89; Killern to Foreign Office, 12 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no 90; Killern to Foreign Office, 13 November 1946, FO 371/F16417, BNA.

<sup>307</sup> Linggadjadi, a small mountain village close to Cheribon, was where the dinner had taken place.

<sup>308</sup>

<sup>309</sup> Sjahrir quoted in: Mrázek, 332; Bland to Foreign Office, 15 November 1946, FO 371/F16409.

Bland on his point regarding Dutch inertia, stating optimistically, however, that the draft agreement was “a remarkably interesting and at the same time baffling document” in which the Dutch conceded a good deal more than originally contemplated.<sup>310</sup>

As Schermerhorn, Van Poll, and De Boer made their way to the Netherlands to give text and explanation in the hope of securing an official signature on the agreement, in the United States, too, the news of the proposed settlement was hailed as a

breakthrough,  
and warmly  
welcomed as a  
fair  
compromise  
and a  
“genuine  
contribution  
to the end of



**11. Linggadjati**

<sup>310</sup> Commission General to Jonkman, 13 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 93; Batavia to Foreign Office, 17 November 1946, FO 371/F16578; Memorandum Foreign Office, 18 November 1946, FO 371/F17212, BNA; Mrázek, 329-332.

imperialism in Asia.”<sup>311</sup> Foreign Affairs Minister C.G.W.H. (“Pim”) van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhout, on a visit in Washington, reported that the American press seemed convinced that this would be a definitive agreement. Compared to the situation in the rest of Southeast Asia, policymakers in the United States noted, the Linggadjati Accords offered much hope; in tumultuous Indochina, negotiations between the French and Viet Minh had broken down, and in Burma, the main political party AFPFL (“Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom League”) was demanding immediate independence, while in British Malaya, animosity between different ethnic groups and opposition to the colonial administration was increasing. The American administration hoped that the Dutch would soon follow the example it had set with the Philippines, which had been granted its independence, as promised, on July 4.

Eelco N. van Kleffens, wartime Minister of Foreign Affairs and first Dutch representative to the UN Security Council, therefore argued from New York that no matter how much the government in The Hague might want to object to the way in which the commission had reached the settlement or squabble about its finer points, as a whole the agreement was “fully in line with the development of the world.” The only alternative to it, he added, had been war. Reminding them that world opinion was not, in general, supportive of Dutch actions in Indonesia, he advised his colleagues against adopting a tactic that could be explained as “delaying, resisting, or

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<sup>311</sup> British ambassador in Washington Lord Inverchapel (Archibald Clark Kerr) to Foreign Office, 30 November 1946, FO 371/F53834, BNA.

backing out.”<sup>312</sup> Within days of the initialing of the Linggadjadi Agreement, Abbot Low Moffat, chief of the U.S. State Department’s Division of Southeast Asian Affairs, ominously reported Jonkman to have said that the Dutch government did not yet have all the facts, did not yet understand some details of the draft, and thus would not immediately decide whether to accept it and present it to parliament for debate. There were “extreme difficulties,” the minister had admitted; it would take months, if not longer, to try and secure the necessary legislative and constitutional changes.<sup>313</sup>

The agreement of Linggadjadi went too far and had been drafted too quickly for most Dutch policymakers to keep up. On November 22, former Minister of the Colonies Charles Welter and a group of supporters appealed to Prime Minister Beel and his government, arguing that approval of the agreement would signal the end of the kingdom of the Netherlands. The proposed union, they stated, had reduced the crown to a mere ornament. Over the course of the previous two months, Dutch planners had done little but object to the work of the commission. Now, the council of ministers decided that the commission’s mandate had only instructed it to resume contact with the Indonesian representatives before November 30. Claiming that the appearance of an actual draft settlement was unforeseen, the government was left to

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<sup>312</sup> Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout to Beel, 16 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 122; Van Kleffens to Beel, 17 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 127; Batavia to Foreign Office, 18 November 1946, FO 371/F16647.

<sup>313</sup> Memorandum of conversation between J. Webb Benton (American embassy in The Hague), J.A. Jonkman, and Abbot Low Moffat, 19 November 1946, 856E.00/11-1946, NARA.

decide how to interpret that agreement so that a reasonable Dutch influence was maintained in the Indonesian archipelago, while also making sure the it remained acceptable to the Republicans in Yogyakarta. Even before Schermerhorn and his colleagues arrived back in the Netherlands, therefore, Netherlands leaders decided they could not sign the Linggadjati draft agreement in its current form.<sup>314</sup>

Those who had been left behind in Jakarta were in a mood of subdued expectancy. After a visit with Van Mook, Lord Killearn described him as awaiting the outcome with a sense of fatalism, having moved “beyond either emotion or even curiosity about the decision in Holland.” The Lieutenant Governor-General’s whole life’s work was at stake, the British diplomat commiserated. If the Dutch did not approve the agreement the current uneasy truce would be roughly disturbed, and once the British troops withdrew the situation would become extremely dangerous. On the eve of their departure from the archipelago, strictly separate Dutch and Indonesian goodbye parties were held for British forces. At the Republican event, Sjahrir underlined the tense atmosphere by thanking the allies for the good work they had done, telling them they had “introduced to [the] country [...] some attractive traits of Western culture” that the Indonesian people had “rarely seen before from white people they [knew].”<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Charles Welter c.s. to Beel, 22 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 158; Minutes meeting council of ministers, 23 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 160; Doel, 186-187.

<sup>315</sup> Batavia to Foreign Office, 24 November 1946, FO 371/F16916, BNA; Killearn to Foreign Office, 28 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 192. MacKereth noted that Sjahrir had given a very good party for the

In The Hague, the debate on the Linggadjati Agreement exemplified once more the chasm that divided those in the Dutch political capital and those in Jakarta and even New York. Despite Van Kleffens' warning that it would lead some to accuse Netherlands leaders of not "understanding the lessons of history [nor] the spirit of the times," the cabinet decided that Minister Jonkman and the members of the commission would write an explanatory addendum to the draft in order to "elucidate" or "dress [it] up" to the point that it included the terms under which the government could accept it.<sup>316</sup> In the ambiguous amendment the government drew up the Netherlands-Indonesia Union acquired the character of a transformed kingdom with a more than symbolic crown at its head and far-reaching authority over its member states.<sup>317</sup>

The draft agreement of Linggadjati and its surrounding controversies made the "Indonesian question" more visible to the Dutch public at large. On December 2, wartime Prime Minister Pieter S. Gerbrandy held a radio speech in which he compared the current moment with the sense of impending doom he had had on May 10, 1940, the day the German armies invaded the Netherlands. Comparing the settlement to appeasement, describing Sukarno as a collaborator who had betrayed his

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few remaining British and Indian officers, and that he imagined "it was a counterblast to a similar, and much duller, party given by Van Mook." See: MacKereth to Foreign Office, 26 November 1946, FO 371/F17555, BNA.

<sup>316</sup> Van Kleffens to Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, 28 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 193.

<sup>317</sup> Minutes meeting council of ministers, 30 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 207; Schermerhorn, 153-154. The full text of the draft agreement (in Dutch), including the explanations added to it by the Dutch government, is available in: NIB, VI, pp. 753-784.

people, and invoking the Dutch “calling” in the Indies, he moreover argued that without the Indonesian archipelago and its riches, the Netherlands would become an impoverished small state on the North Sea. The newly established “National Committee for the Maintenance of the Unity of Empire” (*Nationaal Committee Handhaving Rijkseenheid*), headed by Gerbrandy, gathered almost 300,000 signatures for a petition to the queen to try and stop the agreement’s ratification. An opinion poll showed, however, that despite the noise the increasingly better organized opposition was making, many Dutch had not yet made up their mind or were disengaged: 38% supported the Linggadjati agreement, 36% was against, and 26% had no opinion. Schermerhorn nevertheless made note of an odd mood in the Netherlands. The people had no sense of reality, he complained, and believed that their government even at this critical juncture still had “twelve different options” to choose from.<sup>318</sup>

In mid December, the amended Linggadjati draft was discussed in a packed parliament building. Jonkman opened the debate. He spoke at length and described the document before him as the foundation on which a new political structure could be built. The Dutch still had a duty and a mission to fulfill in Indonesia, he noted. When the leader of the Catholic Party, Carl P.M. Romme, took to the stage he echoed many of Jonkman’s sentiments. The Netherlands-Indonesia Union was the current kingdom transformed, he explained to his colleagues, and the Indonesian ideal of

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<sup>318</sup> Bank, 225; Doel, 187-189; W.K.H. Feuilletau de Bruyn, *Klare taal: Een bundel radio-redevoeringen van tegenstanders van de overeenkomst van Linggadjati* (Amsterdam: s.n. 1947), 16-21; Schermerhorn, 158.

“100% *merdeka*” was a “utopia” brought about by an “overworked element” in Indonesian society. The smaller protestant parties in parliament argued for the restoration of law and order prior to the signing of any agreement that altered the structure of the kingdom, and called on the government to focus its efforts on organizing the imperial roundtable conference. The until now remarkably conservative Jonkman biting responded that his government had been forced to negotiate without first reestablishing Dutch authority, because previous administrations had refused to negotiate when they still had some authority.<sup>319</sup>

On December 19, a majority in Dutch parliament made up of members of the two coalition parties adopted the expanded Linggadjati Agreement. The smaller protestant parties and the communist party voted against it. Schermerhorn, breathing a sigh of relief, believed that the government stood a good chance of convincing the Republican cabinet to accept it. At the same time, he admitted that it had been almost impossible to make his colleagues aware of current Indonesian sentiments.

Nationalists like Sjahrir, Sukarno, and Hatta were wary of the crown at the head of a powerful union, he reasoned privately, because it had been in the name of that monarch that they had been exiled during the prewar period; “it reminded them of past unpleasantness.”<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> *Handelingen van de Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal: 1946-1947* (The Hague: s.n.), 859-861; Schermerhorn, 179, 185.

<sup>320</sup> Schermerhorn, 161, 164, 166, 174; Taylor, 29-31.

In Indonesia, meanwhile, an increasingly concerned Van Mook had organized the follow-up conference to Malino, which took place in the city of Denpasar on the island of Bali from December 7 until December 24. Seventy representatives had gathered with the explicit purpose of forming as soon as possible “states of such an organization and with such authority, that they could take up their places in the federation as full equals to the Republic.” Although most of the delegates were either associated with the colonial government or local aristocracy, some again asked the Lieutenant Governor-General pressing questions, and although the state of East Indonesia was indeed created, the establishment of the state of Borneo had to be postponed because non-cooperative and pro-Republican parties were stirring up trouble in that region. The idea of *merdeka* had evidently gained popular appeal in areas other than Java and Sumatra, too.<sup>321</sup>



12. Van Mook at Denpasar

There were problems, also, with the execution of the truce agreement signed two months previous. The numerous infringements on the ceasefire were caused, so

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<sup>321</sup> Draft of announcement, 14 November 1946, in: NIB 6, p. 244, note 1; Doel, 163-166; Cheong, 99-104. One of the participants in the conference, for example, argued that although he did not reject continued cooperation with the Netherlands, this cooperation could not be forced upon Indonesians; the Indonesian people desired independence to the fullest possible extent, J.E. Tatenkeng from Celebes warned, and would feel even the smallest limitation to freedom to be an unjust interference in their right to self-determination. For the Dutch minutes of the meetings held during the conference, see: *De Conferentie te Denpasar, 7-24 December 1946* (Batavia: G. Kolff & Co., 1947).

Van Mook reported to Jonkman, by a general sense of mistrust about Dutch intentions among Indonesians. The establishment of clear demarcation lines had failed in Semarang and Surabaya, for instance, leading to trespassing, raids on convoys, and kidnappings of Netherlands Indies officials and those who cooperated with them. Netherlands forces were carrying out purges in areas of suspected “subversive” activity. Tensions increased even further when, on December 26, General Sudirman declared on the radio that the Dutch threatened the independence of the Republic. He called on his troops to move to the front and ready themselves for combat. Van Mook’s suggested solution was for Dutch army commanders to unilaterally to put in place demarcation lines. At the same time, however, the Lieutenant Governor-General admitted that he sensed in those officers a lust for military activity, and a proneness to take rash action. About Sudirman’s speech Van Mook complained directly to Sjahrir, warning the Prime Minister about the spirit of increasing enmity. He would much regret, he ended, a change in the Republic’s stance on cooperation with the Dutch, since it would negate many months’ hard work on both sides.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> Van Mook to Jonkman, 25 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 169; Report of meeting, 26 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 180; General Simon Spoor to Van Mook, 30 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 210; Van Mook to Jonkman, 9 December 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 248; Van Mook to Jonkman, 17 December 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 284; Van Mook to Jonkman, 24 December 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 310; Van Mook to Jonkman, 31 December 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 324; Van Mook to Sjahrir, 31 December 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 323; Van Mook to Jonkman, 7 January 1946, in: NIB, VII, no. 4.

After a year of laborious negotiations, it seemed that the draft agreement of Linggadjati had opened the door towards a peaceful settlement between the Dutch and the Republicans in the Indonesian archipelago. By late December, however, the diplomatic climate again began to deteriorate and the door that had stood ajar was quietly closed. The draft agreement initialed in November was a program of principles. It had been brought about largely through pressure from the British, who for the past year had had the unexpectedly difficult task of tiptoeing through a figurative, and increasingly also literal minefield. With limited patience and resources, policymakers in London and diplomats in Southeast Asia had tried to make the Dutch understand that the war had changed Southeast Asia, and had explained to the Republicans that their ideal of “100% *merdeka*” was unrealistic. The draft agreement of Linggadjati, as McMahon rightly indicates, reflected these compromises.<sup>323</sup>

The Dutch government in The Hague, however, was overwhelmed by the speed with which the Commission General had set to work. Minister Jonkman illustrated the widening gap between Jakarta and The Hague when he stated in a meeting with his department aides: “over there they live under facts, and over here we live under principles.”<sup>324</sup> Schermerhorn and Van Mook’s reluctant recognition of the factual reality that a Republican administration had broad authority and an enthusiastic following in important parts of the archipelago had been unavoidable.

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<sup>323</sup> McMahon, 135-136.

<sup>324</sup> Jonkman in a meeting with his aides, 8 November 1946, in: NIB, VI, no. 71.

Most in Netherlands policymaking circles, however, emphasized that structural reforms to the status of the Indonesian colony were such a complex matter that it would take months if not years to implement them. Throughout 1946 the Dutch national character, “with its excess of caution and its deficiency of imagination,” as Van Mook later described, “stood in the way of a large gesture that might have given the history of the conflict a turn for the better.”<sup>325</sup>

In the year that had lapsed since August 1945, Sjahrir remarked on the first anniversary of the Indonesian proclamation of independence, “an intensive self-confidence [had] arisen, and an almost unrestrained belief in actual power.”<sup>326</sup> The Prime Minister’s own position had nevertheless remained paradoxical, as the more radical nationalists in Yogyakarta would have replaced him if he had not been the only man with whom the Dutch would negotiate.<sup>327</sup> It had been Sukarno who had secured the Prime Minister’s release during the crisis in early July, and it had been he who had made the draft agreement of Linggadjati possible in mid November. As the American State Department reported, the President remained “the key integrating element in the Republican political machinery,” capable of swaying the trend of events.<sup>328</sup>

Almost twenty years later, Sukarno explained the reasoning behind his sudden support of the Linggadjati accords to his autobiographer Cindy Adams. Since the

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<sup>325</sup> Van Mook, *Stakes*, 214-215.

<sup>326</sup> Sjahrir quoted in: Mrázek, 321.

<sup>327</sup> Anderson, 378-380.

<sup>328</sup> Department of State, Office of Research and Intelligence, Division of Far East Intelligence, Situation Report, Southern Areas, 3480.7, 10 April 1946, NARA.

Republic was not yet strong enough to oust the Dutch by force, he argued, a policy of *diplomasi* would allow nationalists to achieve at least part of their ideal peacefully. It was a temporary tactic. Did not 80% of the population of the whole archipelago live in Java and Sumatra? Did this not mean that within the foreseeable future, a sovereign Republic would become the dominant force within the proposed federal state, and expand into the entire territory of the former Netherlands East Indies? It was the only solution available, Sukarno stated later, though not the best. The Dutch government had made the proposals reluctantly, and the Indonesian delegation had accepted them in the same manner, acquiescing to the terms so that the Republic could be a free nation. “I knew that someday,” Sukarno reflected, “future bargaining sessions would demolish [the Linggadjati agreement] and return us to our basic concept of one sovereign, independent, unitary Republic.”<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> President Sukarno quoted in: Cindy Adams, *Sukarno: An Autobiography* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 238-240.

## Chapter 4

On the Way to War: January 1947 - September 1947

*“The bleating of the lamb attracts the tiger.”*<sup>330</sup>

Lord Killearn, July 1947

“I do not wish to be alarmist,” British Special Commissioner in Southeast Asia Lord Killearn warned the Foreign Office in London in early 1947, “but I was disturbed at [the Dutch Commission General’s] pugnacious attitude of mind. [...] It is almost as though they have come back with marching orders from The Hague to stand no nonsense from the Indonesians and insist upon such interpretations and modifications of the initialed [Linggadjati] agreement as best suits the Dutch palate.”<sup>331</sup> Despite this dire warning about the stiffening view of the Netherlands government, cautious optimism prevailed in Washington at the turn of the year. In its first official press statement on the situation in Indonesia since December 1945, the United States government noted that it had “received with gratification” the news of the provisional Linggadjati Agreement, characterizing the accords as “evidence of high statesmanship” on the part of both the Indonesian and Dutch delegation. President Truman, Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson, and policymakers in the European and Southeast Asian bureaus of the State Department believed that the

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<sup>330</sup> British Special Commissioner in Southeast Asia Lord Killearn to Foreign Office, 12 July 1947, FO 371/F63605, British National Archives, London (hereafter cited as BNA).

<sup>331</sup> Killearn to Foreign Office, 10 January 1947, FO 371/F63580, BNA.

agreement would allow the two parties to work together toward its swift implementation, and the United States would “watch with close interest the measures undertaken to make it effective.” The accords promised progress, the government declaration read, “toward political stabilization and economic rehabilitation of the Indies.”<sup>332</sup>

The year 1947, however, would bring not political stabilization and economic rehabilitation, but war to the Indonesian archipelago. Instead of cooperating with the Republic to establish the federal United States of Indonesia, as the Linggadjati Agreement had called for, Dutch policymakers proceeded unilaterally. Over the course of the year, a disconcerting gap grew between the Netherlands Indies Government personified by Lieutenant Governor-General Van Mook and Prime Minister Louis J.M. Beel’s administration in The Hague. This gap was both exacerbated and mirrored by the chasm between the American Department of State in Washington and United States Consul-General Walter Foote in Jakarta.

The disastrous consequence of all this was a Dutch “police action,” a euphemistically named operation with the appearances of a colonial war that started in the third week of July. Why did the Netherlands and Netherlands Indies governments choose such drastic action against Indonesian nationalism? To what extent did friction and communication problems within the Republican leadership contribute to this

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<sup>332</sup> *United States Department of State Bulletin*, 15 (29 December 1946, statement released to the press 17 December 1946), 1188.

outcome? And what actions did British and American policymakers take or not take to try to avoid it?

This chapter focuses on events from the beginning of 1947 until the fall of that year, and takes a particularly close look at the problematic negotiations for the implementation of the Linggadjati Agreement, the changing role of Lieutenant Governor-General Van Mook, and the growing interest in the conflict in Washington during that period. It critically examines the economic and financial justifications that the Dutch gave for their resort to force (and that were accepted more or less uncritically by Robert McMahon in his *Colonialism and Cold War* and by Anthony Reid in his *The Indonesian National Revolution*), as well as the British and American belief that the two parties were closer than ever to an agreement when large-scale hostilities broke out. The chapter also interprets the shifting and shaky allegiance to Prime Minister Sjahrir in the Republic, and the rising importance of other political figures in its symbolically powerful center of Yogyakarta. Finally, it investigates the start of a period of international intervention in the conflict in the Indonesian archipelago through the United Nations. Throughout, it argues that although few Dutch policymakers in The Hague and Jakarta realized it at the time, the increasing pressure they put on Republican leaders to conform, their resort to force, and the resultant awakening of the world to the conflict by the fall of 1947 gave more astute observers

increasing certainty about the shape of a solution and the ultimate inevitability of complete independence for Indonesia.

From the American point of view, the draft Linggadjati Agreement arrived at in November 1946 eliminated the threat of a full-scale colonial war. It paved a peaceful way toward Indonesian self-government while at the same time securing continued Dutch influence in the archipelago, and any unsettled questions could be worked out with mutual good will.<sup>333</sup> American officials agreed with the British, however, that certain sections of the accords were vague, and that failure to ratify the agreement would have serious consequences. Because even a protracted delay might result in chaos and cause radical elements in the Republic to seize power, they urged the parties to follow through on their commitments.<sup>334</sup>

During the previous sixteen months, the United States government had been able to remain detached from the complex situation in the Netherlands Indies while British troops were in charge of law and order in the archipelago. Policymakers in Washington had occasionally called for increased self-government, but had not

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<sup>333</sup> Robert J. McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1945-1949* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 137-138.

<sup>334</sup> Memorandum of conversation Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson and Netherlands Ambassador in Washington Alexander Loudon, 27 November 1946, in: *Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 1946, VIII, 855-856. Hereafter this series will be cited as FRUS, followed by the year and volume; Communication from United States State Department to United States Embassy in London, 19 November 1946, FO 371/F16881, BNA; Memorandum prepared for Acheson by John Carter Vincent (Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs) and John D. Hickerson (Deputy Director of the Office of European Affairs), 27 November 1946, in: FRUS, 1946, VIII, 853-855; Byrnes to Foote, 6 January 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 890.

challenged the Dutch government's attempts to restore its rule. From the summer of 1945 until late 1946, in other words, the United States had managed to maintain "the appearance of neutrality." This neutrality, as former chief of the State Department's Division of Far Eastern Affairs and Ambassador to the Netherlands Stanley Hornbeck admitted, had effectively worked to the advantage of the Dutch: in the conflict between the Netherlands and nationalist forces in the Indonesian archipelago, the United States had "attempted to support neither side and yet favored one and hoped not to offend the other." American policymakers had had principles, sympathies, and hopes, but had thought it best to "leave the resolving of issues to the parties [...] most concerned."<sup>335</sup>

The British government under Prime Minister Clement Attlee, meanwhile, had helped negotiate a Dutch-Indonesian settlement mere weeks before the withdrawal of its troops on November 30. British disengagement from the brewing conflict in the Indonesian archipelago signaled the beginning of a new phase. The power vacuum they left behind created the potential for renewed unrest and so presented Washington with fresh concerns. In the face of this dilemma, American policymakers intensified their calls for a prompt political settlement, economic rehabilitation, and stability. Especially in terms of natural resources, the archipelago was "the richest jewel of the East," and could play an important role in the increasingly interdependent

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<sup>335</sup> Stanley K. Hornbeck, "The United States and the Netherlands East Indies," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 255 (January 1948): 132-133; McMahan, 138.

world economy, officials noted. In a Dutch-sponsored informational pamphlet, Walter Foote proclaimed the region “so important to manufacturing industries everywhere that greedy eyes have looked upon it with envy.” The United States, hoping for long-term access to resources and materials such as rubber, tin, and petroleum, strongly advocated the normalization of commercial relations with Indonesia. Unhampered trade and investment of foreign capital through the practice of an “open door” policy was an essential predicate for rehabilitation, and against the backdrop of increasing tensions between Washington and Moscow, recovery in Southeast Asia was closely tied to the stabilization of Western European economies.<sup>336</sup>

In early 1947, however, it became clear that the Netherlands government would only sign and bind itself to its own interpretation of the drafted Linggadjadi Agreement. Believing the agreement Schermerhorn and Sjahrir had initialed in November 1946 too vague and too liberal, policymakers in The Hague composed a memorandum to water down the terms of the agreement and accompany the proposals, as we have seen at the end of Chapter 4.<sup>337</sup> The new goal of the Dutch

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<sup>336</sup> Acheson to United States Embassy in The Hague, 12 March 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 904-905; Netherlands Indies Government Information Service, *What's It About In Indonesia?* (Batavia: Netherlands Indies Government Information Service, July 1947), 2. The pamphlet presented the Indonesian archipelago as crucial to the rehabilitation of the world economy, and aimed to prove that the Netherlands government was best suited to increase productivity in the region. The booklet underlined that General Spoor and Prof. Schermerhorn received the United States Medal of Freedom, patronizingly characterized Sjahrir as “usually smiling and amiable,” and stipulated that Sukarno was a “violent nationalist [leader] in pre-war days.”

<sup>337</sup> The full text of the draft agreement (in Dutch), including the explanations added to it by the Dutch government, is available in NIB, VI, pp. 753-784.

delegation in Jakarta thus became to try and convince the Republicans to accept the amendments to and expanded interpretation of the Linggadjati accords. Their work was complicated by reactionary visitors from The Hague such as leader of the Catholic Party Carl P.M. Romme, who, the British Consul-General lamented, was blocking the way out of the political impasse by peripatetically touring the country “in a manner strangely reminiscent of the Mad Hatter, making ill-considered public statements encouraging Dutch die-hards and undermining the authority of the Commission General.”<sup>338</sup>

The growing difficulties were once more exemplified in March, when Dutch troops in Jakarta confiscated the cargo of the ship *Martin Behrman*, under charter to the Isbrandtsen Company in New York, on the grounds that strict new import-export regulations decreed by the Netherlands Indies Government in January rendered export of commodities from Republican ports illegal. Only with the approval of that government could direct trade between these ports and the outside world take place; all other activity was to be regarded as the smuggling of produce and products from plantations owned by absent Dutch or other Europeans. The State Department in Washington had informed the crew of the *Martin Behrman* of the new embargo while the ship was en route to the port of Republican-held Cirebon,<sup>339</sup> where it was to take in rubber, sugar, and other commodities as a first attempt to establish trade between

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<sup>338</sup> British Consul-General Sir Gilbert MacKereth to Foreign Office, 15 February 1947, FO 371/F63583, BNA; MacKereth to Foreign Office, 22 February 1947, FO 371/F2411, BNA.

<sup>339</sup> Formerly referred to as Cheribon in English.

Indonesian territories and the United States. American policymakers had specifically told Isbrandtsen directors that they recognized the authority of the Netherlands Indies Government in the entire archipelago.<sup>340</sup>

The United States admitted that the government in Jakarta had acted within its legal rights, but was also eager to point out to Dutch administrators that the embargo practically paralyzed trade with the Indies. Dutch discriminatory trade policies, officials charged, thus prolonged and intensified economic disturbances in the islands which in turn deprived the world of valuable commodities. Acheson reminded the Dutch government that the United States bore a “large part of the burden of relieving world food shortages,” and that its interests ran deeper than the need to acquire commodities “for its own purposes.” Unless an amicable settlement was promptly found, he added, the attitude of the American public toward the Dutch might well turn sour.<sup>341</sup>

Although a settlement eventually allowed the *Martin Behrman* and its cargo to sail for the United States, the incident pointed to a growing concern in Washington. It was becoming clear that the Republican government and the mass nationalist movement that supported it were not isolated phenomena of concern only to the

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<sup>340</sup> Secretary of State George Marshall to Consul-General in Batavia Walter Foote, 5 February 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 896-897; McMahon, 146-147.

<sup>341</sup> Acheson to United States Embassy in The Hague, 8 March 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 900-902; Marshall to United States Embassy in The Hague, 3 March 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 899-900; Acheson to United States Embassy in The Hague, 13 March 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 905-906; *United States Department of State Bulletin*, 16 (20 April 1947, article released to the press 21 March), “S.S. “Martin Behrman” Incident,” 720.

European colonial powers. Southeast Asia was in turmoil, and the United States, interested in stability, wished to see the peoples in the region seek voluntary association with Western democratic powers. Since the Indonesian archipelago in particular was strategically located and of economic importance, a peaceful political agreement that would meet both the natural aspirations of Indonesians while at the same time establishing a continued bond with the Dutch was imperative.

No less important than forging a political agreement was finding a solution to the conflicting economic interests of the Republican and Netherlands governments. The immediate opening of trade and commerce throughout the region would not only rehabilitate Indonesia's economy, but also strengthen the Republican government's moderate elements, newly appointed Secretary of State George Marshall noted.<sup>342</sup> Eager to prove their moderate intentions, Indonesian policymakers admitted that there would be extensive nationalization of industries and public works and utilities, but at the same time declared that they would encourage foreign investment and aid especially from the United States and Australia. Although fearful of economic domination from abroad and opposed to the continuation of special privileges for Dutch companies, the Republican leadership thus aimed to present itself as realistic, responsible, and non-discriminatory.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> Marshall to United States Embassy in The Hague, 16 May 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 924-926.

<sup>343</sup> Foote to Secretary of State James Byrnes, 1 October 1946, in: FRUS, 1946, VIII, 846; Foote to Secretary of State James Byrnes, 2 October 1946, in: FRUS, 1946, VIII, 846-847; Charles Wolf, Jr., *The Indonesian Story: The Birth, Growth, and Structure of the Indonesian Republic* (New York: J. Day Co., 1948), 77-82.

Cooperation between the Dutch and the Indonesians was crucial for the implementation of the political and economic clauses of the Linggadjati Agreement and the establishment of a federal United States of Indonesia. As Charles Wolf and George Kahin argue, many on both sides nevertheless doubted that the other party was sincere and trustworthy. The Dutch debate on amendments to the agreement had made Republican officials especially suspicious about a forced unilateral interpretation of the accords. The second problem manifest in the agreement was that it envisioned a top-heavy and unbalanced federal state. The United States of Indonesia was to remain under the Dutch crown in a so-called Netherlands-Indonesia Union, and the three constituent parts that were to make up the federacy were hardly equal. The Republican islands of Java and Sumatra together contained 85% of the population and still provided 80% of the total import and export trade of the entire archipelago, with the other two, East-Indonesia and Borneo, accounting for the rest.<sup>344</sup>

In March, after months of debate and dozens of questions and explanations sent back and forth between the Indonesian delegation and the Dutch Commission General, whose three members had been attempting to negotiate a peaceful solution to the conflict since their arrival in the archipelago in September 1946, both parties were ready to sign the Linggadjati Agreement. Republican Prime Minister Sjahrir

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<sup>344</sup> Wolf, 45; George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952), 196-198.

warned that if they delayed the act any further, there was a danger of it being “buried under interpretative material.”<sup>345</sup> And so during a ceremony in Jakarta on March 25, in the presence of seventy guests seated under a larger-than-life portrait of the Dutch Queen, Lieutenant Governor-General Van Mook, head of the Commission General Willem Schermerhorn, and Sutan Sjahrir signed the agreement. Schermerhorn was carefully optimistic, expressing his hope that despite the views of radicals on both sides, the two parties would follow the road toward peaceful cooperation. Van Mook warned that the last eighteen months had raised two and three-foot walls between the parties. Sjahrir underlined that the accords were merely a first step. All pointed, in other words, to difficulties ahead.<sup>346</sup>

The continued delays in the ratification of the agreement had stiffened resistance to the Linggadjadi accords in Yogyakarta, too. Indonesian sources tell us that the Republican Ministry of Defense, for instance, told Sjahrir that the agreement was an example of Dutch “divide and rule” policy, and boldly urged him to reject it.<sup>347</sup> Although Republicans were suspicious about Dutch intentions, a substantial majority in the legislative body KNIP (*Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat* or Central Indonesian

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<sup>345</sup> Sjahrir quoted in David Wehl, *The Birth of Indonesia* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1948), 189.

<sup>346</sup> “Dutch, Indonesians Sign Cheribon Pact,” *New York Times*, 26 March 1947, 14; United States State Department Office of International Relations (OIR), Division of Research for the Far East, “Post-Linggadjadi Developments in Indonesia,” Situation Report – Southern Areas, no. 3480.29, 9 April 1947, U.S. Department of State Records, National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as NARA); Rudolf Mrázek, *Sjahrir: Politics and exile in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1994), 332. The full English text of the Linggadjadi Agreement upon its ratification on March 25 can be found in: Taylor, Appendix 3.

<sup>347</sup> Soekardiman of Ministry of Defense, 24 December 1946, Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia Files, no. 834, *Arsip Nasional*, Jakarta, Indonesia (hereafter cited as ARSIP).

National Committee) approved the Prime Minister's signing. This authorization expressly excluded the Dutch amendments, however. And so even at its signing, as Wolf notes, both parties in effect bound themselves to different interpretations of the Linggadjati Agreement.<sup>348</sup> Apparent agreement, that is, hid unresolved divergences between the two delegations on crucial issues. In the eyes of the Dutch, for instance, cooperation implied a continuation of their leadership and responsibility for the entire archipelago. For the Republican government the term signified mutual consultation in all areas. In The Hague, federalism referred to equal status for all three parts in the proposed United States of Indonesia. Indonesian leaders in Yogyakarta expected the construction to allow for the Republic to become more influential than the less developed, less populous, and less wealthy states of East-Indonesia and Borneo, however. President Sukarno, Prime Minister Sjahrir, and the Indonesian cabinet, in other words, feared a Dutch "divide and rule" policy.<sup>349</sup>

Difficulties arose almost immediately. Van Mook made no secret of his conviction that the Republic was unable to carry the responsibility of nationhood. The administrative problems to be solved were appalling, he complained, and Indonesian officials were too feeble to effectively organize themselves. Most of all, he later wrote, "the [Republic's] apparatus of law and order was powerless against the lawlessness

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<sup>348</sup> Wolf, 46.

<sup>349</sup> Kahin, 206; Alastair M. Taylor, *Indonesian Independence and the United Nations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960), 31-33.

and the total lack of discipline of the political *soldateska* and the organized bandits.”<sup>350</sup>

Insisting on maintaining Dutch sovereignty over all of the Indies, the Lieutenant Governor-General refused to lift the blockade of Republican ports. Despite Indonesian expectations and American and British protests, restrictions on foreign trade remained in force.<sup>351</sup>

The most important Dutch complaint heard in the weeks and months after the signing of the Linggadjati Agreement was that Indonesian leaders did not appreciate the fine distinctions between *de facto* and *de jure* recognition and authority. Nationalist sparks in Borneo increased, and were inspired, Netherlands officials charged, by Republican propaganda advocating unification of the entire archipelago. Violent resistance to Dutch rule in South Celebes (now South Sulawesi), where the city of Makassar had been designated as the capital of the East Indonesian state and where Netherlands Indies authorities claimed the population supported them, led to the deployment of special contra-guerilla forces led by second lieutenant Raymond Westerling, who had been given *carte blanche* to quell the revolt. In early 1947, South Celebes became the scene of some of the worst excesses committed by Dutch troops in the archipelago during the entire revolutionary period; they rounded up villagers,

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<sup>350</sup> H.J. van Mook, *The Stakes of Democracy in South-East Asia* (New York: Norton, 1950), 224-225.

<sup>351</sup> OIR, Division of Research for the Far East, “Post-Linggadjati Developments in Indonesia,” Situation Report – Southern Areas, no. 3480.29, 9 April 1947, NARA.

ordered them to point out Republican conspirators, and summarily executed those suspected of anti-Dutch activities as well as those unwilling to give information.<sup>352</sup>

At the same time, sources tell us that Republican officials in west Java observed a different strategy applied widely by the Dutch to get the Indonesian population on their side. Although Netherlands Indies troops and administrators displayed a “vicious” attitude to *pemudas*, officials said, they were being “extra nice deliberately” to ordinary villagers and farmers in the hope of convincing them that their daily lives would be easier under Dutch administration than Republican authority.<sup>353</sup>



13. Inter-Asian Conference

Netherlands Indies administrators were also indignant about the Republic’s attempts to improve its international standing by fostering independent foreign diplomatic relations. In late

<sup>352</sup> No action was taken by the Netherlands Indies army leadership until March, after thousands of Indonesians had been killed. Westerling resigned in the course of 1948. He stayed in Indonesia and in early 1950 led a failed coup against the newly independent government. He was later smuggled out of the archipelago and eventually reached the Netherlands. It later emerged that the corps of special troops had resorted to excessive violence on a structural basis. Westerling and his forces undoubtedly committed what today we would call “war crimes,” yet never faced trial and died in 1987. See: J.A. de Moor, *Westerlings Oorlog: Indonesië 1945-1950* (1999).

<sup>353</sup> Letter from West Java Information Section to the Republican governor of West Java, 27 February 1947, Kementerian Dalam Negeri Files, no. 81, ARSIP.

March, Indian Prime Minister of the interim government Jawaharlal Nehru organized the Inter-Asian Conference and invited Republican deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Haji Agus Salim, the aged diplomat and long-time nationalist from West Sumatra.<sup>354</sup> Not much later, an Indonesian delegation traveled to the Middle East to establish diplomatic headquarters in Cairo. These actions displayed, according to politicians in The Hague, a Republican unwillingness to abide by the terms of the agreement and an intent on creating itself as an entity apart from the projected United States of Indonesia. In an atmosphere of growing distrust, both parties clung to their original viewpoints on the dividing issues in the Linggadjati Agreement. This made a return to the negotiating table and swift implementation of the accords virtually impossible.<sup>355</sup>

In the United States, the signing of the agreement came less than two weeks after the American president's famous "Truman Doctrine" speech in which he had announced a new foreign policy doctrine that included "[supporting] free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures [...] [and assisting them] to work out their own destinies in their own way."<sup>356</sup> The doctrine effectively expanded the country's global commitment, and its rhetoric implied at least

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<sup>354</sup> In his younger years, Salim had worked at the Netherlands embassy in Saudi Arabia and been a protégé of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, the highly influential Dutch scholar of Oriental cultures and languages and adviser to the Netherlands Indies colonial government

<sup>355</sup> Wolf, 46, 109-113; OIR, Division of Research for the Far East, "Recent Developments in Netherlands-Indonesian Conflict," Situation Report – Southern Areas, no. 3480.28, 26 March 1947, NARA; OIR, Division of Research for the Far East, "Post-Linggadjati Developments in Indonesia," Situation Report - Southern Areas, no. 3480.29, 9 April 1947, NARA; Taylor, 33; Mrázek, 334-335.

<sup>356</sup> National Archives and Records Service, *The Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1947* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1963), 178-179.

symbolic support for Indonesian nationalists. In the weeks following Linggadjati's ratification, then, the United States followed the example Britain, Australia, China, India, and a number of Arab states had already set, and extended to the Republic the *de facto* recognition accorded by the Netherlands under Article 1 of the accords.

When Acheson told Consul-General Walter Foote to proceed to Yogyakarta and discuss with Republican leaders matters within the competence of their government, however, this irked Dutch policymakers.<sup>357</sup> Surely, they said in The Hague, the American government understood that the Netherlands remained solely and exclusively responsible for the territory until the United States of Indonesia and Netherlands-Indonesia Union had been formed? In Article 1 of the Linggadjati Agreement, they stipulated to their American colleagues, the Netherlands government did not recognize the Republic of Indonesia *de facto*, but merely recognized the government of the Republic as *exercising de facto authority* over Java and Sumatra. The response of State Department officials was to appease the Netherlands government on this point, and to indicate to the Indonesians that their recognition of the Republic was in full consonance with the Linggadjati Agreement and in no way intended as a sign that the United States did not accept Dutch sovereignty in the Indies.<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> Acheson to Foote, 3 April 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 912.

<sup>358</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs C.G.W.H. Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout to Loudon, 5 April 1947, in: S.L. van der Wal, P.J. Drooglever and M.B.J. Schouten (eds.), *Officiële Bescheiden Betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische Betrekkingen 1945-1950* (hereafter NIB,) 20 volumes (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971-1996), VIII, no. 58; Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout to Loudon, 7 April 1947, in: NIB, VIII, no. 60, emphasis in original; Acheson to United States Embassy in The Hague, 9 April 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 916.

By March 1947, Dutch administrators in The Hague and Jakarta foresaw problems implementing their interpretation of the Linggadjati Agreement, and ordered plans for a limited military campaign against the Republic to be put together. Lieutenant Governor-General Van Mook believed that this might pressure the Indonesian delegation to finally sign the agreement. It was crucial, he thought, that his colleagues in London and Washington understood that the Dutch continued to want to see the agreement implemented. At the same time, Van Mook feared that a military campaign might risk the support of moderate Indonesians, and suspected that any violent means of repressing nationalism would result in a pointless struggle without end. In February, accordingly, Van Mook and the Commission General told Army Commander General S.H. Spoor there was as yet no solid basis for the military action the latter viewed as necessary and long overdue.<sup>359</sup> When despite this pressure the implementation of the agreement remained elusive, Van Mook suggested a new tactic. Instead of returning to the negotiating table with their already formulated plans, he proposed in early April, the Dutch delegation should ask Sjahrir and his aides a series of questions, thereby taking away the perception that the Indonesians could merely accept or reject proposals, and forcing them to elaborate on their own views and commit them to paper.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>359</sup> Memorandum Lieutenant Governor-General H.J. van Mook, 8 February 1947, in: NIB, VII, no. 130; Minutes meeting Commission General, 17 February 1947, in: NIB, VII, no. 167.

<sup>360</sup> Memorandum Van Mook to Director of Cabinet of Lieutenant Governor-General P.J. Koets, 5 April 1947, in: NIB, VIII, no. 57; Memorandum Van Mook, 6 April 1947, in: NIB, VIII, no. 59.

Around the same time, however, the Netherlands government was faced with an added complication. The Netherlands and Netherlands East Indies were on the brink of bankruptcy; the danger line had not only come into sight, it had already been passed, Minister of Finances P. Liefstinck warned Prime Minister Beel. Only selling all gold supplies in the Bank of Java in Jakarta could keep the Indies going for another estimated 2,5 months. The Dutch government needed to take immediate measures. Liefstinck recommended asking the United States for a loan. In the meantime, the Netherlands government should either bring home some of the almost 120,000 Dutch troops stationed across the archipelago, or, he argued pointedly, instruct them to occupy those territories that could feed them.<sup>361</sup>

It was clear that any loan from the United States would depend on the existence of law and order and certain economic freedoms in the archipelago. A swift implementation of the Linggadjati Agreement thus became even more important for the Dutch. This realization gave fruit to the idea that negotiations could only make progress with a capable and forceful army present in the background, or to put it in Spoor's words, by following Teddy Roosevelt's advice to "speak softly and carry a big stick."<sup>362</sup> During a momentous cabinet meeting on April 22, a belligerent atmosphere developed. Minister of War A.H.J.L. Fiévez explained that failure to implement the

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<sup>361</sup> Minister of Finances P. Liefstinck to Prime Minister L.J.M. Beel, 18 April 1947, in: NIB, VIII, no. 120.

<sup>362</sup> General Spoor had expounded this view to officials at the British embassy in The Hague when he visited the Netherlands in early February. See: British embassy in The Hague to Foreign Office, 1 February 1947, FO 371/F1359, BNA.

accords left only three courses of action open to the government: a harsh military campaign, the raising of the issue before the United Nations, or a retreat from the Indies. The latter two options, he added, were unacceptable. Ministers who opposed the large measure of control over Indonesian affairs that the Lieutenant Governor-General held moreover argued that Van Mook should be replaced. It was decided that Prime Minister Beel and Minister of the Colonies J.A. Jonkman would travel to Indonesia in early May for a fact-finding mission to determine the possibility of “effectuating Linggadjati.” The Netherlands government, Jonkman had concluded by the end of the meeting, would “reserve all rights” if this proved impossible.<sup>363</sup>

The mood in Jakarta in early May was dismal. Van Mook was furious about the suggestion of his dismissal and frustrated with his indecisive colleagues, and an increasingly confident Republican delegation, keenly aware of the precarious financial situation the Netherlands found itself in, had so far refused to make concessions to the Dutch in order to form the United States of Indonesia.<sup>364</sup> Two days before the arrival of Beel and Jonkman on May 7, the Commission General concluded that the attitude of the Republican delegation was no longer aimed at cooperation, and that a limited military campaign might have to start in late June. Until then, the American and British governments might help increase the pressure on the Indonesians. As long

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<sup>363</sup> Memorandum Minister of War A.H.J.L. Fiévez to council of military affairs, 21 April 1947, in: NIB, VIII, no. 131; Report meeting council of military affairs, 22 April 1947, in: NIB, VIII, no. 134; H.W. van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indië: De val van het Nederlandse imperium in Azië* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2000), 226-227; Minister of the Colonies J.A. Jonkman to Van Mook, 29 April 1947, in: NIB, VIII, no. 156.

<sup>364</sup> Van Mook to J.H.A. Logemann, 30 April 1947, in: NIB, VIII, p. 446, note 2.

as the Commission's proposals to the Republican delegation remained along the lines of the Linggadjati accords and the Dutch were seen to attempt implementation, failure to reach results would be evidence for the Republican delegation's unwillingness to cooperate, planners in Jakarta believed. This would boost international support for a military campaign and undoubtedly force the Indonesian government in Yogyakarta to "come down a peg or two," Van Mook predicted.<sup>365</sup>

When Beel and Jonkman arrived in Jakarta their meetings with administrators

and the Commission General acquired a sense of urgency. Schermerhorn immediately made clear to the Prime Minister that there could be no question of firing Van Mook in the current dire circumstances. The Commission General and Lieutenant Governor-General then pleaded with their guests from The Hague



14. Beel, Jonkman, and Sjahrir

to at least consider military action. The disagreements between the Dutch and Indonesian delegations, so they explained, were caused by the Republic's view of itself as completely independent and equal to the Dutch government. No one in Yogyakarta would accept a foreign central authority. Commander Spoor threatened

<sup>365</sup> Minutes meeting Commission General, 5 May 1947, in: NIB, VIII, no. 184; Memorandum Commission General, 7 May 1947, in: NIB, VIII, no. 190; United States Ambassador in The Hague H.B. Baruch to Marshall, 10 May 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 921-922.

that an outright rejection of the use of force by Netherlands policymakers would make his army a powerless stick against the door during negotiations; the Indonesians would realize that theirs was an empty threat, and the Dutch would have to accept that they were being blackmailed.<sup>366</sup> The Prime Minister, who had never visited Asia before, was surprised at the opinion in Jakarta that military action had become all but inevitable. Although in principle supportive of a course of action that included a military campaign, Beel believed the Indonesian delegation might still be convinced to cooperate. Jonkman, too, seemed hesitant. Allied governments, he worried, would see a campaign as evidence that the Dutch were intent on waging a colonial war against the Republic.<sup>367</sup>

By the third week of May, the situation appeared almost hopeless. Van Mook and the Commission General insisted on a restoration of law and order and the establishment of a transitional federal government to move more swiftly in the direction of a United States of Indonesia. At the same time, further pressure for restraint and results came from Washington in the form of a forceful reminder that although discussions on a financial loan to the Netherlands East Indies had been started in 1945, the agreement had not yet been finalized. In view of the recent political developments, Secretary of State Marshall noted, Republican representatives

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<sup>366</sup> Schermerhorn, 499-505; Minutes meeting Beel, Jonkman and Commission General, 15 May 1947, in: NIB, VIII, no 235; Director of Economic Affairs J.E. van Hoogstraten to Van Mook, 10 May 1947, in: NIB, VIII, no. 205; Memorandum Army Commander General S.H. Spoor, 7 May 1947, in: NIB, VIII, no. 187.

<sup>367</sup> Minutes meeting Beel, Jonkman, Van Mook, Commission General, Spoor, and Navy Admiral A.S. Pinke, 15 May 1947, in: NIB, VIII, no. 236.

as well as representatives from the other constituents of the proposed United States of Indonesia should participate in the negotiations. It was crucial that the attitude and policies adopted by the Dutch attract foreign capital investment and strengthen the moderate elements in the Republican government.<sup>368</sup>

The complete deadlock in Dutch-Indonesian negotiations disturbed the British government even more than the American. During a cabinet meeting on May 20, Prime Minister Attlee revealed his suspicion that the Dutch intended to resort to force. This course of action would have political and economic consequences so serious that no efforts should be spared to dissuade them; a likely unsuccessful war of re-conquest would not only lead to criticism of the British for having made such a situation possible, but also hinder the export of food and raw materials from the archipelago and disturb relations with other indigenous populations in Southeast Asia.<sup>369</sup> As Attlee warned the Dutch ambassador of the dangers of a long military campaign, Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin suggested that Washington be asked to act in concert with London. American policymakers had expressed their concerns about a Dutch quagmire in Indonesia, after all, and if the British government stressed that it could give the Dutch no assistance for a military campaign and that that campaign

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<sup>368</sup> Marshall to Baruch, 16 May 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 924; Memorandum Van Mook, 19 May 1947, in: NIB, VIII, no 251; Minutes meeting Beel, Jonkman, Van Mook, Commission General, 20 May 1947, in: NIB, VIII, no. 256; Minutes meeting Beel, Jonkman, and Commission General, 22 May 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 15.

<sup>369</sup> H.M. Hirschfeld, economic adviser to Beel, had talked to the new British Consul-General Gilbert MacKereth and said that the Dutch could “not go on indefinitely in the face of Indonesian intransigence and stalling tactics.” United States Ambassador in London Lewis W. Douglas to Marshall, 21 May 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 927-928.

could bring to power a more extremist leadership in Yogyakarta, the United States might be moved to use its rehabilitation dollars as leverage or perhaps even join Britain in offering joint mediation in the conflict.<sup>370</sup>

On May 27, the Dutch decided to make what they threateningly called “a final effort” to reach a diplomatic accommodation. A long note to the Republican delegation proposed the maintenance of Dutch *de jure* sovereignty over Indonesia until January 1, 1949. The whole of the archipelago in the meantime would be ruled by an interim federal government made up of seven representatives: one Dutch member, one member each for Borneo and East-Indonesia, three Republicans, and one representative of the crown with special power of decision. This interim government, the Dutch proposed, would supervise the formation of the United States of Indonesia while also controlling all of the archipelago’s foreign commerce and conducting its foreign relations. In addition, the note called for the creation of a joint police force, made up of both Dutch and Indonesian troops and responsible for implementing a complete cessation of hostilities and maintaining law and order in the whole of Indonesia during the transition period.<sup>371</sup> It is important to note that neither the Republican recognition of *de jure* Netherlands authority, nor the establishment of a

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<sup>370</sup> Record meeting Attlee and Netherlands Ambassador in London E.F.M.J. Michiels van Verduynen, 21 May 1947, FO 371/F7092, BNA; Secretary of State E. Bevin to Prime Minister Clement R. Attlee, 20 May 1947, FO 371/F7032, BNA; Minutes meeting Cabinet, 20 May 1947, CAB 128-48, BNA; McMahon, 154-157; Douglas to Marshall, 23 May 1947, RG59, 856E.00/5-2347, NARA.

<sup>371</sup> For the full English text of the Dutch proposals of 27 May, see Wehl, 191-197. McMahon, 160; Doel, 230; Wolf, 117-120; Wehl, 167.

provisional federal government, nor the formation of a gendarmerie was part of the signed Linggadjadi Agreement.

To convince the Republican delegation and President Sukarno to accept the proposals, a Dutch delegation proceeded to Yogyakarta. In reporting its findings, this delegation described the Republic as a barely functioning “dreamworld,” a “revolutionary and amateuristic irreality.” Sukarno’s attitude toward the latest proposals was negative; he believed they downgraded the Republic’s status. Beel and Jonkman, meanwhile, had returned to the Netherlands. In another important cabinet meeting on May 28, they expressed their doubts about the Republican willingness and ability to implement the Linggadjadi Agreement. According to the Commission General, they stated, the time for negotiation was waning and military action might be necessary.<sup>372</sup>

In the late spring of 1947, then, Dutch officials and military commanders resumed the plans and preparations for the operations that had been conceived before the signing of the Linggadjadi Agreement.<sup>373</sup> In April 1947, Dutch troops in Java and Sumatra numbered some 83,000 men; some 51,000 men, most of them conscripts, had been sent from the Netherlands, and 32,000 were KNIL *Royal Dutch East Indies*

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<sup>372</sup> “Impressions of Yogyakarta,” Director of General Affairs P.J.A. Idenburg, 31 May 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 59; Minutes meeting council of ministers, 28 May 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 37.

<sup>373</sup> On March 19, British special Southeast Asia commissioner Lord Killearn had noted that The Hague had authorized the signing of the agreement only just in time to prevent “the whole Dutch military machine being set in motion.”

*Army* forces. An estimated 70,000 soldiers in total were ready for operations. They were opposed by the more or less regular but poorly equipped volunteer army of the Republic, the *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* or TNI, consisting of about 175,000 men, and at least that many Indonesians again fighting in autonomous armed groups and local militias not under the control of army officers. Despite the prospect of guerilla warfare, Commander Spoor believed that the festering conflict necessitated a decisive and violent response and that a swift “pacification of rebellious elements” was possible: an attitude more indicative of old-style colonialism than an understanding of the new situation.<sup>374</sup>

While the Republican delegation considered its official reply to the proposals, the British and American governments weighed the usefulness of parallel courses of action. As both continued negotiations and a complete withdrawal were unlikely, and the Dutch objected to UN involvement, the latest proposals had clearly been designed to “smoke out the Republicans and make them face the issues,” British officials warned, and their impression was strengthened when on June 2, the Netherlands government agreed in principle to the possibility of limited military action. Anxious for trade with the archipelago to resume, the government in London appealed to its

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<sup>374</sup> P.M.H. Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen: Het Nederlands Militair-Strategisch Beleid in Indonesië 1945-1950* (The Hague: Sdu, 1991), 79, 84, 117. For more on the role of local militias in the Indonesian revolution, see Robert Cribb’s study *Gangsters and Revolutionaries: The Jakarta People’s Militia and the Indonesian Revolution, 1945-1949* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991). It is interesting to note that the KNIL, which stands for *Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger*, was made up mostly of Dutch or Indo-European officers and a majority of troops recruited from Christian areas in the eastern parts of the archipelago, particularly from Ambon in the South Moluccas, Timor, and Manado in Celebes (Sulawesi). See: Kahin, 453.

American counterpart to pressure the Republican delegation to concede. This could be done, they thought, by stating publicly that the Dutch plans were reasonable, had been offered in good faith, and advanced the timetable for the implementation of the Linggadjati Agreement.<sup>375</sup>

As a result of British urging, the State Department's Divisions of Far Eastern Affairs and European Affairs advised Acheson that both a Dutch withdrawal from the archipelago and military action ran counter to American interests. The United States could be the decisive factor in breaking the dangerous deadlock in Indonesia and bring political and economic stability. Although Acheson was concerned over the Dutch suggestion of an ultimatum accompanied by the threat of sanctions, he told the Netherlands government that the Department of State was "generally sympathetic" with the objectives in its proposals, which appeared "reasonable in most respects." He instructed Foote to tell the Republicans that the United States considered the note a "timely and valuable opportunity to achieve an essential step forward" and that they

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<sup>375</sup> Memorandum of conversation Mr. Alexander Schnee, Kenneth P. Landon (Division of Southeast Asian Affairs), Frederick Nolting (Division of Northern European Affairs), and F.C. Everson of British Embassy in Washington, 29 May 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 932-933; Memorandum of conversation Schnee, Landon (Division of Southeast Asian Affairs), and Mr. Helb of Netherlands Embassy in Washington, 29 May 1947, in: FRUS 1947, VI, 933-934; Baruch to Marshall, 29 May 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 934-935; Baruch to Marshall, 2 June 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 935; Baruch to Marshall, 3 June 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 936; Minutes meeting council of ministers, 2 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 68; Van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhout to Loudon, 2 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 70; Douglas to Marshall, 4 June 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 938-939; Aide-mémoire British Embassy in Washington to United States Department of State, 4 June 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 939-940; Killearn to Foreign Office, 5 June 1947, FO 371/F7609, BNA.

“would be well advised to respond promptly in the spirit of good faith and compromise.”<sup>376</sup>

In its official reply of June 8, the Indonesian government accepted the formation of an interim government but added qualifications and conditions. As Kahin states, most Republican political and military leaders had in fact denounced the Dutch plans, interpreting them as demands that posed the alternatives of capitulation or all-out war.<sup>377</sup> The Republic stood on its right of recognition, and desired more concrete power during the transition period. It suggested that decisions in the interim government be made by majority vote, and argued that the consent of the representative of the crown should only be required in matters directly affecting Dutch interests. Fearful of Dutch troops gaining access to Republican territory, especially its center and stronghold Yogyakarta, the counterproposal moreover rejected the formation of a joint gendarmerie, stating that the enforcement of law and order in Java and Sumatra was a task for the Republican police force only. The Republic was prosperous and peaceful, Sjahrir and his colleagues noted; the terror and chaos of which the May 27 proposals spoke took place in Dutch-occupied territories.

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<sup>376</sup> Memorandum from Vincent and H.F. Matthews (Division of the Office of European Affairs) to Acheson, 5 June 1947, RG 59, 856D.00/7-547, NARA; Acheson to Foote, 5 June 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 941-942; Oral statement United States Embassy in The Hague for Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 6 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 102.

<sup>377</sup> Kahin, 206.

Although this response hinted that remaining disagreements could be resolved during further discussions, Dutch officials were disappointed with it.<sup>378</sup>

Not recognizing that Sjahrir, as his biographer Rudolf Mrázek convincingly argues as well, was going as far as he could toward meeting their demands without committing political suicide, the Dutch interpreted the Republican reply as a bid for control, and as a rejection of both Dutch sovereignty during the transition period and of permanent Dutch-Indonesian cooperation in the proposed Netherlands-Indonesia Union. The American Consul-General in Jakarta and the American Ambassador in The Hague importantly supported the Dutch interpretation of Yogyakarta's response as "a carefully prepared attempt to seek power."<sup>379</sup> Van Mook warned The Hague that he might soon have to take matters into his own hands in order to create the necessary conditions for the implementation of the Linggadjati Agreement. Although he underlined the need for American and British support, again acknowledged serious doubts as to whether the Dutch had the capacity to fulfill their difficult task, and noted that Indonesian resistance to a military campaign should not be underestimated, he at the same time optimistically argued that decisive action to restore law and order would be welcomed by many in the Republic. By mid June the number of Dutch officials in Jakarta who did not want to resort to military action, Schermerhorn noted

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<sup>378</sup> Wolf, 120-122; Baruch to Marshall, 9 June 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 946; Taylor, 35-37. For the full Dutch text of the June 8 Republican reply, see: NIB, IX, appendix 2.

<sup>379</sup> Foote to Marshall, 13 June 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 947-948; Mrázek, 342-346.

in his diary, could be “counted on two hands.” What had first been viewed as only one option was now considered to be the only option.<sup>380</sup>

At the urging of the British Ambassador in The Hague, the Foreign Office in London cabled Washington; the Netherlands government was “increasingly despondent” and on the point of deciding that drastic action should be taken. An intervention in the form of a joint British-American offer of good offices was all that could avert disaster and bring both sides back to the negotiating table.<sup>381</sup> The American Ambassador in London added to this plea by explaining that Sukarno and Sjahrir had gone as far as they could in meeting the Dutch demands without losing face.<sup>382</sup> But President Truman rejected joint mediation. Secretary of State Marshall instead publicly stated that the United States government still hoped that the Dutch and the Indonesians would continue their efforts to settle their differences peacefully.<sup>383</sup>

This American faith in finding common ground was misplaced, Van Mook countered. Although Yogyakarta’s response had clearly indicated a desire for further discussion, the Lieutenant Governor-General argued that the Republic had rejected

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<sup>380</sup> Foote to Marshall, 10 June 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 946; Baruch to Marshall, 10 June 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 946-947; Memorandum Van Mook, 11 June, 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 119; Van Mook to Logemann, 11 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 120; Declaration Marshall, 12 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, note 1, p. 291; Schermerhorn, 603.

<sup>381</sup> British Ambassador in The Hague Sir Nevile Bland to Foreign Office, 14 June 1947, Fo 371/F7988, BNA.

<sup>382</sup> Foreign Office to British Embassy in Washington, 16 June 1947, FO 371/F7584, BNA; United States Embassy in London to Marshall, 16 June 1947, RG 59, 856E.01/6-1647, NARA.

<sup>383</sup> Memorandum Marshall, 16 June 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 948.

cooperation with the Netherlands outright, and therefore no basis for continued talks existed. In mid June, he warned policymakers in the Netherlands that the current Dutch position in Indonesia was untenable. A limited military campaign, he explained, might end the terror and violence in parts of the Republic.<sup>384</sup> Privately, the Americans told the Netherlands government that a resort to violence would be self-defeating in purpose and have a “serious adverse reaction” on public opinion in the United States. Although of the opinion that the Indonesians were sabotaging the Linggadjati Agreement and playing for time, Foote advised Sjahrir to resume negotiations on the basis of the May proposals.<sup>385</sup> The British, meanwhile, still hoped for last-minute Indonesian compliance and urged the Dutch to be patient.<sup>386</sup>

On June 19, Sjahrir attempted a rapprochement via the radio. The previous months had seen a chain of failures and disappointments, Sjahrir noted, but the Republican answer to the Commission General had reflected a sincere desire to realize the Linggadjati Agreement. Anyone civilized and cultured, he emphatically stated, “[had] the duty to stand up against a catastrophic war.”<sup>387</sup> The Prime Minister made similar overtures in an explanatory memo the next day. The Republican government accepted the formation of an interim government by as early as mid July, agreed to the special executive position of the crown’s representative, and suggested further

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<sup>384</sup> Commission General to Jonkman, 17 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 170; Van Mook to Jonkman, 18 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 175.

<sup>385</sup> Marshall to Embassy in The Hague, 17 June 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 950; Marshall to Foote, 17 June 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 950-951; Foote to Marshall, 19 June 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 952-953.

<sup>386</sup> Michiels van Verduynen to Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, 17 June 1947, in NIB, 9: no. 169.

<sup>387</sup> Radio speech Sjahrir, 19 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, p. 422-424.

discussions on the establishment of a joint police force as well as federal organs to conduct foreign relations and economic policy. Sjahrir's "courageous" gestures, Schermerhorn noted in his diary, had reduced the chance of military action from 80% at the beginning of the week to 40% at the end. Nevertheless, he warned, "irrational elements on both sides" made these percentages somewhat imprecise.<sup>388</sup>

The major concessions made by the Indonesian delegation went unrecognized in Jakarta, however, where a majority of the Dutch Commission General and Van Mook remained unsatisfied. Foote noted that Sjahrir's communications showed no Republican intention to recede from its bid "to dominate all of the Netherlands East Indies." The Lieutenant Governor-General, whom the Dutch cabinet had now preemptively authorized to intervene militarily, personally handed The Hague's final ultimatum to the Indonesian Prime Minister on June 23. Fortified by Foote's opinions, he accompanied it with the verbal warning that the large foreign powers were growing impatient with the Republic. Although he suspected that Sjahrir had acted without the full support of his cabinet and that his position was precarious, Van Mook, in his typical patronizing manner, stated that it was high time for the government in Yogyakarta to pass from its "emotional revolutionary" phase to a

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<sup>388</sup> Commission General to Jonkman, 20 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 187; Head of Republican Delegation Sjahrir to Commission General, 23 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 200; Schermerhorn, 652.

“rational constructive” stage by fully complying with the Dutch offers within four days.<sup>389</sup>

When Sjahrir arrived in the Republican capital and revealed the concessions he had made, most major political parties withdrew their support. Even the Prime Minister’s own *Partai Sosialis* believed he had gone too far. Sjahrir no longer saw a possibility for peaceful compromise and did not think himself the right person to lead the Republic if a war broke out; on June 27, the day the deadline for a reply passed, he offered President Sukarno his resignation.<sup>390</sup> Sukarno responded as he had done after the attempted coup d’état of June 1946, detailed in Chapter 4: he declared a state of emergency and pulled all powers to himself. He also sent a formal reply to the Dutch delegation reiterating the Republic’s agreement in principle, but stating that further discussions were needed about a joint police force.<sup>391</sup>

By this time, planners in Washington had difficulty keeping up with events on the ground. In memoranda to both Consul-General Foote and the Netherlands government, Marshall characterized the latest Dutch ultimatum as a positive resumption of talks, positing that substantial progress had been made toward the formation of an interim government. On June 26, the Secretary of State urged the Dutch not to insist on unanimous voting in the interim government, stated that the

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<sup>389</sup> Minutes meeting council of ministers, 16 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 158; Minutes special meeting council of ministers, 19 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 178; Foote to Marshall, 20 June 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 955-956; Van Mook to Jonkman, 23 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 202; Doel, 235-236.

<sup>390</sup> Wolf, 122-123.

<sup>391</sup> Letter President of Republic Sukarno to Netherlands Government, 27 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 228; Mrázek, 344-346.

Republican demand for fair representation sounded to him like a sound idea, and expressed his doubts about the advisability of a joint army. The Dutch, in other words, were not to push for Republican acceptance to the extent that it might harm the position of moderates and play into the hands of extremists in Yogyakarta.<sup>392</sup> On that same day, however, Marshall also sent a strongly worded aide-mémoire to the Republican delegation, advising it to “cooperate without delay” and warning that in the American reading of the Linggadjati Agreement, a clear transition period had been envisaged during which the Netherlands retained sovereignty and ultimate authority in Indonesia. After the establishment of mutual cooperation along a constructive path, he added to both policymakers in The Hague and Yogyakarta, the possibility of American financial aid to Indonesia might be discussed.<sup>393</sup>

Although the Dutch claim to complete sovereignty over the entire Indonesian archipelago during the transition period had not been included in the original Linggadjati Agreement and had made its first appearance only in the May proposals, the American government thus clearly backed the unilateral Netherlands interpretation of those accords.<sup>394</sup> Although Van Mook told The Hague that they had come “to the end of a long period of negotiations” with Republican officials who “lived in a dream world” and could only be awoken with a “hard shock,” the

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<sup>392</sup> Marshall to Embassy in The Hague, 26 June 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 960-961; Van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhour to Beel and Jonkman, 27 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 234.

<sup>393</sup> Marshall to Foote, 26 June 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 959-960. For the full text of the American aide-mémoire to Republican delegation see Wolf, 180-181.

<sup>394</sup> Baruch to Marshall, 28 June 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 963.

Lieutenant Governor-General therefore admitted that the American aide-mémoire might yet induce the Indonesians to conform. For the moment, he decided, military action must be postponed.<sup>395</sup>

Van Mook's harsh June 1947 cables to The Hague illustrated both the change in his attitude that had taken place during the first half of that year and the widening gap between the Netherlands government in The Hague and isolated Netherlands Indies officials in Jakarta. Born and bred in the Indies, Cheong argues also, Van Mook was attached to the land in a way that was unimaginable to many Dutch policymakers. During the war and the first sixteen months after the Indonesian proclamation of independence, his opinion that the era of colonialism in its traditional form had ended and that a new pattern of organization had to be found made his colleagues regard him as an extreme progressive. Jakarta's actual and symbolic distance from the Netherlands had seemed to increase with every passing month. Historians have described Van Mook as a pragmatic and "enlightened despot," impatient with the outmoded Dutch system that ruled his Indies from The Hague rather than Batavia. Van Mook was an administrator to the bone. His idealism and paternalism led him to believe that independence should come with peace and order, not the other way around. Indonesians first had to fulfill certain conditions and prove that they could

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<sup>395</sup> Van Mook to Logemann, 27 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 226; Wolf, 124.

gain experience and would not let the archipelago fall to what he feared would be ruination.

During the first half of 1947, the Lieutenant Governor-General claimed that his first priority was the protection of the welfare of the Indonesian people. Van Mook was hurt and discouraged by the fact that Republican leaders resisted his one-sided implementation of the federal structure that had been his brainchild and the Linggadjati Agreement that he viewed as his handiwork. They also contributed to his stiffening attitude. Reports from the new British Consul-General in Jakarta, J.M.L. Mitcheson, support this interpretation. By late June, he told his colleagues in London that the Lieutenant Governor-General “[seemed] to wish and almost hope” that Sjahrir would fail to convince his cabinet, was convinced that the Republican government was divided against itself, and “having lost all patience [had] largely engineered [the] new crisis.”<sup>396</sup> In later years, Van Mook admitted that in grand gestures that appealed “to the heart rather than the head,” the Dutch had failed the Indonesians. Where the Dutch had lacked imagination, he wrote, the Indonesians had lacked realism. This explanation illustrates the fallacy of his own thinking, his own unrealistic convictions, supported and encouraged by his close aides, military commanders, and personal friend Walter Foote, that a Dutch resort to force would

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<sup>396</sup> British Consul-General J.M.L. Mitcheson to Foreign Office, 24 June 1947, FO 371/F8583, BNA; Mitcheson to Foreign Office, 26 June 1947, FO 371/F8622, BNA.

strengthen the hand of moderates and could convince the Indonesian population to cooperate with him.<sup>397</sup>

And so the stern American message caused the Dutch delegation in Jakarta to send another letter to Sukarno on June 29. It asked direct questions: did the Republic recognize the authority of the representative of the crown in the interim government? Did it agree that it was the proposed federative United States of Indonesia that would become sovereign, not the Republic? Did it concede to the organization of federal bodies under the interim government, and accept joint responsibility for law and order in the territories currently under the Republic's *de facto* authority? A final response that left "no doubt" about the Republic's acceptance of these Dutch terms was expected within one week.<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> Yong Mun Cheong, *H.J. van Mook and Indonesian Independence: A Study of His Role in Dutch-Indonesian Relations, 1945-48* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 103; Wolf, 130-131; Anthony Reid, *The Indonesian National Revolution, 1945-1950* (Hawthorn: Longman, 1974), 104-105; Van Mook, 243, 248. In late June 1947, Van Mook told Schermerhorn that he believed Consul Foote deserved a royal Dutch medal for his efforts. He also bitterly told new British Consul-General J.M.L. Mitcheson about Republican politicians that "one should not trust those so-and-sos one yard," leaving the Consul-General to suspect the Lieutenant Governor-General had come under the influence of Dutch and Netherlands Indies reactionaries. See: Mitcheson to Foreign Office, 9 June 1947, FO 371/F63596, BNA.

<sup>398</sup> Minutes special meeting council of ministers, 28 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 236; Commission General to Jonkman, 29 June 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 250.

On July 5, the answer arrived in the form of a letter from the new Prime



15. Amir Sjarifuddin

Minister: Amir Sjarifuddin. Sjarifuddin, who had been born in 1907 into Sumatran aristocracy and was educated at elite colonial schools and in the Netherlands, was decidedly left leaning and had during the war actively resisted the Japanese occupation. After the proclamation of Indonesian independence, he had joined Sjahrir's

*Partai Sosialis* and become first Minister of Information,

then Minister of Defense, and eventually Prime Minister. Sjarifuddin's response to the Dutch underlined his belief that progress had been made, and that Washington's aide-mémoire showed American support of a continuing exchange of thoughts. The Prime Minister further emphasized the Republic's good faith and willingness to accept every Dutch demand. The formation of a joint gendarmerie, he noted, was an issue for further discussion.<sup>399</sup> The Commission General and Van Mook, however, told The Hague that the response was not only "deliberately vague and unclear" and altogether below standard, but "the most sickening and slimy product that had so far reached them from Yogyakarta."<sup>400</sup>

<sup>399</sup> Note Prime Minister Amir Sjarifuddin in: Van Mook to Jonkman, 6 July 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 287.

<sup>400</sup> Minutes meeting Commission General, 6 July 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 288; Van Mook to Jonkman, 6 July 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 289; M.J.M. van Poll (member Commission General) to Beel, 7 July 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 292.

Nevertheless, continual pressure from London and Washington to find a peaceful solution made it impossible for the Dutch to outright reject the latest Republican counterproposal. Abbott Low Moffat, who, as we saw in Chapter 2, had predicted an American foreign policy dilemma in September 1944, described it once again in a long memo in early July of 1947. The American objective with regard to the Netherlands East Indies was, he argued, to “secure a settlement of the situation which [would] meet the natural aspirations of Indonesian nationalism, and at the same time preserve so far as possible for the Netherlands the economic strength which she derives from association with the Indies.” Both economically and politically, Moffat went on, Indonesia was a country of enormous importance for the United States. American policymakers must therefore continue their restraining influence against use of force by the Netherlands government, while also urging the Indonesians to cooperate.<sup>401</sup> The sentiment of this memorandum, however, was at glaring odds with Foote’s simultaneous stark warning to Yogyakarta that the American government would understand a Dutch resort to force. The Republic would “never get one cent” in financial aid if it persisted in its attitude, he threatened; it was “at the brink of a precipice, and would not even need a kick in the pants to fall into it, only a slight puff of wind.”<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> Memorandum Abbott Low Moffat, 8 July 1947, RG 59, 856E.00/7-847, NARA.

<sup>402</sup> Van Mook to Jonkman, 8 July 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 303.

In this atmosphere of suspicion and uncertainty, Spoor warned his contact in the Netherlands government that his troops at the perimeter, exposed to hostilities “day in day out,” were restless and at a breaking point, and that the palaver had to end.<sup>403</sup> Van Mook again

informed his colleagues in The Hague that the Dutch position had become untenable.<sup>404</sup>

After continued



16. Sjarifuddin, Foote, and Sukarno

discussions between the Commission General

and Prime Minister Sjarifuddin, he decided to make one final effort. He issued a new ultimatum on July 15, now demanding an immediate end to the spread of Republican propaganda and destruction of property. Van Mook also ordered an end to hostilities. These, he had argued for some time, took the shape of Republican forces or autonomous local militias carrying out guerilla attacks, ambushes, sabotages, and raids on targets both military and civilian in Dutch-occupied territory on Java and Sumatra. The Republican government was moreover to call for a broad withdrawal of its troops

<sup>403</sup> Spoor to liaison officer in Beel’s cabinet C. Moolenburgh, 10 July 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 316; Spoor to Chief General Staff H.J. Kruls, 14 July 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 333.

<sup>404</sup> Van Mook to Logemann, 12 July 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 329.

from the perimeter, and to accept the possibility of a joint police force including Dutch troops restoring law and order “where necessary.”<sup>405</sup>

Not more than 30 hours later, Dutch officials intercepted a tense message from Yogyakarta that instructed all Republican commanders in the field to ready their troops for battle. Without awaiting the official Republican reply, in which the Indonesian delegation in any case maintained its stance on the mixed police force, Van Mook cabled The Hague.<sup>406</sup> No one in Jakarta, he stated bitterly, saw any way forward but military action. He proposed that the Netherlands government explain to Britain and the United States that it could no longer be bound to the cease-fire agreed upon in October 1946 and would retake her freedom of action vis-à-vis the Republic.<sup>407</sup> The disappointed head of the Commission General Schermerhorn could conceive no alternative to action, and agreed with Van Mook. He nevertheless professed himself pessimistic about the effectiveness of military action, and feared that understanding of Dutch motives abroad would be minimal. Military action might well be, he presciently lamented, “the beginning of the end of Dutch activity in the area.”<sup>408</sup>

The Netherlands government, “with the utmost reluctance and regret,” Beel explained, gave the signal for a military operation to start on July 18. In the early

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<sup>405</sup> Van Mook to Jonkman, 14 July 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 332; Van Mook to Jonkman, 15 July 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 335.

<sup>406</sup> Taylor, 37-28.

<sup>407</sup> Van Mook to Jonkman, 17 July 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 351; Van Mook to Jonkman, 18 July 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 360.

<sup>408</sup> Schermerhorn to Jonkman, 17 July 1947, in: NIB, IX, no. 352; Schermerhorn, 769-772.

morning of July 21, the Dutch embarked on what they labeled “police measures of a strictly limited character” in order to “create conditions [...] which would enable the principles embodied in the Linggadjati Agreement to come to full fruition.” In Dutch parliament, the military offensive was supported by a majority formed by the Catholic KVP, the smaller Protestant parties, and, albeit under significant pressure, the coalition labor party PvdA. The Communist Party CPN, with only ten out of one



17. Simon H. Spoor

hundred parliament seats, vocally opposed it.

Ambassador Baruch informed

Washington that the Netherlands government considered a campaign its only option in view of “the threat presented to the islands by [...] present disorders.” Officials in The Hague had assured him they had no designs on the integrity of the Republic and remained prepared as

before to come to terms with the Republican

leadership.<sup>409</sup> Similarly echoing the Dutch point

of view, the British embassy in The Hague added that the campaign was the result of the “lack of good faith” and “dilatatory tactics” pursued by the Republican

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<sup>409</sup> Memorandum of conversation Baruch, Vincent, and Assistant Secretary of State for Political Affairs Norman Armour, 20 July 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 981; Baruch to Marshall, 20 July 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 982-983.

government.<sup>410</sup> Prime Minister Beel told the Secretary General of the United Nations that he “confidently hoped that circumstances would soon permit [the resumption of] constructive cooperation with the Republic.”<sup>411</sup>

The *New York Times*, until then commenting on the course of events in Indonesia only on the back pages of the newspaper, reported the Dutch Prime Minister as emphasizing the sincere wishes of his people to “do right” in the archipelago. What Beel did not acknowledge was that the Dutch government itself was violating the Linggadjati agreement by resorting to force; its Article 17 stated specifically that in case of a dispute that could not be resolved by the two delegations, a third party with deciding vote would be asked to arbitrate. The Netherlands government refused to abide by this arbitration clause, insisting that the dispute fell outside of the article’s scope, and that the current operations were not an act of aggression.<sup>412</sup>

Observers in the United States and Britain noted that the two sides were closer than ever to an agreement when hostilities broke out. As Wolf explains, this is untrue. On the surface, it appeared that the Dutch had just about bullied the Republican delegation into accepting its interpretation of the Linggadjati Agreement. In reality big differences remained, especially regarding the status of the Republic in the eventual

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<sup>410</sup> British Embassy in The Hague to Foreign Office, 20 July 1947, FO 371/F9744, BNA.

<sup>411</sup> Taylor, 47.

<sup>412</sup> “Premier addresses Dutch,” *New York Times*, 21 July 1947, 2; “Dutch troops take key points in java as truce crumbles,” *New York Times*, 21 July 1947, 1; “Dutch State Position,” *New York Times*, 22 July 1947, 2; for full English text of the Linggadjati Agreement, see Wolf, 175-178.

federation and the say it would have in establishing it. The American aide-mémoire of late June had thus merely postponed the inevitable.<sup>413</sup>

The question of why the Dutch resorted to force is not an easy one to answer. McMahon emphasizes the untenable financial situation of the Netherlands. Reid similarly underlines that the strategic occupation of producing areas in Republican territory could resolve the Dutch crisis by freeing exportable commodities.<sup>414</sup> But a closer look at the correspondence between Jakarta and The Hague during June and July 1947 reveals no such importance placed on the hard facts of the financial argument.

Where this reasoning did have an effect was in the small financial-economic circles in the Netherlands. On June 20, for instance, the president of the Dutch Bank Suardus Posthuma gave a speech in front of members of the Netherlands society for industrial and commercial trade. He emphasized that the nation must strive towards the maintenance and restoration of the “Dutch element” in Indonesia, noting he had little faith in an economy led by Indonesians themselves. There was a multitude of evidence, Posthuma went on, that the large majority of the archipelago’s population supported the Dutch in this goal. “We must not let ourselves be paralyzed,” he warned, “by quasi-scientific theories about the inevitability of certain historical

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<sup>413</sup> Wolf, 125-127.

<sup>414</sup> McMahon, 168-170; Reid, 111.

processes;” the Netherlands possessed power over this process, and should exercise that power.<sup>415</sup>

These types of arguments played a role only in the background, however; Netherlands Indies officials had embarked on a “war, unless...” course around or even slightly before the ratification of the Linggadjati Agreement in late March. The subsequent delay in the implementation of those accords led to a further erosion of trust between the Republican delegation on the one hand and the Commission General and Lieutenant Governor-General on the other, but preparations for a military campaign had at that point already acquired momentum. The deal was sealed, in many ways, during Beel and Jonkman’s visit to the archipelago in late May. Impressed with the grave difficulties the Netherlands Indies government was facing, the two had returned to The Hague with the firm belief that the Republic was both unwilling and unable to cooperate in the implementation of Dutch plans for Indonesia. The economic explanations policymakers in The Hague brought up after the start of the military campaign, then, were more of a smokescreen than anything else.

On July 21, the United States diplomatically professed that it “profoundly [regretted]” the discarding of negotiations as a means of achieving a peaceful

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<sup>415</sup> Suardus Posthuma, *Nederland en Indonesië als Economische Eenheid: Rede Uitgesproken op de Jaarvergadering te Haarlem, 20 Juni 1947* (Haarlem: H.D. Tjeenk Willink, 1947).

settlement.<sup>416</sup> From Washington, Netherlands Ambassador E.N. van Kleffens explained to The Hague the two main American fears: that pacification would fail and instead leave no moderates with whom negotiations could be resumed, and that no quick economic rehabilitation would follow a cessation of hostilities. President Truman would soon be up for reelection, and the importance of domestic political imperatives in the American response should not be underestimated. Although the government was more favorable to the Dutch than the public at large, the ambassador concluded, all hoped for a quick end to the current military action.<sup>417</sup>

The British government stated it was unpleasantly surprised, greatly distressed, and “keenly disappointed” by the course of events. The Foreign Office warned the Dutch that the campaign forced the government to halt all shipments of military equipment to the Indies, and again noted that the Dutch action might discredit the other Western European colonial powers. Privately officials added their belief that although the Dutch might gain initial successes, the long-term political effects would prove their resort to force unwise; Netherlands policymakers had “never really understood,” they claimed, the change that had come over the situation since the occupation of the islands by the Japanese.<sup>418</sup> A more accurate assessment of Dutch

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<sup>416</sup> *United States Department of State Bulletin*, 17 (3 August 1947, statement released to the press 21 July 1947), 230.

<sup>417</sup> Netherlands Ambassador in Washington E.N. Van Kleffens to Van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhout, 24 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 27.

<sup>418</sup> Memorandum Dutch Embassy Council in London for Van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhout, 21 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 3; John Street at Foreign Office, 22 July 1947, FO 371/F9759, BNA; Note Street, 23 July 1947, FO 371/F9837, BNA; Killlearn to Foreign Office, 18 July 1947, FO 371/F9741, BNA.

thinking might state that policymakers in The Hague and Jakarta did not *appreciate* the change, were unwilling to go any further or any faster in their plans for Indonesia than they had to, and indeed believed they had gone very fast and very far already. British planners, of course, believed that they were doing a much better job in India than the Dutch were doing in Indonesia; India and Pakistan were about to become independent, but would remain part of the Commonwealth as two separate dominions. The intense religious violence and bloodshed that would follow the partition, however, showed that London did not quite possess the level of control over the decolonization process that it pretended to have.

When the military offensive started, the British publicly offered their good offices to both parties in the conflict. After having been rebuffed by planners in The Hague, Bevin became convinced that the only hope of averting disaster was for the United States and Britain to jointly induce the Dutch to accept some form of arbitral solution.<sup>419</sup> But Washington policymakers dismissed Bevin's idea, noting that the Dutch considered the conflict an internal matter and would not agree to outside arbitration. Van Kleffens indeed gave this impression when Marshall warned him that an "unfriendly" nation might introduce the conflict to the United Nations Security Council.<sup>420</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> Aide-mémoire from British Embassy to Department of State, 24 July 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 987-989; Douglas to Marshall, 25 July 1947, RG 59, 856E.00/7-2547, NARA.

<sup>420</sup> Memorandum of conversation Marshall, Van Kleffens, and Associate Chief of Division of Northern European Affairs John H. Morgan, 24 July 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 986-987.

British officials at this point noted that American statements on the conflict were confined to merely polite expressions of regret. Ambassador Nevile Bland reported from The Hague that his American colleague Herman Baruch had uncritically accepted Dutch views in private conversations, considering them “perfectly justified in resorting to force.” Mitcheson reported from Jakarta that his American colleague Foote had done “a great deal of harm” by openly sympathizing with the Dutch. Combined with a Dutch inability or unwillingness to distinguish between the personal views of Baruch and Foote and the official view of the government in Washington, this might well have led the Netherlands government to think that the United States would remain passive. It had caused Van Mook, Mitcheson summarized, to “deliberately [and] with flat-footed obstinacy [drive] Sjahrir too far in order to break up the Republican front.”<sup>421</sup>

Whitehall, in other words, blamed the Americans for not speaking with one voice, and for if not encouraging Dutch military action, then at least not objecting to it forcefully enough. At the same time, British officials also acknowledged that their own actions might have spurred on the Dutch. Special Commissioner in Southeast

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<sup>421</sup> Street, 25 July 1947, FO 271/F10031, BNA; British Ambassador in Washington Sir J. Balfour to Foreign Office, 24 July 1947, FO 371/F10031, BNA; Mitcheson to Foreign Office, 27 June 1947, FO 371/F8697, BNA; Mitcheson to Foreign Office 25 July 1947, FO 371/F10049, BNA; Bland to Foreign Office, 25 July 1947, FO 371/F10049, BNA; McMahon, 175-177. Foote, Mitcheson had reported in May, had casually stated to him, while waving off Beel and Jonkman on their return to the Netherlands, that he personally felt that the Dutch would be justified in using force, that they were only wasting time and money with negotiations, and that Washington was beginning to come around to this point of view too. “My U.S. colleague,” the Consul-General dryly remarked, “is not famed for accuracy.” See: Mitcheson to Foreign Office, 24 May 1947, FO 371/F7055.

Asia Lord Killearn noted from Singapore that British pressure on the “underdog” might well have induced Sjahrir to “overplay his hand.” “The bleating of the lamb attracts the tiger,” he mused; the more conciliatory the Indonesians had become under British and American pressure, “the more aggressive and bullying [...] Van Mook and his colleagues.”<sup>422</sup>

Meanwhile, the police measures throughout Java and Sumatra continued. The Dutch main objectives were the occupation of strategic parts of Republican territory as well as important economic areas. In Java, this meant meeting and eliminating Indonesian troops and isolating the Republic. From Jakarta, Bandung, and Buitenzorg (now Bogor) the Dutch army overtook West Java, from Surabaya it occupied the East, and from Semarang it captured the central regions. In Jakarta, Dutch forces raided the offices and buildings of Republican institutions, arresting all those suspected of Republican sympathies. They also occupied all Republican ports, including the harbor town of Cirebon, host to the meetings that had led to the signing of the Linggadjati Agreement. In Sumatra, troops extended Dutch territory from the bridgehead of Medan and regained possession of major producing areas including the oil fields in

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<sup>422</sup> Killearn to Foreign Office, 12 July 1947, FO 271/FO371, BNA.

Palembang. Within ten days of the start of the campaign, the Dutch had secured control of most of the cities and major towns of both Java and Sumatra.<sup>423</sup>



18. Sudirman

While Dutch troops made quick progress by staying on the main roads, the forces of the *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* or Republican army pulled back to reorganize for a drawn-out guerilla war. General Sudirman led the estimated 175,000 troops in Java and Sumatra. Their armament consisted of rifles, small arms, machine guns, homemade grenades, and land mines, as well as a few dozen Japanese zero fighter planes. The TNI was by no means a modern or mechanized army like the Dutch, but it could fight

a long war of attrition and try to obstruct economic rehabilitation in Dutch occupied territory. Although Van Mook's reports to The Hague were optimistic, noting within five days of the start of the campaign that more than 50% of the objectives had been reached and that minimal enemy resistance had been encountered, he admitted that

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<sup>423</sup> Wolf, 132-133; Kahin, 213-215. See appendices for helpful maps. Before the start of the campaign, the Dutch had held Jakarta and its surrounding area, a narrow corridor to Buitenzorg (Bogor) and Bandung, and the cities of Semarang and Surabaya. After the campaign, it occupied more than half of the island of Java, including the large area between Jakarta and Semarang, and the eastern section of the island beyond Surabaya. Republican territory was limited to a section at western tip of Java, and the area surrounding Yogyakarta and Surakarta (often called Solo). In Sumatra, the Dutch had previously held only the cities of Medan towards the north, Padang in the centre, and Palembang in the south. After the campaign, Netherlands forces occupied the area surrounding Medan and Padang, and an important section of southern Sumatra, including the oil fields southwest of Palembang.

the fleeing of enemy troops into the mountains and hinterland made it impossible for the Dutch to deal with them effectively.<sup>424</sup>

Military and political advisers in Jakarta, meanwhile, turned their attention toward Yogyakarta, which had become the center and symbolic fortress of the revolution after the Republican government moved there in January 1946, and where the absence of Dutch troops and the flying of the red-white Indonesian flag made independence seem a reality. During a secret meeting at Spoor's house on July 24, all agreed that stopping short of occupying the Republican capital would mean facing the exact same difficulties after the end of the military campaign that had caused it in the first place. The outside world, they added, would expect nothing less from the Dutch than a decisive victory.<sup>425</sup> The main problem in the implementation of the Linggadjati Agreement, Van Mook's aide P.J.A. Idenburg noted two days later, had been the Republican aspiration for a unitary state and dominant power within it. Creating conditions for cooperation with constructive elements in the archipelago therefore required the splitting of the Republic into smaller states comparable in size and population to those of East-Indonesia and Borneo. To accomplish this, the current government in Yogyakarta needed to be ousted.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>424</sup> Schermerhorn, 779; Van Mook to Jonkman, 25 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 29; Van Mook to Jonkman, 25 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 30; Van Mook to Jonkman, 23 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 14; Overview situation Medan, 26 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no 44; Van Mook to Jonkman, 23 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 15; Wolf, 133-135.

<sup>425</sup> Minutes secret meeting at house Army Commander, 24 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 23.

<sup>426</sup> Memorandum Idenburg to Van Mook, 26 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 48.

Van Mook and Schermerhorn concurred. They maintained that a relatively swift occupation of Yogyakarta (before, the Lieutenant Governor-General advised, international intervention could throw a spoke in the wheel) would strengthen the Dutch position in the newly occupied territories and would enable those of good will to come openly to the Dutch side. Netherlands forces did not need to wipe Yogyakarta off the map completely, Schermerhorn added in a tone that hinted he had come around to the point of view expounded by Spoor, but simply eliminate “current obstinate company.” To the outside world this expansion of the current operation could be justified by pointing to the Republic’s lack of authority.<sup>427</sup> But when policymakers in The Hague deliberated on the request from Jakarta, many believed it went too far; the Prime Minister had, after all, publicly insisted that the Netherlands government had no designs on the Republic and would leave its center untouched.<sup>428</sup>

After the start of the military campaign, world opinion indeed turned against the Dutch. Shortly after the outbreak of hostilities President Sukarno had appealed to the United States in a radio speech, urging President Truman to exert every effort to stop the war in Indonesia. “Just as your American ancestors fought 170 years ago for your liberty and independence,” he emphatically told the American public, “so are we Indonesians fighting for ours. Just as you then rebelled against domination by a

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<sup>427</sup> Van Mook to Jonkman, 26 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 46; Schermerhorn, 796-801; Van Mook to Jonkman, 28 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 65.

<sup>428</sup> Minutes meeting council of ministers, 28 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 63.

country far across the seas, so are we.” He concluded with an appeal to the United States to join the British in mediation of the dispute.<sup>429</sup>

Sjahrir, now special adviser to Sukarno, was given the chance to exert his diplomatic talents abroad. During the first six months of 1947, the Prime Minister from Sumatra had had to face increasing pressures to move himself and the remaining government offices from Jakarta to Yogyakarta, where Mrázek argues he was always seen as a visitor, a “man coming from abroad.” His final concessions to the Commission General before his June 27 resignation had been a far cry from his party’s principle of “100% *merdeka* (freedom),” signaling a policy less heroic and more ambiguous than President Sukarno, General Sudirman, and others told the Indonesian people they stood for. Sjahrir’s trip to Singapore, India, and eventually New York was his first foreign journey since having returned from his studies in the Netherlands in 1929, and afforded him the opportunity to escape the sometimes-uneasy alliance he found himself in back home. On July 22 he arrived in New Delhi with a single piece of luggage, looking tired and ill. At the airport he spoke to journalists about the start of the Dutch campaign: “at seven o’clock on Monday morning [...] I was in Yogyakarta. I looked up and saw a number of fighter planes overhead. At first I thought they were Indonesian planes, but then I realized that they were so modern and so fast they could only be Dutch.” The former Prime Minister indeed seemed

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<sup>429</sup> “Indies Chief asks peace move by US,” *New York Times*, 25 July 1947, 3.

disappointed that the Netherlands, a country he had enjoyed spending time in as a young man, could not play a more positive role in Indonesia's future.<sup>430</sup>

In soon to be independent India, Prime Minister Nehru had closely followed the situation in the archipelago. He had already warned London before the outbreak of hostilities that the peoples of Asia would not tolerate war in Indonesia and strongly supported the Republicans. In mid July, just a month before the British were due to withdraw from the subcontinent and hand over sovereignty, he had urged Bevin to do everything in his power to prevent armed conflict.<sup>431</sup> During Sjahrir's brief stop in New Delhi while en-route to New York, the former Prime Minister gave an emotional speech, saying he had been sent by Sukarno on a mission "to make the world stop the colonial war in Indonesia."<sup>432</sup> Two days later Nehru made a strongly worded public statement. The "police measures of a strictly limited character", he argued, were in fact a carefully and long-prepared military campaign whose real purpose was to "inflict complete military defeat [...] and prepare the way for a political settlement entirely favorable to the Dutch." If they wanted, Britain and the United States could end the conflict immediately, Nehru added. Unless the two nations take immediate

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<sup>430</sup> Mrázek, 323-324; Sjahrir quoted in same, 349. The airplanes Sjahrir heard were mostly likely some of the American P-40 Kittyhawks or P-51 Mustangs with which the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army Air Force had been equipped during the Second World War. The Republic had only a few dozen captured Japanese Mitsubishi Zeros at its command.

<sup>431</sup> Government of India to British India Secretary, 18 July 1947, FO 371/F10039, BNA.

<sup>432</sup> Dutch deputy in New Delhi Bas Backer to Van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhout, 25 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 37; Wolf, 135-137.

and more effective action, he warned, India would soon have no option but to bring the matter before the UN Security Council.<sup>433</sup>

Australian officials, who as we saw in earlier chapters viewed their country as an important power and partner in the region and believed it could make a positive contribution to an ultimate solution, also professed themselves greatly concerned about the conflict in Indonesia.<sup>434</sup> In Canberra like in New Delhi, Republican diplomats appealed to the government “in the name of humanity and in the interests of friendship” to do everything it could to bring about an end to Dutch aggression. Australia’s good offices would be “deeply and eternally appreciated.” Just days before the commencement of the military campaign, Australian Prime Minister J.B. Chifley had informed the British that if no peaceful agreement was reached, his country would have no recourse but to raise the matter in the Security Council.<sup>435</sup>

Contrary to the perception of Netherlands planners, then, the Australian leadership believed Republican authorities had demonstrated patience in the face of continuous Dutch provocations. American and British urges to Sjahrir’s delegation to comply had unduly encouraged the “incomprehensible” Dutch before the outbreak of hostilities, and neither nation had demonstrated a willingness to act since, officials in

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<sup>433</sup> United States Ambassador in India H.F. Grady to Marshall, 26 July 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 990-991; Mrazek, 349-350.

<sup>434</sup> Australian Department of External Affairs to Political Representatives in the Netherlands East Indies B.C. Ballard, 19 June 1947, in: Philip Dorling (ed.), *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949, Volume XI: Indonesia 1947* (hereafter AUS) (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1994), no. 90.

<sup>435</sup> Government of Australia to British Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs Viscount Addison, 16 July 1947, in: AUS, no. 116; Usman to Australian Prime Minister J.B. Chifley, 23 July 1947, in: AUS, no. 144.

Canberra charged.<sup>436</sup> London advised the Australian government against taking action in the United Nations; this would give the Soviet Union, which had been casting itself as a defender of oppressed colonial peoples in the Security Council, an opportunity to intervene and discredit the western powers.<sup>437</sup> According to Chifley's cabinet, however, avoiding Dutch embarrassment was "a matter of relatively small importance as compared with the very great importance of accepting the challenge put forward by Asiatic peoples." Australian long-term interests, the Prime Minister told Attlee in no uncertain terms on July 28, demanded unequivocal action.<sup>438</sup> Two days later, the Dutch envoy in Canberra reported that the government had decided to refer the matter to the Security Council "in the spirit of impartiality" and "solely for the purpose of restoring peace."<sup>439</sup>

The American government was unhappy with this prospect, but believed it could prevent it by informing the Dutch that Washington now desired to be helpful and asking them if they might accept an offer of mediation by a third power. Dutch Ambassador Van Kleffens responded to this query by emphasizing that the police measures would be concluded within days, and that at that point in time his

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<sup>436</sup> Department of External Affairs to Australian Minister to the Netherlands F.K. Officer, 15 July 1947, in: AUS, no. 115; Secretary of Department of External Affairs J.W. Burton to Minister of External Affairs H.V. Evatt, 23 July 1947, in: AUS, no. 138.

<sup>437</sup> Addison to Government of Australia, in: AUS, no. 124.

<sup>438</sup> Government of Australia to Addison, 25 July 1947, in: AUS, no. 155; Chifley to Attlee, 28 July 1947, in: AUS, no. 174.

<sup>439</sup> Dutch envoy in Canberra P.E. Teppema to Van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhout, 30 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 78; Teppema to Van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhout, 31 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 93; Memorandum Chief of Political Affairs Office of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Henri van Vredenburg, 30 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 79.

government would gladly avail itself of American good offices in order to renew consultations with the Republic. The Dutch preferred good offices to mediation, he explained, because the latter assumed two equal parties. The unfriendly Australian and Indian announcements no longer left the British free and impartial agents, Van Kleffens added; the Netherlands government was in fact doing London a favor by not asking for its help.<sup>440</sup> On July 30, Marshall warned Truman that the UN Security Council meeting planned for the following day would put the United States in a difficult position. If India or Australia raised the matter of Dutch action in Indonesia, as they clearly planned to, U.S. representative Herschel V. Johnson “would not be able to support the Dutch position [...] nor to oppose the establishment of a UN committee” that would investigate the conflict. The Secretary therefore asked the President to authorize him to again urge the Dutch to accept American good offices. The President agreed, and Van Kleffens was pulled off his plane to New York and informed.<sup>441</sup> The British government considered this unilateral offer of good offices “bad manners and bad faith,” especially because Dutch officials had only just cast aside a similar British proposal “like an outworn garment.”<sup>442</sup>

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<sup>440</sup> Memorandum Matthews to Marshall, 24 July 1947, RG 59, 856D.00/7-2447, NARA; Baruch to Marshall, 31 July 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 1001-1002; Van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhout to Chief of Far East Office in Jakarta T. Elink Schuurman, 31 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 88.

<sup>441</sup> Memorandum Marshall to President Harry S. Truman, 30 July 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 997; Memorandum of conversation Van Kleffens and Under Secretary of State Robert A. Lovett, 31 July 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 1002-1003; McMahon, 182-183.

<sup>442</sup> Mitcheson to Mr. Brain, 24 July 1947, FO 371/F12126, BNA; Denis Allen at Foreign Office to Esler Denning, 2 August 1947, FO 371/F10496, BNA.

This change in American attitude toward the conflict in Indonesia must be seen, as McMahon suggests, from the perspective of a shifting United States grand strategy.<sup>443</sup> As tensions between Washington and Moscow increased over the course of 1946 and 1947 and communists took over in Poland and Hungary, containing the USSR became something to be achieved first and foremost in Western Europe. One of the first reports produced by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), created by Truman with the signing of the National Security Act in late July, assessed the greatest danger to American security to be not Soviet military strength and aggression, “but the possibility of economic collapse in Western Europe.” To avert this disaster and its dangerous political ramifications, the Secretary of State had during a speech at Harvard University in early June outlined the administration’s “Marshall Plan,” an economic assistance program that proposed large-scale American monetary support to help rebuild the devastated European economies and so prevent the spread of communism. Negotiations on this reconstruction plan were underway in Paris when the Dutch military offensive in Indonesia started.<sup>444</sup>

From the American point of view, the British, French, and Dutch economies remained inextricably bound up with their colonies. U.S. interests in Indonesia could therefore not be separated from American interests in the Netherlands. Stanley Hornbeck explained the importance of both the Netherlands and the Indies to the

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<sup>443</sup> McMahon, 177-178.

<sup>444</sup> CIA Review Report, 26 September 1947, Truman Papers, Truman Library.

United States; the former were located on the strategically important eastern frontier, the latter on the western frontier.<sup>445</sup> Continued instability in Southeast Asia severely hindered not only the economic rehabilitation of the colonial regions, but also economic recovery in Western Europe. The consequence of this belief was the acceptance of the motives the Dutch government had given for its military campaign in Indonesia. It must be seen, the *New York Times* also stated in late July and early August, as the result not of warlike aggression, but of the necessity of opening ports and reviving the trade that would prevent the Netherlands from going bankrupt.<sup>446</sup> In the late summer of 1947, the main question in front of American policymakers thus again became how to reconcile the nation's "traditional liberal policies" that supported self-government for formerly colonial peoples, and its interests in "supporting friendly European governments."<sup>447</sup>

The UN Security Council debate on the ongoing conflict in Indonesia started in Lake Success, NY, on July 31. Both the Indian and Australian representative requested swift action, charging the Netherlands with having embarked without warning on a large-scale military operation. An urgent and forceful Australian draft resolution stated a breach of peace under Article 39 of the United Nations Charter

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<sup>445</sup> Hornbeck, 130-131.

<sup>446</sup> "Dutch look to Indonesia to bolster their economy," *New York Times*, 5 August 1947, E5; "Dutch stocks gain after war starts," *New York Times*, 28 July 1947, 23.

<sup>447</sup> CIA Review Report, 26 September 1947, Truman Papers, Truman Library.

and called for immediate measures to end hostilities. The Australian delegate W.R. Hodgson further argued that Dutch troops should be ordered to revert to the original positions they had held when hostilities broke out, and that the dispute should be submitted to third party arbitration as, he noted, the Linggadjati Agreement had provided. Dutch representative Van Kleffens countered with a lengthy oration in which he posited that the name “Republic of Indonesia” was misleading, that the Republic should not be considered a sovereign state but rather a “political entity to be affiliated ultimately with [...] two other states [as] part of a federation,” and that the conflict in any case was a strictly internal matter not of international concern. On August 1 a resolution nevertheless passed with the help of American delegate Johnson, who in return for the Dutch acceptance of American good offices had insisted that the inconvenient reference to the arbitration article of the Linggadjati Agreement be struck out. Resolution 27, which the other Western European colonial powers France, Britain, and Belgium had voted against, called upon the two parties to cease hostilities and settle their dispute by arbitration or by other peaceful means.<sup>448</sup>

On July 31, too, the Netherlands government decided not to authorize Van Mook to occupy the Republican center of Yogyakarta. Prime Minister Beel noted that the city’s occupation was politically impossible; because the progressive members of his cabinet resisted an extension of the offensive, and because it would lead to

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<sup>448</sup> Taylor, 48-51; McMahan, 185-186; *United Nations Security Council, Official Records, 2<sup>nd</sup> year*, 171<sup>st</sup> meeting, 31 July 1947, 1619-1621; Netherlands representative to United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Van Kleffens to Van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhout, 2 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 127.

mounting criticism from abroad, the military operation had to remain a limited campaign. Van Mook was instead told to focus on renewed negotiations with the Republic.<sup>449</sup>

The Lieutenant Governor-General reluctantly ordered a ceasefire to go in effect at midnight on August 4. President Sukarno held a victory speech. The *New York Times* hailed the historic United Nations resolution as the body's first major victory. Great difficulties still remained, however.<sup>450</sup> Dutch troops had occupied large territories formerly under Republican control, including important sugar, rubber, tea, coffee, and oil producing regions. The Netherlands government now considered itself responsible for law and order in those areas, and called for continued "purgues." Meanwhile, the withdrawn Indonesian army was preparing for a guerilla war. Despite the ceasefire, therefore, the fighting did not stop.<sup>451</sup>

Van Mook and Spoor were once again unhappy with The Hague. Convinced as they were that further negotiations would prove fruitless, they feared that a Dutch reluctance to penetrate Yogyakarta would make the Netherlands leadership seem weak and insecure. A swift and effective march on the capital, which Van Mook claimed *everybody* expected to take place, would make international criticism subside.<sup>452</sup>

Both men moreover continued to believe that large parts of the Indonesian

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<sup>449</sup> Minutes special meeting council of ministers, 30 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 77; Jonkman to Van Mook, 31 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 87; Minutes special meeting council of ministers, 2 August 1947, in NIB, X, no. 133; Jonkman to Van Mook, 2 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 134.

<sup>450</sup> "UN circles happy over Java action," *New York Times*, 4 August 1947, 3.

<sup>451</sup> Groen, 112; Doel, 249; Van Mook to Jonkman, 5 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 156.

<sup>452</sup> Van Mook to Jonkman, 31 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 92, emphasis in original.

population were willing to cooperate with the Dutch as long as they could be certain the “Republican boys with their weapons and terror” would not return. They refused, in other words, to give up hope that the Netherlands government would eventually agree to the extermination of the “pesthole” Yogyakarta.<sup>453</sup>

By early August, the results were clear: the UN-ordered ceasefire was ineffective. Fighting continued, and the military campaign had strengthened anti-Dutch feeling in the Republic. Short-wave broadcasts from Yogyakarta, where radios were an enormously powerful tool to exert influence and authority over a far-flung archipelago with many remote areas, forbade Indonesian administrators in occupied territories to cooperate with Dutch officials. Attacks on Netherlands army outposts persisted. Destruction of foreign property continued. The Lieutenant Governor-General explained that this “scorched-earth” policy and the wavering attitude of the government in The Hague were decreasing the willingness of the Indonesian people to cooperate with Dutch troops, and ordered extensive “mopping up” operations.<sup>454</sup>

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<sup>453</sup> Van Mook to Commission of Netherlands Indies Affairs at Ministry of Colonies J.P. Bannier, 1 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 118; Van Mook to Jonkman, 3 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 139; Spoor to Kruls, 4 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 144; Spoor to Kruls, 31 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 90; Memorandum Idenburg, 31 July 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 91.

<sup>454</sup> Spoor to Kruls, 6 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 172; Spoor to Kruls, 10 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 222; Van Mook to Jonkman, 11 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 229; Van Mook to Jonkman, 11 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 229; Netherlands Indies Government to Jonkman, 7 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 185; Van Mook to Jonkman, 8 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 199; Netherlands Indies Government to Jonkman, 12 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 242.

At this point, a group of disgruntled Dutch Indies administrators and military commanders appealed directly to Queen Wilhelmina. “Gravely concerned” about the current course of events, they argued that the continued existence of the Republic and its leadership would inevitably result in the ruination of Java and Sumatra. The only way out of the impasse was the swift destruction of extremist elements in Yogyakarta followed by the formation of a new government by those willing to cooperate. This course of action, they predicted, a large majority of the fearful population would greet with joy. In a separate telegram to Minister Jonkman, Van Mook threateningly added that unless the Dutch government came to a firm decision, he would be forced to either give up his task as impossible or, “like a captain on a ship in need,” take those measures necessary to save the land trusted to his care.<sup>455</sup>

Beel and Jonkman were tempted to agree to the occupation of Yogyakarta. Minister of Foreign Affairs Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout and Labor Party cabinet members, however, doubted whether the occupation of Yogyakarta would solve Dutch difficulties, and resolutely disagreed. Van Kleffens shared this view, noting that from his reading of newspapers and talks with officials, he was forced to conclude that American public opinion was turning against the Dutch, and that an occupation of the Republican capital was likely to result in UN sanctions against the Netherlands

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<sup>455</sup> Idenburg to Jonkman, 11 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 231; Navy Commander Admiral A.S. Pinke to Minister of Marine J.J.A. Schagen van Leeuwen, 12 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 246; Van Mook to Jonkman, 12 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 247.

government.<sup>456</sup> For those reasons The Hague decided against Van Mook's rash proposal, cabling the Lieutenant Governor-General to stress the importance of the international front and the disastrous effects of economic sanctions.<sup>457</sup>

The leadership in Washington was meanwhile doing everything it could to help the Dutch. After having offered The Hague American good offices, Acheson told Consul-General Foote to "locate properly authenticated Indonesian Republicans" and tell them that the United States was prepared to offer them assistance, too.<sup>458</sup> Sjarifuddin formally accepted this offer, but also demanded the withdrawal of Dutch troops and the restoration of full independence to the Republic. The Prime Minister moreover asked the United States to persuade the Dutch and UN Security Council to dispatch an international arbitration commission to Indonesia. His remark that herein lay "the only and final hope of settling [the] dispute by peaceful means" led British Consul Mitcheson to observe that the Indonesian response in fact amounted to a "polite refusal" of American good offices.<sup>459</sup> After a further explanation of the offer's objective of bringing the two parties together to work out an equitable settlement without the direct participation of other states, Republican leaders again stated that they accepted the American offer in principle but preferred arbitration by the Security

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<sup>456</sup> Van Kleffens to Van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhout, 14 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 269.

<sup>457</sup> Minutes meeting council of ministers, 13 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 259; Jonkman to Van Mook, 14 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 274.

<sup>458</sup> Acheson to Foote, 14 August 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 1028-1029.

<sup>459</sup> Mitcheson to Foreign Office, 8 August 1947, FO 371/F10791, BNA.

Council. This led Foote and Acheson to conclude that, with “little conception” of what good offices constituted, the Indonesians had effectively rejected them.<sup>460</sup>

This should not have been a great surprise to policymakers in the American capital. President Sukarno had long since realized that a large part of the Republican battle had to be fought in the international arena and commenced a skillful war of perception. Like a growing number of Indonesians, he believed that eliciting support through the United Nations would serve their purpose better than accepting an American offer to mediate. Not only had the United States failed to stop the Dutch from resorting to force, it had allowed Consul-General Foote’s obvious backing of the Dutch position. It is hard to argue against George Kahin’s contention that American actions had in recent months directly weakened the Republic’s case vis-à-vis the Dutch.<sup>461</sup>

In early August, the Security Council resumed its debate on Indonesia, inviting Sjahrir to speak for the Republic. Van Kleffens objected, noting that if the Republic was allowed a voice, then representatives from the Republic’s fully co-equal “sister states” East-Indonesia and Borneo should also be able to present their views. Although he was supported on this point not just by the British, French, and Belgian representatives but also by the American delegate, the motion was denied; in contrast to the other two states, a majority of Council members agreed, the Republic had *de*

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<sup>460</sup> Foote to Marshall, 8 August 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 1017-1018; Acheson to Foote, 14 August 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 1028-1029.

<sup>461</sup> Kahin, 209, 214; Wolf, 133-135.

*facto* recognition and was a party to the dispute.<sup>462</sup> In a moving speech on August 14, former Prime Minister Sjahrir sketched the historical background of the conflict, going back all the way to the establishment of the Dutch East India Company in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, and argued that the continued presence of Dutch troops on Republican territory threatened the existence of the Republic. He asked the Security Council to order the withdrawal of these troops to the demarcation lines of the October 1946 cease-fire. Since resuming negotiations with one party standing “with a pistol pointed at the head of the other” would surely be fruitless, the only method for a peaceful and lasting solution would be an international and impartial arbitration commission, he concluded.<sup>463</sup>

Although the Netherlands government dismissed Sjahrir’s speech as hostile and, in effect, a declaration of war, it was in fact much better received than Van Kleffens’s subsequent speech, which observers labeled an “emotional [and] tediously legalistic lecture.” During this speech, the Dutch delegate made a counterproposal to Sjahrir’s: the establishment of a commission of investigation with three members, one

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<sup>462</sup> Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Indonesië in de Veiligheidsraad van de Verenigde Naties, Januari 1946 – September 1947* (The Hague: Staatsdrukkerij, 1947), 38-39; Van Kleffens to Van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhout, 14 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 277; Doel, 252.

<sup>463</sup> *Indonesië in de Veiligheidsraad*, 40-42, 90-96; *United Nations Security Council, Official Records, 2<sup>nd</sup> year*, 184<sup>th</sup> meeting, 14 August 1947, 2002-2003; *United Nations Security Council, Official Records, 2<sup>nd</sup> year*, 187<sup>th</sup> meeting, 19 August 1947, 2075.

of which would be chosen by the Netherlands, the second by the Republic, and the third jointly by the two members already selected.<sup>464</sup>

In Jakarta, Van Mook and Spoor objected to an international investigation commission. Both sent The Hague a stream of reports on the ever-deteriorating situation in the Indies. A frustrated Spoor stated he was close to convinced that the Dutch deserved to lose the archipelago. Republican retaliations to continuing Dutch “mopping-up” operations made the Lieutenant Governor-General repeat his threat of resignation. Without informing the government in The Hague but nevertheless hoping he would in the meantime acquire its support, Van Mook unilaterally decided that the occupation of Yogyakarta would commence on the 20<sup>th</sup>. He was forced to delay the operation, however, when Dutch policymakers, fearing that the Lieutenant Governor-General might rebel at any moment, ordered him to await the results of the next Security Council meeting.<sup>465</sup>

It was at this point that the United States intervened. Ambassador Baruch warned the Netherlands government that starting another military campaign ran counter to long-term Dutch interests and would be like opening Pandora’s box. He

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<sup>464</sup> Chief Division of Europe United Nations Secretariat P.J. Schmidt to leader Dutch Labor Party (PvdA) M. van der Goes van Naters, 16 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 300; Van Kleffens to Van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhout, 18 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 324; Australian representative to the United Nations Security Council Colonel W.R. Hodgson to Department of External Affairs, 15 August 1947, in: AUS, no. 287; Minutes special meeting council of ministers, 14 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 272; Minutes special meeting council of ministers, 15 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 285.

<sup>465</sup> Van Mook to Jonkman, 14 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 262; Minutes meeting at house of Army Commander, 16 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 294; Spoor to Kruls, 16 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 293; Minutes meeting council of ministers, 18 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 315; Spoor to troop commanders, 18 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 318; Kruls to Spoor, 18 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 317; Van Mook to Jonkman, 17 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 306; Taylor, 52.

also predicted that an expanded operation would result in enough pressure on the United States by other nations to leave its UN representative unable to resist Security Council measures against the Netherlands. Van Kleffens again informed The Hague of increasing anti-Dutch sentiments. On August 22, American delegate Johnson proposed the formation of a non-binding consular commission, importantly adding that the United States believed it was the parties themselves, not the United Nations, who bore the responsibility for determining the terms of the settlement and the method by which it might be reached.<sup>466</sup> Beel and Jonkman, realizing by now that the Netherlands could not escape foreign intervention in Indonesia, considered this UN commission the least threatening proposal yet; it would offer only those services the parties themselves requested. They ordered Van Mook to postpone any further action against the Republic.<sup>467</sup>

The American fear that a discussion of the Indonesian conflict in the United Nations would hinder Washington's efforts in appearing to be a neutral power was justified. As Ruth McVey has pointed out, the Security Council was the perfect stage, and Indonesia the perfect case, for the Soviet Union to propagandize against and publicly embarrass the Western imperial powers that it claimed were suppressing the

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<sup>466</sup> Van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhout to Van Kleffens, 22 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 362; Van Kleffens to Van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhout, 22 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 363; *United Nations Security Council, Official Records, 2nd year, 192nd meeting, 22 August 1947, 2177-2178.*

<sup>467</sup> Van Mook to Jonkman, 23 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 370; Minutes special meeting council of ministers, 23 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 373.

sincere aspirations of the peoples of Southeast Asia.<sup>468</sup> Delegate Andrei Gromyko repeatedly accused the United States of feigning an anti-colonial attitude while really attempting to “by-pass” the world organization that was seeking a solution in Indonesia. And indeed, the eventual compromise reached and the precedent it set benefited Europe’s colonial powers more than it did the newly emerging nations in Southeast Asia. While this outcome was a disappointment for Sjahrir, Van Kleffens cabled to The Hague that if the Security Council debate was compared to a boxing game, the ultimate rejection of binding arbitration meant the Netherlands had “won on points.”<sup>469</sup>

Although the American resolution was accepted on August 25, Van Mook and Spoor each made a last attempt to acquire the Dutch government’s authorization for the occupation of Yogyakarta. *This* Republic would not honor the ceasefire or suddenly accept Dutch plans for the future of the archipelago, Van Mook stated.<sup>470</sup> Spoor complained that the Republic’s continued existence and The Hague’s unwillingness to “create conditions for cooperation” forced him into failure.<sup>471</sup> Despite these objections, the Netherlands government finalized its decision not to allow the occupation of Yogyakarta. Any solution not supported by the United States

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<sup>468</sup> Ruth T. McVey, *The Soviet View of the Indonesian Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1957), 11-12.

<sup>469</sup> *United Nations Security Council, Official Records, 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 194<sup>th</sup> meeting, 25 August 1947, pp. 2197-2212; for full text of speech Sjahrir in UNSC on 25 August 1947, see: *Indonesië in de Veiligheidsraad*, 109-110; Van Kleffens to Van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhout, 26 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 398; Van Kleffens to Van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhout, 29 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 418; McMahon, 191-192; Taylor, 54-55.*

<sup>470</sup> Van Mook to Jonkman, 26 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 401, emphasis in original.

<sup>471</sup> Spoor to Kruls, 27 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 406.

had to be rejected on practical grounds, Minister of Social Affairs Willem Drees believed. Instead of granting him his wish, the cabinet decided to invite the Lieutenant Governor-General to the Netherlands for further discussion. A disappointed Van Mook, still of the opinion that the Dutch must continue to try and burst the Republic's bubble, reluctantly agreed.<sup>472</sup>

By late August of 1947, then, the Dutch had escaped a great danger. Although the discussions in the Security Council had led to more sympathy for the position of the Republic and had meant the matter could no longer be considered an internal affair, the members of the Council had voted against the binding arbitration that Sjahrir had argued for. The Dutch soon nominated Belgium, its advocate in colonial matters, as their representative for the new commission the American resolution had brought into being. The Republic announced Australia as its choice. Unsurprisingly, the third strategic spot was then taken by the United States. The Committee of Good Offices, as it came to be known, could act only at the request of the warring parties themselves. It was likely because of this that Lieutenant Governor-General Van Mook maintained his belief that UN "interference" would ultimately come to naught.<sup>473</sup>

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<sup>472</sup> Minutes special meeting council of ministers, 27 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 410; Jonkman to Van Mook, 28 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 413.

<sup>473</sup> Van Kleffens to Van Boetzelaer Van Oosterhout, 29 August 1947, in: NIB, X, no. 417; Taylor, 54-55; Van Mook to Idenburg, 5 September 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 18.

During the early fall, the nearly constant violations of the armistice highlighted the diverging Indonesian and Dutch interpretations of the order to cease fire; whereas the Republic had instructed its troops to pause hostilities and hold their position, Netherlands Indies officials had ordered the Dutch army to proceed with the consolidation of its control over the newly occupied territories. With Java and Sumatra's major producing areas now in Dutch hands, the Republic was crippled. Its threatened existence in turn led to Indonesian forces opposing Dutch attempts at subjugation with increasing amounts of resistance and violence. When the Good Offices Commission arrived in the archipelago without having been granted the actual powers needed to mediate, it faced the almost insurmountable task of inducing the two parties to cooperate with one another in an atmosphere of growing hatred and mutual dislike and mistrust. By October 1947, a complete breakdown of the ever fragile and mostly unobserved ceasefire seemed likely.

## Chapter 5

International “Interference”: October 1947 - July 1948

*“Militarily the Dutch have presented the [Good Offices] Committee and [Security] Council with a fait accompli. They are now endeavoring to do the same politically, and it is essential that [we] endeavor to check this without delay.”*<sup>474</sup>

Thomas K. Critchley, December 1947

“Dutch mistakes in Indonesia in the last two years,” Hubertus van Mook told the assembled cabinet ministers on a visit to The Hague in early September 1947, “have revolved around an inability to make quick decisions.” The Netherlands government had been unable to keep up with the swiftly changing circumstances in the archipelago, he went on; “extremist [Republican] elements” now intimidated and terrorized the Indonesian population in the territories occupied by the Dutch. The good news, according to the Lieutenant Governor-General, was that the Republican regime in Yogyakarta would likely succumb to internal weaknesses and collapse; in the meantime, Netherlands and Netherlands Indies forces could encourage anti-

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<sup>474</sup> Acting head of the Australian delegation on the Good Offices Committee Thomas K. Critchley to head of the Australian delegation on the Good Offices Committee Richard C. Kirby and Secretary of Department of External Affairs J.W. Burton, 27 December 1947, in: Philip Dorling (ed.), *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1994), Volume XI, no. 491 (hereafter this series will be cited as AUS, followed by the volume).

Republican resistance and force a swift sanitation, pacification, and consolidation of the areas they had occupied during the police action.<sup>475</sup>

The year 1947 had so far brought to the Indonesian archipelago not political stabilization and economic rehabilitation, but war. In July, a euphemistically labeled “police action” that was in fact a well orchestrated and extensive military campaign saw the Dutch aiming to subjugate the Indonesian Republic into submission, and a march on the Republican capital of Yogyakarta had only narrowly been avoided when the Netherlands policy drew international protests and criticism. By the late summer, however, the government in The Hague believed it had escaped the danger of foreign “interference” in the conflict in Indonesia. Although debates in the United Nations Security Council had led to more sympathy for the position of the Republic and had meant the Dutch could no longer present the matter as an “internal affair,” the members of the Council had voted against the binding arbitration that Republican delegates had argued for.

On August 4, the Dutch leadership in Jakarta and The Hague and the Indonesian leadership in Yogyakarta had in principle agreed to the ceasefire issued by the Security Council. In the field, however, the fighting had not ceased. At the end of that month, the Lieutenant Governor-General unilaterally declared new demarcation lines (the so-called “Van Mook line”) that connected the most advanced Dutch posts

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<sup>475</sup> Minutes meeting council of ministers, 4 September 1947, in: S.L. van der Wal, P.J. Drooglever and M.B.J. Schouten (eds.), *Officiële Bescheiden Betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische Betrekkingen 1945-1950* (hereafter NIB), 20 volumes (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971-1996), XI, no. 16. See appendices for useful maps.

in Java and Sumatra. This former Republican territory still held tens of thousands of Indonesian troops, which Dutch soldiers aimed to disarm through continued “mopping-up” operations. Republican forces in turn aimed to intimidate and deter potential cooperators with the Dutch authorities. Van Mook thought that foreign interference into the ongoing conflict would likely come to nothing; the diplomats currently drafting a ceasefire progress report for a United Nations Consular Commission were uninformed men of “generally [...] small stature” and prone to “losing their heads,” he reassured his colleagues in The Hague, although he admitted that further military action would risk serious international repercussions.<sup>476</sup>

Despite the Lieutenant Governor-General’s confidence, the Dutch military stopping just short of Yogyakarta had everything to do with increasing interest and concern about the Indonesian dispute in the United States, Australia, and the UN. The imminent arrival of a Consular Commission reporting on the ceasefire made it impossible for Netherlands forces to take advantage of their military superiority and destroy the Republican government by marching on its capital, a course of action Van Mook had strongly argued for. An August 25 United Nations resolution had moreover established a three-member “Good Offices Committee” for Indonesia with the goal of finding a lasting solution to the conflict.

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<sup>476</sup> Lieutenant Governor-General H.J. van Mook to Director of General Affairs P.J.A. Idenburg, 8 September 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 30; Van Mook to Prime Minister L.J.M. Beel, 14 September 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 65; Anthony Reid, *The Indonesian National Revolution, 1945-1950* (Hawthorn: Longman, 1974), 113-114.

Republicans requested that Australia represent them on this committee, and the Dutch asked Belgium for its support. Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin politely declined an invitation for Britain to join as a third party; after multiple unsuccessful attempts at bringing peace to the region in 1945 and 1946, his government had decided to stay on the sidelines of the conflict. Uneager for the position but unable to refuse, the United States then took the last and presumably impartial seat on the committee. President Harry Truman nominated Frank Porter Graham, the president of the University of North Carolina and an experienced arbitrator in labor disputes. The Belgians selected Paul van Zeeland, former Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Richard C. Kirby, a judge at the Australian Commonwealth Court of Arbitration, was to be the third representative. From this last delegate in particular the Dutch expected nothing but trouble. Netherlands officials labeled the attitude of the Australian representative to the UN, Colonel W.R. Hodgson, “rather impetuous,” and accused another Australian diplomat of having a “somewhat tactless approach.” Australians in Indonesia, the Dutch said, exhibited their naivety by believing that Republican politicians in Yogyakarta could still be negotiated with.<sup>477</sup> And indeed, the leadership in Canberra and its representative on the Good Offices Committee would soon prove

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<sup>477</sup> Reid, 114; Prime Minister Amir Sjarifuddin to Prime Minister Ben Chifley, 7 September 1947, in: AUS, no. 317; Dutch envoy in Canberra P.E. Teppema to Minister of Foreign Affairs C.G.W.H. Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, 10 September 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 39; Netherlands Ambassador in Washington E.N. Van Kleffens to Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, 11 September 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 48; Burton to Minister of External Affairs H.V. Evatt, 15 September 1947, in: AUS, XI, no. 333; Teppema to Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, 16 September 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 73; Burton to Australian Minister to the Netherlands F.K. Officer, 23 September 1947, in: AUS, XI, no. 345.

how problematic, in the eyes of officials in The Hague and Jakarta, international “interference” in the archipelago could be.

This chapter focuses on events from the early fall of 1947 until July of 1948. How did the summer’s police action influence the political and military strategies of the Dutch? What, if anything, might the perilously situated Republican leadership do to further its cause? And how did both parties view and try to win over the foreign consuls and UN observers about to enter the fray? This chapter critically examines the role of the United States, Australia, and the United Nations through the prism of the Good Offices Committee in Indonesia, the arduous negotiations between the Dutch and Republican delegations for another comprehensive agreement after the failure of Linggadjati, and the Netherlands Indies government’s *fait accompli* policy and unilateral formation of a federative United States of Indonesia. It also investigates the views of Dutch officials in Jakarta about the “meddling” of foreigners, and the influence of these officials on planners in The Hague (something that American historians have paid little attention to). Throughout, it argues that this period of the Indonesian struggle for independence was one of deception and delay, of negotiations and a new agreement that solved nothing -- the two parties in the conflict were living through nothing more than a brief and relative calm between two wars.

After a hot and violent summer, the six consuls on the Consular Commission arrived in Indonesia in September of 1947.<sup>478</sup> British Consul-General Francis Shepherd reported to the Foreign Office in London that it took some effort to elevate the meetings “from a series of cozy chats with “Uncle Billy” [Foote] into rather more business-like sessions.” Apart from the enterprising Australian Charles Eaton, Shepherd intimated, the lackluster company of consuls resembled to him a set of “suet puddings.” His initial impression of the Dutch in the archipelago was that they had little realization of what Indonesian independence actually entailed.<sup>479</sup>

It soon became clear to the Commission that the military campaign had crippled the Republic. Dutch troops occupied all major producing areas and harbors. Tens of thousands of refugees had been displaced. The Netherlands government and Netherlands Indies authorities believed that time was on their side, while the leadership in Yogyakarta depended on prompt and effective action by the United Nations for its very survival.

In investigating the observance of the ceasefire order, the consuls spent most of September traveling through Java (visiting the cities of Yogyakarta, Bandung, Malang, and Surabaya, for instance) and Sumatra (where they inspected Palembang,

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<sup>478</sup> The members on this commission were: Charles Eaton (Consul-General of Australia), Paul Vanderstichelen (Consul-General of Belgium), Tsiang Chia-Tung (Consul-General of China), Etienne Raux (Consul-General of France), Francis Shepherd (Consul-General of the United Kingdom), and Walter Foote (Consul-General of the United States).

<sup>479</sup> British Consul-General Francis M. Shepherd to Foreign Office, 16 October 1947, Foreign Office Files (FO) 810/6, British National Archives, London (hereafter cited as BNA); Shepherd to Foreign Office, 22 October 1947, FO 810/4, BNA.

Padang, Fort-de-Kock (now Bukittinggi), and Medan).<sup>480</sup> The leftover Republican administrators they found in newly occupied Dutch territory were grudgingly cooperating with Netherlands Indies authorities and officers; relying on his preponderance of force, Van Mook had ordered all those guilty of subversive actions to be imprisoned. Shepherd reported privately to London that in his view, the Republican government was “amateurish [and] inefficient” and made up of “charming irresponsibles,” but he also believed that “a good deal [had] been learned since July 20, and what [was] left of the Republic [had] probably gained in solidarity.”<sup>481</sup> Against this solidarity stood a Dutch policy of “divide and conquer,” as Republican Deputy Prime Minister A.K. Gani had called it in his protest of the Van Mook line in the Security Council. Only severe economic pressure and intimidation could force Indonesian officials to enter into the Dutch Indies government service, he argued, underlining that the penetration of Republican territory by Netherlands forces did not mean complete occupation and control.<sup>482</sup>

In mid October, the Consular Commission was ready to publish its final report. It described the two parties’ lack of confidence in each other’s willingness to carry out the ceasefire order, and noted that although the Republican troops had remained in

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<sup>480</sup> For a detailed outline of their itinerary, see: *Indonesië in de Veiligheidsraad, October-November 1947*, 58. The consuls’ reports of their visits are in Appendices I-VII in same.

<sup>481</sup> Shepherd to Foreign Office, 9 October 1947, Foreign Office Files (FO) 810/4, BNA; Shepherd to Foreign Office, 22 October 1947, FO 810/4, BNA.

<sup>482</sup> Deputy Prime Minister A.K. Gani to Chairman United Nations Security Council, 29 September 1947, in: Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Indonesië in de Veiligheidsraad van de Verenigde Naties, October – November 1947* (The Hague: Staatsdrukkerij, 1948), 9.

position since early August, the Dutch were proceeding with what it termed “the restoration of law and order.” It stressed the population’s suffering, widespread shortages, and banditry. In the interim reports they sent to New York during the first half of September, several consuls had said Indonesian administrators were eager to see the Netherlands soldiers leave. They had also emphasized feelings of hatred toward the Dutch. At the insistence of outgoing American Consul-General and staunch supporter of the Dutch Walter Foote, however, the final report in October grossly underestimated the number of nationalists as “no more than five percent of the population,” who sought “some form of independence” but not necessarily supported the present Republic. Most Indonesians recognized, the report moreover said, that Dutch assistance in running the country was “essential.”<sup>483</sup>

Despite these declarations of support, the report was a bitter pill for the Dutch to swallow. Officials in Jakarta had previously assured The Hague that when they had met with the consuls they had been more “interested listeners” than “interrogators,” but the report had ultimately turned out clearly partial. In fact, one administrator complained, it contained “hardly a single acceptable sentence.” Van Mook helpfully repeated to the Netherlands government that the foreign observers were in fact a group of irresponsible amateurs; the Australian delegate formed his opinion only after

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<sup>483</sup> Report Visit Eaton and Lambert to East Java, 14 September 1947, in: *Indonesië in de Veiligheidsraad, October – November 1947*, Appendix II, 81-86; Report Visit Eaton and Raux to Yogyakarta and East Java, 7 September 1947, in: *Indonesië in de Veiligheidsraad, October – November 1947*, Appendix I, 74-80; Report Consular Commission, 14 October 1947, in: *Indonesië in de Veiligheidsraad, October – November 1947*, 56-74; H.W. van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indië: De val van het Nederlandse imperium in Azië* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2000), 266-267; Margaret George, *Australia and the Indonesian Revolution* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1980), 89-90.

“big intakes of alcohol,” and the Frenchman was a “crazy” man who had obviously been fooled by the Republic’s façade that, according to the Lieutenant Governor-General, hid a reality of chaos, terror, and mismanagement.<sup>484</sup> Although Yogyakarta’s influence on the Indonesian masses had proven strong, Van Mook admitted, it was the common people’s fear of Republican reprisals, not hostility toward the Dutch, what stood in the way of constructive cooperation with his officials. If the army could offer consistent security and protection, he argued, the population would be less afraid and more willing to assist them.<sup>485</sup>

In the months after the Dutch military campaign, then, the Lieutenant Governor-General’s mind became firmly shut against any other views than those he was expressing. His disappointment and frustration about what he labeled “twenty months continuous effort to secure honest cooperation from [the Republican leadership]” led him to suggest a shift in the focus of Dutch policy in the archipelago. The Netherlands and Netherlands Indies governments must do their utmost not to feed the Republic’s “illusion of sovereignty,” Van Mook argued, and instead stimulate and organize anti-Republican sentiment in areas that could be encouraged to take a stand against Yogyakarta. While the Good Offices Commission prepared to begin its difficult assignment of finding a permanent solution to the conflict, Dutch

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<sup>484</sup> Chief of Far East Office in Jakarta T. Elink Schuurman to Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, 2 October 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 129; Van Mook to Beel, 6/10 October 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 155; Mook to Beel, 16 October 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 176.

<sup>485</sup> Report Situation Central Java in September from Recomba (Government Commissioner for Administrative Affairs) Central Java P.H. Angenent, 18 October 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 125; Van Mook to Beel, 17 October 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 181.

administrators should move swiftly to aid the population of Indonesia in the formation of independent “*daerabs*” (districts) and “*negeras*” (states). These small units might then serve as counterweights to the Republic within the federative United States of Indonesia.<sup>486</sup>

Van Mook’s suggestion was to extend the policy already followed in the *buitengewesten* East Indonesia and Borneo, where the Dutch believed the people overwhelmingly supported their cause, to Java and Sumatra, where the Republic had a large following. A start was made in Bandung, a city eighty miles southeast of Jakarta. From 12 until 19 October some fifty delegates discussed the future administration and “self-rule” of their region in a “West Java Conference.” Pro-Dutch Indonesian administrators, representatives from old aristocratic families, and influential feudal lords agreed to reject the regime in Yogyakarta and join the Dutch variant of the federal United States of Indonesia. The Lieutenant Governor-General was delighted with this result. “Practically the entire population [of West Java], except extremist groups,” he cabled to The Hague, wished for the quick restoration of law and order and desired constructive cooperation with Dutch rehabilitation efforts.<sup>487</sup>

The Good Offices Commission, meanwhile, held its first informal meeting in the Blue Mountains outside Sydney on October 20. Although it faced a difficult task,

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<sup>486</sup> Sheperd to Foreign Office, 9 October 1947, FO 371/F63615, BNA; Van Mook to Recomba East Java Charles O. van der Plas, 14 October 1947, in: NIB, XI, p. 276, note 4.

<sup>487</sup> Doel, 269; Report First West Java Conference in Bandung, 12-19 October 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 193; Minutes meeting army council, 17 October 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 180; Van Mook to Beel, 19 October 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 192; Van Mook to Beel, 19 October 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 190.

it was merely allowed to “assist” the two delegations by making suggestions, and only if requested to do so by one of the parties. The three members moreover were required to be unanimous in their proposals.<sup>488</sup> American Frank Graham, the Dutch noted with some concern, was a progressive idealist: a provincial and stubborn intellectual with a fondness for radical organizations, but not unsusceptible to reason. They described Paul van Zeeland as a businessman convinced of his own importance and wisdom. The Belgian wanted to be the “*deus ex machina*,” solve the conflict as quickly as possible, and return to Europe, something Netherlands officials who believed time was on their side recognized as “not in [their] benefit.”<sup>489</sup> The youngest member by ten years, Australian Richard C. Kirby had been chosen by Prime Minister Ben Chifley because he was impartial and would “do the right thing.”<sup>490</sup>



19. Van Zeeland, Graham, and Kirby

After his first formal contact with the Commission on October 27, the Lieutenant Governor-

General cabled The Hague with his impression that “the three gentlemen were not

<sup>488</sup> Robert J. McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1945-1949* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 192-193.

<sup>489</sup> Deputy Chairman of Dutch delegation Henri van Vredenburg to Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, 17 November 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 350.

<sup>490</sup> Doel, 275; Blanche d’Alpuget, *Mediator: A Biography of Sir Richard Kirby* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1977), 47-72, 210-212; Van Kleffens, 2 and 8 October 1947, in: NIB, XI, p. 185, note 2; Van Mook to Beel, 27 October 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 231.

prepared to stay [in Indonesia] very long.” Disliking the prospect of resuming negotiations with a regime he had publicly labeled “extremist,” Van Mook suggested that the Dutch should merely appear to cooperate.<sup>491</sup> While waiting for the Good Offices Commission to give up on its job, he argued, all their actions must be aimed towards promoting the economic “necrosis” of the severely weakened Republic and pushing the political development of areas formerly in Republican territory.<sup>492</sup>

The first question the Commission needed to answer was the location of the negotiations. Republican politicians rejected the Dutch suggestion of Jakarta, because it was the political center of the Netherlands Indies administration from which the Republican government had moved in early 1946. Van Mook in turn refused to hold discussions in Singapore, believing he would be missed in the archipelago and wishing as usual to portray the conflict as “internal.” As no land site in or near the Indonesian archipelago was agreeable to both parties, Graham suggested that the United States government might make available a ship on which to meet.<sup>493</sup> By mid November, the new American Consul-General in Jakarta, Charles A. Livengood, somberly intimated to Washington that everyone’s first hope of the Dutch and Republicans finding a solution amongst themselves seemed to offer slim chances. Even the formulation of a more effective ceasefire agreement was complex, as Graham and Van Zeeland wanted

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<sup>491</sup> Van Vredenburg to Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, 10 November 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 320.

<sup>492</sup> Memorandum Van Mook 19 November 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 361; Memorandum Van Mook, 23 November 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 382.

<sup>493</sup> American Consul-General in Jakarta Charles A. Livengood to Secretary of State George Marshall, 7 November 1947, in: *Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 1947, VI, 1069-1070. Hereafter this series will be cited as FRUS, followed by the year and volume.

to recognize the Van Mook line, and Kirby, firmly on the side of the Republic, resisted.<sup>494</sup>

Meanwhile, the Dutch stepped up their “mopping-up operations,” as the Lieutenant Governor-General had proposed, and intensified their efforts to encourage nationalist anti-Republican movements, introducing the latter in discussions about Indonesia’s future as speaking for a significant portion of the people. The Netherlands delegation so played down the authority and popularity of the Republic “both inside and outside the areas controlled by it.” The Indonesian leadership in Yogyakarta attempted to convince the Good Offices Committee that the Dutch planned to “smother” the Republic through the application of political intimidation and economic blockades. In an effort to induce the population to cooperate with them, Dutch soldiers moreover committed military atrocities.<sup>495</sup> An example of these tactics came with an incident in Bondowoso in East Java on November 23. When forty-six out of one hundred Indonesian political prisoners died from asphyxiation while on a 14-hour transport to Surabaya in three locked wagons, an investigation by Dutch army commanders showed that the troops in charge of the transport had paid little attention to the situation of the captives and given them no food or water. The Republic protested, and in July 1948 several Netherlands officers

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<sup>494</sup> Van Vredenburg to Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, 15 November 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 342; George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952), 219; Consul-General in Batavia Charles A. Livengood to Secretary of State George Marshall, 13 November 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 1070-1072.

<sup>495</sup> Shepherd to Foreign Office, 28 November 1947, FO 371/F16113, BNA.

appeared before a martial court. Most were acquitted on the grounds that they had received no clear instructions from superiors on how to handle the prisoners. Only the supervisor was sentenced to one month in jail. During the appeal, eight men were convicted, and the longest prison sentence was eight months.<sup>496</sup>

When we look at the last months of 1947, it becomes clear that Lieutenant Governor-General Van Mook believed visiting consuls and foreign policymakers had little understanding of how the situation in “his” Indies had evolved over the last two years. He complained about having had to “tutor” diplomats such as Inverchapel and Killlearn, politicians such as Schermerhorn, and now the delegates of the Good Offices Commission. In turn, these outsiders increasingly described Van Mook and his aides as being both “touchy” and out of touch. The atmosphere in Jakarta, they stated, was a sensitive one full of nostalgia and suspicion. The Netherlands Indies administration was top-heavy; almost all responsibility and power of decision lay in the hands of the Lieutenant Governor-General, whose function allowed for not even a week’s vacation. He was surrounded by a group of advisers without specific tasks and department specialists not consulted about general policy. Overworked and isolated, none of them had an eye for what was happening outside of the archipelago.

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<sup>496</sup> *De Excessen Nota* (The Hague: Sdu Uitgeverij Koninginnegracht, 1985), 82-83. *De Excessen Nota* was first published in 1969, after the chairman of the Dutch Lower Chamber had asked the Prime Minister for a memorandum summarizing the knowledge the government had about excesses committed by Dutch troops in Indonesia during the period 1945-1950. For a meticulous reconstruction of the incident, see: Ad van Liempt, *De Lijkentrein: Waarom 46 Gevangenen de Reis naar Surabaya Niet Overleefden* (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 1997).

Van Mook's aide Henri van Vredenburg later said that he reminded him of a solitary elephant: big and roughly built, with a strong head, broad shoulders, and heavy neck. A lonely figure by nature and profession, the Lieutenant Governor-General was not prone to working with others in close confidence. His many good characteristics, Van Vredenburg admitted, included seemingly limitless energy, an optimistic spirit, and an ability to accept and work around setbacks, but he was also ambitious, domineering, and increasingly resentful of the lack of trust The Hague put in him. It became clear over the course of 1947 that the important relationship between the Lieutenant Governor-General and the Netherlands government had turned uneasy, and was marked by a lack of openness and mutual bitterness and irritation. Van Mook and his small group of aides regularly left policymakers in the Dutch capital in the dark about the course of their policy, radically changing it and then presenting the government, ministers complained, with *faits accomplis* (a phrase repeatedly used in relevant correspondence and memoirs). Administrators in Jakarta in turn charged those in The Hague with being indecisive.<sup>497</sup>

By early November, it became clear that the American government was reluctant to supply a ship as a neutral site for the discussions between the Good

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<sup>497</sup> H.F.L.K. van Vredenburg, *Den Haag Antwoordt Niet* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985), 278-279, 283; Van Vredenburg to Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, 17 October 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 182; Doel, 264; Elink Schuurman to Van Vredenburg, 20 September 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 90; Van Vredenburg to Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, 28 October 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 236; Van Mook to Beel, 3 November 1947, in: NIB, XI, no. 278.

Offices Committee and Dutch and Republican delegations. It would tend to overemphasize, British Consul-General Shepherd intimated to London after having spoken with a disappointed Graham, that country's intervention in the Indonesian question. The Dutch, not eager for substantive discussions, stipulated that no political negotiations could take place until Republican leaders signed a satisfactory ceasefire agreement and implemented it effectively. Despite the Good Offices Committee's arrival, Van Mook continued to argue that the dispute with the Republic was an internal conflict. Calling together an official "delegation" for the upcoming talks was, therefore, "absurd and exceptionally dangerous;" it would give the world the idea that the Netherlands government accepted the Republican regime as an equal partner.

Although the Republicans sent influential politicians such as Prime Minister Amir



20. Haji Agus Salim

Sjarifuddin and Minister of Foreign Affairs Haji Agus Salim to head discussions, Van Mook decided he did not want to lead the negotiations himself. He instead dispatched his trusted colleague Van Vredenburg, and his protégé Abdul Kadir Widjoatmodjo, a pro-Dutch Netherlands Indies civil servant and military officer who had studied in Leiden under the influential Dutch scholar of Oriental

cultures and languages and colonial adviser Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje. The Lieutenant Governor-General told Shepherd “off the record” that he had no confidence in the Committee’s efforts and that, frankly, he saw no other solution than the Republic’s disintegration. Graham especially, he noted, was too naïve and inexperienced in his dealings with “orientals.”<sup>498</sup>

The U.S.S. *Renville* arrived in Jakarta’s harbor of Tanjung Priok in early December. On the eve of the resumption of discussions, Graham stressed to both parties that the responsibility of finding an equitable solution lay first and foremost with them. He also suggested that the Linggadjati Agreement of November 1946 might serve as a working basis. In the absence of concrete Dutch or Indonesian proposals, the two delegations were forced to accept this recommendation.<sup>499</sup> Shepherd pessimistically warned London that at the advent of the talks, the general belief was that although the negotiations might lead to satisfactory conclusions on paper, they would never be implemented.<sup>500</sup>



21. Abdulkadir Widjoatmodjo

<sup>498</sup> Shepherd to Foreign Office, 27 November 1947, FO371/F15701, BNA; Van Mook to Minister of the Colonies J.A. Jonkman, 29 November 1947, in: NIB, XII, no. 21; Shepherd to Foreign Office, 4 December 1947, FO371/F16032, BNA; Doel, 277.

<sup>499</sup> McMahan, 195-197.

<sup>500</sup> Shepherd to Foreign Office, 3 December 1947, FO 810/4, BNA.

Between 11 and 19 December the Good Offices Committee met with each delegation in informal but unproductive sessions on the *Renville's* small deck. Going over the Linggadjati Agreement article by article, Van Vredenburg dryly remarked, only served to find new areas of disagreement between the two parties. The Dutch delegation insisted on explaining the “elucidation” policymakers in The Hague had attached to the draft in early 1947; upon the eventual signing of the agreement in March, it claimed, the Netherlands government had only bound itself to its own interpretation of the accords. According to Van Vredenburg, this meant that the minutes of the negotiations leading up to the initialing of the draft agreement in November, upon which the Good Offices Committee was basing its questions and which the Republican delegation viewed as an integral part of the proposal, “had no more than an historical value.”<sup>501</sup>

Attempts to quickly hammer out a ceasefire agreement were thwarted by the delegations’ divergent viewpoints on the demarcation lines. The Republican leadership wanted the Dutch to withdraw to the areas they had occupied at the time of the UN ceasefire resolution on August 4, whereas the Dutch held fast to the Van Mook line declared on August 29 after extensive consolidation operations.<sup>502</sup>

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<sup>501</sup> Concise report meeting Good Offices Commission with Dutch delegation, 15 December 1947, in: NIB, XII, no. 112.

<sup>502</sup> Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, *Renville als Keerpunt in de Nederlands-Indonesische Onderhandelingen* (Alphen aan den Rijn: A.W. Sijthoff, 1980), 64-66.

Political discussions between the Committee and the Dutch delegation focused on those articles in the Linggadjadi Agreement that described the recognition of the Netherlands government of the *de facto* authority of the Republican government in Java and Sumatra. As we have seen in Chapter 5, most outsiders had interpreted this as a recognition of the existence of the Republic of Indonesia as a state, even as the Netherlands maintained *de jure* authority over the area. According to Van Vredenburg, however, Article 1 merely recognized an opportunity for the Republican government to prove its capacity to govern the area concerned, and in no way amounted to recognition of a sovereign state or partner equal to the Netherlands. The Dutch representative moreover objected to the Good Offices Committee's interpretation of Article 5 as stating the commitment of the two parties to work together in the formation of a federative United States of Indonesia. Van Vredenburg explained that the Netherlands government was not obligated to seek cooperation from the Republic in the formation of the federation's component states. Only in the organization of the joint federal organs, he argued, would the two parties aim to work together. The Australian representative astutely observed that this reading of the text conveniently gave the Dutch recourse to permit the fragmentation of Republican territory. Graham was forced to, in the words of Van Vredenburg, "let bygones be bygones" and discard the Linggadjadi Agreement as a basis for discussion.<sup>503</sup>

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<sup>503</sup> Concise report meeting Good Offices Commission with Dutch delegation, 19 December 1947, in:

In meetings with the Republican delegation, meanwhile, the Good Offices Committee attempted to discover what Yogyakarta's interpretation of Linggadjati had been. Sjarifuddin told Graham and his colleagues that the word "government" in the phrase "government of the Republic of Indonesia" had the same weight as it had in the phrase "government of the Netherlands." The Dutch had clearly recognized the Republic as a *de facto* state, he noted. As such it had granted the Republic the right to conduct its own foreign relations and to maintain an army, until it would relinquish those powers to the federative United States of Indonesia on the proposed date of January 1, 1949. The question of *de jure* sovereignty had been left out of the draft agreement, the Indonesian Prime Minister explained, both because each party had claimed authority over the whole of Indonesia, and because the Netherlands in any case had undertaken to relinquish its claim to *de jure* authority when the United States of Indonesia was established.<sup>504</sup>

In mid December, Dutch Prime Minister Louis Beel and a group of ministers arrived in the archipelago to be updated on current developments in person. The former was so impressed with the Lieutenant Governor-General's plans for the formation of the federation that he gave an impromptu radio speech. In it he urged the Republic to enter the federation at once, threatening that it would otherwise be

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NIB, XII, no. 128.

<sup>504</sup> Concise report meeting Good Offices Commission with Dutch delegation, 18 December 1947, in: NIB, XII, no. 123.

left out of the creation of a new Indonesia completely.<sup>505</sup> The Lieutenant Governor-General was satisfied the Prime Minister had authorized him to “resume the attack,” as he reported to Van Vredenburg, not only against the Republic, but also against the Good Offices Committee.<sup>506</sup> Van Vredenburg in turn told Shepherd, who was already suspicious that the Dutch believed they had matters under control and wished to be left alone, that “Sjarifuddin was on his way out, and the Republic was finished.”<sup>507</sup>

Van Mook thus continued his efforts to organize and encourage anti-Republican movements throughout the archipelago. This, he thought, might also “divert” the attention of foreign observers away from the Republic and towards an Indonesian federation.<sup>508</sup> In early December, he established the *Komite Indonesia Serikat* (“Committee for a United Indonesia”) and populated it with representatives from prospective member states of the federation. From 15 until 20 December, a second conference on the future of West Java took place in Bandung. Nearly all 154 delegates had been selected by the Dutch, and although the large majority of them was Indonesian, half of the total number of delegates was made up of administrators. The conference overwhelmingly displayed, in the words of a Dutch official, a “willingness to cooperate with the Netherlands Indies Government.” West Java, in other words,

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<sup>505</sup> Doel, 278-279; Beel to Van Kleffens, 21 December 1947, in: NIB, XII, no. 140; for the referenced parts of Beel’s speech, see: NIB, XII, pp. 277-278, note 4.

<sup>506</sup> Van Vredenburg, 310-311.

<sup>507</sup> Shepherd to Foreign Office, 14 December 1947, FO 810/4, BNA; Shepherd to Foreign Office, 24 December 1947, FO 810/4, BNA.

<sup>508</sup> Memorandum Van Mook for Van Vredenburg and Elink Schuurman, in: NIB, XII, no. 125.

was well on its way to becoming a separate *negara*. This result was no surprise, as the likely votes had been counted out beforehand; a local Dutch official had assured Van Mook in early December that “presently, the chances were quite safe,” and that he would not have hesitated to postpone the conference “had he had another impression.”<sup>509</sup> The final report drawn up by Dutch civil servants paid little attention to the significant fact that a substantial minority of delegates had questioned the conference’s level of representativeness, and had moreover suggested that no decision could be made about West Java’s future until the negotiations on board the *Remville* were completed.<sup>510</sup>

The Republican delegation, meanwhile, was ringing the alarm bell. In a memorandum to the Good Offices Committee, Sjarifuddin objected to the Dutch attempts to separate a West Javanese puppet state from the Republic, deplored the activities of the *Komite Indonesia Serikat*, and voiced his concern over the “ultimative character” of the Prime Minister’s radio address. The Dutch were circumventing both the Committee and the Security Council through delaying tactics while attempting to settle the conflict “their way.” The Republic, Sjarifuddin contrasted, remained willing to negotiate and cooperate in the formation of an Indonesian federation, and was

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<sup>509</sup> Yong Mun Cheong, *H.J. van Mook and Indonesian Independence: A Study of His Role in Dutch-Indonesian Relations, 1945-48* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 143.

<sup>510</sup> Report Second West Java Conference, 15-20 December 1947, in: NIB, XII, no. 132.

ready to “accept unconditionally any decision” the UN would take on the question.”<sup>511</sup>

Recognizing the stalemate that had developed over the course of December, Graham cabled Washington for further instructions. The State Department would have to work towards one of two discernable courses of action, since “in questions of ultimate sovereignty,” he argued, “there [could] be no compromise.” The first was the construction of the United States of Indonesia according to the Dutch plan and under the *de jure* and *de facto* authority of the Netherlands government. This would involve a “reduction” of the Republic. Graham admitted he was reluctant to accept “at face value” the good faith of the Dutch, and thought it more likely that the Netherlands coveted a federation in which it itself would have the ultimate voice. Continued military operations and severe setbacks in the restoration of the archipelago’s economy would be the likely results of this course. There might even be another revolution, Graham warned. If the United States decided this was the preferred outcome, it need only “let nature take its course.”

The second option, the American explained, was recognition of the Republic’s sovereignty and construction of a United States of Indonesia in which that Republic would be the dominant element. Unless the Netherlands desired Dutch control over Indonesia to be permanent, this prospect would eventually have to be faced, he

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<sup>511</sup> Head of Republican delegation Prime Minister Amir Sjarifuddin to Good Offices Committee, 21 December 1947, in: NIB, XII, no. 139.

argued, even if it might temporarily lead to serious factional conflicts within the archipelago. If relieved of Dutch economic and military pressure, Graham believed, the Republic might be able to “set its house in order without a major crisis.” The current leadership of the Republic was as moderate, responsible, and responsive to Western ideas as any that were likely to arise in the future,” the American delegate concluded, but the State Department would have to exert “maximum pressure” on the Netherlands to accept this course of events.<sup>512</sup>

As 1947 drew to a close, then, Graham’s warnings and suspicions lead to increasing concern and pessimism in Washington; might the Netherlands government think a second military offensive in the archipelago was inevitable? The rather obvious Dutch strategy had been to keep the spotlight on the disorders and illegal acts they claimed the Republic condoned and encouraged, this allowing the Netherlands government to blame a breakdown of the ceasefire on the regime in Yogyakarta.<sup>513</sup> American Undersecretary of State Robert A. Lovett concluded from Graham’s cables that Netherlands officials were unwilling to enter into substantive discussions about an ultimate solution. Instead of chiding them, however, Lovett recommended that Graham try to solve the apparent stalemate by taking a strong position with the Republic and urging its leaders to accept the Dutch delegation’s ceasefire demands. In return, Van Vredenburg and his aides should accept the Republic’s *bona fide*

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<sup>512</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 20 December 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 1087-1088; Livengood to Secretary of State, 20 December 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 1088-1089.

<sup>513</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 22 December 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 1090-1093.

assurances that it would do all in its power to prohibit sabotaging activities. The time had probably come, the State Department believed, for the United States to “take a strong position along these lines to produce a positive effect.”<sup>514</sup>

On December 21 and 22, the members of the Good Offices Committee discussed how to proceed. Van Zeeland underscored the gravity of the impasse, noting that a failure to reach a peaceful settlement would reflect badly on both the Netherlands and the UN and might mean the end of the Republic. Thomas K. Critchley, temporarily replacing Kirby, lacked faith in the Dutch and believed that no solution could work unless the aspirations of Indonesians were satisfied. It would be a pity, he opined to Canberra, to allow the Republic to go under while the haggling continued. Graham, Van Zeeland, and Critchley realized their Committee was at a crossroads. They decided to take the initiative, and drafted a conciliatory paper inducing both parties to increase their efforts in serious discussions.<sup>515</sup>

The three formulated eight clear but compromised political principles. They asked for the Republic to accept the Van Mook line, but at the same time implored Netherlands Indies officials to cease the unilateral creation of *negaras*. A ceasefire agreement was to be followed by troop reductions on both sides, and by Dutch

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<sup>514</sup> Lovett to Consulate General in Jakarta, 19 December 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 1084-1085; Van Vredenburg, 310-311.

<sup>515</sup> Critchley to Kirby and Burton, 22 December 1947, in: AUS, XI, no. 482; Concise report meeting Good Offices Committee, 25 December 1947, in: NIB, XII, no. 168.

withdrawals from all territory occupied since late August. Economic rehabilitation was to be given priority. The paper also called for free elections in which Indonesians could decide on their relationship to the Republic and the United States of Indonesia. Finally, it proposed continued international assistance and observation during the transition period. The paper was completed on December 25 and informally delivered to the two parties the next day, and as such was soon referred to as “the Christmas message.”<sup>516</sup>

Critchley privately professed he “[did] not believe for one moment” that the Dutch would accept the proposals. They had presented the world, he said with a military *fait accompli* the previous summer, and “now endeavored to do the same politically.” If the Dutch rejected and the Republicans accepted the plan, however, the leadership in Yogyakarta would gain an advantage when the Good Offices Committee wrote its progress report for the Security Council. Critchley therefore gave the members of the Republican delegation detailed instructions, urging them to cooperate, but advising them to stress their reluctance to accept the Van Mook line.<sup>517</sup>

Graham, meanwhile, was growing increasingly disillusioned with Dutch policy. He warned Netherlands officials that they were “doing the right thing in the wrong

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<sup>516</sup> Draft message agreed at meeting on 25 December for transmission to the parties in the Indonesian dispute, in: NIB, XII, no. 169; McMahon, 199; for the text of the Good Offices Committee’s Christmas message see also: *Indonesië in de Veiligheidsraad, December 1947 – Februari 1948*, Appendix V.

<sup>517</sup> Critchley to Kirby and Burton, 25 December 1947, in: AUS, XI, no. 488; Critchley to Kirby and Burton, 27 December 1947, in: AUS, XI, no. 491.

way,” and should not try to present the Republic with “artificial *faits accomplis*.”<sup>518</sup> Over the course of the last few months, the American had come to the conclusion that the Republic was the center around which all Indonesians desiring independence would rally. Given the superiority of the Netherlands Indies army and the precarious position of the Republic, any compromise agreement that ensured the survival of the government in Yogyakarta and that the Dutch signed to would be a miracle.<sup>519</sup>

During a meeting between the Good Offices Committee and the Dutch decision makers who were visiting the archipelago on December 27, Prime Minister Beel reiterated his goal of giving the United States of Indonesia full sovereignty on a basis of equality with the Netherlands within the Netherlands-Indonesia Union. With the signing of the Linggadjati Agreement, he underlined, Indonesian leaders had accepted the idea that sovereignty would be vested in the United States of Indonesia, not in its separate member states; the Republican pretention that it was already sovereign was therefore unacceptable. During the transition period, the Netherlands government aimed to transfer authority to an interim federal government formed by Indonesian leaders representing the various member states, Beel explained. With regards to the present movements working toward organization of separate political units in Java and Sumatra, he ended, these were spontaneous expressions of self-determination rather than Dutch creations, and his officials had “no right to suppress

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<sup>518</sup> Delegate Chief Administration Netherlands Indies L. Neher, no date, in: NIB, XII, no. 141.

<sup>519</sup> McMahan, 200.

them.”<sup>520</sup> The events that followed, as is shown particularly in Chapter 7, proved the Prime Minister’s pronouncement wrong.

The Republican representatives took Critchley’s advice and reluctantly accepted the plan, noting that although this involved “considerable sacrifice” on their part, they viewed it as “an integrated and balanced whole” and “a decisive step toward an equitable settlement.”<sup>521</sup> The Dutch delegation submitted its response to the Committee’s Christmas proposals in the form of an amended and extensive set of principles.<sup>522</sup>

The last days of 1947 saw the Good Offices Committee considering this last reply. The Dutch flatly refused to withdraw from any territory occupied by Netherlands forces during the summer’s military campaign. The delegation’s response also threatened that the Dutch would “retake their freedom of action” if the Republic did not promptly accept the new offer on the table. Whether this implied extended military operations or simply a halt to negotiations, the Committee members could not say, but Van Vredenburg’s statement that “this [was] July 15,” a reference to the tense days before the start of the police action, certainly sounded ominous.<sup>523</sup> The Committee therefore revised its original program to something presumably more acceptable to the Dutch, and passed it on to the Republican delegation on January 2.

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<sup>520</sup> Report meeting, 27 December 1947, in: NIB, XII, no. 171.

<sup>521</sup> For the full text of the Republican response, see: *Indonesië in de Veiligheidsraad, December 1947 – Februari 1948*, Appendix VII; 200-201; Livengood to Secretary of State, 5 January 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 57-60.

<sup>522</sup> For the full text of the Dutch response, see: *Indonesië in de Veiligheidsraad, December 1947 – Februari 1948*, Appendix VI.

<sup>523</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 31 December 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 1097-1098.

Prime Minister Sjarifuddin agreed to meet with his cabinet in Yogyakarta for discussion. While awaiting his reply, Graham pessimistically told Washington that the two parties were irreconcilable, and that a Dutch move on Yogyakarta seemed inevitable. Prime Minister Beel and his colleagues, now on their way back to The Hague, had appeared to him “completely confident and untroubled by any prospect of international repercussions which might result from a Republican collapse.”<sup>524</sup>

Kirby, recently returned to Indonesia from Australia, doubted the Republican government would survive acceptance of the counterproposals. He also believed, however, that its current position of strangulation left it no choice but to submit. He accompanied the members of the Republican delegation to their meeting with President Sukarno, Vice-President Mohammad Hatta, and the rest of the cabinet, and assisted them in drafting a reply that expressed indignation at the Dutch unilaterally submitting inflexible suggestions and an ultimatum. The Republican delegation, if of the view it must accept the proposals, might do so in a strongly worded letter to the Committee, Kirby suggested, emphasizing that the plans were forced upon the Republic while under great military and economic duress. It would now be up to the UN Security Council, the Australian ended his brief to Canberra, to show whether it had “the guts or even the desire” to stop the Dutch.<sup>525</sup>

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<sup>524</sup> Concise report meeting Good Offices Committee and Republican delegation, 2 January 1948, in: NIB, XII, no. 203; Livengood to Secretary of State, 5 January 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 57-60.

<sup>525</sup> Kirby to Burton, 9 January 1948, in: AUS, XIII, no. 6.

The American Undersecretary of State, meanwhile, spent the last days of the year drawing up new instructions for Graham. Commending the initiative the Good Offices Committee had recently shown in finding an equitable solution to the crisis, he stated the Department's belief that the Committee was and should be "a free agent on the spot." The major considerations of Washington's policymakers, he nevertheless reminded Graham, included the fact that the Netherlands was a strong proponent of American foreign policy in Europe. At the same time, however, the United States had "long favored self-government or independence for peoples who [were] qualified to accept the consequent responsibilities." Thirdly, American economic interests demanded the speediest acceleration of trade between all of Indonesia and the rest of the world, as well as the opening up of the archipelago to US businesses. The construction of a stable federal United States of Indonesia under temporary Netherlands sovereignty seemed consistent with all three principles and appeared to offer an adequate degree of continued orderly conditions, Lovett argued.<sup>526</sup> His recommendation nevertheless showed little appreciation of the slim chance that a plan based on three contrary principles offered of being effective or even acceptable to two parties with divergent interests.

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<sup>526</sup> Lovett to Livengood, 31 December 1947, in: FRUS, 1947, VI, 1099; Memorandum Minister of Social Affairs Willem Drees, 3/4 January 1948, in: NIB, XII, no. 207.

During the first days of 1948, then, the Dutch in Jakarta aimed to once again make clear to the Republicans that unless they received an unqualified acceptance of their latest proposals, no further discussion was possible. These counterproposals to the Good Offices Committee's Christmas message significantly amended the original political principles; no reference was made to the restoration of a Republican civil administration, withdrawal of troops, or international observation during the transition period, for example. Indeed, no mention was made of the Republic at all.

Around the turn of the year, one case in particular underlined the humanitarian implications of the recently stiffened Dutch attitude toward the Republic. On December 9, in the west Javanese village of Rawagede (now Balongsari), Dutch troops left more than four hundred Indonesians, almost the entire male population, dead in their search of the suspected center of underground activities. Although the Republic officially asked the Good Offices Committee to investigate the case in late December, and its January 12 report labeled the Dutch operation "deliberate and ruthless," no criminal investigation was ever conducted.<sup>527</sup>

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<sup>527</sup> In 2008, a small group of survivors and relatives officially held the Netherlands responsible for the massacre, and in late 2009 they sued the Dutch state in court. In September 2011, a court in The Hague decided that the crime was of such extraordinary nature that it was not subject to a statute of limitations, as the Dutch attorney general had argued. The Netherlands ambassador in Indonesia has since apologized for the massacre. The relatives of the victims are currently awaiting compensation from the Dutch government. See also: "Dutch State Apologizes for 1947 Indonesia Massacre," *The Jakarta Post*, 9 December 2011. See also: "Widows sue Netherlands over Indonesia massacre," *NRC Handelsblad*, 9 December 2009; "No statute of limitations on Dutch past in Indonesia," *NRC Handelsblad*, 26 November 2011. In December 2007, the massacre was the subject of a broadcast of the Dutch television series *Onvoltooid Verleden Tijd* (the title translates to the grammatical tense "past imperfect"): "Het Spoor Terug: Het Bloedbad van Rawagede," Jeroen Wielaert, VPRO (Hilversum).

On January 6, Graham cabled Washington to explain that the political principles offered by the Netherlands were so generalized they offered the Republic virtually no hope of recovering the status envisaged for them under the Linggadjati Agreement “or even any assurance of its continued existence.” The collapse of the Republic was imminent, he argued, so in a last attempt the Committee had drawn up a set of supplementary principles in the hope these would prove acceptable to both parties. Although these additions clearly stated that ultimate sovereignty in Indonesia lay with the Netherlands until the Dutch transferred it to the federation, the Republic would in the meantime be given the chance to demonstrate the extent of its popular support. The latest proposal called for the Republic to be included as a component of the United States of Indonesia, in the interim government of which all member states of the proposed federation to get “fair” representation, and it proposed for plebiscites to be held within six months to a year from the signing of a political agreement. The Good Offices Committee would meanwhile continue its tasks of assistance and observance. Unless the Dutch, with the State Department’s help, could be persuaded to accept this plan, Graham believed, the present situation could not be saved “from a finish which will have lasting and dangerous repercussions for all parties concerned.”<sup>528</sup> Secretary of State George Marshall responded by saying that he approved of this approach as “eminently fair and manifestly practical.” He also again underlined the need for the Good Offices Committee to take “an unequivocal

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<sup>528</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 6 January 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 62-64.

position.” Although officials in Washington were now in direct and informal discussions with the Netherlands embassy, the Secretary warned, Graham should present the principles as a Committee proposal, not as one emanating from the State Department.<sup>529</sup>

One of those informal meetings between Dutch and American policymakers nevertheless proved essential. On January 8, officials told Netherlands ambassador Eelco N. van Kleffens that in their opinion, the latest proposals contained all the points the Dutch had insisted on. They moreover noted almost off-handedly that the acceptance of the plan by the Dutch delegation would “decisively affect” not only American consideration of assistance to the Netherlands under the Marshall Plan, but also interim aid to the Indonesian archipelago. No one in the United States, Van Kleffens afterwards reported to the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, would understand “further bickering” in Indonesia. Congress was due to discuss the European Recovery Program’s financial aid to the Netherlands within a week, he warned, and in order to maintain goodwill and support in the United States, it was essential that the government in The Hague instruct the delegation in Jakarta to accept the proposals that, in the ambassador’s view, represented the maximum they could achieve.<sup>530</sup>

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<sup>529</sup> Secretary of State to Livengood, 7 January 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 68.

<sup>530</sup> Van Kleffens to Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, 9 January 1948, in: NIB, XII, no. 230.

The importance of Southeast Asia to the success of the European Recovery Program and the interconnectedness of Indonesian reconstruction and trade and the rehabilitation of the Dutch economy has already been explored in Chapter 5. Over the course of 1946 and 1947, the United States used potential financial assistance as an incentive for both parties to reach an agreement. In the year 1948, policymakers in Washington continued to view the conflict in the archipelago through that same lens. Under the Marshall Plan, the American government was scheduled to allocate almost \$500 million in aid to the Netherlands (the highest per capita aid of all of Europe in that year), one-fifth of which was to be used in the Indies. In the absence of a political agreement, however, it would be difficult for the United States to avoid the criticism that American dollars were assisting the Dutch in a war of colonial reconquest. At the same time, the deepening Cold War added two more fears; ongoing discussions for European integration and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) meant it was unwise to upset the Dutch, but a breakdown in negotiations in Indonesia might lead Republican politicians to look towards Moscow for support. A successfully implemented agreement might ensure continued Dutch influence in the archipelago while at the same time establishing a pro-western United States of Indonesia.

As it had done before, the rattling of the American moneybag put pressure on those in The Hague and Jakarta to see the situation in a different light. Although Dutch officials believed that decision makers Washington had not seriously suggested

that failure to reach a swift agreement would endanger American financial assistance, their warning had made clear that the Netherlands and Netherlands Indies governments could not ignore the State Department as readily as it could the Good Offices Committee. Despite lingering objections, both the Lieutenant Governor-General and the Prime Minister felt the additional principles must be accepted. The last six months had, after all, seen great improvements in the Dutch position in the Indies, Beel noted satisfied. If the Republic rejected or sabotaged the agreement, the United States would be squarely on the side of the Dutch, he predicted.<sup>531</sup>

During the second week of January, the Good Offices Committee traveled to Yogyakarta to induce the Indonesian leadership to accept the comprehensive final program. It found itself attempting to clarify the proposals to a skeptical audience; the Republicans wanted to avoid a repetition of their experience with the divergent interpretations of the Linggadjati Agreement. The Committee met with President Sukarno, Vice-President Hatta, Prime Minister Sjariduffin and others on January 12 and 13. Sutan Sjahrir, only recently returned to Indonesia after having spent almost six months abroad advocating the Republican cause, was unsure about the plans.<sup>532</sup> The Committee members tried to answer the probing questions as best they could,

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<sup>531</sup> Minutes meeting council of ministers, 11 January 1948, in: NIB, XII, no. 248; Philip W. Bonsal at American Embassy in The Hague to Secretary of State, 12 January 1948, RG59, 856E.00/1-1248, U.S. Department of State Records, National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as NARA).

<sup>532</sup> Ann Swift, *The Road to Madiun: the Indonesian Communist Uprising of 1948* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, 1989), 18.

stressing that their elucidations represented only their personal views and understanding of the words on the page.<sup>533</sup>

The fears of the leadership in Yogyakarta centered on the first principle in the political program, which concerned the status of the Republic of Indonesia. Would the recognition of the Republic as a state immediately follow the signing of the political agreement, or would it come only after the ratification of the constitution of the proposed United States of Indonesia? Would its current status be unaffected, or did the political agreement signify a diminishment of the Republic's internal powers during the transition period? Would politicians in Yogyakarta be allowed to continue to foster foreign relations, and keep an army? Van Zeeland explained that the agreement only concerned the status of the Republic after the creation of the federation, and had no bearing on its present status. Graham, while pointing out that he was in no position to arbitrate between the parties' conflicting claims regarding the Republic's status, assured the Republican cabinet that acceptance of the principles could not in itself alter the status of either party.<sup>534</sup>

The first part of the agreement included a truce on the basis of the Van Mook line, and did not include Dutch withdrawals but rather outlined the evacuation of remaining Republican troops from pockets of resistance throughout Java. The

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<sup>533</sup> Concise report meeting Good Offices Committee and Republican Government and delegation, 13 January 1948, in: NIB, XII, no. 259.

<sup>534</sup> Concise report meeting Good Offices Committee and Republican Government and delegation, 13 January 1948, in: NIB, XII, no. 261.

political section of the agreement promised plebiscites which could prove overwhelming support for the Republican cause among Indonesians. Republican officials, therefore, were weighing certain short-term military losses against possible long-term political gains. They had been left, too, with the impression that the Republic's status would be unaffected, and that the United States and Australia would not allow the Dutch to diminish its status until after it had secured fair representation in a federal government. McMahon, Kahin, Reid, and others are united in their argument that Graham's promises and pressure were decisive in securing the Republic's reluctant acceptance of the agreement. The American delegate himself admitted shortly afterward that the atmosphere during the meetings had been "extremely tense," with the fate of the program "hanging in the balance most of the time." Kirby agreed, remarking to the Australian government that Graham had made "a quite oratorical and frenzied appeal with much table thumping," arguing that the Republic would be foolish to reject this agreement. The Australian himself believed that the Republic had been bullied into an unjust agreement that went against its principle interests.<sup>535</sup>

The Republican government decided to accept the proposals, and the "Renville Agreement" was signed by both the Dutch and Indonesian delegation on board the

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<sup>535</sup> Kahin, 227; McMahon, 204; Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, *Twenty Years Indonesian Foreign Policy, 1945-1965* (Yogyakarta: Wacana University Press, 1990), 38-39; Reid, 114; Livengood to Secretary of State, 19 January 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 78-79; Kirby to Burton, 16 January 1948, in: AUS, XIII, no. 21; J. Leimena, *The Dutch-Indonesian Conflict* (Jakarta: 1949?), 7.

ship that lent it its name on the afternoon of January 17. The agreement consisted of a military truce and a political program, made up of the twelve principles drawn up by the Dutch and the six supplemental articles proposed by the Good Offices Committee. It was a painful concession for politicians in Yogyakarta, for in the recognition of the Van Mook line the Renville Agreement legitimized the Dutch police action of July 1947. It moreover ordered the cessation of Republican military activity within Dutch-occupied areas, and clearly gave the Netherlands government sovereignty over the entire archipelago until such time as the federative United States of Indonesia came into being. On the other hand, the accords had prevented for the time being an expansion of Dutch military operations, stated that the administration of all territory would eventually come only with the consent of its population, and so given the Republic hope of attaining independence through peaceful means. It moreover ensured continued international concern about the Republic's survival. The basis of his acceptance of the principles, Sjarifuddin explained, lay in "the strength of the conceptions and clarifications" given by the Good Offices Committee to the Republican delegation during the bilateral meetings.<sup>536</sup> Like the Linggadjati accords, however, the language of the Renville Agreement was vague, and basic issues were left unresolved.

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<sup>536</sup> Kahin, 228-229; Sjarifuddin to Good Offices Committee, 19 January 1948, in: NIB, XII, no. 286; Rudolf Mrázek, *Sjabrir: Politics and exile in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1994), 365-366.

In Yogyakarta, the signing of the agreement provoked the cabinet crisis Kirby had predicted; two major political parties, the Islamic *Masyumi* and the *Partai Nasional Indonesia*, withdrew their support from the Prime Minister. Mirroring Sutan Sjahrir's sacking after concessions mere weeks before the start of the Dutch military offensive, Amir Sjarifuddin's compromises led to his downfall. He resigned his post on January 23. Before the end of the month and at the urging of President Sukarno, Mohammad Hatta announced the formation of a new national emergency cabinet of which he himself became Prime Minister. He committed his government to the prompt and just implementation of the Renville Agreement, continued negotiations with the Dutch delegation under the auspices of the Good Offices Committee, the reconstruction of the economy, and an accelerated formation of the United States of Indonesia.<sup>537</sup> He immediately ordered all Republican army commanders to tell their troops to avoid provocation and incidents with Dutch forces, and warned them about their upcoming withdrawal from Dutch-occupied territory. A January radio speech featured Sukarno asking the population to observe the ceasefire, and similarly underlined a careful Republican optimism.<sup>538</sup>

In Jakarta, meanwhile, the Lieutenant Governor-General bemoaned the last-minute interference by officials in Washington, arguing that American opportunism had again restricted Dutch policymaking in the Indonesian archipelago. The

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<sup>537</sup> Kahin, 230-234.

<sup>538</sup> Van Mook to Jonkman, 21 January 1948, in: NIB, XII, no. 302.

Australian delegation to the Good Offices Committee, Van Mook added, consisted mostly of jealous dilettantes with a back-yard mentality. Graham was unsuitable and dangerous, could not distinguish fact from fiction, and was controlled by “typically American [...] simplistic and almost childlike sentiments.” His “scrupulous impartiality,” in Van Mook’s opinion, often masked his notion of the Republic as “the beleaguered champion of freedom.” In North Carolina, he scoffed, Graham had no doubt been an “obedient and diligent little man,” but he was distinctly out of place in the Indies. Even Van Zeeland, the representative chosen from friendly Belgium, the Lieutenant Governor-General characterized as “vain.” In sum, he complained, foreign interference and political “burrowing” had continually hindered the Dutch in solving the Indonesian problem.<sup>539</sup>

Within only two days of the signing of the agreement, Graham’s promise to the Republic, “you are what you are,” was recognized by the Dutch as a phrase that could be exploited by the regime in Yogyakarta.<sup>540</sup> By late January, the American delegate himself was forced to explain that “erroneous press reports” alleged him to have assured Republican leaders that they could maintain the right to an army, a financial policy, and foreign relations. Graham admitted, however, that he had guaranteed the Indonesian delegation that the agreement would not touch the present status of the Republic, “whatever that [might] be.” In early February, British Consul-General

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<sup>539</sup> Van Mook to Van Kleffens, 21 January 1948, in: NIB, XII, no. 304; Beel and Van Mook to Van Kleffens, 28 December 1947, in: NIB, XII, no. 174.

<sup>540</sup> Neher to Jonkman, 19 January 1948, in: NIB, XII, no. 290.

Shepherd dryly remarked on the problematic “clarifications” to the Foreign Office in London: “the less said about [them], the better.”<sup>541</sup>

The Renville Agreement being in harmony with broad American foreign policy goals, Department officials advised Secretary of State Marshall that the United States must do what it could to ensure maximum cooperation and swift implementation by both parties. The Dutch should be made to realize that their superior bargaining position in the archipelago would have to come with “more than average restraint” in their dealings with the Republic; “more than [a] halfway effort” would be required of the Netherlands government, officials warned.<sup>542</sup> Officials in Washington, in other words, interpreted the agreement as strengthening the position of the Dutch in Indonesia, and a comparison to the Linggadjati Agreement evidenced this; the Republic could “point to no immediate gains” in the Renville accords, a State Department report summarized in mid February, except the assurance of the Good Offices Committee’s continued presence in the archipelago. In the coming months, experts further predicted, the Dutch might try to bring about the disintegration of the Republic, and would undoubtedly attempt to consolidate their influence and expedite

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<sup>541</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 28 January 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 84; Shepherd to Foreign Office, 2 February 1948, Colonial Office Files (CO) 537/3341, BNA. Three days earlier, the Consul-General had indicated that the present British position “on the sides lines” was sound; any intervention by British officials might be obstructive rather than constructive. Shepherd argued for a policy that involved only persuading the Dutch to retain as friendly as possible relations with the Republic, lest they give ground in the future for the accusation that they had attempted to “extinguish the torch of freedom,” and trying to induce the Republican leadership to have confidence in the United Nations and Dutch intentions. See: Shepherd to Foreign Office, 30 January 1948, CO537/3345, BNA.

<sup>542</sup> Memorandum to Secretary of State, 10 February 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 91-94.

the organization of the future federation's component states. The Republican leadership, on the other hand, would likely insist on maintaining its separate national powers and status, and try to foster pro-Republican sentiment throughout the archipelago. For these reasons, and owing to the already diverging interpretations of the Republic's official status, Washington anticipated that Dutch-Indonesian negotiations would continue to be difficult.<sup>543</sup>

Planners in The Hague and Jakarta had been less than happy with Graham's performance during the previous four months. Van Mook, especially, continually complained that he had had enough of "professors" interfering in his affairs.<sup>544</sup> When the American delegate tendered his resignation to President Truman in order to return to the University of North Carolina, then, the Dutch were hopeful. Graham's replacement was to be Coert DuBois, who had been Consul-General to the Netherlands East Indies from 1927 until 1930. Van Kleffens reported from Washington that DuBois had made on him an excellent impression, and was in many ways Graham's antitype; the ambassador described him as realistic, experienced with

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<sup>543</sup> United States State Department Office of International Relations (OIR), Division of Research for the Far East, "Analysis of the Political Principles of the Renville Agreement," Situation Report – Southern Areas, no. 3480.48, 11 February 1948, NARA.

<sup>544</sup> Van Vredenburg, 278.

the mentality of “Asiatics,” and decidedly pro-Dutch. In some ways, he added, he had reminded him of Walter Foote.<sup>545</sup>

The heads of the Belgian and Australian delegations to the Good Offices Committee were replaced also: Raymond Herremans took Van Zeeland’s seat, and Thomas K. Critchley succeeded Kirby. The change was made effective after the original members’ progress report to the UN Security Council in February. From New York, Kirby told his superiors that the State Department was resolved to secure an early political settlement of the conflict in Indonesia on the basis of the Renville Agreement, and was moreover prepared to put financial pressure on the Dutch. American assistance was all that kept the Netherlands floating, officials in Washington had told the Australian; they would tolerate “no nonsense.” Kirby suggested that the Republic’s best policy might therefore be to emphasize settlement rather than dispute, and to cooperate actively in a quick and practical implementation of the agreement.<sup>546</sup>

Prime Minister Hatta was indeed making haste with the withdrawals of regular troops of the TNI (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, or Indonesian National Army), as had been laid out in the truce agreement. By late February, some 35,000 men had been evacuated from significant pockets of resistance behind Dutch lines and moved back to the now much smaller Republican territory. Thousands of “irregular” troops, who

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<sup>545</sup> Van Kleffens to Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, 30 January 1948, in: NIB, XII, no. 353; Lovett to Consul-General, 13 February 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 95-96; Van Kleffens to Van Mook, 9 February 1948, in: NIB, XII, no. 403.

<sup>546</sup> Kirby to Department of External Affairs, 10 February 1948, in: AUS, XIII, no. 51.

were not under the control of the TNI but fought as local militias, had refused to be withdrawn and remained behind in Dutch territory.<sup>547</sup> From what informants told Dutch police officers in Jakarta, it was clear that the focus of the Republican government in Yogyakarta had shifted from the bullet to the ballot. Instead of choosing to fight a full-scale guerilla war against Dutch troops and administrators, Republicans had embraced diplomacy as the only alternative policy. The government set out to pardon rather than punish “traitorous” Indonesians who had collaborated with the enemy’s regime, and the population in Dutch-occupied territories was encouraged to participate in conferences and elections organized by the Netherlands Indies administration. In mid February, Republican officials established the *Gerakan Plebisciet Indonesia* (“Plebiscite Movement of Indonesia”). The organization prepared the Indonesian population for the upcoming all-important plebiscites, and tried to show the people it was in their interest to choose the side of the Republic. The final pillar of this “*pénétration pacifique*,” as the Dutch labeled it, was the strengthening of ties between the Republic and other future federative states; in its official recognition of the Dutch-controlled state of East Indonesia, for example, the Republic hoped to

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<sup>547</sup> Doel, 284-285; Kahin, 234. An excellent study of the west Javanese *lasykar* (“paramilitary troops”) is offered by Robert Cribb in his *Gangsters and Revolutionaries: The Jakarta People’s Militia and the Indonesian Revolution, 1945-1949* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991).

prove that it was the “champion of freedom” not only in Java and Sumatra but in all parts of the archipelago.<sup>548</sup>

On February 3, in a parallel Dutch publicity campaign in the shape of an English-language broadcast to the United States and Britain, Queen Wilhelmina declared: “colonialism is dead.” She hinted at the coming change in the relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia, and stated she was happy that the people of Indonesia were on the verge of forming a federal state. In a sweeping statement that hardly rang true for the entire archipelago she stressed, however, that the “common man” in the archipelago was still “far from being free from fear and want,” something she claimed was caused by acts of terrorism and anarchism.<sup>549</sup> But Dutch actions after the signing of the Renville Agreement did little to illustrate the Queen’s pronouncement of the end of an era. When Soviet delegate to the United Nations Andrei Gromyko referenced the line in a Security Council’s debate in late February, he added that the United States, Britain, and the Netherlands were in fact “injecting medicine” into the institution of colonialism to try and keep it alive. The Renville accords aimed at suppressing the Indonesian struggle for freedom and had been forced on the Republic, Gromyko argued, under threat of renewed attacks; he considered it a shameful document that betrayed the national interests of Indonesians

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<sup>548</sup> Secret report Police Office in Jakarta, 19 February 1948, in: NIB, XII, no. 458; Doel, 285; Political report Netherlands East Indies Forces Intelligence Service, 15 February 1948, in: NIB, XII, no. 440.

<sup>549</sup> “Colonialism Dead, Wilhelmina Says,” *New York Times*, 4 February 1948, 1. For the full text of the Queen’s speech, see p. 18 of that edition of the *New York Times*.

and “deserved to be preserved in [a museum] as an illustration of the activity of the United Nations, bearing witness of the fact that member states [promoted] their own colonial interests.”<sup>550</sup>

If Gromyko had warned that the Indonesian struggle for freedom could be suppressed but not be stopped, Dutch officials in Jakarta and The Hague were doing their best to quell it. The Dutch put off appointing new representatives for the upcoming round of negotiations, so the resumption of political discussions with Republicans was delayed until mid-March. In the meantime, however, Netherlands Indies civil servants continued their efforts to unilaterally create pro-Dutch states in territory previously administered from Yogyakarta. Republican protests that the timing and lack of supervision of this process violated the Renville Agreement, which after all had called for plebiscites, not conferences, no sooner than six months after the signing of a political agreement and even then under international observation, were shot down with the argument that the new *negaras* were “provisional.”<sup>551</sup>

An illuminating example of the Dutch push for the swift creation of states that could serve as counterweights to the Republic was the third West Java Conference, which took place in Bandung from February 23 until March 5. Lieutenant Governor-General Van Mook was anxious to stress that its entire organization had been in

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<sup>550</sup> *United Nations Security Council, Official Records, 3rd year, 256th meeting, 26 February 1948, 312, 315.*

<sup>551</sup> Kahin, 234-235.

Indonesian hands. He was also eager to interpret its results as proof that anti-Republican sentiment ran high and that the new *negaras* were not Dutch marionettes. A closer look at the proceedings shows, however, that after the broadcasting of the Renville Agreement it became increasingly difficult for the Dutch to keep the Indonesian population and its aspirations under control. The task of electing the conference's one hundred delegates fell to a Preparatory Commission that worked with the region's administrative officer, who was directly responsible to Van Mook. Because the inhabitants of some of the villages in West Java had fled the Dutch police action and a "floating population" on the run occupied various other towns, direct elections of candidates had often not been possible. This led to Netherlands Indies officials, who had already disqualified two elected pro-Republican delegates because of their alleged criminal past, undemocratically appointing a significant number of representatives. As with the second Bandung conference in December, civil servants attempted to anticipate the outcome, again predicting a majority vote for *negara* status even before the assembly got underway.

Owing to the timely circulation of a speech by Hatta in which the Prime Minister called upon the delegates to prevent the secession of West Java from the Republic, the conference started in considerable turmoil. Pro-Republican representatives attempted to change the agenda of the meeting, introducing a motion that called for a supervised plebiscite six months from February as referred to in the

Renville Agreement. Panicking about this postponement, the Dutch official overseeing the conference behind the scenes adjourned the meeting. When the conference met again the following morning, the pro-Dutch and carefully instructed Indonesian chairman instead stated that the two prior conferences in October and December 1947 meant that West Java was already in the process of becoming a *negara*, and that a discussion about whether it should be one at all was therefore moot. The conference leaders then actively blocked the freedom of speech of those representatives wishing to object to this course of events. In a swift vote 62 delegates showed their support for West Java's *negara* status. During the week of discussions that followed these chaotic first days, representatives did manage to propose that West Java should not be a presidential democracy but instead have a parliament, thereby ensuring that the population of the region could be heard more directly. Delegates also chose the pro-Republican R.A.A. Wiranatakusumah as the state's leader. Nevertheless, *negara* status had been extended to West Java. With similar votes and meetings having taken place in Madura off the coast of east Java, and in Medan and Deli in north-east Sumatra, these *faits accomplis* further increased Republican suspicion about the true intentions of the Dutch.<sup>552</sup>

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<sup>552</sup> Van Mook to Jonkman, 5 March 1948, in: NIB, XIII, no. 67; Doel, 289-290; Report of Third West Java Conference in Bandung, 23 February – 5 March, in: NIB, XIII, no. 66; Cheong, 144-147; Kahin, 240-244; CIA Review Report, 12 February 1948, Truman Papers, Truman Library.

Republican politicians in Yogyakarta followed these events with wary eyes. In a policy statement on February 14, Prime Minister Hatta declared the Republic ready to join an interim federal government. His cabinet was moreover willing, he stated, to relinquish a number of its powers to it. The Netherlands government similarly would have to transfer some of its authority to the provisional government of the United States of Indonesia, Hatta noted. Van Mook turned down this open proposal for joint cooperation, stating bluntly that the Republic could not be admitted to an interim body until the Dutch and Indonesian delegations signed a final political agreement.<sup>553</sup>

At the same time, however, the Netherlands delegation, being “in no mood to compromise,” as Critchley reported to Canberra in early March, systematically delayed negotiations. It was preoccupied with alleged Indonesian violations of the recent truce agreement, the Australian argued, and regarded angrily and with contempt “any expression of opinion contrary to [its] own.” At the same time, Republican officials heard from their representative at the UN in New York that the Dutch were waging a “whisper campaign” to convince American policymakers that the government in Yogyakarta was too weak and unstable to implement the Renville Agreement. Van Mook and his aides, meanwhile, put increased pressure on the Republic through the use of propaganda, an economic blockade, intimidation, and “political warfare,” meaning the well-orchestrated fragmentation of Indonesia into small states. The

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<sup>553</sup> Kahin, 245; Alastair M. Taylor, *Indonesian Independence and the United Nations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960), 117-119.

American government and its delegate DuBois, Critchley somberly summarized, meanwhile seemed anxious to reach a solution in the conflict “no matter how bad or temporary.” The chances of the Good Offices Committee furthering a fair implementation of the Renville Agreement, in other words, were bleak.<sup>554</sup>

On March 9, during a ceremony at the Lieutenant Governor-General’s palace in Jakarta, Van Mook announced the unilateral establishment of an interim federal government for the proposed United States of Indonesia. It was to function until the formal birth of the United States of Indonesia, still scheduled for January 1, 1949. A Dutch creation set up independently from the Republic, this provisional senate-like body comprised twelve “Secretaries of State:” six of them anti-Republican Indonesians, the other six the Dutch department heads of the former Netherlands Indies government. All would work under the direction of and in cooperation with the Lieutenant Governor-General, who would occupy the position of president during the transitional period. If Van Mook differed with the advice of an absolute majority of the secretaries in matters related to the interests of the Netherlands or constituent states, an appeal could be made to the Dutch crown. This interim government, the Dutch hoped, would encourage the cooperation of other federal

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<sup>554</sup> Memorandum by Critchley, 6 March 1948, in: AUS, XIII, no. 100; Letter from Ali Sastroamidjojo to government in Yogyakarta, 28 February 1948, Yogya Dokumen, no. 5355, *Arsip Nasional*, Jakarta (hereafter cited as ARSIP). Note that the Yogya Dokumen are a collection of documents seized by Dutch forces after the capture of the Republican capital in December 1948 and brought to the Netherlands for analysis. After the transfer of sovereignty the documents were returned to Indonesia and deposited in the *Arsip Nasional*.

states with the central government in Jakarta. Indeed, this new institution was, as Kahin and others suggest, “merely the old Netherlands Indies regime in new dress.”<sup>555</sup>

The Lieutenant Governor-General remarked to the gathered press that the principles behind the installation of the interim federal government were democracy, federalism, and “cooperation with Holland.” Belying his earlier dismissal, he also insisted “the door was open to the Republic to participate [in the provisional government] as a state.”<sup>556</sup> Van Mook’s swift and decisive action left the Netherlands government in The Hague bemused and, as some ministers noted, once more without sufficient time to carefully deliberate an important decision. Other policymakers in the Dutch political capital believed the changes in the governmental structure in the Indonesian archipelago merely superficial; after all, they said during an internal cabinet meeting, the members of the interim federal government had not been given “a single responsibility.”<sup>557</sup>

The new head of the Indonesian delegation was Mohammad Roem, an Indonesian diplomat and former Minister of the Interior under Sjahrir, who was born in central Java in 1908, and who, by the spring of 1948, was



**22. Mohammad Roem**

<sup>555</sup> Kahin, 246; McMahon, 212; Cheong, 188-190.

<sup>556</sup> ‘Dutch Establish New Indies Regime,’ *New York Times*, 10 March 1948, 17.

<sup>557</sup> Van Mook to Jonkman, 7 March 1948, in: NIB, XIII, no. 72; Minutes meeting council of ministers, 8 March 1948, in: NIB, XIII, no. 74.

walking with a permanent limp; a trigger-happy Dutch soldier had shot him in the leg while searching his house in November 1945.<sup>558</sup> Roem professed the creation of the provisional government a disappointing and humiliating act of rebuff that had moreover been unnecessary. Had not Prime Minister Hatta expressed his willingness to cooperate with the Dutch in its formation? Why were the Dutch delaying the resumption of negotiations if, as Van Mook had stated, a political accord had to precede the joint creation of the body? While the Netherlands government and the Lieutenant Governor-General had been dragging their feet appointing negotiators, Roem argued, the Republican representatives had been ready and waiting.<sup>559</sup>

In hindsight it is clear that one of the main problems of the Renville accords was that they did not stipulate whether a provisional government was to be established before or after a political agreement. As such, its recognition of Dutch sovereignty during the interim period left the Republic without legal safeguards in the absence of that agreement. The leadership in Yogyakarta nevertheless lodged a formal protest with the Good Offices Committee on March 16. The unilateral formation of the interim government was “contrary to the spirit as well as the letter” of the Renville Agreement, it charged. At a minimum, the accords stated that a political settlement was to be approached along the way of mutual cooperation.<sup>560</sup>

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<sup>558</sup> George McT. Kahin, “In Memoriam: Mohammad Roem,” *Indonesia* 37 (1984): 135-138.

<sup>559</sup> Aide to Van Mook D.C. Buurman van Vreeden to Neher, 6 march 1948, in: NIB, XIII, no. 70.

<sup>560</sup> Republican delegation to Chairman of Good Offices Committee, 15 March 1948, in: *Indonesië in de Veiligheidsraad, Maart – October 1948*, Appendix II, 135-136; Taylor, 117-119.

Negotiations between the Dutch and Indonesian delegations under the auspices of the Good Offices Committee finally resumed on March 18. Discussions should start, DuBois, Critchley, and Herremans decided, on the basis of working papers submitted by the two parties themselves.<sup>561</sup> It soon became clear that the dividing issues and divergent interpretations of the two parties were the same as those that had plagued the delegations in the aftermath of the Linggadjati Agreement. The most important disagreement lay in the status and sovereignty of the Republic during the transition period. Roem insisted that the government in Yogyakarta could maintain its *de facto* authority and the powers that came with it until they were transferred to the United States of Indonesia. Van Vredenburg disagreed, and demanded that the Republic reduce itself to a federal state equal to East Indonesia, Borneo, and the other newly created *negaras*.<sup>562</sup>

Coert DuBois tended to agree with the Dutch on this point, and urged the Republican delegation to accept the terms offered them. During two meetings with Roem on April 5 and 8, DuBois attempted to “make clear once and for all” that in the minds of American foreign policymakers, there could be no doubt where sovereignty resided during the interim period. The Republic, he warned, had no right to its own army or foreign representation, and its insistence could only delay a Dutch transfer of sovereignty to a provisional government. The Netherlands government “could

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<sup>561</sup> Concise report first meeting political commission, 18 March 1948, in: NIB, XIII, no. 91; Concise report second meeting political commission, 23 March 1948, in: NIB, XIII, no. 105; Agung, *Renville*, 88-89.

<sup>562</sup> Agung, *Renville*, 92-96.

scarcely be expected” to turn over sovereignty except to an organized and operating federal government. When Roem reminded DuBois of his predecessor’s January promises to the contrary, the American simply and rather undiplomatically stated his regret that the Republic “had been misled.” When asked point blank if he believed the Dutch could be trusted, DuBois argued that they had made far-reaching concessions. They could be trusted, he believed, to carry out the Renville Agreement.<sup>563</sup>

As DuBois came upon his third month in the Indonesian archipelago, however, negotiations for a permanent political settlement still showed no progress, and the American began to doubt the sincerity of Dutch intentions. In late April Critchley, who had hoped to convince his subdued colleagues in the Good Offices Committee to take more initiative, warned the Australian government that the discussions were “likely to blow up at any time.”<sup>564</sup> In early May, the two representatives made a three-day tour of Republican territory in the company of President Sukarno and Prime Minister Hatta, visiting Magelang, Wonosobo, and the Dieng plateau region in central Java where many evacuees from Dutch-occupied territory had gathered. What DuBois saw and heard here led directly to his May 10 telegram to Secretary Marshall.<sup>565</sup>

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<sup>563</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 10 April 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 143-144; Livengood to Secretary of State, 6 April 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 134-136.

<sup>564</sup> Eaton to Burton, 29 April 1948, in: AUS, XIII, no. 123; Critchley to Burton, 28 April 1948, in: AUS, XIII, no. 121; Agung, *Renville*, 90-92.

<sup>565</sup> Critchley to Burton, 21 May 1948, in: AUS, XIII, no. 139.

The strength of the Republic lay in several factors, the American delegate began. He had first of all detected in Indonesians a “nearly universal passion for national liberty.” He had witnessed both the “political finesse” of Hatta and become acquainted with Sukarno’s “winning personality.” The discipline, loyalty, and *esprit de corps* of the Indonesian troops he had encountered was excellent, and the common deprivations suffered under the Dutch economic blockade were a binding force. The feeling was clearly that the Republic was working for the freedom of the entire archipelago; it represented the “spearhead of the independence drive” for Indonesian nationalists everywhere. Over the past few months, DuBois continued, the Dutch record had certainly not been unassailable. Although he had tried in vain to interest Netherlands and Netherlands Indies officials in their precarious position in the UN Security Council, he suspected that they expected any “showdown” in New York to be covered by the United States. The essential fallacy of Dutch policy, he summarized, was a “consistent underestimation” of the strength of Republican support throughout much of Indonesia, and an “unshakeable determination” to view the Dutch-supported anti-Republican movements as similar to the regime in Yogyakarta in force and appeal. The Dutch were foolhardily “living in a dream” if they believed that the Republic would not dominate an independent Indonesia. If a political agreement between the Netherlands and the Republic remained elusive, DuBois concluded, a settlement by force appeared inevitable.<sup>566</sup>

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<sup>566</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 10 May 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 164-168.

Netherlands Indies officials admitted to their colleagues in The Hague they had “an unpleasant feeling” about DuBois’ trip to the Republican interior, as they suspected the American delegate had begun to believe that the Republic was the most important or even the only representative of the Indonesian independence movement.<sup>567</sup> He had moreover voiced the opinion, Van Vredenburg reported warily, that if the Dutch wished to restore Republican trust in their intentions, they must make concessions and announce, for example, a “target date” for the transfer of sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia.<sup>568</sup> The Republican representatives, Prime Minister Beel concluded on the basis of these communications from Jakarta, were becoming more unmanageable by the day.<sup>569</sup>

After the purported success of the Third West Java Conference, meanwhile, the Lieutenant Governor-General had continued to work on his federal program. On May 1 he announced, in name of the interim federal government, a “federal conference” in Bandung. To this set of meetings Van Mook invited representatives of thirteen Indonesian “states” and recently created *negaras*, but no Republican delegates. A circulating preliminary list of topics showed that at the gathering planned for late May, participants were to discuss the gradual establishment of the United States of Indonesia’s federal organizations, the formation of the its representative body and the creation of its constitution, the division of powers and responsibilities between the

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<sup>567</sup> Neher to Beel, 15 May 1948, in: NIB, XIII, no. 278.

<sup>568</sup> Van Vredenburg to Beel, 10 May 1948, in: NIB, XIII, no. 258.

<sup>569</sup> Beel to Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, 11 May 1948, in: NIB, XIII, no. 262.

federation and its constituent states, and such matters as common defense and internal security.<sup>570</sup> The latter did not merely refer to crime control, but was a convenient umbrella term that could be explained to include a host of issues.

Alarmed by another unilateral Dutch initiative, the Republican delegation again lodged a formal protest with the Good Offices Committee. Van Mook's Bandung conference was widely regarded as the forerunner of an Indonesian constituent assembly, Roem charged, and Republican officials had been deliberately shut out. Because the Renville Agreement had called for a democratically elected assembly and the delegations at the upcoming Bandung conference could not possibly be regarded as representative of the people of Indonesia, the Lieutenant Governor-General's scheme constituted, once more, a contravention of the accords. The Netherlands government was clearly preparing to present the Republic with yet another *fait accompli*, the head of the Republican delegation summarized.<sup>571</sup>

Critchley was similarly concerned. Over the course of 1947, the Dutch delegation had become increasingly unwilling to make any concessions to reach a political settlement, the Australian stated, and had customarily voiced its demands to the Republic on a "take it or leave it" basis. The Netherlands government was

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<sup>570</sup> For the conference's list of topics sent out with the invitation, see: NIB, XIII, p. 521-522, note 3. For the opening speech of the conference held by Van Mook, see: NIB, XIII, p. 728-729, note 8. See also the booklet published for the conference by the Interim Federal Government of Indonesia, containing in Indonesian and Dutch the agreements made with prospective federal states since the conference at Malino in July 1946: *Naar de Nieuwe Rechtsorde in Indonesië: Bouwstoffen voor de Federatie* (Jakarta: Druk Visser, 1948).

<sup>571</sup> Republican delegation to Chairman of the Good Offices Committee and President of the Security Council, 23 May 1948, in: *Indonesië in de Veiligheidsraad, Maart – October 1948*, Appendix I, 142-146.

planning to present the breakdown of discussions as the result of a Republican refusal to accept Dutch sovereignty, and so attempt to withdraw the conflict in the archipelago from the limelight of the world stage. After pressure from the Australian, the Republican delegation urged President Sukarno to do everything in his power to see that the ceasefire was carried out without violations. “The people of Indonesia and of the Netherlands, and the peoples of other countries as well,” they argued in the third week of May, “are hopeful that an end of strife has been reached [...] so that Indonesia can prepare for the future. Do not disappoint these hopes.” In the Dutch request for the Republic to essentially “abolish itself,” however, the leadership in Yogyakarta saw parallels between the present situation and events leading up to the police action almost a year previous. His colleagues in the Good Offices Committee, Critchley complained, seemed to believe they could not even exert moral pressure on the Dutch.<sup>572</sup>

Critchley nevertheless saw a ray of hope after a journey through Republican territory with DuBois. And indeed, the American delegate was coming to the realization that the Dutch were trying to confine the Indonesian nationalist spirit. On May 21, he cabled the Secretary of State in Washington a long telegram. He expressed his increasing concern and stated that while the current Dutch position was not technically incorrect, it was “by no means the only correct position.” The same

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<sup>572</sup> Critchley to Department of External Affairs, 18 May 1948, in: AUS, XIII, no. 134; Critchley to Burton, 21 May 1948, in: AUS, XIII, no. 139; Critchley to Department of External Affairs, 22 May 1948, in: AUS, XIII, no. 142; Letter to the President, 17 May 1948, Delegasi Indonesia Files, no. 22, ARSIP.

question had been at the heart of the dispute from the start, DuBois argued: who are the real representatives of the Indonesian people? In his opinion, the Republic enjoyed confidence with the population. The Dutch-controlled interim government, in contrast, was “an unnatural organization” that could ultimately only be maintained by Dutch arms. DuBois moreover believed that fair representation in the provisional federal government, as envisaged in the Renville Agreement, meant direct elections. These would return the majority of seats in that government to pro-Republican candidates. The Dutch were pressing for the swift formation of the United States of Indonesia so that the Republic would either “be forced to enter strictly on Netherlands terms,” or be left out, after which “the resultant conflict [could] be presented to the world” as an internal Indonesian dispute. The State Department’s views, DuBois ended, at a loss for ideas about what the Good Offices Committee might still do to stave off a complete deadlock, were “earnestly solicited.”<sup>573</sup>

A few days later, and in sharp contrast to his earlier reassurances to Roem, DuBois again underlined that there was “ample justification” for Republican fears about Dutch intentions. Besides the United States of Indonesia, the Netherlands-Indonesia Union, in which the federation was to partner the Netherlands, also proved problematic. The Netherlands government proposed that the constitution of the United States of Indonesia was to be subordinate to a “union statute,” for example. DuBois again asked his colleagues in the State Department for their comments,

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<sup>573</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 21 May 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 178-183.

noting that “in absence of contrary instructions” from Washington, the Good Offices Committee would endeavor to draft its own comprehensive proposal and present it to both parties.<sup>574</sup>

In his telegrams of early June, the American delegate moreover began placing more emphasis on the argument that the Dutch policy in Indonesia would endanger the long-term economic interests of the United States. Netherlands plans for the Union envisaged severe restraints on not only the political but also the economic freedom of an Indonesian federation, DuBois stated, which would leave the door shut for American investors and enterprise. This was an exaggeration, but it was true that failure to rehabilitate the archipelago’s economy would endanger the recovery of Western Europe, which in turn threatened the interests of the United States. The Republican leadership, DuBois maintained, currently had a “Western orientation” and exhibited the express intention to look to the United States for assistance. Restrictions on the sovereignty of the United States of Indonesia, he ended, could only work to America’s long-term disadvantage. State Department experts summarized DuBois’ recent communications as having carried the warning that a breakdown in negotiations was likely, and that present Dutch policy was increasing the receptivity of

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<sup>574</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 29 May 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 196-197; Livengood to Secretary of State, 1 June 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 203-207.

moderate politicians in Yogyakarta as well as the Indonesian people in general to “extremist and communist agitation.”<sup>575</sup>

When Dutch officials heard about DuBois’ intentions for an independent plan, they were alarmed and dismayed. Surely, they asked the staff of the American embassy in The Hague, DuBois and his critical Australian colleague Critchley realized that the Netherlands delegation was continuing negotiations, and that a compromise proposal from the Good Offices Committee could only serve to make the Republican delegation even more uncooperative?<sup>576</sup> In Jakarta, the Lieutenant Governor-General complained as well. DuBois had claimed that the State Department would support any Committee proposal that could solve the stalemate, and the Belgian representative was rumored not to be involved with the draft at all. Realizing he needed to win time, Van Mook sent a personal letter to Prime Minister Hatta to invite him for direct talks, and on June 4 urged the government in The Hague to instruct Ambassador Van Kleffens to intervene with the Americans.<sup>577</sup> This, combined with the Lieutenant Governor-General’s rather frantic reassurance to DuBois that the Dutch did not intend a new military action, adding that a “sudden and drastic move” on the Committee’s part would interfere with Dutch proposals and could make it responsible

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<sup>575</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 3 June 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 210-213; United States State Department Office of International Relations (OIR), Division of Research for the Far East, “Implications of a Possible Breakdown in Netherlands-Republican Negotiations,” Situation Report – Southern Areas, no. 3480.54, 2 June 1948, NARA.

<sup>576</sup> Memorandum Chief Division Political Affairs of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Hendrik N. Boon, 4 June 1948, in: NIB, XIII, no. 384.

<sup>577</sup> Van Mook to Jonkman, 4 June 1948, in: NIB, XIII, no. 378.

for an “irreparable deadlock in the negotiations,” made the American delegate only more suspicious of Dutch intentions to try to ease the Good Offices Committee out of the dispute.<sup>578</sup>

The very next day, in a meeting with Undersecretary of State Lovett, William S.B. Lacy from the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs, and Frederick E. Nolting from the Office of Northern European Affairs, Van Kleffens underlined that although the Netherlands government was fully committed to achieving a settlement based squarely on the Renville Agreement, the Republic was “recalcitrant” and unwilling to carry out the “obligations imposed upon it.” Most Dutch officials considered DuBois “somewhat off the beam,” Van Kleffens brashly observed. He implored the State Department to reemphasize to the American delegate in Jakarta the need to stick more closely to the principles agreed upon in January. Lovett in turn professed that although he had formerly viewed the Indonesian dispute in black and white and had believed the Netherlands position to be correct, he now saw “a large element of gray injected into the picture.”<sup>579</sup>

DuBois submitted his comprehensive new plan to the State Department on June 5. There were two alternatives, he argued, mirroring Graham’s suggestions of late December. The first was the creation of the United States of Indonesia according to his draft proposal. This involved, he explained, direct elections and full internal

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<sup>578</sup> Van Mook to Dubois, 8 June 1948, in: NIB, XIV, no. 25.

<sup>579</sup> Memorandum of conversation Lovett, Van Kleffens, Lacy, and Nolting, 5 June 1948, RG59, 856D.00/6-548, NARA.

powers of self-government to an interim government that included Republicans. The second was the establishment of that federation according to the existing unrealistic Dutch plan, which in essence left full authority over the entire archipelago in the hands of a Netherlands Indies government in cooperation with what was really a minority group of Indonesian federalists. This second course would likely include the suppression of all dissidents by Dutch forces. The arguments the Dutch advanced for their plan were “in part consciously misleading and in part [the result of] autointoxication,” DuBois said, referring to what he viewed as a tendency on the part of Netherlands Indies officials to be obstinate, close-minded, self-aggrandizing, and therefore blind to reality. Since the actual government of Indonesia must be in the hands of either the Dutch or Indonesians, he warned, again echoing his predecessor, there was no compromise possible between the two alternatives. The Dutch plan would prove the Netherlands “a sink without stopper” so far as American financial assistance was concerned, whereas his own plan, DuBois argued, would result in “the speedy formation [of an] orderly and by no means incompetent Indonesian government” that would exert “strong pro-Western influence throughout Southeast Asia.” If the State Department did not subscribe to the essentials of the new plan, the American delegate ended somewhat threateningly, it practically nullified his usefulness.<sup>580</sup>

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<sup>580</sup> DuBois to Secretary of State, 5 June 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 218-223; Livengood to Secretary of State, 7 June 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 226-228.

Critchley, who had long believed that the Committee must take a more active role in breaking the impasse, enthusiastically agreed to DuBois' draft plan for an overall political settlement. Their suggestions included closely supervised elections throughout the archipelago for delegates to a constituent assembly, which would in turn form an interim government that was responsible to it and would attain control of all internal and external affairs, including matters relating to the armed forces, foreign relations, and trade. The Netherlands would retain ultimate authority until it officially transferred it to the United States of Indonesia.<sup>581</sup> On June 8, without giving specific comments on the content of this plan, Secretary of State Marshall let DuBois know that the Department wished him to "continue to regard [himself] as a free agent in making such choices on the spot as [he believed would] lead to an agreement between the parties and in accordance with the larger interests of the United States." The American delegate was authorized, in other words, to try and avert a second Dutch military offensive by acting "in whatever manner [he] deemed appropriate."<sup>582</sup>

On June 10, after discussing the new proposal once more amongst themselves and finding that the Belgian delegate wished to reserve his position, DuBois and Critchley informally submitted their working paper directly to Van Mook and Hatta. No significant progress toward a political settlement had been made since the Renville Agreement, they observed in its introduction, and only by coming forward with this

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<sup>581</sup> McMahon, 219-220; Doel, 292.

<sup>582</sup> Secretary of State to Livengood, 8 June 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 229-231.

initiative could the members of the Good Offices Committee “acquit [themselves] of [their] obligation and justify the 7,5 months [the Committee had] spent in Indonesia.” The enclosed paper was to be regarded as “tentative and subject to reconsideration in light of discussions, questions, or objections.” The presentation of this proposal, drafted at DuBois’ initiative, further showed that although the American government wished to remain “neutral” in the Indonesian conflict, as the third and supposedly impartial member of the Good Offices Committee the United States inevitably played a central role.<sup>583</sup>

When American Consul-General in Jakarta Livengood called on DuBois the next day, the latter explained he had decided to “[follow] his conscience [...] after most earnest deliberation” and would have presented the plan to the two parties even had Critchley refrained from signing it. The Dutch delegation in Jakarta was confused, Livengood told Washington, and had chosen to assume that the American delegate had acted in a purely personal capacity.<sup>584</sup> In The Hague, Dutch officials told the staff of the American embassy that DuBois had “created havoc in all respects;” there had been no justification for his actions, they argued, seemingly more irritated by the

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<sup>583</sup> Concise report meeting Good Offices Committee, 9 June 1948, in: NIB, XIV, no. 38; for the full text of the working paper, including its introduction, see: DuBois and Critchley to Van Mook, 10 June 1948, in: AUS, XIII, no. 173; Philip C. Jessup, *The Birth of Nations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 47-49.

<sup>584</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 11 June 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 237.

procedure followed to present the working paper than its contents.<sup>585</sup> Embassy officials in turn charged that the lack of progress to date “hardly [justified] the rejection of any carefully worked out proposal without a most detailed examination.”<sup>586</sup> And indeed, what the Netherlands government feared most was that free elections as proposed by the working paper would illustrate the popularity of the Republic, and expose Van Mook’s federal program for a modern colonial state as an illusion.

DuBois defended his “rash action” to the Secretary of State by arguing that he had undertaken it only after reluctantly concluding that the Dutch plan was “based on fictitious premises,” “unworkable,” and likely to have disastrous consequences not only for the Indonesian archipelago and the Netherlands, but also and moreover for the United States. The future of Indonesia, he told Marshall on June 12, “[belonged] necessarily to the Indonesians.” The working paper was, in DuBois’ words, “at least one gesture from the United States of [its] belief and confidence in the ability and right of Indonesians to govern themselves.” Voicing his hope that Washington would help put pressure on the Dutch to accept the plan, he ended: “this is all we can do. The rest is up to the [State] Department.”<sup>587</sup>

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<sup>585</sup> United States Ambassador to the Netherlands Herman B. Baruch to Secretary of State, 12 June 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 237-238.

<sup>586</sup> Baruch to Secretary of State, 14 June 1948, RG59, 856E.00/6-1448, NARA.

<sup>587</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 12 June 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 240-243.

During this crisis moment in Dutch-American relations, the State Department's course of action was a curious one. Despite the recent flurry of detailed telegraphic exchanges between Jakarta and Washington containing DuBois' views and vision, clearly uneasy policymakers indicated in discussions with Dutch officials on June 12 and 14 that they had not yet received the full airmailed text of the proposals. The Department was "obviously somewhat in the dark as to exactly what had occurred," they apologized. When Van Kleffens notified American officials that a *Time* correspondent in Jakarta seemed to have gotten hold of the secret details of the proposal, matters became even worse.<sup>588</sup>

In a stern telegram to DuBois, Secretary Marshall underlined that it was of "the utmost importance" that his working paper maintained "a personal, confidential, and informal character." At the urging of the Dutch, he moreover stated his "unalterable opposition" to the inclusion of the paper, or even references thereto, in the upcoming Good Offices Committee's progress report to the UN Security Council. A final matter on which the Department held a strong opinion, the Secretary ended in a statement contradictory to his earlier reassurances, was that the Committee should in

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<sup>588</sup> Secretary of State to Embassy in The Hague, 12 June 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 240; Memorandum of conversation between Lovett, Van Kleffens, and Director for Far Eastern Affairs W. Walton Butterworth, 14 June 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 243-245. During the discussion, Undersecretary of State Lovett noted that one of the disadvantages under which everyone involved with the case operated was "a considerable delay" in communication. As there had not been any problems with communications previously and all radiotelegraphic telegrams from Jakarta had come through, this seems to have been a rather feeble argument to hide that the State Department was concerned about the fallout of DuBois' proposals. See also: McMahon, p. 221-222, note 29.

no way constitute itself as an arbitral body, but limit itself to assisting the Dutch and Indonesian delegations only “as and when needed.” DuBois had been rebuked.<sup>589</sup>

A disgruntled Dutch delegation abruptly broke off negotiations with the Republic on June 16, stating that the leak of the DuBois-Critchley proposal to the press necessitated new instructions from the Netherlands government in The Hague. Unofficially intimating he believed DuBois responsible for the publication of a confidential document, Van Vredenburg suggested to the American Consul-General that it might be helpful if the discussions were taken over by new negotiators and the current ranking delegates “[disappeared] from the scene.”<sup>590</sup> Most observers pointed to Netherlands Indies officials themselves as the distributors of the plan to news reporters, however; DuBois denied the accusations and argued that the journalist’s source was “almost certainly Dutch.” In his defense, the American delegate also referred to his recent telegrams as indicators that he had endeavored to give his colleagues in Washington a full picture of the dangerous situation that had evolved in

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<sup>589</sup> Secretary of State to Livengood, 14 June 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 245-246; McMahon, 226. During the third week of June, the debate on the Indonesian conflict was reintroduced in the UN Security Council. The Good Offices Committee submitted its third progress report, from which the Dutch had insisted it remove any references to the DuBois-Critchley plan. When a number of Security Council members called for the proposals to be discussed, the Belgian and American representatives blocked it; American delegate Philip C. Jessup argued the Council could not vote on the reception of the proposal because not the entire Good Offices Committee had thought submission desirable. Thus the Security Council took no direct action, and the members of the Committee were forced to limit themselves to a summing up of the main problems relating to the implementation of the truce agreement, the interim period, and a final settlement. See also: *United Nations Security Council, Official Records, 3<sup>rd</sup> year, 326<sup>th</sup> meeting*, 23 June 1948, 32-35; Taylor, 129-130; Third Interim Report of the Good Offices Committee, 23 June 1948, in: *Indonesië in de Veiligheidsraad, Maart – October 1948*, 165-185.

<sup>590</sup> Netherlands delegation to Beel, 16 June 1948, in: NIB, XIV, no. 86; Livengood to Secretary of State, 16 June 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 247-248.

the archipelago. His plan was eminently impartial and in the best interests of the Netherlands, he noted, and his personal impressions of the policy and conduct of the Dutch were shared by all neutral eyewitnesses. If decision makers in Washington did not accept his analysis and could not support the plan, “the situation [called] for a new United States delegation.”<sup>591</sup>

When his personal meetings with Hatta failed, Van Mook bitterly stated that DuBois’ “unacceptable and impracticable” initiative had destroyed the last chance of an agreement. He felt shocked that the international delegates had ignored his furious attempts to create a federal state, and believed that the leadership in Yogyakarta would now reject whatever the Dutch might offer, knowing that it could count on the support of a majority in the Good Offices Committee. Head of the Republican delegation Roem objected to the Dutch withdrawal from negotiations, however, labeling it an “unwarranted and untimely” move that further deteriorated the atmosphere. In contrast to the Dutch delegation, Republican representatives had accepted the DuBois-Critchley proposals as constituting one of the best means with which to achieve a settlement.<sup>592</sup> When the Dutch agreed to resume negotiations on June 23, Roem therefore called for a discussion of the working paper. Van Vredenburg flatly refused to take the carefully drafted working paper in

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<sup>591</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 16 June 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 248-250; Kahin, 248-249. The particular *Time* journalist in question, Daniel Schorr, never revealed his source.

<sup>592</sup> Roem to Chairman of Good Offices Committee, 21 June 1948, in: NIB, XIV, no. 115; H.J. Van Mook, *Indonesië, Nederland en de wereld* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1949), 211-212.

consideration, and returned all his copies to the Good Offices Committee.

Discussions had once again reached a deep impasse.<sup>593</sup>

In early July, high-ranking official from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs Hendrik N. Boon wrote Lieutenant Governor-General van Mook an honest letter from The Hague, and it nicely sums up some of the themes of this chapter. The Dutch, he remarked, had complicated illusions about their relation with the Indies that had little to do with reality. Instead of demanding that the Republic commit suicide, Boon went on, the Netherlands and Netherlands Indies governments must work on the basis of facts, however hard those facts might be to accept. Dreams of the Republic succumbing to internal weaknesses constituted wishful thinking. In their promise of ultimate Indonesian sovereignty, the Netherlands government had already defined the end point of the journey, and whining, worrying, and waiting along the way would do little good. It was remarkable, Boon observed perceptively, that every carefully selected foreign observer within months of moving to Jakarta turned enemy to the Netherlands; the scolding of those expressing opposition to or disagreement with the Dutch had clearly only served to antagonize these bystanders. Perhaps, Boon concluded, a new Netherlands government would have the courage to change course.<sup>594</sup>

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<sup>593</sup> Kahin, 248-249.

<sup>594</sup> Boon to Van Mook, 5 July 1948, in: NIB, XIV, no. 178.

This new Netherlands government would come into being after the general elections on July 7, which were held because the creation of a Netherlands-Indonesia Union required amendments to the constitution and a broad parliamentary majority. They resulted in a slight shift to the right that could largely be attributed, American officials in the Dutch capital said, to the people's desire for a firmer policy toward the Indonesian Republic.<sup>595</sup> The left-wing labor party PvdA, which had advocated a more liberal policy in the archipelago, lost two seats to its more conservative Catholic coalition partner KVP, which had argued that the government should adopt a tougher attitude toward the Republic. The Catholics therefore held the initiative in forming a new cabinet. This task fell to former Prime Minister Beel, who also had to take into account the growing new VVD Party for Freedom and Democracy, a center-right party without a religious base whose members desired a radical change in Indonesian policy on the basis of mostly pragmatic financial-economic arguments.

The conflict in the colony had been an important topic during the election campaigns. The Dutch Communist Party CPN (which had won 10% of the vote in 1946), for instance, supported the Indonesian nationalists and demanded the abolition of what it labeled "the colonial system." The escalation of international tensions since the last elections, however, caused the party to become increasingly isolated; it lost a fifth of its seats. The Catholics had unsuccessfully tried to win one third of the seats

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<sup>595</sup> Secretary of American Embassy in The Hague George W. Renchard to Secretary of State, 12 July 1948, RG59, 856.00/7-1248, NARA.

in parliament so that it could block any major changes in Dutch Indonesia policy that required a two-thirds majority. After a number of weeks without progress, the formation of a new coalition cabinet gathered speed towards the end of July, when labor party leader Willem Drees, the former Minister of Social Affairs, agreed to become Prime Minister. The Catholic Party was promised the majority of important minister posts, however. Staunch conservative Emmanuel M.J.A. Sassen thus became the new Minister of the Colonies, while VVD-leader Dirk U. Stikker obtained the influential post of Minister of Foreign Affairs.

One stumbling block during the negotiations was the option of a second police action in the Indonesian archipelago, something the Catholics refused to rule out and wanted anchored into the new government's program. This went too far for Drees, however, who insisted that another military campaign was to be avoided. Another difficult question was the replacement of Van Mook, upon which both the Catholic Party and Stikker's VVD insisted, arguing that the current Lieutenant Governor-General had over the last few years acted too independently too often, and that The Hague needed an official in Jakarta whom they could trust to carry out the Dutch government's policy. It was agreed that former Prime Minister Beel would eventually take Van Mook's place, with the latter being offered a post as ambassador, possibly in the United States. As a career administrator without clear connections to any one political party, and a tendency to berate many of his colleagues in the Netherlands to

boot, by the late summer of 1948 the Lieutenant Governor-General could count on the support of only a few politicians in The Hague. No decision had been made about the exact timing of Van Mook's transfer and replacement, however, when the new center-right leaning cabinet under Prime Minister Drees was installed on August 7.<sup>596</sup>

Coert DuBois, whose health had been deteriorating while in Indonesia, was also replaced; a career foreign service officer with no experience in the Indonesian archipelago by the name of H. Merle Cochran would take his place on the Good Offices Committee. The Dutch were disappointed with Cochran's small caliber. Van Kleffens informed The Hague the diplomat was somewhat of a "dark horse" to him, although after having met him for the first time, he found Cochran a pleasant and fairly well-prepared man with much common sense.<sup>597</sup>

The State Department in Washington intended for Cochran to arrive in Jakarta with detailed and workable proposals supported by the American government. He was to study fresh approaches to the conflict on the basis of a new version of the ill-fated DuBois-Critchley plan, which had been "modified to meet insurmountable Dutch objections."<sup>598</sup> These revisions had been made in consultation with the Offices of Northern European Affairs, Far Eastern Affairs, and United Nations Affairs, with experts in these divisions concluding that the only viable course was the resumption

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<sup>596</sup> Doel, 300-302; Jan Bank, *Katholieken en de Indonesische revolutie* (Baarn: Amboboeken, 1983), 367-375; P.F. Maas, *Indië Verloren, Rampspoed Geboren: Het Moeizame Afscheid van Indië van Van Mook, Stikker, en Sassen* (Dieren: Bataafse Leeuw, 1983), 25-28.

<sup>597</sup> See communications by Van Kleffens on 12, 14 and 22 July 1948, in: NIB, XIV, p. 355, note 2.

<sup>598</sup> Secretary of State to Baruch, 25 June 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 270-271.

of constructive negotiations under the auspices of the Good Offices Committee. The Netherlands government would be required to accept further compromise with the Republic. For any new plan to be acceptable to both parties, it would have to originate with the Good Offices Committee, these officials believed, and be firmly supported by the American government. There was therefore no question that a Dutch plan for a settlement, in which the function of the Committee had been diminished to that of a simple salesman to the Republic, could be effective.<sup>599</sup>

The summer of 1948, then, was a period of relative calm in Dutch-Indonesian relations, as both parties awaited new developments. Elsewhere in South and Southeast Asia, decolonization processes were proving no less complex or violent than the one in the archipelago. The partition of India into two independent states in August 1947 and the migration of millions of people across the newly drawn borders had resulted in communal strife that killed hundreds of thousands. The princely state of Kashmir and Jammu, effectively split between India and Pakistan, had become the site of armed conflict. In Malaya, amid an atmosphere of rising tension and strikes, the murder of three European overseers on a rubber plantation by members of the Malayan Communist Party led to the British colonial government declaring a state of emergency in June. In Indochina, unsuccessful military expeditions against the Viet Minh had made the French realize the need to oppose Ho Chi Minh's forces

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<sup>599</sup> Memorandum prepared for Lovett, 12 July 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 279-281; Van Kleffens to Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, 13 July 1948, in: NIB, XIV, no. 207; Memorandum of conversation between Lovett, Van Kleffens, Lacy, and Nolting, 13 July 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 282-283.

politically; by mid 1948, negotiations with moderate nationalists and former emperor of Vietnam Bao Dai for an “autonomous” government within the French Union were ongoing.

The Dutch, meanwhile, hoped that the new American delegate on the Good Offices Committee would see that any proposal for a final settlement in Indonesia would have to be based on the preservation of Netherlands sovereignty during the interim period. While awaiting Cochran’s arrival in Jakarta, and after having had virtually no word from the State Department for almost a month, the other members of the American delegation sent a stern telegram to their superiors. While time was growing dangerously short, they warned, “one way or another, Indonesians [would] achieve independence.”<sup>600</sup>

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<sup>600</sup> Memorandum of conversation by Lacy, 21 July 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, 285; Livengood to Secretary of State, 28 July 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 291-293.

## Chapter 6

### Combat and Capitulation: August 1948 - May 1949

*“Together with the federalists, and relying on our military success, we could have defied the United States, the Commonwealth, the Asiatic world and the Republic. [...] Now that the federalists have joined that front [...] we must realize that the entire foundation of our policy has been erased. With the disappearance of the federalist trump from our game, we can merely play poker.”<sup>601</sup>*

J.H. van Roijen, March 1949

“It is the intention of this ministry to replace the representative of the Dutch Crown in Indonesia. The cabinet therefore urgently asks you to accept a new and of course very important position elsewhere.”<sup>602</sup> Recently installed Minister of the Colonies Emmanuel M.J.A. Sassen sent Lieutenant Governor-General Hubertus van Mook this missive, the first official exchange of communication between the two, in August 1948 to thank the latter for decades of service. An infuriated Van Mook intimated to a close aide that he had never before been treated this crudely.<sup>603</sup> What hurt most, the bitterly disappointed Lieutenant Governor-General admitted, was that his unsolicited

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<sup>601</sup> Netherlands representative to the United Nations Security Council J.H. van Roijen to Netherlands Minister of Foreign Affairs Dirk U. Stikker, 12 March 1949, in: S.L. van der Wal, P.J. Drooglever and M.B.J. Schouten (eds.), *Officiële Bescheiden Betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische Betrekkingen 1945-1950* (hereafter NIB,) 20 volumes (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971-1996), XVIII, no. 88.

<sup>602</sup> Netherlands Minister of the Colonies E.M.J.A. Sassen to Lieutenant Governor-General H.J. Van Mook, 12 August 1948, in: NIB, XIV, no. 323.

<sup>603</sup> Van Mook to Director of General Affairs P.J.A. Idenburg, 23 August 1948, in: NIB, XIV, no. 365.

dismissal meant he was to transfer his affairs and office to a successor without having been allowed to “finish the job.”<sup>604</sup>

This job, Van Mook would have said, was to establish a federal United States of Indonesia under a firm and efficient administration run by Indonesians but overseen, at least for the foreseeable future, by the Dutch. Throughout his career as a colonial administrator, Van Mook’s primary criticism of policymakers in The Hague had been that his colleagues there viewed relations with the Indies with an eye towards financial and economic interests. He, in contrast, worked from a standpoint not only of moral duty but also of genuine attachment to “his” Netherlands Indies.

In the eyes of cabinet members in the Dutch political capital, Van Mook’s roots in the archipelago and lack of interest in The Hague’s point of view had led to his disregard for what they considered the all-important future Netherlands-Indonesian Union, which would look after “common interests” such as foreign affairs, defense, and economic and cultural matters and so safeguard, in the shape of a “voluntary and permanent bond,” continued Dutch involvement in Indonesia. The Lieutenant Governor-General’s successor, former Prime Minister and soon to be High Commissioner of the Crown Louis J.M. Beel, believed this union should have strong

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<sup>604</sup> Netherlands Prime Minister Willem Drees to Delegate Chief Administration Netherlands Indies L. Neher, 23 September 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 99; Van Mook to General Secretary Netherlands Indies Government K. Verboeket, 16 September 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 59.

powers and go beyond mere cooperation.<sup>605</sup> Dirk U. Stikker, a former banker and industrialist and the newly instated Minister of Foreign Affairs, was one of those planners in the Netherlands that Van Mook accused of viewing the dispute in Indonesia from a financial and economic perspective. Instead of focusing on stuffy principles of constitutional law, Stikker held, the Dutch must be pragmatic and focus on attracting the financial aid and foreign capital to the archipelago that would further the economic rehabilitation of both Indonesia and the Netherlands.<sup>606</sup>

As a new Dutch government took seat in The Hague during the late summer of 1948, however, the American administration that was to provide the bulk of that aid and capital was developing a fresh perspective of its own. This chapter investigates that shift in Washington, and examines the Dutch and Republican reactions to it. It moreover looks at the role of the new Netherlands representative in Jakarta, and explains why, yet again, the Dutch resorted to force in its attempt to subjugate the Indonesian Republic. Finally, it details the deteriorating military situation in the archipelago and the height of international involvement in the conflict, and concludes with what in hindsight we can see was the Dutch capitulation.

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<sup>605</sup> Yong Mun Cheong, *H.J. van Mook and Indonesian Independence: A Study of His Role in Dutch-Indonesian Relations, 1945-48* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 17-19.

<sup>606</sup> L.G.M. Jaquet, *Minister Stikker en de Souvereiniteitsoverdracht aan Indonesië* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 17-20.

August 1948 had seen the return to Indonesia of communist leader Musso, the former leader of the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI or Indonesian Communist Party) and its failed revolt of 1926. He had spent much of the previous two decades in the Soviet Union as a loyal follower of Joseph Stalin. Within three weeks of his arrival in Yogyakarta, Musso had taken command of the left-wing resistance to Prime Minister Mohammad Hatta's relatively conservative government, giving interviews and attending meetings and mass rallies throughout Java. In his political program titled "A new path for the Republic of Indonesia," Musso called for drastic economic changes and an overhaul of society. He repudiated the Linggadjati and Renville agreements for not having envisioned real Indonesian independence, and advocated a harder line against the Dutch who he bitterly insisted were supported by the capitalist United States in joint efforts to strangle the Republic. The West, Musso not unconvincingly argued, had betrayed Indonesians.<sup>607</sup>

Although the real influence and strength of the estimated 2,000 to 3,000 PKI members was minimal, this minority rapidly began to grow more vocal. The population was pessimistic about the outcome of negotiations with the Netherlands delegation and increasingly discontent due to the deteriorating situation in the archipelago. Shortages of food, clothing, and medicine caused by the Dutch economic

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<sup>607</sup> Anthony Reid, *The Indonesian National Revolution, 1945-1950* (Hawthorn: Longman, 1974), 136-147; H.W. van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indië: De val van het Nederlandse imperium in Azië* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2000), 307; Ann Swift, *The Road to Madiun: the Indonesian Communist Uprising of 1948* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, 1989), 53-57. For a comprehensive background on the revival of the Communist Party in Indonesia, see: George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952), 269-303.

blockade of the Republic worsened the daily conditions of life for almost all Indonesians. As a consequence, a U.S. State Department report argued, Hatta's government was experiencing "increasing difficulty in maintaining its position against the pressures from the left and the agitation of communists." If no progress was made in the settlement of the Indonesian dispute and the Republican cabinet fell, analysts prophesized, communist influence would expand rapidly.<sup>608</sup>



23. H. Merle Cochran

On August 31, a concerned Secretary of State George Marshall cabled new Consul-General Charles Livengood and Good Offices Committee member Merle Cochran in Jakarta to warn them that the stiff Netherlands attitude and continued deadlock in discussions was increasing the popularity of communism among disillusioned Indonesians and so

<sup>608</sup> Robert J. McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1945-1949* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 237; Memorandum by James W. Branco of the Division of United Nations Political Affairs to Director of the Office of United Nations Affairs Dean Rusk, 3 September 1948, in: *Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 1948, VI, 318-322. Hereafter this series will be cited as FRUS, followed by the year and volume. For evidence that the American State Department was carefully watching for signs of growing communist activity and concerned about its effects on Hatta's government, see also: British Ambassador in Washington Sir. O. Franks to Foreign Office, 11 August 1948, Colonial Office Files (CO) 537/3344, British National Archives, London (hereafter cited as BNA); Franks to Foreign Office, 27 August 1948, CO 537/3341, BNA; Livengood to Secretary of State, 2 August 1948, RG59, 856E.00/8-248, U.S. Department of State Records, National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as NARA); Chief of Division of Southeast Asian Affairs Charles S. Reed to Deputy Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs H. Merrell Benninghoff, 27 August 1948, RG59, 856D.00/8-2748, NARA. Republican pessimism about the general outlook for a political agreement with the Dutch is also noticeable in a letter sent by head of the Republican delegation Mohammad Roem to the Good Offices Committee and included in the Committee's fourth interim report to the United Nations Security Council, 9 September 1948, in: *United Nations Security Council, Official Records, 3<sup>rd</sup> year*, December Supplements, 67-75.

hastening the fall of Hatta's moderate government. At present, sentiment within the Republic was pro-Western, but a new Indonesian cabinet, experts concluded ominously, was likely to be "strongly left-wing if not communist controlled." It is clear in hindsight that the risk that communists would achieve full power in Indonesia and replace the evermore-popular Sukarno was miniscule. In an atmosphere of growing fear and paranoia, however (the first televised congressional hearings by the House Un-American Activities Committee was aired on August 25), Marshall nevertheless believed that to prevent this scenario, all possible steps must be taken to resume political negotiations between the Dutch and Republican delegations. He therefore ordered Cochran to formulate a working paper that could be submitted first to his Australian and Belgian colleagues on the Good Offices Committee, the latter of whom had proved to be a cipher of little support to the Dutch, and then to the two parties.<sup>609</sup>

The first week of September was taken up with Dutch Queen Wilhelmina's golden jubilee and abdication; after fifty years on the throne, she stepped down for her daughter Juliana to be crowned. In Jakarta, the celebrations took place "in a dignified manner and without incident" in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Palace Rijswijk. It was the

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<sup>609</sup> Secretary of State George Marshall to American Consul-General in Jakarta Charles A. Livengood, 31 August 1948, in: Secretary of State to Livengood, 1 September 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 314-315. Note that although FRUS heads the telegrams "Secretary of State to Consulate General (Livengood)," more often than not the telegrams are sent between Undersecretary of State Robert A. Lovett and Head of the United States delegation on the Good Offices Committee H. Merle Cochran. I will continue to use the original FRUS heading of telegrams.

Lieutenant Governor-General's last formal function, already having been informed that his successor Beel was to arrive in Indonesia by the end of the month.<sup>610</sup>

On September 7, Cochran transmitted to Washington his draft proposal for an overall political settlement between the Dutch and Republicans. Recent developments had convinced him, too, that Indonesian communists had been "using nationalism as a cloak" and were gaining strength as time passed. Prime Minister Hatta, however, seemed prepared to take strong action against these "intransigent elements." If the State Department allowed him to present his paper before the Netherlands delegation submitted a likely unacceptable plan of their own, Indonesian leaders would not, the diplomat argued, "quibble over details."<sup>611</sup>

After having received Marshall's blessing, Cochran informally presented his confidential draft to the Dutch and Republican delegations on September 10. Cochran's plan was in many ways similar to the one his predecessor Dubois had proposed in June, and was chiefly concerned with the structure and powers of a federal interim government for the proposed United States of Indonesia. It called for swift general elections for a provisional parliament that would also function as a constitutional convention. The American scheme lay down a timetable for the transfer

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<sup>610</sup> Neher to Drees, 4 September 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 9.

<sup>611</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 7 September 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 322-324; Livengood to Secretary of State, 7 September 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 324-325. The American ambassador in the Netherlands Herman B. Baruch was similarly asked to inform the Dutch of the importance the United States attached to the bolstering of Hatta's government. As the Republican regime could only hold out if negotiations soon proved successful, the government in The Hague could do much to prevent a further swing toward Communism in the Indonesian archipelago. See: Secretary of State to Embassy in the Netherlands, 9 September 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 328.

of powers to the United States of Indonesia as well, but by suggesting that the Republic provide no more than one-third of the provisional government's representatives also ensured against Republican domination of that body. The right to veto legislation moreover increased the authority of the representative of the Dutch crown in the interim federal government.<sup>612</sup>

As usual, the Republican delegation welcomed the plan as a suitable basis for the resumption of negotiations while Netherlands representatives voiced objections. The Dutch declared Cochran's actions as "wholly contrary to procedure;" they believed the initiative for a fresh proposal lay with them, and that in any case they should have been separately consulted about the American draft prior to its presentation to the parties. The negotiators complained (for more than two hours, an exasperated Cochran noted), that the unexpected move left them with no hope for the adoption of their own upcoming proposals.<sup>613</sup>

During a cabinet meeting in The Hague on September 13, Prime Minister Willem Drees remarked that there was a good deal in Cochran's plan that was acceptable, but that some parts would surely have to be rejected. Minister of the Colonies Sassen more forcefully opined that the American's suggestion for general elections throughout the archipelago were "entirely premature," the powers of the

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<sup>612</sup> Secretary of State to Livengood, 8 September 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 325-327; Secretary of State to Livengood, 9 September 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 327-328; Oral note from Cochran to Acting Deputy Head of Dutch delegation T. Elink Schuurman, 10 September 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 28; McMahon, 240; Alastair M. Taylor, *Indonesian Independence and the United Nations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960), 142-143.

<sup>613</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 11 September 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 333-335.

Dutch head of the interim federal government insufficient, and a fixed date for the transfer of sovereignty unreasonable. The government decided to send Foreign Minister Stikker to Washington; he was to inform the State Department that without extensive revision, Cochran's plan would not gain a majority in Dutch parliament and could not be accepted as a basis for discussion.<sup>614</sup>

Stikker and Netherlands ambassador in Washington Eelco N. van Kleffens, both of whom understood that the attitude of the United States to the conflict in Indonesia was decisive for the scope of action available to the Dutch, met with Marshall a few days later. During a discussion that lasted less than one hour, they attempted to convince him of their point of view. The Secretary held firm, however, and pointed out that "all the elements of the American government concerned [with the problem in Indonesia] were unanimous in regarding [Cochran's] proposals as fair."<sup>615</sup> When Stikker bluntly asked him if he really believed that the advice of the few Americans who had been in Indonesia for only three months at a time was "of more value than all the experience [the Dutch had] gained over more than three centuries," he received no reply. Marshall then dismissed the Netherlands delegation and noted that further contact about the details of the proposed political settlement would take place through Undersecretary Robert A. Lovett. Although it was agreed that some of

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<sup>614</sup> Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 13 September 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 44; Sassen to Dutch delegation in Jakarta, 15 September 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 53.

<sup>615</sup> Memorandum of conversation by Secretary of State, Undersecretary of State, Director for Far Eastern Affairs W. Walton Butterworth Butterworth, Director for European Affairs John D. Hickerson, Netherlands Ambassador in Washington E.N. Van Kleffens, Legal Adviser to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs N.S. Blom, Stikker, 17 September 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 343-345.

the Dutch objections might be erased through “clarifications” of the plan, the Undersecretary insisted he could not unilaterally negotiate changes to the delegate’s proposal in Washington, and confirmed the Department’s support of Cochran’s opinion that only Hatta’s government could meet the grave communist threat. His cool reception and unsatisfactory visit, a disappointed Stikker soberly noted, made clear that “[the Dutch] were expected to get on with the task at hand.”<sup>616</sup>

This task became significantly more complex after a communist revolt led by Musso took place in the east Javanese city of Madiun on September 18. Although brief and ultimately unsuccessful, the rebellion further strengthened the Department’s belief that the United States must support the moderate Hatta government at all cost. The Indonesian Prime Minister, who had declared that a social revolution might break the united front needed for the national rebellion against the Dutch, quickly moved Republican troops from the TNI (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, or Indonesian National Army) to the area to suppress the uprising. President Sukarno moreover held an emotional radio speech, in which he stressed that the whole of Indonesia was facing a great ordeal and called on the people to show solidarity with the government at this critical moment. Musso’s Communist Party, the President warned, was trying to create

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<sup>616</sup> Memorandum of Conversation by Lovett, with Hickerson, Stikker, Kleffens, Blom, and Frederick E. Nolting from the Office of Northern European Affairs, 17 September 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 345-347; Philip C. Jessup, *The Birth of Nations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 60-61; Stikker to Drees, 19 September 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 71; Jaquet, 57-61; Dirk U. Stikker, *Men of Responsibility: A Memoir* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 109, 115-117.

unrest and disorder and would obstruct the attainment of independence. In staging the revolt, the PKI had counted on the support from both TNI troops and the Indonesian people. When it received neither, no general uprising materialized; Indonesians clearly recognized Sukarno as their leader and remained loyal to him. After government soldiers acted swiftly and effectively against the premature bid for power, Musso fled Madiun.<sup>617</sup>

High Commissioner Beel, who had arrived in the archipelago on September 15, saw in the communist rising a chance for the Netherlands Indies Army to once and for all eliminate the Republic. "It [was] now or never," he warned after the outbreak in east Java; it would be fatal if the Dutch did not seize this "God-given opportunity." A mere five days after his appearance in Jakarta, Beel informed Sassen that he had discovered a basic mistake in Netherlands policymaking. Indies administrators and Van Mook in particular, he had found, did not really feel Dutch. As such, their goals and those of planners in The Hague did not run parallel. He, on the other hand, was resolved to take a harder line against the Republic, and asked the Netherlands

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<sup>617</sup> Radio speech by President Sukarno on the Madiun Coup, 19 September 1948, in: Swift, Appendix B; Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 281-282; Doel, 309; McMahon, 243; Swift, 77-80; George McT. Kahin, "The Crisis and Its Aftermath," *Far Eastern Survey*, 17 (22), 17 November 1948, 261-264. For more on the Madiun revolt, see also: Arnold C. Brackman, *Indonesian Communism: A History* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), 80-101. Musso was killed in late October trying to escape custody. Former Republican Prime Minister and admitted longtime underground member of the Indonesian Communist Party PKI Amir Sjarifuddin was involved in the Madiun revolt also. He was captured and later killed by Republican forces.

government to authorize him to take deliberate and forceful action not only in troubled areas like Madiun, but against Yogyakarta as well.<sup>618</sup>

The Dutch cabinet, however, was unwilling to grant Beel such extensive powers of decision. Prime Minister Drees in particular had misgivings about a march on the Republican capital. He had been privately informed that the High Commissioner's performance in the Indonesian archipelago was already marked by "a desire for and pleasure in a position of power," a "partly real and partly elevated sense of responsibility," and a nervousness and hasty urge to "do something." Drees therefore underlined the fact that Van Mook was still, for some more weeks, Lieutenant Governor-General, and ordered Beel to delay any operation he had been planning. The High Commissioner could merely offer Hatta Dutch support in restoring law and order and fighting communism in the Republic.<sup>619</sup>

But the Republican Prime Minister, fearing Netherlands interference in what he considered internal affairs, did not want this help. Hatta told the Indonesian press bureau ANTARA that the Republican government in Yogyakarta would apply its own powers to quell the revolt. Consul-General Livengood noted the government's strong anti-communist measures, remarking that if they were successful, Hatta's cabinet

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<sup>618</sup> L.J.M. Beel to Sassen, 20 September 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 76; Minutes meeting at home of Army Commander S.H. Spoor, 20 September 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 73; Gase, 200-202.

<sup>619</sup> Neher to Drees, 22 September 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 91; Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 20 September 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 79.

would be in a much stronger position both towards its opposition and in negotiations with the Dutch delegation.<sup>620</sup>

Dutch unhappiness about Cochran's decision to present his plan without a further exchange of views with the Netherlands delegation, then, did little to convince the U.S. State Department, nor did the argument of Netherlands Indies administrators that elections in a disorganized community such as the Republic would generate extremist agitation rather than a clear expression of popular opinion. It was clear to decision makers in Washington that behind the Netherlands objection to elections throughout the archipelago lay the fear that these would show widespread support for the Republican government. At the same time, that government's energetic and swift reaction to the Madiun rebellion in the eyes of American planners proved its staunchly anti-communist attitude and made it worthy of assistance. From Washington, Van Kleffens began to observe marked differences between the United States and the Netherlands about the recommended tactics to reach Indonesian independence. An "iciness in the general atmosphere" between American and Dutch officials was becoming increasingly noticeable, as Cochran also remarked from Jakarta.<sup>621</sup>

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<sup>620</sup> Acting Lieutenant Governor-General Abdulkadir Widjoatmodjo to Sassen, 21 September 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 84; Livengood to Secretary of State, 20 September 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 356-357.

<sup>621</sup> Brackman, 85; McMahon, 243-244; Kahin, "The United States and the Anticolonial Revolutions in Southeast Asia, 1945-1950," in: Yonosuke Nagai and Akira Iriye, *The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 350; Van Kleffens to Stikker, 29 September 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 127; Livengood to Secretary of State, 13 September 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 335-337.

In late September, the Netherlands government in The Hague and Netherlands Indies authorities in Jakarta were weighing their options. How should the Dutch respond to Cochran's proposal for a settlement, given the fact that the American delegate had refused to amend his plan before the start of negotiations? Van Mook, still awaiting his formal dismissal, suggested that they might accept the draft agreement as a basis for new discussions with the Republic, but advised his colleagues to include in their formal response amendments to the objectionable provisions in the original proposal.<sup>622</sup>

This Dutch reply was drafted during the first half of October. When it was shown to State Department planners, Van Kleffens was told that no objective critic could expect even for a moment that this "brutal" note would be acceptable to Republicans. As it stood, they noted, the Dutch answer was "tantamount to a rejection" of Cochran's plan. Noting once again that the Department stood squarely behind the American delegate, they urged the Netherlands government to revise its standpoint. Van Kleffens himself stated to Minister Stikker and the head of the Dutch delegation in Jakarta that he believed the reply ill-suited to raise sympathy for the difficult position in which the Netherlands found itself. The Americans deemed it most important, he warned, that Dutch-Indonesian negotiations were resumed.<sup>623</sup>

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<sup>622</sup> Van Mook to Sassen, 28 September 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 122.

<sup>623</sup> Sassen to Dutch delegation in Jakarta, 1 October 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 139; Van Kleffens to Stikker, 6 October 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 169; Kleffens to Stikker and Elink Schuurman, 6 October 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 170.

Dutch ministers, however, believed they had already conceded much, and remained convinced that they could not allow a further weakening of the Dutch position in the archipelago. “Circumstances may arise,” Sassen undiplomatically informed Cochran, that would make “immediate action to cope with the intolerable conditions unavoidable.”<sup>624</sup> In its eventual response to the proposals, delivered a full month after their presentation, the Netherlands delegation stated that it accepted the plan as a basis for discussion, but insisted that there were parts of the agreement “to which objections of such a serious nature [existed] that they [could not] be incorporated in the political agreement.” Dutch views on how these objections should be met were expressed in the form of lengthy amendments.<sup>625</sup>

A close look at these amendments to the Cochran plan reveals they were so sweeping they amounted to counterproposals. Whereas both the original and the amended plan underlined the *de jure* sovereignty of the Dutch in Indonesia during the transition period, Cochran’s draft agreement limited the *de facto* sovereignty of the Netherlands in its outline of a progressive transfer of authority and powers to the provisional federal government of the United States in Indonesia. In the Dutch amendments, however, the Netherlands retained ultimate responsibility in that body. In the original September 10 proposal, the Republic had been safeguarded through

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<sup>624</sup> Sassen to Dutch delegation in Jakarta, 12 October 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 213.

<sup>625</sup> Elink Schuurman to Sassen, 4 October 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 152. For the full text of the Dutch response of 14 October, see: *United Nations Security Council, Official Records, 3<sup>rd</sup> year*, December Supplements, 169-194.

the exclusion of Netherlands Indies troops in the federal armed forces that were to function throughout the United States of Indonesia. In the October counterproposal, these troops were made part of the army. Where Cochran's plan had called for the establishment of strong federal organs, the Netherlands delegation insisted on a centralization of powers in the hands of the Dutch representative of the crown. In essence, as Alistair Taylor also argues, the counterproposals called for "the progressive liquidation of the Republic as a constitutional entity."<sup>626</sup>

Irritated U.S. State Department officials were certain the government in Yogyakarta would not accept the new plans. Hatta's impression of the Dutch response, as outlined in a personal letter to Cochran, was that the leadership in the Netherlands "did not actually want to come to an agreement that [was] not in line with [its] preconceived design." Instead, its primary aim was to divide Indonesia, render it weak, and "annihilate the Republic which [was] the mainstay in the struggle for freedom," the Prime Minister argued to the American. The Dutch unwillingness to abandon their colonial ideas, Hatta warned, illustrated their underestimation of the Indonesian people's desire for freedom.<sup>627</sup> By late October, then, the two parties were at a grave impasse. Unless the situation improved, the British ambassador in The

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<sup>626</sup> Taylor, 146-153.

<sup>627</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 23 October 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 430-435.

Hague reported to London, the Dutch would see no alternative in the archipelago “except either to fight or get out.”<sup>628</sup>

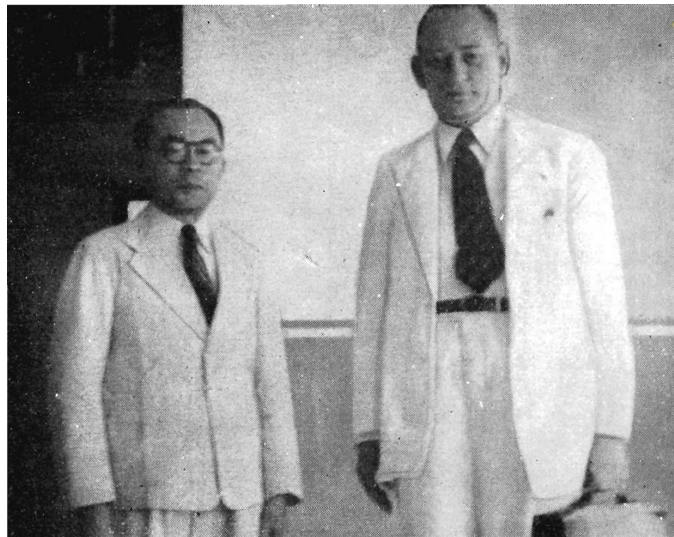
On November 4, Lieutenant Governor-General Van Mook turned over his authority to High Commissioner of the Crown Beel and said goodbye to the country where he had been born, raised, and worked for more than three decades. Netherlands Indies officials waved as he boarded a plane. Van Mook was bitter about the treatment he had received from policymakers in The Hague and frustrated because he had not been allowed to “finish the job.” In his final speech, the last Dutch Lieutenant Governor-General spoke of the convictions and ideals that had inspired his work. Although disappointed in Republicans for seeking unity through common resistance to the Dutch, he underlined his belief that many people in both camps desired peace, and expressed the hope that cooperation between Indonesia and the Netherlands would continue indefinitely. “We survived the doctoring of the Indonesian case by no fewer than fifteen foreign physicians, not all of whom contributed to her healing,” Van Mook said not without pride and in a slighting

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<sup>628</sup> British Ambassador in The Hague Sir P. Nichols to Foreign Office, 22 October 1948, CO 537/3342, BNA.

reference to the meddling of those whom he considered amateurs in Indonesian affairs. “We have not yet reached the Promised Land, but we can see it before us.”<sup>629</sup>

Two weeks after the presentation of the Dutch counterproposals to the Cochran plan to the Republic, the Netherlands government sent Minister Stikker to the Indonesian archipelago for direct negotiations with Prime Minister Hatta. This circumvention of the Good Offices Committee meant that neither the American draft nor the Netherlands plan was ever discussed in detail. Cochran, although increasingly concerned about the sincerity of the Dutch and convinced that the Netherlands government was preparing for a second military offensive against the Republic, was anxious to get the two politicians together for one-on-one negotiations. It was crucial, the American delegate underlined in a personal meeting with Stikker, that the Netherlands reveal better faith.



24. Hatta and Stikker

The Dutchman in turn assured Cochran that although there were divisions within his government and rightist Catholic elements advocated military action, he himself was “from the center” and had come to seek a peaceful solution.<sup>630</sup>

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<sup>629</sup> Van Mook to Netherlands Queen Juliana, 12 October 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 207; Van Mook to Drees, 12 October 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 208; Speech Van Mook in: Neher to Drees, 4 November 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 282.

Cochran's faith in and admiration of Stikker grew when the latter volunteered to go to Yogyakarta and make "as friendly an approach to Republican leaders as the situation allowed." Indonesian sources show us that Mohammad Roem was wary, however. In his notes on the upcoming talks between the Netherlands Foreign Minister and Hatta, he observed that the Dutch reluctance to engage in substantive discussions unless Republican troops strictly observed the ceasefire betrayed the Dutch unwillingness to break a vicious cycle of violence. Cochran himself had intimated, Roem said, that the Netherlands delegation wanted to "torpedo" his proposal. The American diplomat in his cables to Washington moreover rightly observed that Stikker's attitude was markedly different from that of other Netherlands officials.<sup>631</sup>

High Commissioner Beel, for example, believed that renewed military action was unavoidable. He somberly spoke of a "drifting process" across the board; militarily, economically, and socially, he argued, the conditions in the archipelago were deteriorating. Cochran could not be trusted. The present Republican government lacked authority, he claimed, and was unable and unwilling to restore law and order by

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<sup>630</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 29 October 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 439-441; Livengood to Secretary of State, 1 November 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 446-449.

<sup>631</sup> Notes Roem, 1 November 1948, *Yogya Dokumen*, no. 5247, *Arsip Nasional*, Jakarta (hereafter cited as ARSIP); Livengood to Secretary of State, 4 November 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 453-457.

taking strong measures against the increasing number of violations of the truce agreement. The situation was becoming untenable, Beel concluded.<sup>632</sup>

Under the direction of Army Commander S.H. Spoor and Vice-Admiral A.S. Pinke, the Dutch military top in Jakarta spent the month of October preparing a large operation. The demobilization of Netherlands troops had been postponed; Dutch troops now totaled some 130,000 troops. These soldiers, airmen, and marines were to destruct the Republic through the swift capture of the city of Yogyakarta followed by the seizure of all territory in Java and Sumatra not yet under Dutch control. After disorganizing the enemy and securing the cooperation of the Indonesian people, the plan said, the troops were to “sanitize” and “pacify” the newly occupied areas. Although these proposals included some references to expected levels of resistance, they lacked a detailed analysis of the power and plans of Republican forces and their leadership; all was aimed at the quick, successful, and permanent elimination of the Republic.<sup>633</sup>

First, however, diplomacy was to be given another chance. Cochran believed this would be its last. “No one could have come to Batavia with a more friendly

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<sup>632</sup> Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 29 September 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 124. As we saw in the previous chapter was the case with the phrase “*fait accompli*,” the term “drifting process” (Dutch: *afglijdingsproces*) seems to have been a favorite with policymakers at the time. In Dutch, the word indicates a process of sliding or slipping down that is difficult to stop or gain control of without forceful action. Unfortunately, the term does not have a correspondingly illustrative translation in English. High Commissioner Beel and military men like Army Commander S.H. Spoor were particularly fond of using the word to describe the deteriorating Dutch position in the Indonesian archipelago to the cabinet in The Hague, and to point to what they believed to be the slow but steady loss of Dutch military, political, and economic strength in Indonesia.

<sup>633</sup> Doel, 314; P.M.H. Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen: Het Nederlands militair-strategisch beleid in Indonesië 1945-1950* (The Hague: Sdu, 1991), 141, 144-145.

attitude toward the Netherlands than I did,” he wrote to Washington in early November. It had nevertheless become clear to him that the Dutch government was determined to settle the Indonesian question on its own terms, and that renewed conflict was perhaps inevitable. In order to prevent this, he argued, the United States might have to consider cutting off financial assistance to the Netherlands. “We have the responsibility,” he noted, “not to put funds into [a Dutch] colonial enterprise involving military suppression of truly nationalistic aspirations.” This type of pressure would be more effective than moral persuasion, Cochran concluded.<sup>634</sup>

But it seemed that Stikker and Hatta were making headway in their direct discussions. Back in Jakarta to inform Beel and his aides, the Foreign Minister underlined that the Republican Prime Minister had made significant political concessions. His government had also agreed to do what it could to curb the continuing violent incidents and hostile infiltrations that the Dutch cabinet in The Hague and administrators and military officers in Jakarta were laying such emphasis on. The remaining disagreements, Stikker wrote, were related to the role and powers of the High Commissioner during the interim period, the position of the Republican army within the proposed organization of federal forces, and the status of the Republic vis-à-vis the other members of the federative United States of Indonesia. The Foreign Minister privately added that his own position between the powerful conservative Catholics and the more progressive liberals in the Dutch cabinet was

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<sup>634</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 6 November 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 465-467.

uneasy; he was living “on a razor’s edge.” In The Hague, Sassen whispered he believed Stikker “too perfect a gentleman.”<sup>635</sup>

Stikker’s discussions with Hatta had led him to conclude that military action was as yet premature. Beel, Spoor, Pinke, and head of the Dutch delegation T. Elink Schuurman, in contrast, were reserved and pessimistic, and did no longer believe a mutually acceptable agreement could be reached. The Republic desired a dominant position in the interim federal government and eventual United States of Indonesia, they charged. Spoor, wedded to the idea that use of force was the only way to solve the “Indonesian problem,” complained that making more concessions meant that the interests of the Netherlands would disappear into the background. Beel confessed he could not see any evidence that Stikker’s bilateral talks had had satisfactory results. Only with difficulty did the Foreign Minister convince his colleagues on November 10 that the Netherlands government must be advised to negotiate further. A guardedly hopeful Stikker then left for The Hague to talk matters over personally with the Dutch cabinet.<sup>636</sup>

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<sup>635</sup> Verslag Stikker about journey to Indonesia, 10 November 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 313; Note by Chief Division Political Affairs of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Hendrik N. Boon, in: NIB, XV, p. 692, note 1. The views of the Republican government on their negotiations with the Dutch Foreign Minister become clear in an aide-mémoire printed in: Stikker to Sassen, 10 November 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 311. In his memoirs, Stikker characterized these discussions with Hatta as frank and direct. He appreciated the Indonesian Prime Minister as a serious, kind, and intelligent man whose line of thinking, he argued, corresponded closely with his own. “We viewed ourselves,” he later wrote, “as engaged as equals in finding solutions to serious problems.” They could only do so by being honest and pragmatic and guided by the interests of their peoples; no sentiments or resentments should influence them. After initial reservations and hopelessness, their meetings grew friendlier, although Stikker also became aware of “the hostile determination” of Republicans to “defend what [they] believed they had achieved.” See: Stikker, 122-131.

<sup>636</sup> Brief report meeting, 10 November 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 312.

In Washington, American planners breathed a small sigh of relieve. Lovett told Ambassador Herman B. Baruch in the Netherlands that the Department felt encouraged by Stikker's "forthright attitude [...] and apparent intention and ability to cut through preliminaries to the essentials of the problem."<sup>637</sup> If a voluntary agreement could be reached on a conference level without assistance of the Good Offices Committee, the Undersecretary of State told Cochran, the Department "would of course be delighted."<sup>638</sup> The American delegate admitted that Stikker's approach offered the greatest possibility for a settlement, but repeated that the strongest argument the United States could bring up against those influential Dutchmen who preferred military action was the financial one.<sup>639</sup>

With the Foreign Minister en route back to The Hague, Beel cabled his colleagues in the city to ensure his dissenting opinion was heard. He had just had a meeting with the Indonesian leaders who represented the Dutch-created federal states, he noted.<sup>640</sup> Their growing frustration and impatience with Netherlands administrators had made clear to the High Commissioner that, contrary to the advice that the Foreign Minister was to give the cabinet, only immediate armed action could prevent disaster.<sup>641</sup> Three days after this telegram, he went as far as saying that

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<sup>637</sup> Lovett to United States Ambassador in The Hague H.B. Baruch, 10 November 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 478.

<sup>638</sup> Lovett to Livengood, 10 November 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 478-479.

<sup>639</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 11 November 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 481-484.

<sup>640</sup> Recently united in a Federal Consultative Assembly, or BFO.

<sup>641</sup> High Commissioner of the Crown in Indonesia L.J.M. Beel to Sassen, 12 November 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 320.

Stikker's travels to Yogyakarta had increased unrest and insecurity among pro-Dutch federalists in the archipelago. The population of the Dutch-created *negaras* West Java, East Sumatra, South Borneo, and East Indonesia feared Republican domination and felt betrayed by the Netherlands government, Beel stated. He also maintained that an atmosphere of dispiritedness had become sensible among increasingly defeatist Dutch troops and officers. The attitude of the weak Republican government was irreconcilable with Dutch demands for order and security, the High Commissioner concluded.<sup>642</sup>

The Netherlands government proved divided. Stikker argued it was still possible to come to a peaceful solution. Minister of the Colonies Sassen asked sarcastically if the Foreign Minister had perhaps forgotten to insist with Hatta on the need for the Republic to put a stop to ceasefire infringements. Drees stressed that the Prime Minister had made concessions and seemed to want to come to an agreement. The ministers eventually agreed to make another attempt at attaining an accord; Sassen and Stikker would receive strict instructions, travel to the archipelago accompanied by a group of advisers, and outline certain minimum principles and demands that the Republican government was to swiftly and unconditionally accept in order for negotiations to resume.<sup>643</sup>

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<sup>642</sup> Beel to Sassen, 15 November 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 325.

<sup>643</sup> Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 15 November 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 328; Sassen to Beel, 16 November 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 335.

In the third week of November, a full-fledged Netherlands delegation thus arrived in Indonesia to enter into substantive discussions guided by a directive from The Hague. Before the talks had even started, however, Stikker realized that subtle and informal meetings without stringent preconditions, like those he had had with Hatta, offered a better chance of success. The more conservative new delegation had less freedom to maneuver and was soon more concerned with the observation of the truce than with the need to find a solution to political points. When by the end of the month the Dutch politicians had failed to obtain from the Republican Prime Minister the binding declaration they sought, this second series of discussions broke down.<sup>644</sup>

Representatives in Yogyakarta admitted that the Dutch Foreign Minister had shown “courageous statesmanship and strength in seeking a fair solution.” Profound talks had nevertheless been unable to erase fundamental differences between the two parties. Sassen blamed Hatta for the failure, and accused him of receding from concessions made in earlier discussions with Stikker. The Dutch demands, the Minister insisted stubbornly, were entirely reasonable.<sup>645</sup> British Consul-General Francis Shepherd was closer on the mark, however, when he observed that the

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<sup>644</sup> Taylor, 153-156; Stikker, 128-131.

<sup>645</sup> Sassen to Indonesian Prime Minister Mohammad Hatta, 30 November 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 402.

Republic refused to accept the subordinate position Netherlands planners had devised for it.<sup>646</sup>

On December 2, Stikker informed the Good Offices Committee that despite the excellent atmosphere in which the discussions had taken place and his impression that both parties sincerely wished to come to a settlement, a deadlock had been the result. Cochran immediately inquired into the possibility of a second police action, not only giving the Dutch Foreign Minister “broad hints” about the likely negative reaction of the American public to such a course of action, but even stating bluntly that “[his] people would hit the ceiling.” The American diplomat admitted to Washington that Hatta’s reluctance to confirm the tentative agreements he had previously reached with Stikker had put the Dutch Foreign Minister in an embarrassing position, but underlined that it had been Sassen who had pushed the Republicans too far. The Indonesian Prime Minister had made considerable concessions, Cochran argued, while the Dutch had gone into the talks with “absolutely fixed positions.” He nevertheless still held hope that discussions might succeed, and asked the Department for help bringing the Dutch back to the negotiation table.<sup>647</sup>

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<sup>646</sup> British Consul-General in Jakarta Sir. Francis M. Shepherd to Foreign Office, 26 November 1948, CO 537/3342, BNA.

<sup>647</sup> Stikker and Sassen to Drees, 1 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 3; Verslag meetings Stikker with Good Offices Committee, 2 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 7; Livengood to Secretary of State, 2 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 506-509; Livengood to Secretary of State, 5 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 523-526.

Under pressure from the United States, then, the Dutch delegation of ministers invited Hatta to Jakarta for further discussion. The Prime Minister explained that the demands of the Netherlands government would be unacceptable to his cabinet. The Republic was prepared to accept the sovereignty of the Netherlands and large executive powers for the High Commissioner in theory, but required safeguards in the form of a protocol or “gentlemen’s agreement” that in practice limited this authority. The High Commissioner, for example, should be allowed to use federal forces in emergency situations only with the agreement of the federal government. Sassen and Stikker in response stressed that the sovereignty of the Netherlands over Indonesia could not merely be theoretical. They concluded that it was impossible to come to an agreement with Hatta’s government. Although they did not tell the Prime Minister, their minds had been made up; military action against the Republic had become inevitable. Visibly touched, the delegation reported to The Hague, Hatta said goodbye and left.<sup>648</sup>

Upon the Dutch ministry delegation’s arrival in the archipelago in late November, a large but remarkably short meeting had taken place between the visitors, High Commissioner Beel, and Indonesian federalist leaders. The heads of the various *negaras*, among whom the East Indonesian Prime Minister, Ide Anak Agung Gde

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<sup>648</sup> Kort verslag meeting Sassen, Stikker, Neher and Hatta, 4 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 19; Verslag meeting Stikker and Good Offices Committee, 4 December 1948, in: NIB, XI, no. 22; Ronald Gase, *Beel in Batavia: Van Contact tot Conflict, Verwikkelingen rond de Indonesische kwestie in 1948* (Amsterdam: Anthos, 1986), 249-256. For a thorough summary of the second Dutch ministry mission to Indonesia, see: Jaquet, 105-125.

Agung, Tengku Mansur from East Sumatra, and Sultan Hamid II from West Borneo, had asked to be allowed to become directly involved in negotiations with the Republic. When the Dutch refused this request, the Indonesian political leaders had warned that they were facing growing pro-Republican sentiment among the populations they were representing, and would be forced to resign their positions if the proposed interim federal government would not include representatives from Yogyakarta. They had moreover expressed their strong objection to a second Dutch police action. Federalists in the Dutch-created *negaras*, in short, were starting to believe that any provisional government in which the Republic did not participate was doomed. When the Dutch ministers left Jakarta for The Hague on December 5, however, they had only minimally informed these Indonesian leaders on whom they leaned for support of the latest developments and failure to reach an agreement. The Netherlands representatives had merely stated that it would be “inopportune” to talk about matters that had yet to be discussed with policymakers in The Hague. It was enough to inform the federalists, they believed, that the results of the negotiations were unsatisfactory.<sup>649</sup>

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<sup>649</sup> Brief report meeting chiefs of federal states and Beel, Sassen, Stikker, and Neher, 25 November 1948, in: NIB, XV, no. 378; Doel, 316; Brief report meeting Beel, Sassen, Stikker, Neher, and chiefs of federal states, 4 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 17. For a detailed and concise treatment of the role of Indonesian federalists, see: Richard Chavel, “Tarred with the Dutch Brush: The Fate of Federalism in Indonesia,” in: P.J. Drooglever and M.J.B. Schouten (eds.), *De Leeuw en de Banteng: Bijdragen aan het Congres over de Nederlands-Indonesische Betrekkingen 1945-1950* (The Hague, Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 1997), 201-219.

On December 7, the Netherlands government received an unexpected surprise in the form of an aide-mémoire from the State Department in Washington. At Cochran's urging, the paper expressed deep disappointment about the unilateral suspension of conversations with the Republicans. Given the extreme costliness of failure and Hatta's sincere desire to cooperate towards a solution, officials said, it was imperative that *bona fide* negotiations were resumed. "Successive American representatives on the Good Offices Committee and other neutral observers [had] come to identical conclusions," the paper stated; the "preponderant desire of the Indonesian people to govern themselves [found] its chief expression in the Republic, which must be considered not as a geographical concept but as a political force." If the Dutch resorted to force, the American people would be profoundly shocked, the goodwill of the Indonesian people would be replaced by bitterness and enmity, and "the nationalist movement [would come] under the sway of leaders with whom no truce or common understanding would be possible." In that case, the aide-mémoire sternly warned, the United States would have no choice but to take the Indonesian dispute before the Security Council, resign from the Good Offices Committee, and "consider itself free to take such measures as the changed circumstances might require."<sup>650</sup>

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<sup>650</sup> Department of State to Netherlands Embassy, Aide-Mémoire, 7 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 531-535.

The reaction of the Dutchman who was handed this American paper was one of “pained and angry surprise,” an embassy official noted. The Netherlands government believed that the aide-mémoire illustrated how little appreciation the leadership in Washington had for the length to which the Dutch delegation had gone to reach a settlement. Embittered by its harsh language, Stikker went as far as labeling the document an “unfriendly act.”<sup>651</sup>

The Dutch cabinet, however, chose to obstinately disregard the carefully prepared paper. Van Kleffens’s dissenting voice, and his argument that renewed military action would result in “serious and prolonged loss of prestige” for the Dutch, was barely heard. Although the ambassador underlined that Americans believed another offensive could not possibly be successful, and warned that “the Netherlands government, as a government of a nation that [did not] wish to go under, could not afford to keep rowing against the strong tide that [moved] the world,” the Dutch cabinet spent little time discussing the aide-mémoire.<sup>652</sup>

It is therefore no surprise, perhaps, that the official Netherlands reply to the paper on December 10 boldly argued that the views and recommendations it contained were based on “an insufficient understanding of the circumstances which [had] led to the present situation.” The Dutch delegation had in fact made scrupulous

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<sup>651</sup> Chargé at United States Embassy in The Hague L.V. Steere to Secretary of State, 7 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 530-531; Nichols to Foreign Office, 8 December 1948, CO 537/3342, BNA; Stikker, 138-139.

<sup>652</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 12 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 549-550; Van Kleffens to Stikker, 9 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 44.

attempts to come to an agreement, officials in The Hague argued to their colleagues in Washington, but believed that further concessions from the Netherlands government rather than strengthening Hatta's cabinet would "inevitably lead to increased demands by irresponsible extremist[s]," and in effect qualify as surrender. The Dutch government saw two alternatives. Either the Republicans confirmed their willingness to "recognize Netherlands sovereignty during the interim period in principle and practice," or the cabinet would be "obliged to make a final decision concerning the matter in which it could best implement its formal pledges to the people of the Netherlands and Indonesia."<sup>653</sup>

In early December, a disappointed Prime Minister Drees said he believed military action would be "catastrophic," but at the same time admitted he did not think it could be avoided; further concessions would be equivalent to an abandonment of the archipelago, and this he believed ran contrary to the responsibilities of the Netherlands.<sup>654</sup> Reports from Jakarta, meanwhile, added cause for concern. The lack of a clear declaration by the Netherlands government had led to unrest, unease, and distrust in the east of the archipelago, Beel reported, where a

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<sup>653</sup> Netherlands Embassy to Department of State, Aide-Mémoire, 10 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 544-548. Curiously, Van Kleffens reported to Stikker that when handed Lovett the Dutch response, the Undersecretary told him that he had just ordered Cochran to once more approach Hatta, and wanted to give Livengood the instruction to "give those fellows [the Republicans] hell." Lovett also told Van Kleffens over the phone that same day that Cochran had pointed out to Sukarno and Hatta that their standpoint on the matter of Netherlands sovereignty was "incorrect." These points were brought up by Stikker in the Council of Ministers, which may well have given the cabinet in The Hague the impression that the State Department well understood the Dutch point of view. See: Van Kleffens to Stikker, 11 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 53; Van Kleffens to Stikker, 11 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 63.

<sup>654</sup> Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 8 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 36; Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 9 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 41.

Republican “goodwill mission” was about to arrive at the express invitation of Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung.<sup>655</sup> General Spoor warned that the number of violent incidents was steadily increasing and that Republican troop movements alarmed him, but assured the Netherlands government that his forces could handle a Yogyakarta-inspired guerilla war. During a momentous cabinet meeting on December 13, the Netherlands government unanimously decided to authorize the High Commissioner to finalize preparations and execute the planned police action. The UN Security Council would start their Christmas recess on the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> of the month, and by the time it reconvened in mid January, Netherlands officials predicted, everything would be “passé.”<sup>656</sup>

On the same day that fateful decision was made, and at Cochran’s suggestion, Prime Minister Hatta hastily wrote a conciliatory letter containing further compromises. The Republic accepted “fully and without qualification” the principles of the Renville Agreement, he noted, including Netherlands sovereignty during the interim period. His cabinet maintained its request that the Dutch self-impose restraints and limitations on the exercise of their powers, however. This was in full accord, Hatta stated, “with the manner in which sovereignty [found] expression in the modern democratic states of Europe and America.” The Prime Minister further

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<sup>655</sup> Commissioner of the Crown for East Indonesia J.J. Mendelaar to Beel, 13 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 69.

<sup>656</sup> Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 13 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 73; Netherlands Labor Party Leader M. van der Goes van Naters to Drees, 2 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 10.

argued that the Republic was ready to resume negotiations. In effect, Australian Good Offices Committee delegate and staunchly pro-Republican Thomas K. Critchley reported to Canberra, this letter met the Dutch insistence on legal sovereignty “without giving way on the practical need of safeguards against its abuse.” Van Kleffens immediately informed Stikker that the State Department had labeled Hatta’s urgent missive “an excellent piece” that offered “adequate and practical grounds” on which discussions should be resumed.<sup>657</sup>

For the Dutch Prime Minister and his labor party colleagues, the letter was indeed enough reason to overturn their decision from the previous day. The Catholic ministers disagreed, however; they did not think Hatta had satisfied Dutch demands or that his note should lead to the postponement of military action. On December 14, this difference in opinion between the two factions led to a cabinet crisis. Minister of the Colonies Sassen argued that Hatta’s letter contained “escape clauses” that clearly showed his government’s unwillingness to concede to the Dutch on the most important points. For Drees and Stikker, the very fact that the letter had been sent at all was reason to delay the military offensive; the international community would surely state that the Netherlands government was not at this point justified to resort

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<sup>657</sup> Elink Schuurman to Sassen, 13 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 74; Australian delegate to the Good Offices Committee Thomas K. Critchley to Department of External Affairs, 14 December 1948, in: Philip Dorling (ed.), *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1994), Volume XIII, no. 370; Van Kleffens to Stikker, 14 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 90; Lovett to Livengood, 14 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 558-559; Reed to Butterworth, 15 December 1948, RG59, 856D.00/12-1548, NARA.

to force, they responded. The Prime Minister in particular believed Hatta's effort afforded the Dutch a last opportunity to reach a peaceful solution.

Dissension inside the Netherlands cabinet was marked. While the Catholics pressed for strong action, Drees, who the British ambassador in The Hague reported looked "more tired and grey" than ever before, weakened in his resistance. Stikker, the ambassador observed, had "more courage and imagination than the others" and "still some fight left in him." Officials in London voiced the prevailing sentiment of the international community when they expressed their hope that the Netherlands government would "on no account fail to grasp this opportunity of achieving an eleventh-hour settlement."<sup>658</sup>

The crisis was sworn off the following day, when the cabinet decided to ask the Republican Prime Minister for further clarifications. Hatta was to explain whether his letter had been a personal and informal one, or whether it had reflected the opinion and carried the approval of his entire government. Minister Sassen drew up a stern and unconciliatory draft response that warned Republicans that "the Netherlands government could only reconsider its point of view that the continuation of negotiations [was] futile if a binding declaration [from them] would be received

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<sup>658</sup> Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 14 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 85; Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 14 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 88; Nichols to Foreign Office, 16 December 1948, CO 537/3342, BNA; Foreign Office to Nichols, 17 December 1948, C) 537/3342, BNA.

forthwith.” This reply was cabled to Jakarta, where it was to be handed to Cochran for submission to Hatta without delay.<sup>659</sup>

High Commissioner Beel reluctantly agreed to postpone the start of the police action for twenty-four hours, but he did not send the Netherlands ultimatum to the American delegate until the next day.<sup>660</sup> This left the Indonesian Prime Minister less than twenty hours for a reply. Warning that federalists in West Java and East Indonesia were stirring at the anticipated outbreak of hostilities, and that he had already had to declare a state of emergency in South Borneo, Beel moreover asked the government in The Hague to grant him the sole authority of judging whether the Republican response was satisfactory.<sup>661</sup>

After refusing Beel this power of decision, the Dutch council of ministers met at the crack of dawn on December 18, waiting to hear if Hatta’s reply indicated that his earlier letter had been a formal expression of the position of his government. Washington officials again urged the Netherlands cabinet to exercise restraint; it seemed incredible, a Department official noted, that the Dutch could resort to force because of this “self-generated emergency.”<sup>662</sup> Cochran, meanwhile, was understandably furious. He told the head of the Netherlands delegation in Jakarta that

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<sup>659</sup> Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 15 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 94; Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 15 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 95; Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 15 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 96; Sassen to Dutch delegation in Jakarta, 16 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 98.

<sup>660</sup> Elink Schuurman to Sassen, 16 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 111.

<sup>661</sup> Beel to Sassen, 17 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 124; Beel to Sassen, 18 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 140; Mendelaar to Beel, 16 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 100.

<sup>662</sup> Memorandum of conversation by Butterworth, 18 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 571-572.

he could not “in justice press Hatta for an immediate reply which [called] not for a mere expression of willingness to resume negotiations, but rather for surrender to the position of [the Dutch] government on every material point.”<sup>663</sup> When Beel announced the lack of a Republican response to The Hague, Prime Ministers Drees decided the military offensive would commence the following morning.<sup>664</sup>

In his explanation to policymakers in the American capital, Cochran stated that he had been in serious doubt as to whether he should even deliver the Dutch ultimatum to the Indonesian Prime Minister or try to “extract from [him] in a few hours the basic settlement that [the Netherlands delegation] had failed to obtain.” The more adamant and threatening the Dutch became, the diplomat remarked, “the more guarded [he would] have to become in handling or meeting their unreasonable ultimata and running their erratic errands.”<sup>665</sup> At the eve of the renewed outbreak of hostilities in Indonesia, American officials warned their colleagues in the Netherlands one last time that they were doing themselves “a grave disservice” and that “very unhappy times [would be] in store for many.”<sup>666</sup> Undersecretary Lovett cabled Acting U.S. representative to the Security Council Philip C. Jessup, currently in Paris, that a

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<sup>663</sup> Elink Schuurman to Sassen, 18 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 138; Elink Schuurman to Sassen, 19 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 159.

<sup>664</sup> Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 18 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 141. For an interesting view of the eventful days between the return of the Dutch delegation of ministers to the Netherlands and the decision to start the second policy action from Sassen’s point of view, see: Sassen to Beel, 22 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 215.

<sup>665</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 18 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 574-576. British Consul-General Shepherd well understood Cochran’s fury at the Dutch position; on 20 December he himself noted the “regrettably Hitlerian tang of [the Dutch] recent announcements and communications.” See: Shepherd to Foreign Office, 20 December 1948, Foreign Office Files (FO) 810/11, BNA.

<sup>666</sup> Memorandum of conversation by Butterworth, 18 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 578-579.

new campaign would make it necessary for the Council to meet in an emergency session.<sup>667</sup>

Despite the numerous British and American warnings that the Dutch military strategy made long-term success in the Indonesian archipelago highly doubtful if not impossible, the second offensive, codenamed Operation Crow, started expeditiously. The main objective, in contrast to the first police action seventeen months previous, was the occupation of Yogyakarta and elimination of the Republican leadership. An air raid by the Dutch in American B-25 Mitchell bombers and the dropping of almost a thousand paratroopers on nearby airport Maguwo left troops only a short march to the presidential palace in the center of the capital. To their surprise, they found almost the entire cabinet in an emergency meeting. The Republican leadership, who had expected the United States to prevent an attack and who considered it dishonorable to be captured in flight, had decided not to evacuate. President Sukarno, Prime Minister Hatta, Foreign Minister Haji Agus Salim, adviser Sutan Sjahrir, and many others were arrested and placed under house arrest on December 19. In the days that followed, Sukarno, Salim, and Sjahrir were flown to Prapat, an isolated community on Lake

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<sup>667</sup> Lovett to Acting United States Representative at the United Nations Philip C. Jessup, 18 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 577-578.

Toba in north Sumatra, and Hatta was transported to the island of Bangka off Sumatra's east coast.<sup>668</sup>

General Sudirman, commander of the Indonesian forces but seriously ill with tuberculosis, managed to broadcast an order to Republican troops to continue their resistance just before the radio station was bombed by Dutch airplanes, and then left the city. Dutch commander Spoor did not expect to meet much resistance, nor fear guerilla warfare; he had argued to Beel and the Netherlands government that taking out Yogyakarta would signal the end of organized Republican operations and resistance, and that the morale of Indonesian forces would be low. Once Dutch troops could offer “permanent security” from Republican terror in newly occupied territory, the population would moreover openly demonstrate its support, Spoor predicted optimistically.<sup>669</sup> Sources from the Republican Ministry of Information, however, hint that the commander was likely to be proven wrong; in the report Republicans drew up about George Kahin's travels through Republican territory near Magelang in early December, the relations between TNI forces and the Indonesian people are described as “like between fish and water.”<sup>670</sup>

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<sup>668</sup> Bernard Dahm, *History of Indonesia in the Twentieth Century* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1971), 136-137; Salim Said, *Genesis of power: General Sudirman and the Indonesian military in politics, 1945-49* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1991), 96-101; Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 336-339. Note that George Kahin was himself in Yogyakarta at the start of the second military offensive. The commander of the airplane that was to take the Republican leaders to their places of internment was only allowed to open his very secret orders once in the air. He learned he was to drop off Hatta and a few others on Bangka, and fly Sukarno, Sjahrir, and Agus Salim to Medan. From there the latter were first driven to Brastagi, a mountain resort south of the city, and eventually taken to Prapat on January 1. See: Giebels, 465-467.

<sup>669</sup> Groen, 173-179; Gase, 284-286.

<sup>670</sup> Report of the journeys of George Kahin, 1-6 December 1948, *Yogya Dokumen*, no. 5378, ARSIP.

During the week that followed the start of the offensive, Netherlands forces indeed reached and seized control of the remaining Republican cities on Java and Sumatra.<sup>671</sup> Beel soon recommended to Sassen that the Dutch cabinet no longer use the terms “Republic” or “Republican territory;” the military campaign, the High Commissioner reasoned, had terminated the Republic as a party in the conflict. On that same ground, the government could and should forcefully reject any outside meddling in the Indonesian dispute as “unacceptable and unjustified.”<sup>672</sup>

Acting Head of the Indonesian delegation to the UN Sumitro Djohadikusumo, however, held a contrary opinion. He told American officials that the Netherlands action was “a fragrant violation” of international agreements and obligations in general, and of the Renville Agreement in particular. The Republic sincerely desired to reach an amicable settlement, he argued, and had been able to maintain itself, despite constant Dutch attacks, due to the wide popular support it enjoyed. The present offensive, Sumitro warned Secretary Marshall, would spark widespread social unrest, and the Republic was “grimly and firmly determined to defend [its] freedom with all the means available to [it].” The prominent Indonesian economist and later Minister of Finance also requested that the United States government render its full political and economic support to the Republic. The

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<sup>671</sup> See appendices for helpful maps.

<sup>672</sup> Shepherd to Foreign Office, 19 December 1948, CO 537/3342, BNA; Beel to Sassen, 19 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 156; Beel to Sassen, 22 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 210; Beel to Sassen, 20 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 175.

Netherlands was diverting American aid dollars to the archipelago “for the purpose of waging a colonial war against freedom loving people,” he argued, echoing Cochran’s sentiments. Undersecretary Lovett responded that his government “profoundly regretted the turn of events” and said that although the cessation of financial aid to the Netherlands was a difficult issue, the matter of continuing the assistance that was flowing through the Netherlands to the Indies “was receiving [his] utmost attention.”<sup>673</sup>

Department officials, although critical of the Dutch decision to resume military action, made clear to Jessup that he should make every effort to prevent having to act unilaterally in the Security Council.<sup>674</sup> President Truman agreed that the United States should avoid taking any action that would “involve [the country] subsequently.”<sup>675</sup> “We do not desire,” Lovett cabled to Paris, where the Council was meeting for a UN conference, “that the United States assume a position of outstanding and solitary leadership in dealing with this case.” Jessup was encouraged to associate with, for example, the Australian and Belgian delegates in considering possible courses of action. The main objective for the emergency meeting was to express concern at the

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<sup>673</sup> Acting Head of Indonesian Delegation to the United Nations Sumitro Djojohadikusumo to Secretary of State, 19 December 1948, 501.BC Indonesia/12-1948, NARA; Memorandum of conversation Lovett, 20 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 590-592. The Netherlands had at this point received almost \$300 million in aid, and Indonesia just over \$60 million. See also: “Indonesians Urge U.S. Halt Dutch Aid,” *New York Times*, 21 December 1948, 7.

<sup>674</sup> Franks to Foreign Office, 19 December 1948, CO 537/3342, BNA; Franks to Foreign Office, 26 December 1948, CO 537/3343, BNA.

<sup>675</sup> Memorandum of conversation by Lovett, 20 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 587-588.

violation of the Council's ceasefire order and to issue a warning to the two parties the fighting should stop at once.<sup>676</sup>

Dean Rusk, then working at the State Department's Office of United Nations Affairs, summarized the difficulties of the American position. The resumption of hostilities in Indonesia brought into conflict a number of important interests, he set off. "On one hand we are deeply interested in political and economic stability of Western European countries and in the solidarity of Western Europe as a whole. On the other hand, we have a long established policy favoring the rapid development of non-self-governing people toward self-government and independence." The Dutch police action, he went on, constituted a "serious blow" to the prospect of self-government in Indonesia "under moderate nationalist elements." Although the United States did not desire to support UN sanctions against the Netherlands or bring about a break with the Dutch over the Indonesian question, it must not be seen to support "either directly or indirectly Dutch military action" and be cautious to "act in good faith" as a member of the United Nations. "We must avoid," Rusk warned Jessup, "putting ourselves in such a position that any wrong committed anywhere in the world and left unpunished constitutes a diplomatic defeat and humiliation for the United States." Instead, he suggested, a "clear and full exposition of the course of

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<sup>676</sup> Lovett to Jessup, 18 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 577-578; Lovett to Jessup, 19 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 585-586. Van Kleffens, incidentally, also argued to Lovett that the United States might associate itself with other powers rather than act alone, which he feared would likely have a bad effect on Dutch public opinion. See: Memorandum of conversation by Assistant Chief of Division of Southeast Asian Affairs William Lacy, 19 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 583-584.

events” in the Security Council might create the pressure needed for the Dutch to resume their seats at the negotiating table.<sup>677</sup>

Jessup followed instructions, and during the Security Council meeting on December 22 denounced the Dutch offensive by stating that his government “[failed] to find any justification for the renewal of military operations in Indonesia.” He called for an order to both parties to cease hostilities immediately.<sup>678</sup> Dutch representative to the United Nations J.H. van Roijen countered with allegations against the Republic and emphasized the importance of the federalists in the Indonesian question. The police action had not, he argued, altered the political aim of his government, which was to establish a sovereign and independent Indonesia.<sup>679</sup> A draft resolution filed by Jessup and signed by the Colombian and Syrian representatives called for the immediate withdrawal of armed forces to the truce lines stipulated in the Renville Agreement, but did not receive enough support to be passed.<sup>680</sup> On that same day, however, the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), which oversaw Marshall Plan aid, did suspend financial assistance to the Netherlands Indies. At the urgent request of the Dutch, however, this decision was expressly motivated as “dictated by economic considerations” rather than political ones; “pending the clarification of the

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<sup>677</sup> Rusk to Jessup, 23 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 597-600.

<sup>678</sup> *United Nations Security Council, Official Records, 3<sup>rd</sup> year*, 389<sup>th</sup> meeting, 22 December 1948, 42-49.

<sup>679</sup> Taylor, 172-174.

<sup>680</sup> “Resolution Weakened,” *New York Times*, 22 December 1948, 1; “U.S. Will Demand Dutch End Attack in Java Forthwith,” *New York Times*, 22 December 1948, 1; Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 339-340. In 1948, the elected non-permanent members of the Security Council were Argentina, Colombia, Canada, Ukraine, Syria, and Belgium. The permanent members: United States, United Kingdom, France, USSR, and China.

situation” in Indonesia, an ECA spokesman declared, there was no reasonable assurance that the aid could be distributed efficiently among people and contribute to the area’s economic recovery.<sup>681</sup>

The international reaction to the Dutch offensive was one of outrage. Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru labeled it “contrary to the principles of the United Nations Charter,” warned the Dutch they could not possibly achieve their objectives, and pledged to end the alien domination of Asia. The age of imperialism, he said, was over.<sup>682</sup> The *New York Times*, taking a stiffer line than the previous year in an atmosphere of hardening public opinion, argued that the renewed outbreak of violence constituted the shocking and tragic breaking of a promise by a people for whom “the whole western world [had] deep admiration and affection.”<sup>683</sup> Most of the Dutch press described the step as a bitter necessity and stressed the need for national unity.<sup>684</sup>

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<sup>681</sup> Administrator Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) Paul G. Hoffman to Van Kleffens, 22 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 223. In a press conference that same day, however, Undersecretary Lovett did intimate that some aspect of the decision to cut financial assistance to the Indonesian archipelago had also been political. Prime Minister Drees personally ordered Beel not to make any announcements about the cessation of Marshall Aid to Indonesia; the Netherlands government expressly desired to keep publicity regarding this sensitive decision in hand. See: NIB, XVI, p. 299, note 1; Drees to Beel, 22 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 224.

<sup>682</sup> “Nehru Denounces Dutch Java Action,” *New York Times*, 20 December 1948, 1. See also: Aide-Mémoire Government of India to United States State Department, 21 December 1948, RG59, 856D.00/12-2148, NARA.

<sup>683</sup> “The Broken Promise,” *New York Times*, 23 December 1948, 18.

<sup>684</sup> Nichols to Foreign Office, 22 December 1948, CO 537/3343, BNA.

When the Security Council met again on December 24 it passed a compromise resolution that no longer called for a withdrawal of forces, but still ordered the parties to cease hostilities. It moreover required the Dutch to release political prisoners.<sup>685</sup> American officials urged the Dutch to abide by it. In conversations with their British colleagues, State Department officials expressed the hope that these immediate, multilateral, “reasonable and moderate measures” would reduce pressure on the United States to take “more extreme measures ultimately.” In the same vein, financial aid to Indonesia had been suspended in the hope that it might reduce pressure to halt the still unrestricted assistance to the Netherlands.<sup>686</sup>

The Indonesian delegation in the UN was bitterly disappointed about the latest resolution, calling it “meaningless and completely inadequate.” It would allow Dutch “mopping-up” operations to continue, representatives charged.<sup>687</sup> In Jakarta, High Commissioner Beel was equally dissatisfied, and argued that the Netherlands government must reject the Security Council’s demands. The federalists in the

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<sup>685</sup> The resolution was an amended version of the December 22 resolution. Seven representatives supported it while the other four (France, Belgium, USSR, and Ukraine) abstained.

<sup>686</sup> Memorandum of conversation Lovett, 24 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 602-603; Lovett to United States Embassy in London, 24 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 603; “Capital in a Dilemma on Indonesian Policy,” *New York Times*, 26 December 1948, E3. This view was reinforced during a discussion between the Indian ambassador in Washington, Rusk, and Butterworth on 3 January, 1948. See: Memorandum of conversation by Acting Assistance Chief of the Division of South Asian Affairs Joseph S. Sparks, 3 January 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 123-125.

<sup>687</sup> “Dr. Soemitro Calls Resolution “Meaningless” – Withdrawal to Pre-Attack Lines Urged,” *New York Times*, 25 December 1948, 3.

archipelago, he warned wildly, would only be willing to continue cooperating with Netherlands officials if The Hague held firm in the face of opposition to its policy.<sup>688</sup>

Not having fully realized that the Security Council was concerned not only with the fate of the Republic, but also with its own prestige and dignity in the aftermath of the second military offensive in the archipelago, Dutch ministers admitted they had not expected the Council to convene in an emergency meeting and openly condemn their decision to resort to force. In a cabinet meeting on December 27, Foreign Minister Stikker explained it would be unwise to follow Beel's suggestion of publicly declaring the Republic no longer to exist. Prime Minister Drees agreed, noting that although its territory and leaders had been seized, the Republic was clearly still a "political idea" in the international community. Both believed that the Netherlands could not terminate military operations before the goals of the police action were met, however. Other ministers dryly commented that they had replaced Van Mook so that important decisions could be made in The Hague rather than Jakarta, but that High Commissioner Beel was acting more independently than the Lieutenant Governor-General had ever done.<sup>689</sup>

When the Security Council next took up the Indonesian question, Netherlands representative Van Roijen, under strict instructions, did little more than declare that the Dutch were giving the December 24 resolution "serious attention." He reiterated

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<sup>688</sup> Beel to Sassen, 25 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 265.

<sup>689</sup> Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 27 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 298.

the familiar argument that the dispute lay outside the competence of the United Nations. The Dutch delegate also contended that the military offensive had not generally led to “hostilities on a large scale,” and stated that its operational phase was in the process of being completed. The goal of the government in The Hague, Van Roijen concluded, remained the earliest possible formation of a federal interim government, the creation of a representative body, and the transfer of sovereignty to a United States of Indonesia within the framework of a Netherlands-Indonesia Union.<sup>690</sup>

This statement did not satisfy the Security Council, and made clear that the Netherlands government had not taken any positive steps to fulfill the provisions of its previous resolution. The general impression was, Jessup cabled from Paris, that the Dutch were “getting away with” deliberately snubbing the Council. Further action was called for to save the prestige of the UN, he said. The State Department agreed.<sup>691</sup>

On December 28, during the last meeting of the year before it was to adjourn until the second week of January 1949, the Security Council passed two more resolutions. The first was a Chinese sponsored resolution that ordered the immediate release of the Republican leaders. The second was introduced by Colombia, and called

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<sup>690</sup> *United Nations Security Council, Official Records, 3<sup>rd</sup> year, 393<sup>rd</sup> meeting, 27 December 1948, 2-3; Stikker to Van Roijen, 25 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 272.*

<sup>691</sup> *Ambassador in Paris Jefferson Caffery to Secretary of State, 27 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 607-608; Lovett to Jessup, 27 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 608.*

for an investigation of the observation of the Council's ceasefire order.<sup>692</sup> Both resolutions were accepted, but importantly, neither demanded a withdrawal of Netherlands troops. The following day Van Roijen nevertheless expressed his acute disappointment with the resolutions. He said that Netherlands Indies authorities were about to lift the restrictions on the political prisoners' freedom of movement, although they had to promise not to engage in "subversive action." He also again stated that the military offensive would soon be terminated, but warned that the Netherlands government considered itself authorized to undertake additional measures against what Van Roijen labeled "disturbing elements," a convenient term that in effect covered continuing operations against those Indonesians loyal to the Republic.<sup>693</sup> What these statements in the Security Council in late December illustrate is that Dutch fears centered on others forcing the pace towards independence for the Indonesian archipelago, stealing the initiative from the Netherlands planners, and preventing them from carrying out their original program.

During the last days of the year, the military progress reports officers sent from the archipelago became increasingly gloomy. The offensive had gone more or less according to plan; troops had faced little resistance from or contact with Indonesian

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<sup>692</sup> Caffery to Secretary of State, 28 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 611-612.

<sup>693</sup> Taylor, 174-176; Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 29 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 331; Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 341-343. In 1949, Cuba replaced Colombia, and Egypt replaced Syria, and Norway replaced Belgium on the Security Council. The other non-permanent members were Argentina, Canada, and Ukraine.

soldiers and easily occupied what little Republican territory remained. Enemy forces, however, had efficiently employed scorched earth tactics and left utter destruction in the wake of their strategic retreat from the main centers on Java and Sumatra. It slowly became clear that Spoor had underestimated the Republican preparations for a prolonged guerilla war. The Dutch faced constant attacks upon their positions in the form of nightly shootings, raids on convoys, the sabotaging of bridges and roads, and campaigns of terror and infiltration. The “terrorist army,” as Netherlands military leaders called it, had an unexpectedly high morale, and had seemingly come out of the fight without a scratch. Observers began to speak of “orgies of destruction” and informed Beel that it was dangerous to draw “premature conclusions” from the Dutch Indies army’s swift occupation of enemy territory. Netherlands Indies officials noted that the population of the areas formerly under Yogyakarta’s administration was fearful of cooperation with Dutch forces, and although they had driven out Republican troops, “complete suppression of political awareness” among Indonesians appeared impossible.<sup>694</sup>

Among Indonesians, the military offensive destroyed all remaining trust in Dutch honorable intentions. Some Republican leaders had not wanted to believe the Netherlands government capable of going to war when it did; with the eyes of the

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<sup>694</sup> Temporary Acting Government Commissioner for administrative affairs in East Java Charles O. van der Plas to Beel, 27 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 283; Resident West Coast of Sumatra L.B. van Straten to Beel, 28 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 308; Doel, 321-322; Groen, 180-185; Report by administrative officer Tapanuli (North Sumatra) F. Heckman, 19 January 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 35; Reid, 151-152.

international community upon them, one official had asked Prime Minister Hatta, “would this not mean that they had gone mad?”<sup>695</sup> Although High Commissioner Beel and General Spoor were firmly convinced that a large majority of the people in the archipelago would support the Dutch measures, federalists in Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and East Indonesia were angry; they had not been sufficiently consulted or sometimes even communicated with regarding the military operation. In the wake of the second police action, many found themselves in a conflict of conscience: should they stand by Netherlands and Netherlands Indies officials in the hope that the government and army were strong enough to suppress Republican resistance, or should they hedge their bets with the crumbling leadership in Yogyakarta that had aroused the sympathy of the international community?<sup>696</sup> Republicans, finally, held the opinion that the United States might again have stopped the Dutch by taking a firmer stand in support of their government.<sup>697</sup> Judging by the relatively mild and ineffective UN Security Council resolutions, the world’s most powerful nations were assisting the Dutch and betraying Indonesian aspirations for freedom.

The American “man in the street,” Van Kleffens reported from Washington in the final days of 1948, did not possess even a superficial understanding of the

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<sup>695</sup> T.B. Simatupang, *Report from Banaran: Experiences during the People’s War* (Ithaca, Cornell University, 1972), 17.

<sup>696</sup> Gase, 239; Beel to Sassen, 30 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 338.

<sup>697</sup> “A Lesson from Indonesia,” *New York Times*, 31 December 1948, 14. For indications that the Australian government, too, believed the United States could have stopped the Dutch police action, see: Chargé at United States Embassy in Canberra Andrew B. Foster to Secretary of State, 20 December 1948, RG59, 856D.00/12-1748, NARA.

situation in the archipelago, and instead reacted emotionally. A large majority of the population felt sorry for Indonesians, the ambassador observed. The undertone in the press and radio, dependent on the public for their ratings and sales figures, was also overwhelmingly negative towards the Dutch. Church leaders had decried the shocking resort to force in the week before Christmas. In Congress, isolationist representatives already distrustful of economic entanglements with the European continent were calling for a halt to all Marshall Plan aid to the Netherlands.<sup>698</sup>

The State Department, meanwhile, viewed the Dutch military offensive as the failure of the Renville Agreement. With its intent to eliminate the Republic, it also boded ill for the U.S.'s general policy in Southeast Asia, which rested on cooperation with moderate nationalists. By the end of 1948, policymakers in Washington began to reevaluate their options. The United States was very concerned, Lovett cabled to officials abroad, that the Netherlands action might have undone "much of the postwar efforts of [American] diplomacy." The objective had been to prevent a "division of the world along the lines of Asia versus the west" and the simultaneous attainment of the "confidence and support of political movements through which the aspirations and convictions of Asiatic peoples were expressed." In resorting to force the government in The Hague was likely to destroy "the last bridge between the West and Indonesian nationalists," leading to "lasting bitterness and unforgiving resentment on the part of politically conscious Indonesians." There was little the United States

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<sup>698</sup> Van Kleffens to Stikker, 30 December 1948, in: NIB, XVI, no. 352.

could do at the moment, the Undersecretary somberly summarized, “but fix the responsibility on the Dutch” and strongly oppose the actions of the Netherlands government.<sup>699</sup>

A Central Intelligence Agency report similarly illustrated the dilemma in which American planners found themselves at the turn of the year. The military action commenced by the Netherlands on December 19 “raised a number of interlocked security problems” and would have “repercussions far beyond the particular situation it was designed to settle.” The essence of the colonial problem from the American point of view, it summarized, had been “how to satisfy the nationalist aspirations of colonial peoples while at the same time maintaining the economic and political stability of European colonial powers.” The Dutch offensive had pushed this problem to a critical point, as “security interests in Europe and the Far East [were] in danger of appearing as mutually exclusive” at the exact point in time that “the power position of the United States vis-à-vis the Soviet Union [required] that they be pursued concurrently.” Washington was concerned, in other words, that Moscow would exploit the colonial issue. The prolongation of the struggle in Indonesia and similar struggles throughout the region would permit the communists to “join in and manipulate them to their own advantage,” the report went on. Nationalists might moreover jump to the conclusion that their aspirations could be most quickly realized

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<sup>699</sup> Lovett to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Officers Abroad, 31 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 617-620.

through a communist social order. In the eyes of American officials, neither the stabilization of European special interests in the colonies by use of force, nor the formation of a pan-Asian and anti-Western bloc was desirable. In any of these scenarios, the cost of continued upheaval in Indonesia was high. The analysis ended with a central question: could the Netherlands government stabilize its position in Indonesia in the near future at a readily recoverable cost? The CIA's answer was that it could not.<sup>700</sup>

The last week of the year, too, had proven untrue Beel's prediction that the Republic had ceased to exist. Indeed, widespread condemnation and public outcries about the military operations confirmed it as the clear victim of Dutch aggression. Balancing on the edge of a government crisis, the doves and hawks in The Hague had argued about the advisability of continued negotiations with the regime in Yogyakarta. With Indonesian policymaking firmly in Catholic hands, Beel and Sassen had overturned Stikker and Drees's objections to action. By mid December, the latter in any case had themselves seen no other way out of the impasse. Through a second military offensive the Netherlands government aimed to present the world with a final *fait accompli*. Decision makers in The Hague and Jakarta hoped that the demise of the Republic would be swift, virtually silent, and complete, and they had no intention of being deflected from their course by international criticism. There would no longer be a place for Republican voluntary participation in the upcoming interim federal

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<sup>700</sup> CIA Review Report, 19 January 1949, Truman Papers, Truman Library.

government; rather, Dutch politicians envisaged the forced incorporation of the areas the Republic had once held into that system. Like his leaders, the average Dutchman believed his country was acting “from the highest motives,” a sense of trusteeship and responsibility to the Indonesian people, and in order to fulfill promises made to the archipelago’s federalists. But neither Republicans, nor the international community, nor, as would soon turn out, Indonesian federalists, accepted this course of events.<sup>701</sup>

In early January 1949, H. Merle Cochran was reconsidering his role as member of the Good Offices Committee in Indonesia. He was unsure the Dutch offensive left him any appropriate role, but he was eager to use the confidence he had won with the Republicans over the last few months to, in his words, “salvage something from the situation.” This he could only do, he stipulated to Washington, if the United States clearly and publicly disassociated itself from the present Netherlands policy, and if the Dutch ceased hostilities and released the imprisoned Republican leaders forthwith. If this was impossible, he argued, the Committee should be dissolved. His Belgian and Australian colleagues, British Consul-General Francis Shepherd wrote to London, shared Cochran’s defeatist attitude.<sup>702</sup>

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<sup>701</sup> McMahon, 252; Taylor, 157-159; Nichols to Foreign Office, 28 December 1948, CO 537/3343, BNA.

<sup>702</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 3 January 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 119-121; Livengood to Secretary of State, 4 January 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 126-128; Shepherd to Foreign Office, 5 January 1949, CO 537/4457, BNA.

When Indian Prime Minister Nehru announced an Asiatic conference to discuss the Indonesian situation in early January, this did little to ease the troubled minds of the American leadership. Indeed, it confirmed fears that the East might divide irreparably from the West. Undersecretary Lovett informed Ambassador Loy W. Henderson in New Delhi that the State Department wished to pursue two objectives: contributing to a solution for the conflict in Indonesia, and “making the best possible record with Asiatic and Islamic countries.”<sup>703</sup> Director of Policy Planning George F. Kennan added that, as a world power with “vital interests and therefore responsibilities on all of the globe,” the nation was deeply concerned over the long-term implications of the situation in the Indonesian archipelago. It aggravated, he explained, the polarization between the Atlantic community and Asia.<sup>704</sup> Henderson responded with the warning that the “pan-Asiatic movement” had gained momentum as a result of Dutch military action on Java and Sumatra, and that it fed the growing feeling in the region that the United States was immersed with Western Europe to the point of ignoring Asiatic countries. He and his aides would do everything they could, he tried to reassure Washington, to “dispel the idea [among conference delegates] that the Western world [was] sticking together against Asia.”<sup>705</sup>

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<sup>703</sup> Lovett to United States Ambassador in New Delhi Loy W. Henderson, 5 January 1949, 890.00/1-149, NARA.

<sup>704</sup> Kennan to Henderson, 4 January 1949, 890.00/1-449, NARA.

<sup>705</sup> Henderson to Lovett, 6 January 1949, 890.00/1-549, NARA.

On January 7, the Security Council reconvened in Lake Success, New York. In yet another long speech, Dutch representative Van Roijen underlined that the Netherlands government had undertaken the second police action reluctantly. “The incapacity of both the Republican government and Good Offices Committee to achieve effective measures to end [the] bloodshed” caused by Yogyakarta-inspired ceasefire violations, he stated, had directly led to the Dutch government’s decision that the situation in Indonesia was untenable. It had been its right as the sovereignty authority, he added in a belligerent tone, “to purge the Republic by armed action in order to stamp out terror and disorder.” The past three years had shown that the only obstacle to the rapid creation of a United States of Indonesia in a union with the Netherlands, Van Roijen concluded, had been the lack of willingness and ability on the part of successive Republican governments to carry out agreements.<sup>706</sup>

American delegate Philip C. Jessup exemplified the Security Council’s dissatisfaction and disagreement with these statements when four days later, he repeated that the United States could find no adequate justification for the Dutch decision. He also noted that the continuation of military operations into 1949 constituted “an act of defiance,” and that, despite assurances by Van Roijen to the contrary, Netherlands forces had not yet released Republican political prisoners. “No excuses offered [by the Dutch can] conceal the fact that [they] have failed to comply with the Council’s demands,” he sternly observed. The American government, in fact,

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<sup>706</sup> *United Nations Security Council, Official Records, 4<sup>th</sup> year, 397<sup>th</sup> meeting, 7 January 1949, 7.*

could “not but recall a history of non-cooperation on the part of the Netherlands in the work of the Good Office Committee.” Although Dutch troops had achieved quick military successes, their actions were unlikely to contribute to a long-term solution of the conflict in the archipelago. The United States, Jessup ended, could only consider a political settlement valid if it was based on *bona fide* negotiations rather than coercion and duress.<sup>707</sup>

In the wake of the resumption of Security Council discussions on the conflict, Ambassador Van Kleffens called on Washington planners to discuss his fear that in a “desperate move,” a strict draft resolution ordering the withdrawal of Dutch troops from former Republican territory would be introduced by the Soviet Union or Ukraine, for instance. He made it clear that the Netherlands government, “determined to carry through its obligation to launch a free and independent United States of Indonesia under conditions [that] would give it the best chance of success,” would not accept such a resolution. Lovett in return warned the statesman that the military offensive had “blown up” the problem, and that if they wished to avoid an unwelcome resolution, the Dutch must immediately give evidence of their good

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<sup>707</sup> *United Nations Security Council, Official Records, 4<sup>th</sup> year, 398<sup>th</sup> meeting, 11 January 1949, 2-10; Lovett to United States Representative at the United Nations Warren R. Austin, 6 January 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 131-132; Butterworth to Counselor of the Department Charles E. Bohlen, 7 January 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 136-137.*

intentions by releasing the Republican leaders and announcing a fixed date for the transfer of sovereignty.<sup>708</sup>

The Netherlands government was told, in other words, that its ill-considered action had aroused international opinion to the point of active intervention, and that it had short time to prove that its words were more than lip-service. In early January, Prime Minister Drees traveled to Indonesia to show the world that the Netherlands was willing to come to an agreement. In the Prime Minister's first meeting with the High Commissioner, Beel contended that the Republican government could under no circumstances be allowed to resume the administration of its former territory. He moreover argued that Van Roijen should "go into the offensive" in the Security Council, and vehemently disagreed with the demand that Sukarno, Hatta, and the others must be released and allowed to return to Yogyakarta. During meetings between Drees and Indonesian federalists from the *negaras*, however, the latter convinced the Prime Minister of the need to establish informal contact with prominent Republicans in order to move ahead with the formation of an interim federal government. They also stated it was essential for the Republican government to be restored.<sup>709</sup>

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<sup>708</sup> Memorandum of conversation by Lovett, 11 January 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 139-141; British Representative to the United Nations Sir. A. Cadogan to Foreign Office, 9 January 1949, CO 537/4457, BNA.

<sup>709</sup> Diary entry Drees, 8-10 January 1949, in: NIB, XVI, no. 455; Diary entry Drees, 12 January 1949, in: NIB, XVI, no. 482.

Netherlands ministers in The Hague, fully aware that Security Council meetings would continue, were pressing officials in Jakarta to take action. Stikker emphasized the firm position the United States had been taking with him, and Sassen stressed the need to avoid the passing of a resolution that was unacceptable to the Dutch. Van Roijen had publicly announced that political prisoners were about to be released, yet the Republican leadership remained under house arrest on Bangka and in Prapat. Sukarno, Sjahrir, and Salim had been granted increased freedom of movement in return for their reluctant promise not to engage in political activities, but were still interned, albeit in the rather luxurious bungalow of the top official in the region, which Rudolf Mrázek brilliantly described as likely furnished with “turn-of-the-century rattan rocking chairs, oriental curiosities on small tables, a lot of standing lamps, and [...] faded photographs of prewar horse races.” Hatta and others, in contrast, were kept in a poorly maintained, sparsely furnished, and barbed-wired building. As the Good Offices Committee was about to visit the prisoners and inform the Council on the conditions of their continued imprisonment, the cabinet urged Drees and Beel to reconsider the problem.<sup>710</sup>

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<sup>710</sup> Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 13 January 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 5; Commissioner of the Crown for Sumatra’s East Coast M. Brouwer to Beel, 12 January 1949, in: NIB, XVI, no. 481; Report about housing of Hatta c.s. on Bangka by adviser A.H.C. Gieben and Colonel Thomson, 18 January 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 54; Van Roijen to Stikker, 15 January 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 26; Rudolf Mrázek, *Sjahrir: Politics and Exile in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1994), 382. For a report of the Good Offices Committee’s meeting with Hatta, Roem, and others, see: Brief report meeting Good Offices Committee with Republican leaders on Bangka, 15 January 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 23. In the influential Dutch biography of Sukarno, author Giebels suggests that the Indonesian President greatly dramatized his stay in Prapat for his autobiography. See: Giebels, 465-467; Cindy Adams, *Sukarno: An Autobiography* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 257-259.

Drees returned to the Netherlands on January 19. During his stay in the archipelago, the Prime Minister had become convinced that pacification of Indonesia was possible only with the cooperation of leading Republican figures. “We have to cross the threshold,” he wisely told his cabinet of ministers upon his arrival back in The Hague. As a result of the police action, the federalists had come to believe that the Republic should join the interim federal government on the same basis as other constituent states. The growing understanding of both Republicans and federalists of the need for agreement and cooperation between them was an important development. If the two parties established contact and became partners in negotiations, it might no longer look to the outside world like the Dutch were coordinating the process towards independence, but the Netherlands government would at the same time have to show more flexibility in taking into account the wishes of both groups.<sup>711</sup>

In mid January, too, the State Department in Washington and Jessup in New York were working on a new and more effective Security Council resolution. “Maintenance of Netherlands forces in continued occupation throughout the territory of the Republic of Indonesia,” stated the draft, was “incompatible with the achievement of a just and lasting settlement.” The proposal called upon the Netherlands government to discontinue all military operations, immediately and

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<sup>711</sup> Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 24 January 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 142; Doel, 326-327; Jaquet, 175-180.

unconditionally release all political prisoners arrested since the start of the offensive, and allow the government of the Republic to return to Yogyakarta. It moreover recommended the resumption of negotiations under the auspices of a transformed and more powerful Good Offices Committee, to be called the United Nations Security Council Commission for Indonesia. This commission would act by majority vote, make recommendations not only upon request of the parties but also on its own initiative, report regularly to the Security Council, and observe the return of Dutch-occupied areas to the administration of the Republic.<sup>712</sup>

This draft resolution greatly alarmed the Netherlands government. Stikker noted that it expanded international interference to such an extent that it would be unacceptable to the Dutch even in an amended form; it practically forced the Netherlands government to put her powers of authority at the disposal of the wishes of the Security Council and its new Commission. It left the Netherlands no time to pursue her own “constructive program” currently underway in Indonesia, the Foreign Minister explained, which now included an approximate schedule that showed when various stages should be reached: an interim government by the end of the month, free elections by the third quarter of the year, and the transfer of sovereignty at a yet to be decided date in 1950.<sup>713</sup>

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<sup>712</sup> Jessup to Lovett, 12 January 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 144-146.

<sup>713</sup> Stikker to Ambassadors in Washington, Nanking, Ottawa, Paris, Brussels, and London, and to envoys in Cairo, Oslo, Buenos Aires, and Havana, 16 January 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 39.

Jessup and his colleagues in Washington continued their work on the resolution. After further revisions, it called on the Republican government, too, to instruct its forces to cooperate in the restoration of peace, but it still ordered the Dutch to permit that government to be reinstated. It also expressly called for the establishment of an interim federal government before March 15, elections for a constitutional assembly by October 1, and a transfer of sovereignty in 1950 on a date to be fixed before January 1 of that year. At the persistent urging of Netherlands officials that Indonesian federalists from areas other than the former Republic were a force to be taken into account, the resolution also stipulated that the new UN Commission would have the authority to consult with these leaders.<sup>714</sup>

The State Department instructed Jessup once again to seek general agreement on a draft resolution among a majority of Council members, since the United States “did not wish to carry the banner and make [itself] solely responsible for whatever action was taken.” When Jessup asked if he could introduce the draft at the next Security Council meeting if he found there was support for it, Rusk reluctantly said yes. There was considerable merit, he nevertheless told Jessup, in deferring the submission of the resolution, and it was particularly important to work with Britain and France, who might veto any resolution they deemed too strongly worded.<sup>715</sup>

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<sup>714</sup> Jessup to Lovett, 17 January 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 163-166.

<sup>715</sup> Memorandum by Rusk, 18 January 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 168-169; Jessup, 84-88; “The Proceedings in the U.N.,” *New York Times*, 22 January 1949, 2.

When China, Cuba, Norway, and the United States jointly submitted the plan for review on January 21, the Republican leadership was disheartened to find out that it did not call directly for the withdrawal of Dutch troops from Republican territory, but allowed them to remain in areas technically turned back to the Republic. Van Roijen laid out the Dutch objections to the resolution. His government, he explained to the members of the Council, could not agree to the reinstatement of the Republican government. It rejected the empowering of a UN Commission to deal with the establishment of an interim government, the return of territory to the Republic, the holding of elections, and the transfer of sovereignty. This would require The Hague to surrender vital rights and in essence “put the Netherlands under the guardianship of the United Nations.” The Dutch had not earned this treatment, and had not “guided the development of Indonesia for three-hundred and fifty years,” he concluded, “to surrender their responsibility at the last minute before the final consummation of that development: the achievement of statehood for Indonesia.” If it was adopted, the Netherlands government could only carry out the resolution “to the extent which it [was] compatible with [its] responsibility for the maintenance of real freedom and order in Indonesia.” Despite these ominous warnings, the groundbreaking resolution was accepted on January 28 without a single dissenting vote.<sup>716</sup>

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<sup>716</sup> The French representative abstained. “U.S., Three Others Ask UN For Freedom of Indies in 1950,” *New York Times*, 22 January 1949, 1; *United Nations Security Council, Official Records, 4<sup>th</sup> year*, 406<sup>th</sup> meeting, 28 January 1949, 17-19.

On that same day, High Commissioner Beel proposed to his colleagues in The Hague that the Dutch radically change course. He warned his colleagues that as the trust of Indonesian federalists was seeping away, Republicans were visibly gaining in significance. Convinced of broad federalist sympathy for long-term cooperation with the Netherlands, and desperate to attempt to save what he believed could be saved, Beel proposed shortening the interim period and accelerating the transfer of authority to a United States of Indonesia. The High Commissioner believed that this would leave Republicans unlikely to voice objections, and willing to similarly transfer to the federation their “pretense” powers, as Beel labeled them. Free elections to form a constitutional body and simultaneous negotiations on continued cooperation in matters concerning the economy, finance, and defense would allow for the establishment of the Netherlands-Indonesia Union by July 1, 1950. To implement his plan, Beel called for direct discussions first between the federalists and Republican leaders, then between their delegations and himself. The last stage of the negotiations could take place in The Hague.<sup>717</sup>

After the unanimous acceptance of the Security Council resolution, the Dutch cabinet regrettably concluded that the State Department in Washington, as a result of the military offensive and at the urging of Cochran, had started pursuing a more active and stern policy. This left the Netherlands in a weak position and at the mercy of the UN Commission, several minister pointed out. Beel’s plan, however, envisioned the

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<sup>717</sup> Beel to Sassen, 28 January 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 171.

Dutch government transferring power on its own terms. At the same time, it would not give the transformed Good Offices Committee a chance to interfere; the High Commissioner went as far as predicting that his proposal would allow for the disappearance of the Republic from the agenda of the UN.<sup>718</sup>

But Beel's plan left the Minister of the Colonies bemused. In a heated telephone conversation between the two on January 29, Sassen sarcastically said that it seemed the Netherlands did not have anything to do with the solution of the dispute in Indonesia anymore. He urged the High Commissioner not to discuss his plan with anyone in the archipelago before the government in The Hague had had a chance to look at it. Beel responded by saying that he could not afford a delay and had already invited the federalist leaders for a discussion. In any case, he warned, the members of the UN Commission were keeping a close eye on him and would soon learn of the new Dutch initiative.<sup>719</sup>

During two cabinet meetings on the last days of January, Sassen argued against the acceptance of Beel's proposal. He found many parts of it questionable, and feared that a swift transfer of sovereignty to an independent United States of Indonesia prior to an agreement on the Netherlands-Indonesia Union left no hope for permanent and meaningful cooperation between the two nations. Although unhappy about the early leak of the plan and doubtful about its practicability, Prime Minister Drees advocated

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<sup>718</sup> Ibid., McMahon, 273; Doel, 329-330.

<sup>719</sup> Minutes telephone conversation Beel and Sassen, 29 January 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 184.

its acceptance. The federalists and Republicans together might be able to form a front against UN involvement, he noted. Stikker suggested winning time with the international organization by informing American policymakers about a “fresh and progressive plan” without divulging its content. All ministers with the exception of Sassen agreed that the Netherlands must be allowed some leeway for these bilateral discussions to take place. Only if the Dutch plan failed should the government consider the Security Council resolution of January 28 and the extent to which it might be implemented. The cabinet thus decided to authorize Beel to see if a preliminary agreement between the federalists and Republicans could be reached.<sup>720</sup>

Cochran, however, was putting severe pressure on The Hague to take measures towards the implementation of the resolution. The American stopped in the Netherlands on his way back to Indonesia to resume his work on the UN

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<sup>720</sup> Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 30 January 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 196; Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 31 January 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 203; Sassen to Beel, 2 February 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 234. On February 3, the *New York Times* printed an article written by a correspondent in The Hague. It stated that the U.S. State Department would “exert its influence over the United Nations Commission for Indonesia to give the Dutch reasonable time to work out a solution between themselves and the Indonesians.” The provisions of the previous week’s resolution would “not be applied at this time,” it added. A Dutch spokesman was quoted as referencing the resolution by saying that someone had just “tossed a smoking bomb in the window. We know it is there, but we try to get on with our job, hoping it will not go off before we are finished.” The article highly embarrassed policymakers in Washington and Jessup in New York, all of whom were forced to deny it and declare that the United States was in fact insistent upon the swift implementation of the January 28 resolution. The new Secretary of State Dean Acheson, who had succeeded George Marshall in January after the latter’s resignation due to ill health, informed Ambassador Baruch that the Department had agreed “not to press the Dutch too fast or too hard,” but that this should not allow the Netherlands government to think they could keep dragging their feet. See: David Anderson, “Dutch Try to Rush Indies Settlement,” *New York Times*, 3 February 1949, 11; Secretary of State Dean Acheson to Baruch, 3 February 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 203-204; Jessup to Rusk, 4 February 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 206-207; Jessup, 88-89. See also: R.H. Scott to Esler Dening at Foreign Office, 9 February 1949, FO371/F2211; Franks to Foreign Office, 15 February 1949, CO 537/4458.

Commission. After his arrival in the Dutch political capital on February 6, Cochran spoke with Drees, Sassen, Stikker, and Queen Juliana. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, although aware of the Netherlands' weak international position, insisted that the current deep divisions in the cabinet made a full acceptance of the resolution impossible. When Sassen attempted to justify the police action as a means of combating communism, Cochran replied that its resulting unrest had had exactly the opposite effect. The Queen asked the American delegate why he stood up for the Republicans rather than the federalists, who, she opined, "after all represented the majority of Indonesians." To this, Cochran replied he well realized the need to bring the two parties together to consolidate their desires and efforts, but stressed that Republicans were only willing to enter into conversations with federalists if those took place under the auspices of the new Commission. None of the people the American spoke with, in other words, were spared details about "how bad [the Dutch] predicament was, and how much worse it might become unless the Netherlands government implemented the Security Council resolution." To the surprise of all, Cochran refrained from approving the new short-cut plan. Although he did not yet know the details, a first examination had led policymakers in Washington to believe Beel's scheme would allow the Dutch to circumvent international interference. But it was impossible, Cochran explained, to make headway until and unless the initial conditions of the resolution were put into force. The new plan in any case,

Department planners rightly surmised, still left Indonesians “little choice in the matter.”<sup>721</sup>

The man behind the plan meanwhile urged his government to officially declare the UN resolution unacceptable. Beel believed that his proposal could only work if international “interference” was eliminated from the archipelago. He had been waiting for a strong statement from The Hague for more than two weeks, he complained, and would resign if no decision were made. The imprisoned Republicans continued to insist on being returned to Yogyakarta, he told Sassen on the phone, and he was losing control over the federalists. Drees told the High Commissioner that he had informed Cochran the Netherlands could not accept the more powerful UN Commission, but also said that they could not reject the resolution in its entirety. When the Prime Minister notified Beel about the increasing tensions within the Dutch cabinet, the latter merely replied that he would wait only until the end of the week for an announcement.<sup>722</sup>

During two confused cabinet meetings, Minister of the Colonies Sassen made a radical suggestion. Instead of bowing to American pressure, he proposed that the government send a mission to Washington in order to inform policymakers there that unless they changed the course of their Southeast Asia policy the Dutch would be

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<sup>721</sup> United States Ambassador in Brussels Alan G. Kirk to Secretary of State, 9 February 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 212-223; Memorandum of conversation by Butterworth, 11 February 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 225-226.

<sup>722</sup> Beel to Sassen, 9 February 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 272; Diary entry Beel, 10 February 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 279.

forced to abandon the Indies. When this plan found no support from any of his colleagues, Sassen, too, warned that he was considering leaving his post. Prime Minister Drees, attempting to hold together his only six-month old government, recommended carefully asking Cochran not to let the Commission interfere while informal discussions between federalist leaders and Republicans were underway. Sassen did not think this went far enough and resigned on February 11.<sup>723</sup>

The Commission, meanwhile, visited the yet to be released Republican leadership. Sukarno and Hatta again insisted they would have formal negotiations with federalists only under the auspices of the Commission and after the restoration of their government to Yogyakarta. This was the only way, they argued, they could implement their part of the resolution and order an effective ceasefire. Cochran in turn emphasized that a prolonged guerilla war was unlikely to rouse the sympathies of the American public, and that the Republicans must go as far as they could in their discussions with the federalists. Convinced however of the truth of Sukarno's statement, the American told the head of the Dutch delegation that it was imperative the Dutch restore Hatta's government if they were to make any progress.<sup>724</sup>

Without much optimism, Elink Schuurman cabled this request to The Hague. Beel had just arrived there to be able to communicate directly with the Netherlands

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<sup>723</sup> Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 7 February 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 263; Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 10 February 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 283; Stikker, 146-147.

<sup>724</sup> Elink Schuurman to Minister of the Colonies J.H. van Maarseveen, 18 February 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 329; Livengood to Secretary of State, 18 February 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 239-242; Secretary of State to Livengood, 16 February 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 233-235.

government and further outline his scheme. Although the ministers still argued that a Republican return to Yogyakarta could lead to nothing but chaos and destruction, they agreed the imprisoned politicians should be granted the limited freedom they required to conduct negotiations. The cabinet also decided that the final stage of discussions should be held at a Round Table Conference in The Hague, where Republican, federalist, and Dutch delegations would settle the accelerated transfer of sovereignty as well as the simultaneous formation of the Netherlands-Indonesia Union. They rather optimistically scheduled this series of meetings for mid March. Satisfied with the acceptance of his plan, Beel withdrew his resignation.<sup>725</sup>

The preliminary American reaction to the latest Dutch proposals, however, was one of concerned skepticism. Cochran frankly told Elink Schuurman that he believed the plan was vague and unlikely to go far enough to constitute compliance with the Security Council resolution. Although planners in Washington told Van Kleffens they were, of course, “as ready now as always to help obtain a settlement on whatever basis voluntarily acceptable to both parties,” they, too, voiced doubts and objections. The Department foresaw an impasse looming on the point of a Republican restoration to Yogyakarta. When the Netherlands ambassador pointed out that Dutch police forces were firmly in control, law and order was being rapidly re-established, and the return of the government would “undo constructive work already near completion,” Rusk

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<sup>725</sup> Elink Schuurman to Van Maarseveen, 20 February 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 338; Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 17 February 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 326; Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 21 February 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 342.

pointed out that this interpretation was “somewhat at variance” with his own, and much more accurate, information about the situation in the archipelago.<sup>726</sup>

When a Netherlands official traveled to the Republicans’ sites of internment to formally invite them to the Round Table Conference, Sukarno in particular, so reported the civil servant, showed “little inclination” to understand the Netherlands point of view. The President wondered how the Dutch government could expect his help after its second military offensive against the Republic. Minister of Foreign Affairs Haji Agus Salim and head of the Republican delegation Mohammad Roem pointed out that a government that had no recognized authority could not form an official delegation to attend a conference. Hatta, who had spoken to a foreign press correspondent and claimed that the Dutch were employing a “trick” to “befuddle world opinion,” expressed doubt about a Netherlands-Indonesia Union with extensive powers, and echoed the cries of the other prisoners when he underlined that nothing could be done until his government was restored. The administrator’s report on the meeting ended with a short observation: “it was not a pleasant conversation.” Shepherd went as far as informing London that the invitation to the conference had

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<sup>726</sup> Elink Schuurman to Van Maarseveen, 21 February 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 339; Secretary of State to Livengood, 26 February 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 265-266.

been submitted to the Republican leadership “with the ineptitude that [seemed] inevitable the moment the Dutch [undertook] any delicate mission.”<sup>727</sup>

By late February, then, the Netherlands government had come to the realization that if it refused to implement the Security Council resolution, it had to take a bold political initiative to avoid further international interference in the Indonesian conflict. In the face of a cabinet crisis, High Commissioner Beel had forced his colleagues in The Hague, including Sassen’s more liberal Catholic successor J.H. van Maarseveen, to adopt a new policy. Federalists hesitantly accepted the Dutch invitation, aware that although the Republic’s position within Indonesia was one without official status, its international position was strong. The Republican refusal to accept the conference proposal, however, did not deter Netherlands planners from determinedly going ahead with their plans, believing Sukarno and Hatta’s stances merely “tactical,” and counting on the continued support of Indonesian federalists.<sup>728</sup>

Beel formally introduced his plan in a press conference on March 1, during which he expressly stated that the Round Table Conference would go ahead with or without the Republicans.<sup>729</sup> The following day, a delegation of federalists traveled to

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<sup>727</sup> Report meeting A.H.C. Gieben with Sukarno, Haji Agus Salim, Roem, and others, 26 February 1949, and with Hatta and others on 27 February 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 363; Shepherd to Foreign Office, 15 February 1949, FO371/F2375, BNA; Shepherd to Denning, 8 March 1949, FO371/F3906, BNA.

<sup>728</sup> Jaquet, 194-227; McMahon, 281-282; Taylor, 197-199.

<sup>729</sup> See also: Beel to President of the Republic of Indonesia and to the Chairman of the BFO, 26 February 1949; Memorandum Beel to United Nations Commission for Indonesia, 27 February 1949, both in:

Bangka to talk with Sukarno and other Republican politicians about the latest Dutch scheme. The Republican leadership insisted again that under the current circumstances it could not accept it. This firm political stance greatly impressed federalist leaders. The continued strong resistance of Republican forces to Dutch military efforts, too, helped to convince them that any future Indonesian government without Sukarno and Hatta's participation would fail. East Indonesian Prime Minister Anak Agung suggested asking Beel to concede to the Republican demands, and other influential federalists agreed.<sup>730</sup>

The High Commissioner was disappointed, angry, and frustrated. He accused the federalists of having delivered a “stab in the back,” and informed them that if they withdrew their acceptance of the Dutch plan, sided with the Republicans, and let down the Netherlands government, an accelerated transfer of sovereignty would be out of the question. Sukarno's official negative reply to the Dutch invitation, which came on March 5, left Beel even bitterer.<sup>731</sup>

Before notifying the High Commissioner of the results of its discussions with the Republican leadership, Beel moreover found out, the federalist delegation had met with Cochran. Anak Agung had told the American he was aware of the danger of a political crisis in The Hague, but maintained that the Netherlands government must

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Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Indonesië in de Veiligheidsraad van de Verenigde Naties, Februari – December 1949* (The Hague: Staatsdrukkerij, 1950), 100-105.

<sup>730</sup> Beel to Van Maarseveen, 4 March 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 15.

<sup>731</sup> Beel to Van Maarseveen, 4 March 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 16; Beel to Van Maarseveen, 5 March 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 23.

squarely face the dilemma of the Republican government's restoration. "If the Netherlands was genuinely sincere in promising to yield complete sovereignty" within a matter of months, the East Indonesian logically stated, it could have "no valid objection" to this restoration for the purpose of permitting the Republican government to carry out its obligations under the Security Council resolution. Although Beel made sure to tell Cochran that the discussions on Bangka had merely been informal and would have no political consequences, the American hastened to inform Washington that the Indonesian federalists had formed a front with the Republicans against the Dutch.<sup>732</sup>

The altered situation caused a flurry of telegrams from the Netherlands representative in the Security Council, Van Roijen, to Foreign Minister Stikker in The Hague. If the federalists refused to participate in a Round Table Conference unless the demands of the Republicans were met, he warned, then the Dutch had "no leg to stand on" in the United Nations. The Dutch counteroffensive to the January 28 resolution and subsequent international pressure to implement it was based on the unilateral solution contained in Beel's plan, Van Roijen emphasized. If this failed, as it now seemed it had, the government in The Hague would need to realize that no settlement could be found without the Republicans and make concessions

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<sup>732</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 3 March 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 289-291; Secretary of State to Embassy in The Hague, 4 March 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 299-300; Beel to Van Maarseveen, 5 March 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 24; Beel to Van Maarseveen, 6 March 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 30; Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, *Renville als Keerpunt in de Nederlands-Indonesische Onderhandelingen* (Alphen aan den Rijn: A.W. Sijthoff, 1980), 265-271.

accordingly. “Together with the federalists and relying on our military success,” Van Roijen argued, the Dutch “could have defied the United States, the Commonwealth, the Asiatic world and the Republic.” But now that the federalists had joined that front his colleagues must understand that the entire foundation of their policy had been erased. “With the disappearance of the federalist trump from our game,” the Dutch could merely “play poker,” he stated somberly but firmly. The cabinet might consider, he suggested, moving toward a partial implementation of the resolution by asking the UN Commission for Indonesia to organize a preliminary conference in the archipelago itself. These exploratory talks could provide a means to conditionally return Republicans to Yogyakarta and so might still pave the way for a Round Table Conference in the Netherlands.<sup>733</sup>

This compromised but face-saving proposal was introduced as a directive in the Security Council and adopted on March 23. It called on the Commission for Indonesia to assist, in accord with the Council’s previous resolutions, in the preparations for the Round Table Conference by holding preliminary meetings in Indonesia. During a cabinet meeting in The Hague the following day, ministers worried about the ruling’s references to the still unacceptable resolution of January 28. Believing, however, that the initiative would permit them to make the restoration of

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<sup>733</sup> Van Roijen to Stikker, 6 March 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 34; Van Roijen to Stikker, 7 March 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 45; Van Roijen to Stikker, 8 March 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 54; Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 8 March 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 51; Van Roijen to Stikker, 12 March 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 88.

the Republican government contingent upon an truce agreement, that it would allow difficulties to be overcome in Jakarta rather than in the hostile Security Council, and that it gave Beel's plan a chance to succeed, the Netherlands government accepted it. Van Roijen, it was decided, would head the new Dutch delegation in Jakarta.<sup>734</sup>

As politicians in The Hague thus slowly began to show more pragmatism, an influential Dutch administrator in the archipelago was arguing for the High Commissioner, too, to truly face reality. The coverage of the military situation since the start of the second police action in December, a perceptive P.J. Koets told Beel, had been more romantic than factual. General Spoor in particular was guilty of underestimating and understating the scope, depth, and meaning of the Republican national feeling. There was little Indonesian cooperation with Dutch troops and officials, really, and building a policy on anything but a sober appreciation of the facts was misleading and dangerous, Koets argued.<sup>735</sup>

The truth was that by early 1949, undefeated Republican forces had become increasingly better organized. On March 1, a few thousand soldiers led by later President and then Lieutenant-Colonel Suharto administered a sensitive blow to Dutch morale when they temporarily occupied the city of Yogyakarta. It made

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<sup>734</sup> Taylor, 201-204; Van Roijen to Stikker, 24 March 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 150; Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 24 March 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 151.

<sup>735</sup> Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 28 March 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 164; Memorandum P.J. Koets to Beel, 12 March 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 80; Doel, 338. For an illustration of Beel's similar capacity for self-delusion and his questionable argument that "time was on the Dutch side," see: Beel to Van Maarseveen, 27 March 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 160.

painfully clear that Netherlands forces, despite claims to the contrary, had not pacified the Indonesian archipelago.<sup>736</sup> In response to often brutal Dutch “mopping up” operations, Republican troops attacked convoys and supply trucks, kidnapped or murdered Netherlands Indies administrators and Indonesians cooperating with them, laid mines, destroyed roads and bridges, and set fire to factories and offices. This total guerilla war left parts of Java and Sumatra practically ungovernable. Dutch forces, their number too small for the vast archipelago, continued to carry out “mopping up” operations with little effect. The number of casualties, meanwhile, was rising steadily. As many Netherlands soldiers had died since the start of the second police action as were killed in three years prior to it. Imprecise aerial bombardments and the capture of entire villages suspected of subversive activities caused the estimated number of victims among the Indonesian population to rise as high as 150,000. A dirty war of terror and contra-terror meant no prisoners were taken on either side; people were shot on the spot.<sup>737</sup>

Among the population in the Netherlands, little was known of these horrors. The image of the war in Indonesia among the Dutch was one of two relatively successful offensives followed by mostly efficient pacification efforts. Eruptions of violence were portrayed as sporadic violations of the ceasefire. The reality, a

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<sup>736</sup> Doel, 337; Said, 108-109.

<sup>737</sup> Doel, 332-337; J.A.A. van Doorn and W.J. Hendrix, *Het Nederlands-Indonesisch Conflict: Ontsporing van Geweld* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1985), 201; Review of situation 23 February – 1 March 1949 by Spoor, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 1. The casualty number under Republican forces and the Indonesian population can only be estimated. In early March 1949, the number of Dutch forces killed in the Indonesian conflict was 1,251 before the start of the second police action, and 1,275 since.

prolonged revolutionary war, was much worse. Netherlands soldiers tortured captured Republicans for information. Prisoners were water boarded, flogged with canes, hung upside down, and subjected to electrical surges. Women were raped. When these excesses came to light in early 1949, the Minister for the Colonies told Spoor that the disgraceful practices had to end. These Gestapo-like methods were completely unacceptable, he said, not only from a humanitarian point of view, but also because they could lead to serious repercussions both nationally and internationally; it would give those in the Netherlands who opposed military intervention in Indonesia more ammunition, and might damage the Dutch reputation abroad.<sup>738</sup>

In the late spring of 1949, the U.S. State Department prepared an in-depth study for the National Security Council. NSC-51, as the paper became known, identified basic policy objectives in Southeast Asia. The region had become “the target of a coordinated offensive plainly directed by the Kremlin,” George F. Kennan summarized. Its strategic and economic importance to the United States made it essential that “relations between [it] and the Atlantic Community be rationalized.” “The heart of the problem,” the study went on, lay “within the Atlantic Community itself, specifically in the policies [...] being pursued by the Netherlands and France.” In the Indonesian archipelago, the Republic represented “the most virile expression” of nationalist sentiment, but its essentially moderate leadership could only hope to

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<sup>738</sup> Sassen to Beel, 20 January 1949, in: NIB, XVII, no. 89.

survive if a swift peaceful agreement was reached with the “recalcitrant” Dutch. Guerilla warfare would do nothing, the paper warned, but aid the voices of communist and pan-Asian extremism. At the same time, the Netherlands could not continue to bear the burden of its military and economic expenditures; “the ultimate economic and military cost of this piece of adventurism [would] be transferred to the United States, if not directly in aid to the Indies, then indirectly through European Recovery Program and military aid to Holland.”<sup>739</sup>

As the absence of a political settlement in the archipelago thus threatened the survival of both the recovery program and the North Atlantic Treaty that was about to be signed, a quick and orderly transfer of authority from the Netherlands to Indonesia became imperative. In late March and early April, therefore, a series of urgent meetings took place between the new American Secretary of State Dean Acheson, who had succeeded George Marshall in January after the latter’s resignation due to ill health, and the Dutch Foreign Minister. President Truman, newly reelected in November after a campaign that had barely touched on foreign policy matters, “never knew or learned much about Asia” and thus left a great deal in the hands of State Department officials. Nevertheless, when Acheson entered office he had no idea how many headaches Asia would cause him in the years to come; as Robert Beisner

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<sup>739</sup> “U.S. Policy toward Southeast Asia,” (NSC-51, 19 May 1949), in: *The State Department Policy Planning Staff Papers, 1947-1949, Volume III* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1983) 32-58; McMahon, 291; Secretary of State to Embassy in London, 4 March 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, IV, 163.

notes, the new Secretary of State had “bigger fish to fry in Europe.”<sup>740</sup> James Chace agrees, arguing that Acheson’s most pressing task in early 1949 was to conclude a military security treaty with the Western European powers.<sup>741</sup>

With Europe thus first and foremost on the Secretary’s mind, and determined to avoid another repetition of the familiar cycle of negotiations and ultimatums followed by an ineffectual agreement and then a stalemate in Indonesia, Acheson was firm with Stikker. He forcefully presented him with the reasons why the situation in the archipelago required immediate action, and why the United States might find it necessary to refuse the Netherlands assistance under any military aid program. The Secretary underlined the reaction in Washington to the second military offensive: “the Dutch were wrong [and] guilty of aggression.” The “hard political facts,” Acheson stated emphatically, meant that the only means of remedying the situation lay in the Netherlands government promptly reaching an equitable settlement with Republicans.<sup>742</sup>

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<sup>740</sup> Robert L. Beisner, *Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 172-173.

<sup>741</sup> James Chace, *Acheson: The Secretary of State Who Created the American World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 201.

<sup>742</sup> Memorandum of conversation by Secretary of State, 31 March 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, IV, 258-261; Secretary of State to Livengood, 2 April 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 357-358; Secretary of State to Livengood, 2 April 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 355-357. What particularly complicated the situation was the upcoming discussion of Marshall Plan aid in Congress. Republican Senator Owen Brewster had proposed an amendment to the critical bill that generally stated that no funds could be allocated to governments that failed to comply with Security Council resolutions. As such the amendment particularly targeted the Netherlands government. It eventually passed in the compromised form of the Vandenberg amendment (named after Republican senator Arthur Vandenberg), which stated that ECA aid could only be halted if the Council ordered sanctions (which in the case of the Netherlands, it did not.) See also: Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 415-419.

A few days after this first discussion, Acheson again expressed his hope that the Dutch would “really set about settling [the] situation.” He explained to Stikker the points on which the State Department believed the Dutch needed to compromise. It was necessary that the Netherlands delegation lead by Van Roijen could work with broad authority and show a “generous and sincere attitude.” It must moreover move at once toward genuine implementation of the January resolution. In particular it should allow the Republican government to return to Yogyakarta and ensure that Netherlands forces withdraw from that area. Republican troops were to carry the responsibility for the maintenance of law and order in the capital, political prisoners were to be released, and the Dutch government was to divulge at once the detailed plans for the Round Table Conference. Cochran had assured him, Acheson stated to Stikker, that in return for the Dutch taking “the initiative in practical statesmanship,” he would lend his assistance in persuading the Republican delegation to cooperate.<sup>743</sup>

The Netherlands signed the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4, and American reconsideration of financial assistance to the Netherlands was a warning Stikker understood. Acheson’s threat had made clear, he later summarized, that the United States would refuse to aid allies “so long as they had not solved their colonial difficulties.”<sup>744</sup> In the wake of his bilateral meetings with the Netherlands Foreign Minister, Acheson remarked to his British colleague Ernest Bevin that the Dutch had

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<sup>743</sup> Livengood to Secretary of State, 3 April 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 359-361; Secretary of State to Livengood, 7 April 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 362-364.

<sup>744</sup> Stikker, 145-146.

“stupidly delayed many obvious decisions,” and told the British ambassador in Washington Sir Oliver Franks that they had been “very pig-headed and [...] always made their concessions too late.” Much later, the Secretary of State would make the brief, and rather simplistic, observation in his autobiography that after stubbornly resisting American efforts to move the Netherlands government toward preparations for Indonesian independence, “the Dutch capitulated under pressure.”<sup>745</sup>

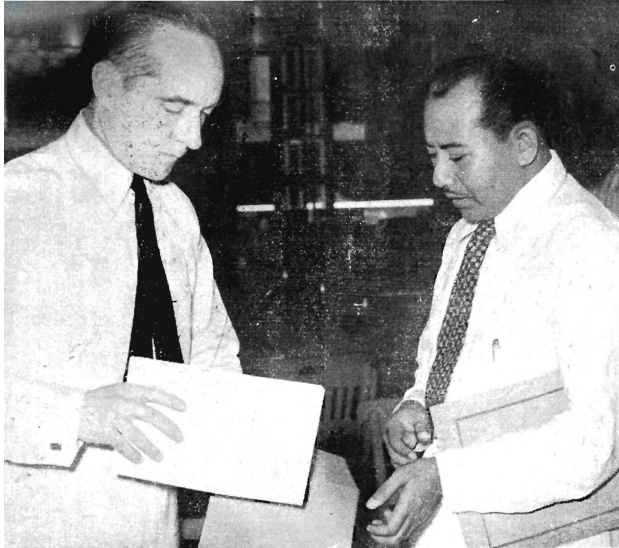
Stikker’s meetings closely coincided with the appearance of another bleak report on the position of the Dutch in Indonesia, which landed on Van Roijen’s desk in Jakarta after he arrived there in the second week of April. It bluntly stated that the situation in the archipelago resembled a vicious circle. The policy of the Netherlands government in its stance against the Republic had been to seek the support of cooperative Indonesians, but those in turn had depended on The Hague’s attitude toward the government in Yogyakarta. It was “absurd” to even consider the possibility of a United States of Indonesia without the Republic, the report continued, unless Netherlands troops could permanently eliminate that Republic. This had proved impossible. The second police action had failed to bring law, order, and security to large areas of the archipelago. The Indonesian people, fearful of being

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<sup>745</sup> Memorandum of conversation by Secretary of State, 4 April 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VI, 50-54; Franks to Foreign Office, 3 April 1949, CO 537/4459, BNA; Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years at the State Department* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1969), 257.

branded bad nationalists by a Republic they increasingly realized had real power and authority, resisted cooperation with Netherlands troops and officials.<sup>746</sup>

On April 14, negotiations between the Dutch and Republican delegations



**25. Van Roijen and Roem**

resumed under the auspices of the United Nations Commission for Indonesia.

Cochran opened the first meeting by expressing his hope that the two parties would “go as far as their authority [would] permit them toward clearing up [...] the contentious points [that had] to date separated them.” The opening statements made by Van Roijen and

Mohammad Roem, who had been released from exile to represent the Republicans, made clear that the biggest obstacle was formed by the terms under which Hatta’s government would return to Yogyakarta.<sup>747</sup> The Republican delegation knew that the position of the Netherlands was weak, and showed itself unwilling to compromise on this essential point. The Dutch delegation was willing to agree to the return of the Republican leadership to the capital in principle, but attached conditions; Sukarno and

<sup>746</sup> “Attempt at analysis of the situation,” by government adviser for political affairs, J.J. van de Velde, 28 March 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 163.

<sup>747</sup> Brief report meeting United Nations Commission for Indonesia with Dutch and Republican delegations, 14 April 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 237.

Hatta would have to make a binding commitment to ensure a halt to guerilla warfare and promise to participate in the Round Table Conference in The Hague.<sup>748</sup>

When after ten days of informal meetings no agreement had been formulated, Cochran, who like the Dutch did not wish to see the dispute return to the Security Council, suggested the impasse might be broken if Hatta agreed to come to Jakarta for direct discussions with Van Roijen. When the Prime Minister arrived in the city, the American delegate organized a small lunch meeting, during which he stressed once more that failure to find a solution would only aid extremist elements in the archipelago. He then left the two men to their private conversation. At the end of their meeting, a cautiously optimistic Hatta and Van Roijen informed Cochran that they believed an agreement could be reached.<sup>749</sup>

Van Roijen reported to The Hague that the general atmosphere during his conversations with Republicans was favorable. He did not think much of Spoor's continuous attempts to "pull the wool over his eyes" regarding the dismal military situation, however, and was coming to resent the general's attitude against the restoration of the Republican government. Spoor had warned him, Van Roijen told

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<sup>748</sup> Brief report meeting United Nations Commission for Indonesia with Dutch and Republican delegations, 21 April 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 263.

<sup>749</sup> Report meeting Van Roijen with Hatta on 25 April 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 276; Van Roijen to Van Maarseveen, 25 April 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 277; Livengood to Secretary of State, 25 April 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 387-388. During this first meeting between Van Roijen and Hatta, the latter expressed his fear about the pending official recognition of additional *daerahs* and *negaras* in Dutch occupied territories during the course of negotiations. Van Roijen reassured him this would not happen. See also: Van Roijen to Van Maarseveen, 25 April 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 277; Van Roijen to Van Maarseveen, 30 April 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 298.

Stikker, that he could not be held responsible for what he predicted would be the “disastrous consequences” of this course of action, and seemed to believe that if only the Netherlands government had done as he desired from the start, everything would have ended well. He was getting along fairly well with the High Commissioner, Van Roijen noted, although it had been difficult to convince Beel of the need to delay the formal recognition of any additional *negaras* in former Republican territory. The continuation of this Dutch policy to encourage the fragmentation of the archipelago into numerous federal states, Van Roijen warned, would surely erase the little faith Republicans had in the Netherlands government and so torpedo the ongoing negotiations. Although the High Commissioner reluctantly agreed, he indicated his dissatisfaction with and concern about Van Roijen’s “misguided belief” to The Hague.<sup>750</sup>

Despite the objections the High Commissioner and the Army Commander continued to voice about the direction the discussions between the Republicans and the Dutch were heading in, by late April, the two parties were inching toward an understanding. Van Roijen said his government would accept the return of Yogyakarta and the area immediately surrounding the city to the Republicans, if Roem

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<sup>750</sup> Head of Dutch delegation in Jakarta Van Roijen to Stikker, 24 April 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 274; Spoor to Van Roijen, 28 April 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 289; Beel to Van Maarseveen, 28 April 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 290.

agreed that Sukarno and Hatta in turn would order a ceasefire and send a delegation to The Hague for further negotiations.<sup>751</sup>

The series of desperate telegrams Beel sent to the Netherlands in early May, in which he warned that the shift in the government's Indonesia policy was approaching the limits of what he believed he could be responsible for, had no effect. On May 6, Van Roijen asked his colleagues in The Hague to authorize him to make an official declaration. The two delegations had drafted two statements, one for each, to be made simultaneously. They were not, he admonished, open for amendments. "Nearly every word of [their] content," he stated emphatically, "[had] a history," and if the Dutch were committed to the Round Table Conference, an accelerated transfer of sovereignty, and the formation of the Netherlands-Indonesia Union, these declarations represented the maximum that could be achieved under the current circumstances.<sup>752</sup>

During a momentous cabinet meeting that same day, the Dutch ministers decided that the military situation in Indonesia was increasingly unsatisfactory and, with no end to guerilla warfare in sight, becoming untenable. Van Maarseveen noted that he took Beel's objections to the proposed statements seriously, but underlined the fact that the High Commissioner had failed to suggest any alternative course of

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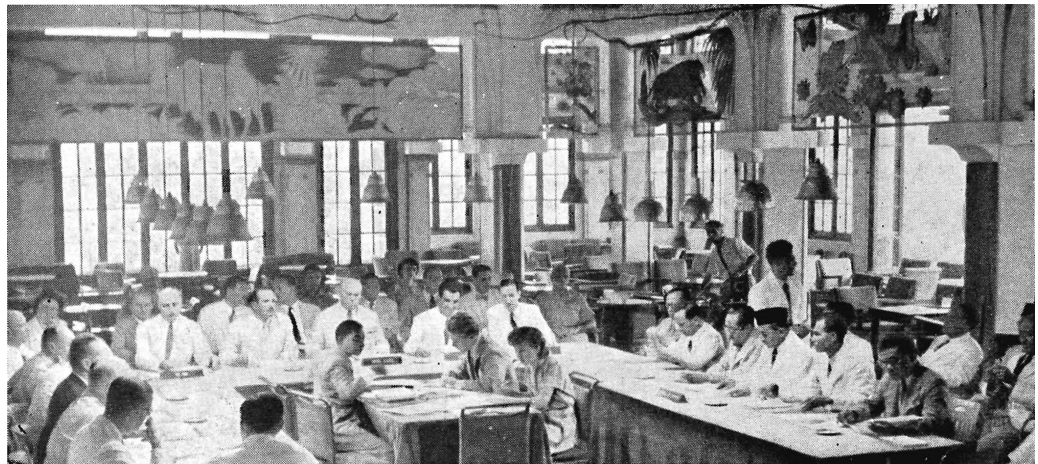
<sup>751</sup> Van Roijen to Van Maarseveen, 28 April 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 291; Livengood to Secretary of State, 28 April 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 391-393.

<sup>752</sup> Beel to Leader of the Catholic Party Carl P.M. Romme, 2 May 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 313; Beel to Van Maarseveen, 2 May 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 312; Spoor to Beel, 6 May 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 336; Van Roijen to Van Maarseveen, 6 May 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 338.

action. Stikker emphasized that this was the time to find a solution. Drees observed that if his government rejected Van Roijen's advise, the entire world would turn against the Dutch.<sup>753</sup> Putting off their acceptance of the inevitable for years left much for planners in The Hague to digest in the space of mere weeks. Believing nevertheless that the declarations were a last chance for a satisfactory settlement and a meaningful future bond between the Netherlands and Indonesia, the cabinet unanimously chose to support its delegate in Jakarta. Upon being informed of this result, Beel gave notice.

On May 7, the agreement was made official when the two heads of delegation read out their declarations. Roem stated that immediately after the restoration of the Republican government to Yogyakarta, Sukarno and Hatta would issue the order to

cease guerilla warfare, and cooperate in the restoration of peace and



26. 7 May 1949

<sup>753</sup> Beel to Van Maarseveen, 6 May 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 341; Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 6 May 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 343; Beel to Van Maarseveen, 7 May 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 345.

maintenance of law and order. Representatives of the Republic would moreover participate in the Round Table Conference “with a view to accelerate the unconditional transfer of real and complete sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia.” Van Roijen in turn declared that the Netherlands government agreed to the return of the Republican leaders to Yogyakarta, would discontinue all military operations, release all political prisoners, and refrain from the establishment or recognition of new federal states in former Republican territory. Noting the “excellent spirit in which the chairmen and their delegations had worked,” Cochran warmly congratulated the two parties on what was to be known as the Van Roijen - Roem Agreement.<sup>754</sup>

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<sup>754</sup> Brief report meeting United Nations Commission for Indonesia with Dutch and Republican delegations, 7 May 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 346.

## Conclusion

*“We do not honestly know how the final step will be taken. [...] We have no measure by which to look that far into the future [...]. We don’t know, for instance, but that the Dutch might in the last instance come to the realization that it would be better if their colonial rule were brought to an end peaceably. [...] At present we only know there is no independence without nationalism; therefore, we promote nationalism. There is no independence without a united people; therefore, we work to unify our people. There is no independence without power; therefore, we organize their power. There is no independence without the consciousness of power; therefore, we awaken their consciousness of power. [...] Indonesia will be free. About this problem [...], about the fact that Indonesia will be released from the Netherlands some time in the future [...] there is no longer any riddle. And there is no riddle concerning the future freedom of our country for anybody with an understanding of history, not for any Indonesian or Dutchman who is honest with himself. The entire history of the world, the entire history of mankind over dozens of centuries offers not a single case of a people who have been ruled forever. On the contrary, time and again it has shown the liberation of ensnared peoples and nations. [...] But the way in which Indonesia will attain her freedom, how the colonial ties will be broken, depends entirely on the intentions of imperialists themselves; it is entirely in their own hands.”*<sup>755</sup>

Sukarno, 1930

“We shall be with you shortly,” the Lieutenant Governor-General had confidently reassured the population of the Netherlands East Indies when he spoke to them via an Australian radio broadcast on the eve of the return of Dutch officials to the archipelago in August 1945.<sup>756</sup> By the time a bitterly disappointed Hubertus van Mook left for good the country where he had been born, raised, and worked for more than three decades three years later in November 1948, these Indonesian islands had been the scene of a triumphant declaration of independence, and the site of an invasion of British and Indian troops liberating the islands in the name of the Netherlands

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<sup>755</sup> Taken from Sukarno’s defense oration in the political trial of 1930 (see also Chapter 1), *Indonesia Accuses!* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 108-112.

<sup>756</sup> Radio speech Lieutenant Governor-General H.J. van Mook, 15 August 1945, in: S.L. van der Wal, P.J. Drooglever and M.B.J. Schouten (eds.), *Officiële Bescheiden Betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische Betrekkingen 1945-1950* (hereafter NIB) 20 volumes (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971-1996), I, p. 42-43, note 2.

authorities. It had also been the subject of increasing international concern, and the stage for virtually continual violent clashes and military offenses reminiscent of colonial wars of conquest. “All signs point to Indonesians wanting to break with the past completely,” the last Dutch High Commissioner in the archipelago, A.H.J. Lovink, lamented another twelve months later.<sup>757</sup>

“Tearing down the past,” Lovink admitted, “is a depressing occupation.”<sup>758</sup>

This dismantling of the Dutch colonial administration in Indonesia took on an almost frantic pace in the last months of 1949. After a final series of negotiations at the Round Table Conference in August, September, and October of that year, during which more than one impasse between the delegations nearly resulted in the complete breakdown of discussions, the transfer of sovereignty from the Netherlands to the United States of Indonesia was formalized in simultaneous ceremonies in Amsterdam and Jakarta on December 27. They



**27. 27 December 1949**

<sup>757</sup> High Commissioner of the Crown in Indonesia A.H.J. Lovink to Minister of the Colonies J.H. van Maarseveen, 5 November 1949, in: NIB, XX, no. 247.

<sup>758</sup> Lovink to Chief Division Political Affairs of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Hendrik N. Boon, 21 November 1949, in: NIB, XX, no. 290.

symbolized the Dutch recognition, more than five years overdue, that Indonesia was independent.<sup>759</sup>

The subject matter of this dissertation is the Indonesian war of independence: the painful and drawn-out process by which the archipelago formerly known as the Netherlands East Indies decolonized between 1945 and 1949. This study has investigated that topic through the lenses of Indonesians, both Republican and federalist, Dutch foreign policymakers in The Hague, Netherlands-Indies officials in Jakarta, and British, Australian, and American planners in London, Canberra, Washington, and New York. This broad view has allowed us to examine crucial questions about the nature of this particular case of decolonization as well as issues relating to identity, legitimacy, and power.

The attention of Western scholars looking at the Indonesian war of independence in an international perspective has focused on the shift in American foreign policymaking from a so-called “hands-off” policy towards the conflict until the second half of 1948 to a grand strategy, informed by increasing Cold War tensions, that insisted the Dutch government rapidly transfer genuine sovereignty.

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<sup>759</sup> Speech Queen Juliana, 27 December 1949, in: NIB, XX, appendix IV; Declaration Indonesian Prime Minister Mohammad Hatta, 27 December 1949, in: NIB, XX, appendix III. When the federal United States of Indonesia came into being, it consisted of the following *negaras* (included are the dates they were created): Indonesian Republic (17 August 1945); Greater Dayak (7 December 1946); East Indonesia (24 December 1946); Southeast Borneo (8 January 1947); East Borneo (12 April 1947); West Borneo (12 May 1947); Banka (12 July 1947); Billiton (12 July 1947); Riau Islands (12 July 1947); East Sumatra (25 December 1947); Bandjar (14 January 1948); Madura (20 February 1948); Pasundan (24 April 1948); South Sumatra (30 August 1948); East Java (26 November 1948); Central Java (23 February 1949); federal district Jakarta (11 August 1948). For a map, see appendix 6.

Washington's threat to cease Marshall Plan aid to the Netherlands features prominently in these explanations of what ultimately caused policymakers in The Hague to "capitulate under pressure," to use Dean Acheson's phrase. What has received much less attention in the English-language historiography of the period are the factors besides and beyond these austere financial and economic considerations that drove Netherlands policymaking with regard to Indonesia: the conservative decades leading up to the Second World War, when the Dutch sowed the seeds of their own demise; the swift and crushing defeat of Netherlands forces in 1942 and the years of Japanese occupation of the Indies that followed, which hid important developments in Indonesian nationalism from view; and the difficult to capture but material influence of the Dutch mindset, motives, and miscalculations on the course of events between 1945 and 1949. It is these gaps that the dissertation attempts to fill, and to explicate.

It has been maintained in this dissertation that in order explain the postwar demise of the Dutch empire in Southeast Asia, we cannot merely focus on the rise of the Indonesian nationalist movement and conclude that after a long struggle it succeeded in driving out the Dutch. What features in the story as well is the domestic arena, in which party and electoral politics, public opinion, and national prestige play a role. Finally, we must look at the changing international system, the influence and

status of the United Nations, and the global impact of rising tensions between the United States and Soviet Union. Only by adopting this wider lens can we begin to find answers to questions such as why the leadership in Yogyakarta ultimately opted for a policy that combined *perjuangan* (“struggle”) with *diplomasi*, why the British government first pushed for swift negotiations with Indonesian leaders the Dutch deemed collaborators and later were relieved to retreat from the conflict, why American policymakers over the course of 1948 grew increasingly concerned with events in Indonesia, and why, perhaps most importantly, experienced and inexperienced Dutch and Netherlands-Indies officials and military leaders alike continually overestimated their own abilities while underestimating the force, appeal, and weight of both their Indonesian adversaries and international opposition.

We have looked at the framework within which these actors’ actions were confined. We have seen that their behavior was led by the norms and expectations delivered to them from the prewar past, inadequate though these were to meet the current challenge. Their experiences during the war made it difficult, but not impossible, for Netherlands policymakers to appreciate that realities were being transformed, that the postwar world order would reconstitute national identities and political systems, that the retreat of the West from Asia was imminent and inevitable.

Dutch and Netherlands-Indies officials and troops were too optimistic about what might be achieved through military means and unprepared for the depth and

intensity of the modern guerilla warfare Republicans unleashed upon them, because the image that men like General Spoor had of the enemy was one of gullible Indonesians having been incited by the propaganda and terrorism of a small group of extremists in the capital. Van Mook, unable to truly understand Indonesians and Indonesian nationalism, sincerely believed that although it signified no genuine change of course in The Hague's policy, his federal solution would appeal to the population of the islands. Moreover, the Dutch legacy of a strictly neutral foreign policy during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century led to the belief among policymakers that neither international affairs nor the competency of United Nations could extend to the "internal" Indonesian case. Before commencing both military offenses, planners in The Hague and Jakarta were convinced that they could achieve their objectives and present the world with a *fait accompli* before any question of foreign intervention would materialize. In these ways, Dutch policymakers operated within a narrowly confined space, influenced by old colonial ideologies and experiences from which they might have, but did not want to extricate themselves. As Edmund Burke observed, and as Dean Acheson quoted, "not the least of the arts of diplomacy is to grant graciously what one no longer has the power to withhold." This dissertation has shown that the Dutch did not master this art of diplomacy; Netherlands policy in the Indonesian archipelago between 1945 and 1949 was aimed instead at keeping, by force if necessary, what had never been a rightful possession.

When Netherlands-Indies administrators returned to their jobs in the Indonesian archipelago after the Japanese surrender, they continued their pre-war policy of attempting to separate “the wheat from the chaff,” distinguishing among Indonesian nationalists the extremists and collaborators such as Sukarno with whom discussions were out of the question, and the “moderates” like Sutan Sjahrir with whom negotiations might be fruitful. This distinction overlooked the fact that the entire leadership of the Republic desired official recognition and complete independence from the Netherlands. Van Mook’s federal policy in which that Republic would be merely one of many component states within a United States of Indonesia, in turn forming a permanent bond of cooperation with the Netherlands in a Union at the head of which would stand the Dutch crown, therefore, was doomed from its inception; it was conceived of within the framework of colonialism and clearly presupposed and prolonged the superiority of one partner over the other. Although the Linggadjati Agreement of November 1946 and the Renville Agreement of January 1948 seemingly brought the two parties close to compromise, the divergent interpretations of those accords and the subsequent problems in their implementation shows that the Dutch vision of a modern colonial state failed to enthuse Indonesians. Two large-scale military offenses calculated to annihilate the Republic unsurprisingly achieved only the opposite effect, destroying what little trust still existed between the

two delegations. When in the spring of 1949 Dutch military problems escalated and the federalist Indonesians who had hesitatingly backed The Hague's policy withdrew their support, Netherlands officials finally stood alone and were forced to accept that only through an almost immediate transfer of sovereignty might they still salvage something from the situation.

Both during and after the Indonesian struggle for independence the Dutch complained that their British and American allies had abandoned them. To objective observers, however, it is clear that at the outset of the conflict especially, and even after it had become apparent that an influential nationalist movement had declared the archipelago independent, the governments in London and Washington were in favor of a restoration of Dutch authority in the Indies and committed to helping reestablish what had been even before the Japanese occupation a fragile and vulnerable order; neither British nor American, nor even Australian policymakers questioned Netherlands' sovereignty in Indonesia in that critical period.

Having had thrust upon them the task of liberating the vast Indonesian archipelago at the eleventh hour, the Labour government in London did not possess the manpower or materials needed to swiftly reoccupy the islands. With outstanding commitments in other parts of Southeast Asia such as Singapore, Malaya, and parts of Burma, British forces did not arrive in the Dutch colony until late September of 1945. Both Mountbatten and his superiors in London soon realized that the Indonesian

independence movement was widespread and more broadly supported than they had thought. When it became obvious that there could be no British-enforced military solution to what was a Dutch-Indonesian political problem, and that London's security interests were directly involved in the conflict, Whitehall policymakers were relieved to hand back responsibility over the islands to the Dutch in November of 1946. In subsequent years, British diplomatic warnings to their Netherlands' colleagues that experience had taught them that the time was long past when European countries could dominate any part of Southeast Asia fell on deaf ears.

Australia's relations with Indonesia were close and cordial from 1945 until 1949, with a majority of the population and its politicians in Canberra sympathetic to the struggle of the Republic. As the weakness of not only the Dutch colonial administration but also of the British in India became apparent, however, Australian policymakers began asserting their independent interests, not seldom to the aggravation of planners in The Hague, London, and Washington. Prime Minister Chifley's government condemned the Dutch police actions and defended the views of the Republican leadership in Yogyakarta on the United Nations Good Offices Committee. Although Australian support was genuine, the official attitude remained ambivalent -- the government did not, for instance, extend even *de facto* recognition to the Republic until July 1947. After the transfer of sovereignty in 1949, relations between Australia and Indonesia soured over the issue of West Papua (known

previously as New Guinea and West Irian Jaya), in which Canberra officials supported Dutch claims.

And what, then, of the United States and its role? On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Indonesian Republic's proclamation of independence, President Bill Clinton congratulated President Suharto, stating that "strong diplomatic support for [the Indonesian] struggle for freedom came from President Truman and the United States Congress as [the] nation was being born."<sup>760</sup> This dissertation has emphasized that that message perpetuates a myth. The Truman administration did not from the start of the Indonesian revolution support the fight, even if it did in principle embrace the right to self-determination for the peoples of Southeast Asia. A preoccupation with Europe and increasing communist tensions muddled the view of policymakers in Washington. Although the United States saw self-rule as ultimately inevitable, it agreed with the Dutch government that this was a development for the future, to be stretched out over years if not decades. Until late 1948, American planners continually sided with their European ally in the Indonesian conflict, lending it military equipment from which American insignia were to be removed, attempting to keep the case out of the United Nations Security Council, and appointing pro-Dutch diplomats to fill the important third seat on the Good Offices Committee. Only when upon arrival in the archipelago one representative after another began to question Dutch policy, after

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<sup>760</sup> Telegram from Bill Clinton to Suharto, 17 August 1995, in: *Indonesia 1945-1995: The First Fifty Years* (Jakarta: Buku Antar Bangsa, 1995), 47.

Hatta's government put down the communist-inspired Madiun revolt, and after the second military offensive caused universal condemnation did United States officials bring effective pressure to bear on their colleagues in the Netherlands. They saw that even 50,000 British troops were hard-pressed to end the guerilla war in Malaya, realized that only through an uncompromising attitude and protracted campaigns the French in Indochina were "succeeding," for the time being, in suppressing Ho Chi Minh's forces, and looked on as Burma plunged into a state of anarchy. The Indonesian Republic, Washington came to understand in late 1948, had at least demonstrated the ability to provide a coherent, moderate, and relatively effective administration. By 1949, then, the Dutch themselves had emerged as the greatest threat to American postwar grand strategy.<sup>761</sup>

A final glimpse at the last few months of 1949 illuminates some of the themes of this dissertation. The practical implementation of the Van Roijen - Roem declarations of May 1949 proved problematic. In Indonesia as well as in the Netherlands, people felt a sense of betrayal. Many Republicans viewed the pragmatic compromise as a dangerous defeat; guerilla warfare would have to end in return for only a fraction of the territory the Republic had previously held, and the political leadership had moreover agreed to become only one of more than a dozen

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<sup>761</sup> Undersecretary of State Robert A. Lovett to United States Embassy in Moscow, 30 December 1948, in: FRUS, 1948, VI, 613-616.

component states, most of which artificially created by the Dutch, in the United States of Indonesia. Federalists in the archipelago had every reason to expect that the Republic would nevertheless attempt to become the dominant force in that federation. In the Netherlands, many feared that the Indies would soon be lost forever.

During the summer, rapid and sometimes unexpected changes took place. General Spoor, the die-hard who until the end believed that the Republic could and should be eliminated through decisive Dutch action, died of a sudden heart attack on May 25. A week later, the conservative career diplomat A.H.J. Lovink replaced High Commissioner Beel, whom even his aides said still felt like a stranger in a strange land.<sup>762</sup> Five days after that, head of the Dutch delegation in Jakarta J.H. van Roijen argued forcefully that the military situation of Netherlands troops was so dismal that genuine authority existed only in small pockets. He suggested controversially that his colleagues in The Hague recognize the hard facts and allow Republican administrators and forces to operate and maintain law and order in those areas they already controlled. The Dutch government had no option but to accept this recommendation.<sup>763</sup>

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<sup>762</sup> Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 16 May 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 388; Former High Commissioner of the Crown in Indonesia L.J.M. Beel to Leader of the Catholic Party Carl P.M. Romme, 30 May 1949, in: NIB, XVIII, no. 435; Commissioner for Indonesian Affairs at the Netherlands Ministry for the Colonies P.J. Bannier, 3 June 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 9.

<sup>763</sup> Head of Dutch delegation in Jakarta J.H. Van Roijen to Van Maarseveen, 7 June 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 16; Van Roijen to Boon, 11 June 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 30; Van Roijen to Van Maarseveen, 12 June 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 37; Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 20 June 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 75; Van

In late June, the Dutch withdrew from Yogyakarta. In early July, Sukarno and Hatta triumphantly returned to the city, waved on by cheering crowds carrying red and white flags. Although military leaders were reluctant to cease hostilities before the completion of negotiations with the Dutch, General Sudirman agreed to meet with the President.<sup>764</sup> By the end of the month, two Inter-Indonesia Conferences saw Republicans and federalists reaching major compromises in their discussions on the future of the United States of Indonesia and their preparations for the Round Table Conference. A frustrated High Commissioner Lovink grew increasingly alarmed at what he perceived to be unauthorized infiltrations that took place as the Republican army and administration took over areas previously held by the Dutch. He described the situation in the archipelago as explosive and highly dangerous, and accused the Republican leadership of demonstrating bad faith. Some of his military advisers even argued that a third police action would strengthen the Dutch position. By now firmly set on its new course, however, Prime Minister Drees's cabinet ruled out this course of action, and urged Lovink to remain cool-headed and practice self-restraint. A

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Maarseveen to Minister of the Colonies ad interim L. Götzen, 20 June 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 74; Boon to Van Roijen, 15 June 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 50.

<sup>764</sup> Brief report meeting Dutch, Republican, Federalist delegations and the United Nations Commission for Indonesia, 22 June 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 84; Livengood to Secretary of State, 7 July 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 455; Alastair M. Taylor, *Indonesian Independence and the United Nations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960), 223; "Sukarno Returns, Hails U.N. Efforts," Bertram D. Hulen, *New York Times*, 7 July 1949, 14; Salim Said, *Genesis of power: General Sudirman and the Indonesian military in politics, 1945-49* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1991), 119-122; T.B. Simatupang, *Report from Banaran: Experiences during the People's War* (Ithaca, Cornell University, 1972), 103-107. Sudirman strongly felt that the military resistance against the Dutch must continue in order to strengthen the Indonesian position in case the Round Table Conference failed. In early August, he threatened to resign over the issue, and was finally persuaded not to when President Sukarno indicated that in that case he believed he, too, would have to abandon his post. Sudirman died of tuberculosis in January 1950, aged only 35.

ceasefire between Dutch and Republican forces finally became effective in mid August.<sup>765</sup>

In the run-up to the Round Table Conference set to open in The Hague on August 23, Netherlands policymakers worked towards the earliest possible creation of a sovereign United States of Indonesia and Netherlands-Indonesia Union. During the ten weeks that followed the start of negotiations, the Dutch, Republican, and federalist delegations were more than once assisted by the American head of the United Nations Commission for Indonesia H. Merle Cochran in breaking through dangerous deadlocks.<sup>766</sup>

Three major issues kept the parties from reaching an agreement quickly. The first was the character and scope of the Union, the second the amount of debt the United States of Indonesia was to assume from the Netherlands, and the third the problem posed by the territory then known as New Guinea in the far east of the archipelago. Despite the Dutch arguments for a tightly knit relationship embodied by a Netherlands-Indonesia Union with real responsibilities and genuine authority, it was

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<sup>765</sup> George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952), 428-431; Report for Van Roijen, 23 July 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 210; Van Roijen to Van Maarseveen, 24 July 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 212; High Commissioner of the Crown in Indonesia A.H.J. Lovink to Van Maarseveen, 25 July 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 216; Report of decisions taken during second session of Inter-Indonesia Conference, 31 July – 2 August, in: NIB, XIX, no. 244; Lovink to Van Maarseveen, 11 August 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 276; Lovink to Van Maarseveen, 12 August 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 279; Lovink to Van Maarseveen, 15 August 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 289; Lovink to Van Maarseveen, 16 August 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 297; Lovink to Van Maarseveen, 17 August 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 304; Lovink to Van Maarseveen, 18 August 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 306; Van Maarseveen to Lovink, 18 August 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 308; Lovink to Van Maarseveen, 20 August 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 313.

<sup>766</sup> Secretary of State to United States Embassy in The Hague (Head of the United States delegation on the United Nations Commission for Indonesia H. Merle Cochran), 23 August 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 474-478.

eventually decided that the crown would merely symbolize and personify a voluntary bond between the two nations.<sup>767</sup> Netherlands politicians further insisted that the Indonesians take on the debt resulting from the military expenditures that had been designed to suppress the Republic: both Indonesian delegations categorically refused. Under heavy pressure from Cochran to reach a compromise, the government in The Hague finally consented to remit 2 billion guilders, leaving the United States of Indonesia with a still enormous 4 billion guilders of combined internal and external debt.<sup>768</sup> Finally, the Dutch delegation was adamant that New Guinea must be excluded from the transfer of sovereignty, noting that as the territory was markedly different from the rest of the archipelago and much less developed, a newly independent nation could not possibly become responsible for it. Already having had to swallow two bitter pills, Drees and his colleagues viewed this thorny issue as a matter of prestige. New Guinea constituted the last Dutch foothold and a sort of pied-à-terre in Southeast Asia. In the “uplifting” of New Guinea’s population, Netherlands politicians not unsurprisingly argued, a splendid task still remained to be fulfilled. For the federalist delegates, especially, the future status of the area was no less important.

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<sup>767</sup> Chargé at United States Embassy in The Hague L.V. Steere (Cochran) to Secretary of State, 19 September 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 494-497; Minute meeting Council of Ministers, 19 September 1949, in: NIB, XX, no. 8.

<sup>768</sup> Memorandum by Netherlands Minister of Foreign Affairs Dirk U. Stikker to Netherlands Prime Minister Willem Drees, Van Maarseveen, Götzen, and Van Roijen, 7 October 1949, in: NIB, XX, no. 75; Steere (Cochran) to Secretary of State, 8 October 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 505-509; Steere (Cochran) to Secretary of State, 8 October 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 509-511; Stikker to Netherlands Ambassador in Washington E.N. Van Kleffens, 8 October 1949, in: NIB, XX, no. 80; Steere (Cochran) to Secretary of State, 9 October 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 512-515; Steere (Cochran) to Secretary of State, 18 October 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 536-538; Steere (Cochran) to Secretary of State, 23 October 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 546-547.

Supported by the Republicans, they maintained that all previous agreements with the Dutch had envisioned the transfer of true and complete sovereignty of the entire territory formerly the Netherlands East Indies to the United States of Indonesia. With Cochran's help, the sides reached an eleventh-hour agreement: New Guinea was to be excluded from the transfer but remain under dispute, and the issue would be revisited through renewed negotiations within one year. When the conference closed on November 2, the overarching goal of outlining the structure, powers, and responsibilities of the United States of Indonesia and Netherlands-Indonesia Union had been narrowly achieved.<sup>769</sup>

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<sup>769</sup> Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 7 June 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 17; Report meeting 27 June 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 103; Report informal meeting Round Table Conference, 6 October 1949, in: NIB, XX, no. 71; Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, *Twenty Years Indonesian Foreign Policy, 1945-1965* (Yogyakarta: Wacana University Press, 1990), 67-70; Van Maarseveen to Lovink, 27 October 1949, in: NIB, XX, no. 197. Netherlands politicians sought international support for their stance on New Guinea, and received it from Australia. Head of the Australian delegation on the former Good Offices Committee and now the United Nations Commission for Indonesia Thomas K. Critchley indicated the Australian government agreed that the area must be excluded from the transfer of sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia, and underlined his country's eagerness to cooperate with the Dutch on strategic and defensive matters regarding the territory, which after all was the part of the archipelago closest to Australia. He suggested the Dutch wait a few months until the new Republic would become "so preoccupied with her own internal problems that [the matter] would disappear into the background" and Indonesians would be more "accommodating" to the wishes of the Netherlands. See: Dutch envoy in Canberra P.E. Teppema to Stikker, 1 September 1949, in: NIB, XIX, no. 349; Chief Division Far East in Jakarta J.G. De Beus to Stikker, 12 December 1949, in: NIB, XX, no. 345; Stikker to Netherlands Ambassador in London Edgar Michiels van Verduynen, Van Kleffens, Teppema, 16 October 1949, in: NIB, XX, no. 121; United States Ambassador in The Hague Selden Chapin (Cochran) to Secretary of State, 30 October 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 550-554; Chapin (Cochran) to Secretary of State, 31 October 1949, in: FRUS, 1949, VII, 554-558; Minutes meeting Council of Ministers, 31 October 1949, in: NIB, XX, no. 214; Report meeting of delegations Round Table Conference, 31 October 1949, in: NIB, XX, no. 215.

As Hubertus Van Mook retreated from public life, occasionally giving guest lectures in the United States such as one at Cornell University's McGraw Hall (!) in November 1953, the Cold War intensified.<sup>770</sup> The detonation of a Soviet atom bomb in the late summer of 1949, the communist victory in China a few months later, and the start of the Korean War the following year contributed to an increasingly bipolar and militarized international system, and to the institutionalization of the American global commitment. In that sense, Indonesia completed its decolonization process and emerged victorious from its struggle for independence just before the closing of a window, and henceforth would pursue a policy of non-alignment.

Within months of the official transfer of sovereignty, the archipelago's federal structure began to collapse, and on the fifth anniversary of the proclamation of independence the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia was created. National troops put down separatist movements in areas such as West Java and the Maluku islands in the east. In late 1950, renewed Dutch-Indonesian negotiations over New Guinea proved fruitless. After yet another round of discussions about the future of the territory failed in late 1955 and early 1956, Sukarno unilaterally denounced the Round Table Conference accords and withdrew his nation from the Netherlands-Indonesia Union. Around the same time, the Indonesian president put into place the political system of "Guided Democracy." The resulting authoritarian state of affairs

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<sup>770</sup> "H.J. Van Mook to Give Talk Discussing International Help," *Cornell Daily Sun* LXX, 43, 18 November 1953, 5.

led to Mohammad Hatta's resignation from the Vice Presidency. When Sukarno broke all ties with the Netherlands in 1960, the Dutch government made one last unsuccessful attempt to keep New Guinea out of Indonesian hands. Under the auspices of United States mediator Ellsworth Bunker, the two parties finally agreed to temporarily transfer sovereignty over the territory to the United Nations in August 1962. In May 1963, the area was incorporated into the Indonesian Republic. With Sukarno's demise and Suharto's ascent to power in the mid 1960s, it might be argued that Indonesian post-1949 regimes inherited the Dutch prewar legacy of autocracy. Relations between the Netherlands and Indonesia remained difficult for several decades. Although they normalized over the course of the 1990s and 2000s, old scars from the period 1945-1949 are still periodically reopened, most recently through court cases connected to the Rawagede massacre in West Java committed by Dutch forces in 1947.

Might events in the Indonesian archipelago have taken a different course? To what extent were the years 1945-1949 marked by missed opportunities? The passage of more than half a century grants us the hindsight that the inflexible Dutch attitude made the decolonization of Indonesia, from the Netherlands point of view, at least, a costly fiasco. For what means, to borrow J.R. Seeley's poignant question and answer from his defense of the British Empire, could the Netherlands possess to resist the

rebellion of seventy million subjects? Some voices said that the Dutch had conquered the Indies once before, and could conquer it again. But over the course of centuries Netherlands administrators had hardly conquered the hearts of the Indonesian people; quite the contrary.<sup>771</sup> Dutch supreme authority was vested in the feudal aristocracy, in bureaucrats and puppet leaders who smothered the voices of nationalists and disempowered the archipelago's population. A sense of national identity nevertheless formed among Indonesians. It was fostered by both Japanese occupiers and Dutch smugness, and grew into an active desire to drive out oppressive foreigners.

Though few things in history are inevitable, it is difficult to see how things might have gone otherwise. The motto of the Netherlands, *Je Maintiendrai*, meaning "I will maintain" or "I stand steadfast," aptly summarizes the attitude of Dutch policymakers to the conflict in Indonesia. Convinced that they were doing what was right for not only the Netherlands and Indonesia but also the world, they remained unimaginative even in the face of international pressure to be generous and Indonesian confidence that the fragile Republic would endure. Even relatively progressive politicians such as Schermerhorn and Van Mook were convinced that the Dutch had a right to their place in the Indies and a duty to fulfill, and argued merely for reconstruction, for a new Indonesia after a Netherlands model. In the eyes of their

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<sup>771</sup> J.R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1922 (first edition 1883), 262-263.

colleagues in The Hague they went too far, in the eyes of their Indonesian opponents, not far enough.

In 1930, an-about-to-be-imprisoned Sukarno prophesized that although there was no question that Indonesia would one day be free, the way in which colonial ties would be broken depended entirely on the intentions of the Dutch. As their unstable authority in Indonesia came crashing down, the latter continued living in a dream world bound by prewar prejudices. Even as that dream turned into a nightmare that took the lives of tens of thousands, each successive point on which the Netherlands government ungraciously gave way over the course of the late 1940s was regarded as a regrettable necessity. Although the Dutch finally resigned to the inevitable outcome of the conflict, the way in which Indonesia gained its independence long remained a source of mournful sentiment.

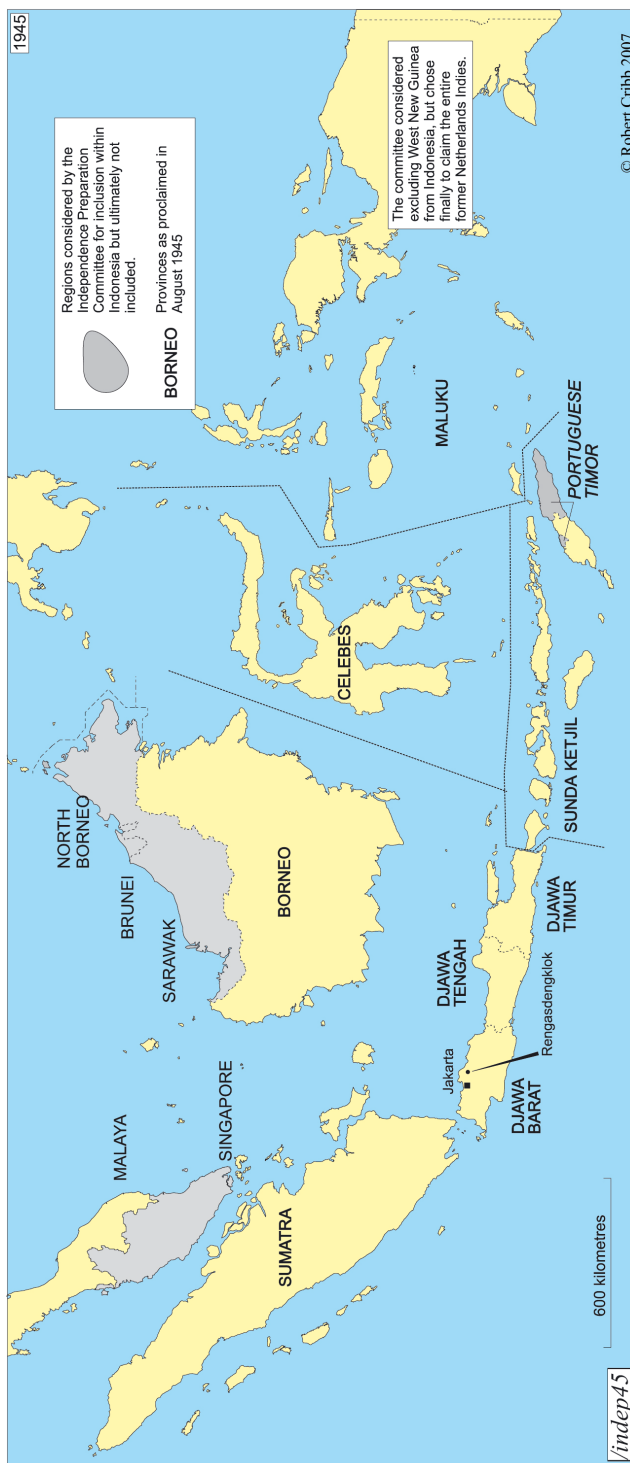
# Appendix I:

Allied re-occupation, August 1945 - March 1946<sup>772</sup>



<sup>772</sup> All maps in appendices apart from appendix III from: R.B. Cribb, *Digital Atlas of Indonesian History* (Copenhagen, NIAS, 2010).

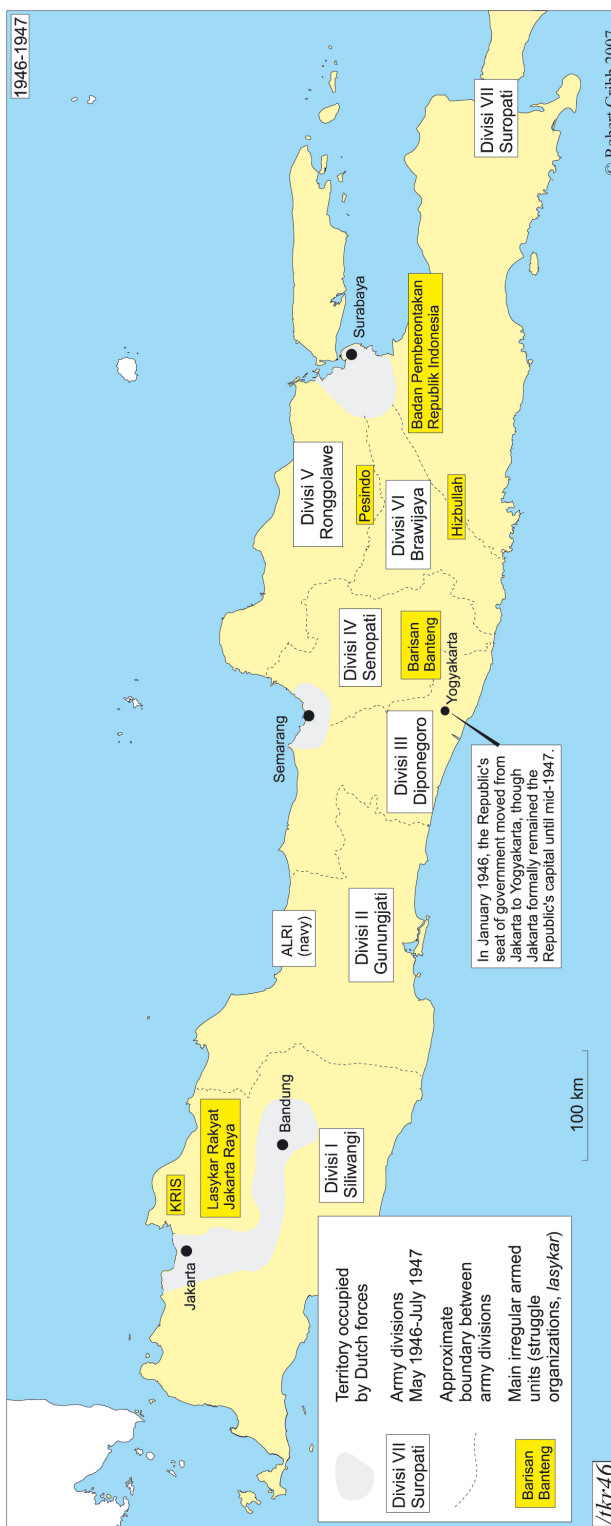
## Appendix II: 17 August 1945: the declaration of independence



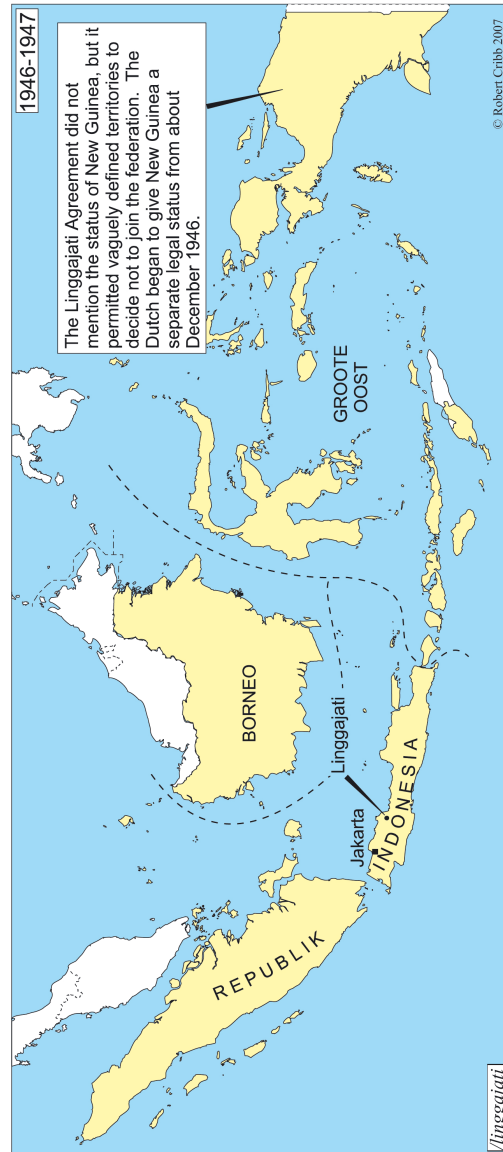
## Appendix III: Java



# Appendix IV: Republican military units on Java, 1946-1947



## Appendix V: Federal Indonesia as proposed in the Linggadjati Agreement



# Appendix VI: First Dutch “police action” on Java, July-August 1947

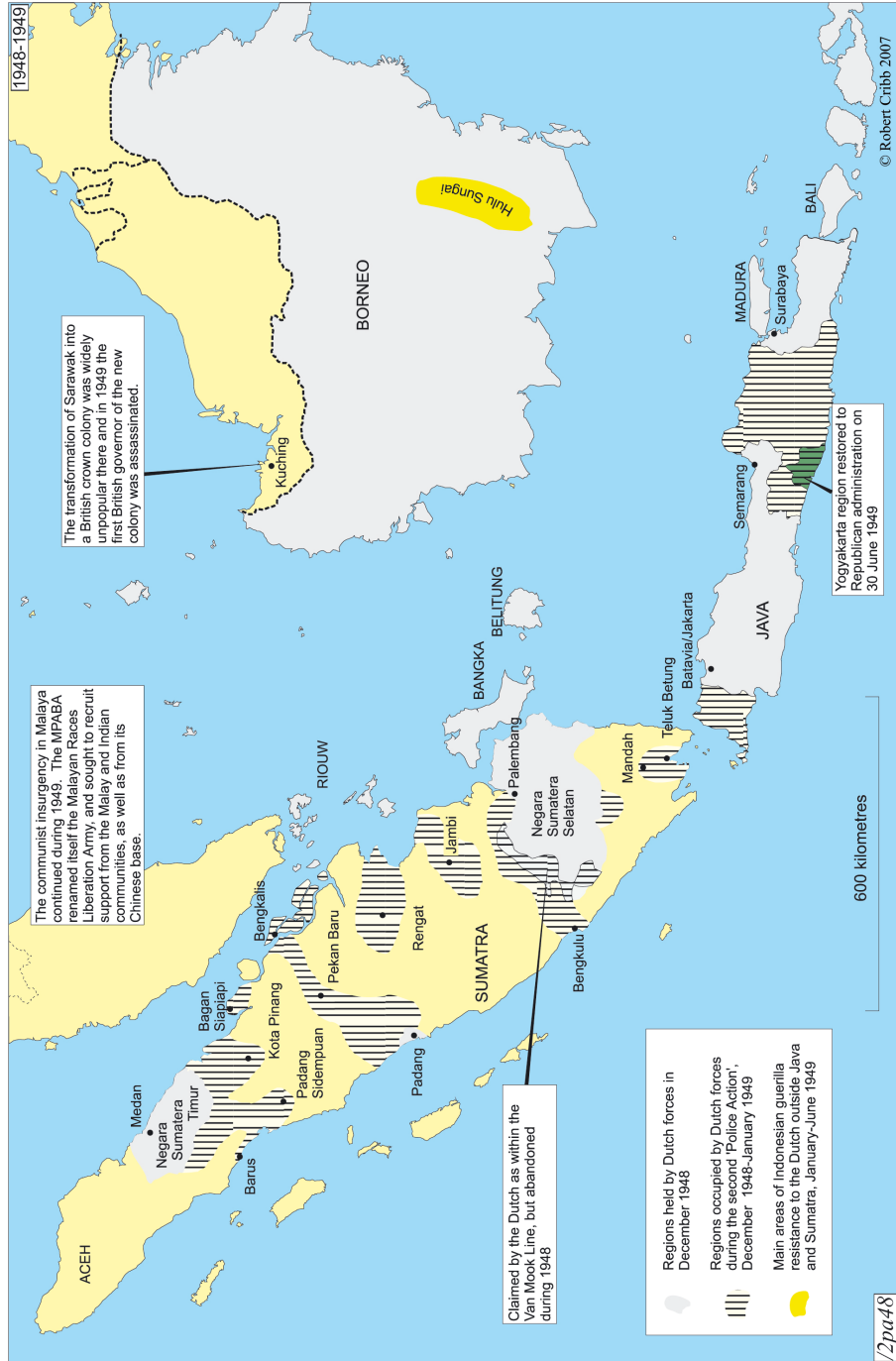


## Appendix VII:

First Dutch “police action” on Sumatra, July-August 1947

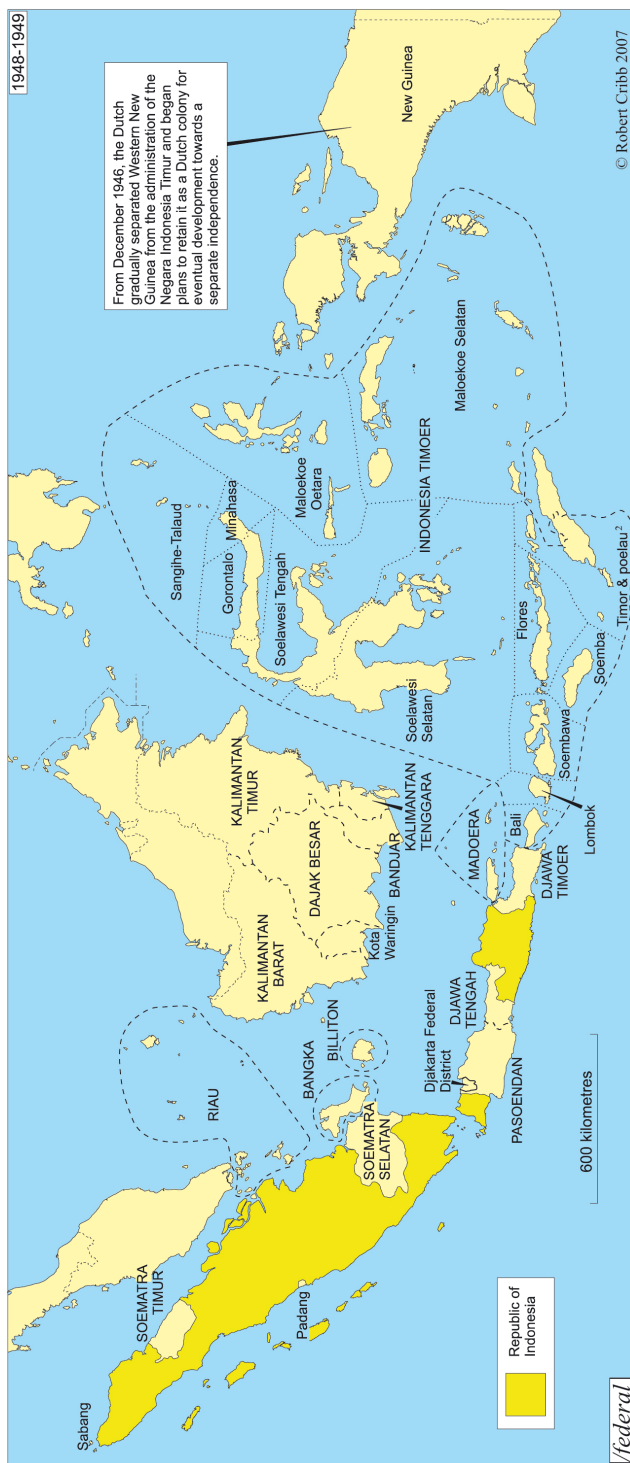


# Appendix VIII: Second “police action” and its aftermath, 1948-1949



# Appendix IX:

## Federal Indonesia, 1949-1950



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