

THE AMERICAN POLITICAL INTERVENTION
IN THE CONFLICT IN THE DUTCH
EAST INDIES 1945-1949

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History

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE AMERICAN POLITICAL INTERVENTION IN THE CONFLICT IN THE DUTCH EAST INDIES 1945-1949, by Major Cornelis W.A.J. van Dijk, 128 pages.

When the Republic of Indonesia declared itself independent from the Netherlands on 17 August 1945, the Dutch leaders did not accept this and tried to restore colonial authority. This led to a four-year conflict between the Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia. Dutch forces conducted both counterinsurgency and major combat operations. International pressure forced the Dutch government to negotiate but that did not lead to a settlement. During the conflict, the United States became more involved and played a major role during the negotiations. When the Dutch were not able to end the conflict and the area became more unstable, the US government, fearing a rise of communism in the archipelago, put political pressure on the Netherlands to end the conflict. After a second military offensive and ignoring United Nations Security Council resolutions, the US government threatened the Netherlands to stop Marshall Aid since Dutch actions influenced the North Atlantic Treaty. The Dutch complied and the Round Table Conference led to the Independence of Indonesia on 27 December 1949. This thesis will address the main reasons for the United States to become involved in the conflict and explain its eventual intervention that forced the Dutch to withdraw.

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This thesis is the result of a life-long interest in the conflict in the Dutch East Indies. Growing up amongst several veterans of this war and doing several case studies during my education at high school and the Royal Military Academy increased my fascination of this topic. My time as a student at CGSC gave me a unique opportunity to write this thesis as I have access to relevant American sources.

I would like to thank my committee members, Dr Sean Kalic, Dr Jonathan House, and Dr Mark Gerges for giving me the guidance and feedback to finish this thesis. They kept me on the right track and motivated me to research this topic in depth.

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ACRONYMS

ABDA	American British Dutch Australian Command
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
GOC	Good Offices Committee
HSTPL	Harry S. Truman Presidential Library
KNIL	Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger (<i>Royal Netherlands Indies Army</i>)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NICA	Netherlands Indies Civil Administration
PNI	Partai Nasional Indonesia (<i>Indonesian National Party</i>)
POW	Prisoner Of War
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAPWI	Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees
SEAC	South East Asia Command
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia (<i>Indonesian National Army</i>)
VOC	Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (<i>United East Indies Company</i>)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The East Indies were under Dutch influence since 1596. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Dutch only occupied small areas along the coast to establish trade routes. In the nineteenth century, the Dutch government considered the area a colony and expanded its presence throughout the whole archipelago. This led to several conflicts with local leaders that opposed the Dutch presence and fought to keep the authority they had for centuries. Although several colonial conflicts took place in the nineteenth century, the Indonesian people did not attempt to declare independence until after World War II. In August 1945, nationalists declared the Republic of Indonesia to be independent from the Netherlands. The Netherlands was rebuilding its economy, and the military struggled to deploy forces to the area. British troops arrived in the area in August 1945 and handed over their positions on Java and Sumatra to Dutch troops in March 1946. Dutch leaders wanted to defeat the Republic and launched two major military campaigns. Although the operations were successful, international pressure forced the Netherlands to negotiate with the Republic. The United States got involved in the conflict, trying to act as a mediator during the negotiations. In 1949, the United States put heavy pressure on the Dutch government, forcing them to reach a settlement. The State Department threatened to stop Marshall Aid funds to the Netherlands. The conflict ended with the transfer of authority to the Indonesian people on 27 December 1949. The impression of the Dutch people is that the United States government intervened because of its dislike of colonization and the right of self-determination of people which was a

part of the Truman Doctrine. However, there are several other reasons that made the United States government intervene in the conflict. The control over Indonesian natural resources, the rise of communism in both Europe and Asia and the North Atlantic Treaty were important issues during the American decision making process for the East Indies.

Primary Research Question

What were the main reasons for the US government to intervene in the conflict in the Dutch East-Indies?

The involvement of the United States went through several stages. At the beginning of the conflict, the US government supported the Netherlands but when the Dutch were not able to stabilize the region the US State Department urged for a settlement. When the Republic defeated an internal communist insurgency by itself and therefore proved to be able to become a stable and non-communist state, the United States was convinced that the Dutch were doing more harm than good and put pressure on the Dutch government to end the conflict. Several other countries like India and Australia urged the United States to put sanctions on the Netherlands. When the formation of NATO was at stake because members of the US Congress did not want to be linked to a country that did not grant the Indonesian people their freedom, the US government was forced to act. The actual intervention took place when Secretary of State Dean Acheson threatened the Dutch to stop the Marshall Aid and secure the North Atlantic Treaty since the formation NATO was important for European security. The main reason for the actual intervention was the security of Europe and the containment of communism.

Secondary Research Question

What was the influence of the rise of the Soviet Union on the decision to intervene?

The rise of the Soviet Union played a major part throughout the conflict. In 1948, there were communist uprisings in Burma and Singapore. When the Republic defeated an internal communist uprising, it gained the support of the United States because it proved to be non-communist. The expansion of the Soviet Union in Europe led to the formation of NATO. The Dutch policy in the East Indies threatened the North Atlantic Treaty and forced the United States to act.

Significance

The significance of this thesis is twofold. The Dutch government deployed many soldiers to the East Indies. Veterans never got the recognition they deserved. They still wonder why the Dutch troops had to leave while the military operations were successful. The thesis also explains the complexity of international relations. Although the Cold War is over, the situation in the East Indies and the interests of the parties involved still explain the linkage between different national interests and international relations.

Limitations

Research: Some of the sources needed to come from the Netherlands. These sources may conflict with the sources from US perspective. The focus of this thesis will be on the US perspective.

Topic: After World War II, many nations like India and the Philippines became independent from their colonial rulers. European countries like the United Kingdom,

France and the Netherlands gave up their colonies and the world faced the rise of the Soviet Union. The Cold War started and the conflicts in Asia had links to the security of Europe. This thesis will only focus on the Dutch East Indies. Both the United States and the Netherlands struggled with internal political issues during the conflict in the East Indies. In the United States, Congress was divided in its opinion and the Dutch multi-party system caused fierce discussions in the cabinet, as the parties did not agree on the Dutch policy. There was also a change of government in the Netherlands during the conflict. This thesis will only refer to any internal political issue when it directly influenced the conflict.

Literature review

There are many sources available on the history of the East Indies but only few sources focus on the involvement of the United States.

Primary Sources

Truman Presidential Library

There are many documents available in the Truman Library. Although the papers from Secretary of State George Marshall and Undersecretary Robert Lovett are not available in the Truman Library there are several documents that describe the involvement of President Harry Truman. A personal letter to H Merle Cochran and the statement of the President after Indonesia became independent both express his concern of the credibility of the United Nations. The Dean Acheson papers give a clear insight of the conversations between the State Department and the Dutch government. The memorandum of conversation of 1949 in which Secretary of State Acheson finally threatened the Dutch to stop the Marshall Aid is a vital primary source. The Truman

Library also holds several CIA reports that reflect the world situation. A report from 1948 expresses the concern of the CIA about the rise of communism in Asia and the American responsibility to contain communism.

Foreign Relations of the United States Series.

These books are a valuable primary source as they contain many of the original communications between the involved officials. The volumes 1947 Vol VI, 1948 Vol VI, and 1950 Vol III give a good view on United States policy on the conflict since the books contain transcripts of conversations between American officials and international partners. The books give an insight in the different conversations that were going on between the US and the Netherlands, the US and other nations and internal the US government. Especially communications between American officials explain the real policy and thoughts about the conflict that explains the reasons for their actions. The series hold many memorandums of conversation of key players like Secretaries of State Marshall and Acheson and Undersecretary Lovett with Dutch officials like Foreign Minister Stikker and Ambassador van Kleffens. The series also contain information sent by the Good Offices Committee to the State Department.

Secondary Sources

There are several books available on this topic. They form a good secondary source but contain personal opinions and conclusions. Although this thesis does not include the conclusions from any of the secondary sources, these were useful to determine some of the backgrounds that reveal the reasons for American decisions.

Doel, H.W. van den. *Afscheid van Indie*. Amsterdam: Prometheus Uitgeverij, 2000. This book describes the end of the Dutch influence in the East Indies. It is a valuable source for Indonesian history and the policy of the Dutch government. It emphasizes the differences within the Dutch political parties which is not included in this thesis. The book holds useful information and details about the events that lead to the independence of Indonesia and mentions the Dutch reactions to the American policy. The conclusion of the writer focuses on the decision-making process within the Netherlands government. This book has been valuable in providing a detailed background of the conflict from a Dutch perspective.

Gouda, Frances. *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002. This book gives a good insight in the developments within the United States and the political differences in the United States government. It provides detailed information on the American thoughts in Congress that led to the actual intervention by Secretary of State Acheson.

Groen, P.M.H. *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*. Den Haag: SDU uitgeverij, 1991. This book provides an excellent background for the military part of the conflict. It focuses on the Dutch military strategic policies and gives detailed information on the police actions in 1947 and 1948. It describes the chaotic situation during the conflict that helps understand the American intervention because the Dutch were not able to control the situation.

Robert J. Mc.Mahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1981. A good back-up source that verifies American policy towards the Netherlands and the influence of communism on American decisions. This book

specifically described the link between the North Atlantic Treaty and the Netherlands policy in the East Indies that forced the US government to act.

William L. Hitchcock, *France Restored*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. Although this thesis does not emphasize other colonial conflicts, this book provides a good background for an alternative scenario in the East Indies. The American support to the French emphasizes their focus on the containment of communism.

CHAPTER 2

COLONIZATION AND THE RISE OF INDONESIAN NATIONALISM

Introduction

The conflict in the Dutch East Indies has a long history. To understand the background and ideas of the several parties, it is important to look at the history of the East Indies, the development of Indonesian nationalism, and the attitude of all groups involved. The early conflicts and the Dutch policy towards the colony had a major influence, as did the Japanese occupation during World War II. This chapter describes the history of the East Indies leading to the start of the conflict in 1945. It will end at the start of the major hostilities in the fall of 1945 and explain the American involvement.

Early Years

The Dutch influence in Indonesia started in 1596, when the first expedition arrived in the area. Dutch sea power annihilated the Portuguese presence and when they established their footprint other competitors, such as the British and Spanish, got discouraged.¹ The Dutch United East-Indies Company (*VOC: Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*) was the Netherlands presence and ruled the area. The Dutch called their colony East Indies because of their presence in the Caribbean where the Dutch Islands were called the West Indies. The VOC, a trading company, established its headquarters in

¹The historical information comes from several open sources. Christiaan Penders, *The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia, 1945-1962* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002) Frances Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002)http://www.onderwijsbeeldbank.geheugenvannederland.nl/component/option,com_bbbk/vak,geschiedenis/hoofdthema,4/. <http://studenten.samenvattingen.com/documenten/show/2244668/>

Jakarta on the island of Java. Another important area for the VOC was the Moluccas, or Spice Islands, where they harvested precious spice like nutmeg and cloves.² Unlike the Portuguese, the VOC did not try to spread its religion because it might cause unrest and hamper trade benefits. For nearly two hundred years, the Netherlands based their relation with the East Indies totally on trade. The VOC ruled the area and, although it was a trade organization, did not hesitate to establish itself as a land force and (re)organize local governments. However, the VOC always remained at its trading posts in the coastal area. At the end of the eighteenth century, when the Netherlands was part of France, the British occupied large parts of the East Indies. The VOC, already showing signs of decay due to corruption, went bankrupt, and disappeared. When the wars in Europe ended, a treaty between the British and the Netherlands re-established Dutch rule over the East Indies. King Willem I, the new Dutch ruler, turned the East Indies into a colony and called it Netherlands-Indies (*Nederlands-Indie*). In the English language, it remained Dutch East Indies or Netherlands Indies. The Dutch government focused on making money in the colony and established the so-called culture system (*cultuurstelsel*). It implied that every farmer had to grow products for the Dutch government on one-fifth of his property. Besides that, they had to help with building roads and ports (*herendiensten*). The culture-system did not have many benefits for the farmers and to force this on the population, the Dutch had to occupy the area. The VOC stayed on the coast and had their goods delivered to them, but the colonial government had to move inland. Until they moved inland, most of the local population had never seen a European person. The Dutch

²Christiaan Penders, *The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia, 1945-1962* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 2.

government installed a Governor-general to be the representation of the King and the colonial ruler. The culture-system and the occupation by the Dutch started the first unrest amongst the locals. Although there is no specific tribal layout in the East Indies, the people on Java and Sumatra put up the most resistance. One of the reasons for this is that they had more wealth and had their own government, the sultans.

The Use of Local Governments

The Dutch did not install an entire European government, there was only a colonial government under the leadership of the governor-general. The seat of the colonial government was in Batavia, as the city of Jakarta was renamed. The governor-general had residents and controllers spread out over the whole area but the local population had their own government. The Indonesian royals ruled their own territory through the village leaders and so-called regents assisted the Dutch governor-general. In this way, the Dutch colonial government did not rule the local population directly and stayed out of sight. The use of local governments limited uprisings but it also had a downside as local rulers were often corrupt so the farmers had to pay two parties. Around 1850, the disadvantages of the culture-system became more and more clear and the Dutch people changed their views of the colony. Instead of making only money in a colony, the Dutch people believed it had responsibility to develop the local population and its leaders. It was the time of the so-called “ethical politics” which meant that the Dutch invested in education of the population, especially the leaders. Although the local leaders went to universities in the Netherlands and were able to conduct more tasks, the colonial structure did not change until the transfer of authority between the Netherlands and Indonesia.

Early Conflicts

The VOC did not interfere in local issues, they only ruled their coastal areas to make trade to be as effective as possible. When King Willem I turned the East Indies into a colony, the Dutch colonials got more involved with the local population. The culture system forced the Dutch to go deeper into the local territories, which led to several conflicts. Local royal families had a strong influence in their territories and were unwilling to give that up because Dutch colonial rule meant that they would be subordinate. The relations with their people were feudal, their minions worked for them and were expected to die for them. In 1825, a Java royal, Prince Diponegoro, revolted against the Dutch as the culture system left insufficient food for his people. He was very popular and was able to raise a large army and the Java war started. After five years, Diponegoro and his men were exhausted and wanted to negotiate. During the negotiations, the Dutch captured him and banished him. The Indonesians looked at the capture as an act of betrayal.³ Dutch history described the period between 1870 and 1914 as modern imperialism, which means that western nations extended their reach in the colonies.⁴ The East Indies contain 13,000 islands and the Dutch started to extend their reach in an aggressive way. The Royal Netherlands Indies Army (*KNIL: Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger*) was established in 1830 and consisted of Dutch and local

³*Het Geheugen van Nederland*. (2003). Retrieved November 10, 2008, from Het geheugen van Nederland - Nederlands Indie: http://www.onderwijsbeeldbank.geheugenvannederland.nl/component/option,com_bbk/vak,geschiedenis/hoofdthema,4/

⁴*Het Geheugen van Nederland*. (2003). Retrieved January 17, 2009, from Het geheugen van Nederland - Nederlands Indie: http://www.onderwijsbeeldbank.geheugenvannederland.nl/component/option,com_bbk/vak,geschiedenis/hoofdthema,4/subthema,50/onderwerp,43/

soldiers.⁵ The governor-general deployed the KNIL into the outer territories to establish Dutch authority. Of course, the local rulers did not want to lose control over their people and income and put up heavy resistance in some areas. In 1894, the expedition to the Hindu area of Lombok led to heavy casualties on Dutch side. After peaceful negotiations, the local population ambushed the KNIL troops and killed hundred soldiers.⁶ The KNIL retaliated and left a bloody trace of ruined villages and dead civilians. The campaign in Aceh was even worse and it resulted in a war of attrition. Aceh was the most western part of the East Indies, a kingdom on the far side of the island of Sumatra. It held a strategic location at the Strait of Malacca and pirates from Aceh hampered commercial shipping. The Dutch started a military campaign in 1873 to end the power of the Aceh princes. They did not count on the perseverance of the population and the KNIL fought their first counter-insurgency war. The conflict lasted thirty years and in 1903, Dutch General Joannes Van Heutsz managed to pacify the area. His brutal methods are infamous and the local population called his police units the “Bloodfingers.”⁷ Although General van Heutsz ended the war of expansion in the East Indies, historians still question his actions today because of the violence of the war and the amount of civilian casualties.

⁵Dutch and local soldiers worked together in a professional way. During the wars, the local soldier displayed excellent courage. Most of the Netherlands’ highest military medals, the Military Order of William (equivalent of the Medal of Honor), were awarded to Indonesian soldiers. The local soldiers mostly originated from Java or the Moluccas.

⁶*Het Geheugen van Nederland*. (2003). Retrieved November 10, 2008, from Het geheugen van Nederland - Nederlands Indie: http://www.onderwijsbeeldbank.geheugenvannederland.nl/component/option,com_bbk/vak,geschiedenis/hoofdthema,4/

⁷*Go 2 War*. (2002). Retrieved April 25, 2009, from <http://www.go2war2.nl/artikel/1337/Korps-Marechaussee-%96-Nederlands-Indi%EB.htm>

At the beginning of the twentieth century and after the war in Aceh, Dutch politicians in the Netherlands wanted to put more emphasis on the development of the population. There was a new government in the Netherlands and it aimed to bring the population of the East-Indies to a “higher level.” Starting in 1901, the Dutch called this new approach “ethical politics” and it aimed for development of the local population and the indigenous government.⁸

Indonesian Nationalism

There are several reasons for the rise of Indonesian nationalism. First, when the area became a colony the Dutch extended their influence. They moved inland from their coastal settlements and forced the culture system upon the local population. The culture system did not have many benefits and especially when a farmer also had to pay his royal, he did not have much left for himself. The Dutch dealt with resistance by conducting major military operations and retained their grip on the population by the use of local governments. The Dutch influence led to several conflicts during which the local population tried to free itself. In the second half of the nineteenth century, feelings of nationalism emerged when the local population did not benefit from the Dutch attempt to develop the people. Local farmers did not receive education and even when they did, they still had to pay a great deal to the colonial government. With these feelings of nationalism the first signs of a general dislike of the Dutch appeared.

The second reason for the rise of nationalism is the Dutch “ethical politics.” Although the local population did not benefit much from the development plans, the local

⁸Wim van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie* (Amsterdam: Prometheus Uitgeverij, 2000), 23-27.

leaders and royals did receive more support. Young Indonesians received education, some of them in the Netherlands, and they formed a new class of intellectuals. They realized that despite the “ethical politics” the Netherlands exploited the East Indies and that the local population had a subordinate role. Because of their education, the “new elite” thought that they could rule the country just as well as the Dutch.⁹ They wanted the Indonesian people to develop through education and politics. Together with the resentment of Dutch presence all over the East Indies, nationalism grew in the early twentieth century.

In 1913, the Dutch got a new Minister of Colonies, Theodorus Pleijte, and he promoted more involvement of the local population in governing the East Indies. Pleijte aimed for an Indonesian population that could rule itself and would be grateful to the Dutch for letting them do so. In 1908, the first nationalist movement was *Boedi Oetomo*, which meant Clean Devotion. The *Boedi Oetomo* started organizations based on cultural heritage and education. *Boedi Oetomo* did not have political aims but soon parties arised that had political goals. Amongst the political parties were an Islamic party, *Sarekat Islam* (1912), and a communist party. Pleijte welcomed the foundation of the political parties of which most of the leaders had studied in the Netherlands or in Batavia.¹⁰ However, in 1927 nationalists revolted on parts of Java and Sumatra. The Dutch reacted by putting many people in camps. The most important party turned out to be the National

⁹*Het Geheugen van Nederland*. (2003). Retrieved November 10, 2008, from Het geheugen van Nederland - Nederlands Indie: http://www.onderwijsbeeldbank.geheugenvannederland.nl//component/option,com_bbkb/vak,geschiedenis/hoofdthema,4/

¹⁰Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 27-28.

Indonesian Party (*PNI: Partai Nasional Indonesia*), formed after the revolt in 1927 by Kusno Sosodihardjo, better known as Sukarno.¹¹ The PNI was the core of new nationalists who had three major goals: combine all nationalistic movements, refuse any cooperation with Dutch colonial government and strive for Indonesian independence.¹² Between 1929 and 1933, the Dutch banished or imprisoned the leaders of the PNI, but the economic depression distracted the colonial leaders and they did not pay much attention to the Indonesian wish for self-governance.¹³ The Indonesian local government submitted a plea for more independence in 1938 but the Dutch refused in any way. They thought the East Indies were not ready to be independent and the nationalist movement kept growing because the population saw little improvement in its influence in governing the East Indies.

The Japanese Occupation

In 1902, the United Kingdom had agreed on a defense treaty with Japan.¹⁴ When the British drained their resources during World War I, there were not many forces left in

¹¹Sukarno was born on Java in 1901. He was a schoolteacher and part of the new intellectual group of young Indonesians. He went to Dutch schools in Bandung (Java) and graduated as an architect. Together with some friends, he formed the PNI. The Dutch imprisoned him for nationalism in 1934. He was a key player in the conflict and became the first president of Indonesia in 1949.

¹²*Het Geheugen van Nederland*. (2003). Retrieved November 10, 2008, from Het geheugen van Nederland - Nederlands Indie: http://www.onderwijsbeeldbank.geheugenvannederland.nl//component/option,com_bbk/vak,geschiedenis/hoofdthema,4/

¹³Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 43-46.

¹⁴Penders, *The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia, 1945-1962*, 6.

East Asia. Therefore, The British relied on Japanese presence for security and the Japanese Navy patrolled as far as the Strait of Malacca and Singapore. The Dutch government was wary of the rise of Japanese power and decided to build their own modern naval force. After World War I, Dutch political parties did not see the need for a strong defense as the Netherlands would always be neutral. The plans for new cruisers disappeared and only two new cruisers reinforced the colonial navy. In the 1910s and 1920s, the colonial government had to rely on British and American support for the defense of the East Indies but support was limited, especially since the British relied on the Japanese. When the Japanese foreign approach became more aggressive, the Dutch government agreed on a plan to modernize the defense of the East Indies, which happened in the 1930s. Unfortunately, The Hague approved a final plan to buy more and modern material in the evening of 9 May 1940, a few hours before the Germans invaded the Netherlands. There would be no more new material for the Dutch forces in the East Indies and the few ships that escaped the Netherlands ended up in England, together with the government. The Dutch colonial government in Batavia expected a Japanese attack, as did the Americans and the British. To defend the area they formed the ABDA Command (American-British-Dutch-Australian) under the leadership of the British General Sir Archibald Wavell.¹⁵ When the Japanese attacked in January 1942, the Dutch forces were not very strong and had to cover the entire area. The Air Force and Navy were outnumbered and had only limited modern assets. Besides the two modern cruisers,

¹⁵Ibid., 12.

the Air Force had a few American fighter planes.¹⁶ The KNIL (Army) was more or less a police force, focused on dealing with local uprisings.¹⁷ The KNIL started to re-organize towards a defense force in 1937, but it had only completed small steps by 1942. After the decisive naval defeat in the Java Sea, in February 1942, nothing could stop the Japanese invasion. The commander of the Dutch colonial forces, Lieutenant-General Hein Ter Poorten, surrendered on 8 March 1942. Some parts of the Dutch Air Force and Navy managed to escape, but the KNIL ceased to exist.

The Japanese occupation had a huge impact in the East Indies. Most of the Europeans, including women and children, ended up in camps and that severely damaged their reputation towards to local population. For ages, the white people had the reputation of being invincible but their defeat by the Japanese changed this belief for good. Even moderate Indonesians, who supported the Dutch, thought the colonial rulers lost their rights because they did not protect the East Indies from the invasion. Status and reputation were very important in Indonesian culture and the vulnerability of the Dutch and their failure to protect the colony influenced the Indonesian opinion. The population realized that the Dutch were not the powerful ruler they had been for the last 300 years.¹⁸ Without being aware of the situation in the East Indies, the Dutch government in London realized that colonial matters would change after the war. On 7 December 1942, Queen Wilhelmina conducted her so-called “7 December speech” in which she promised

¹⁶*Go 2 War*. (2002). Retrieved November 10, 2008, from Go 2 War - Vliegtuigen: <http://www.go2war2.nl/Wapens/1/Vliegtuigen.htm>

¹⁷Penders, *The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia, 1945-1962*, 11.

¹⁸Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 80.

changes in the relationship between the Netherlands and the colonies. She emphasized a more equal authority between the Dutch and local population. However, she did not mention any independence, the Dutch would lead the implementation of any change and the Netherlands would keep authority over the East Indies. The speech was merely based on the “ethical politics.” It was an attempt to keep the local population happy and did not aim to satisfy any nationalistic groups.¹⁹

Most Indonesian people welcomed the Japanese invasion.²⁰ They thought that the Japanese would spend all their time fighting the war and leave Indonesia to the local population. Shortly after the Japanese victory, that seemed to be the case. The Indonesian people were allowed to wave their own flag and use the national anthem. However, when the Japanese established full control over the islands, things changed. The East Indies became a Japanese colony and the Indonesians could not use their own flag and anthem anymore. In many ways, things were worse than under Dutch rule, but nationalist leaders like Sukarno and Hatta still cooperated with the Japanese.²¹ They thought that cooperation would lead to assurance for Indonesian independence from the Japanese. When the war went on, the population suffered from lack of food.²² Nationalist leaders

¹⁹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 68.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 69.

²¹Mohammed Hatta was the counterpart of Sukarno. He was born in 1902 on the Island of Java and studied economics in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Just like Sukarno, he belonged to the new Indonesian intellectuals and stayed in the Netherlands for eleven years. After his return to the East Indies, he formed the PNI, together with Sukarno, and was imprisoned for nationalism in 1934. After the transfer of authority of Indonesia, he became the first prime minister.

²² Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 76.

put a lot of effort in blaming the Dutch for the fate of the population, thus creating support for a future declaration of independence.

In 1943, the war turned bad for the Japanese and they formed local militias in Indonesia to defend the area. According to the colonial divide-and-rule, the Japanese allowed several groups to decrease the risk of a unified opponent. The *Pembala Tanah Air* (PETA), or Defenders of the Fatherland was the first one to defend their own region. Because the Japanese did not trust the Indonesian people, PETA did not have a central command structure. In August and December 1944 the *Barisan Pelopor* (Vanguard Corps), led by Sukarno, and the Islamic Hisbullah appeared. The nationalists got more influence and on 7 September, the Japanese promised Indonesian independence.²³ Sukarno and Hatta continued to prepare for independence, with Japanese support, while the Dutch were unaware of developments. They were in camps and the Dutch colonial government was in exile in Australia. In the meantime, the nationalists succeeded for a large part in influencing the people's opinion on the Dutch. The loss of Dutch reputation, failure to protect the colony and three years of Japanese indoctrination aided their efforts. Especially young Indonesians, the so-called *Pemudas*, were fanatical in their search for independence and definitely did not want the Dutch back. In the East Indies, the Japanese surrendered on 15 September 1945 and Sukarno and Hatta were ready to declare Indonesia independent.

²³Penders, *The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia, 1945-1962*, 21.

Declaration of Independence and First International Reactions

Although Sukarno and Hatta dreamed of Indonesian independence for a long time, they hesitated to act because they wanted a more thorough preparation.²⁴ However, a group of Pemuda, led by a former protégé of Sukarno, abducted Sukarno and Hatta and told them to declare independence immediately.²⁵ They were afraid that a delayed declaration would look like a Japanese action. Sukarno and Hatta had their declaration already prepared and decided to claim Indonesian independence on 17 August 1945. At the residence of Japanese Admiral Tadashi Maeda, Sukarno declared Indonesia independent. He held a short speech and, at the request of Admiral Maeda, left out any reference of animosity towards the Japanese.²⁶ The independent state that Sukarno declared was the Republic of Indonesia and therefore its supporters would be the Republicans.

During the first days after the declaration of independence, the Indonesian people started to realize what had happened. Some of the larger cities still had a wartime curfew that slowed things down but soon people started to gather and discuss the matter.²⁷ Republicans agreed with the Japanese that they would cooperate. There were many operational Japanese forces in the East Indies and the Allied forces still had to arrive. Soon, paramilitary groups started to move. Especially the Pemuda showed

²⁴Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 84.

²⁵Frances Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002), 119.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 120.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 121.

aggressiveness, first towards the Dutch people, who just got out of the camps, and then towards the Japanese. Pemuda had Japanese equipment and started looking for ways to test the remaining Japanese authority. After raising the Indonesian flag on public buildings, they occupied government offices that led to clashes with the Japanese. The Pemuda seized more weapons and equipment and their boldness triggered a broader response of the population. The population started to turn against the Dutch, and later the Eurasians.²⁸

The Republic was concentrated on the islands of Java and Sumatra. There was less support for the Republic on the outskirts of the East Indies, like the Moluccas. The Japanese did not force their will upon the population and there was still no Dutch presence, so the Republicans used this time to strengthen their position.²⁹

The Dutch had little power in the area and had to rely on the British forces to establish order in Indonesia. The British South East Asia Commander (SEAC), Lord Louis Mountbatten, had to liberate the mainland and the islands of Java and Sumatra.³⁰ His forces were stretched and movements took time due to mine clearing in the Straits of Malacca. It took six weeks after the declaration of independence for the first Allied forces to arrive. The British did not have a good view of the situation in the East Indies and their

²⁸The population of the East Indies did not only consist of Indonesians and Dutch, there was a huge Chinese community. The Chinese had a lot of influence in trade. Besides the Chinese, there were many people from Dutch-Indonesian heritage. Mixed marriages were very common but these people were not fully accepted by neither the Dutch, nor the Indonesians. The Dutch called these people 'Indos' and with the Chinese they formed the Eurasians.

²⁹Penders, *The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia, 1945-1962*, 25.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 25.

priority was the occupation of Saigon, where a Japanese headquarters and large forces were located. In the East Indies, the British had no intention of fighting the Indonesian independence and only wanted to deal with the Japanese.³¹ First contact between the British, accompanied by a Dutch representative, and the Republicans took place on 15 September 1945.

In the Netherlands, the Indonesian declaration of independence did not impress the Dutch government. They stated that the Republic consisted of Japanese puppets and that Sukarno and Hatta were traitors.³² The Dutch believed the Indonesians did not want independence but that the Republic was a Japanese idea.³³ They did not intend to lose the colonies because in the Netherlands, people believed they needed the colonies for economic growth after the German occupation. Any changes, as promised by the Queens “7 December speech,” would only be made after Dutch authority was completely re-established.

At the time of the declaration of Independence, the Dutch had limited forces in the area. When the South East Asia Command (SEAC) made first contact on 15 September, the Dutch Cruiser *Tromp* was part of the British fleet and carried a limited contingent of troops. The Dutch colonial authority was Lieutenant Governor-General Van Mook, who was still in Australia.³⁴ Charles van der Plas was the Dutch representative on

³¹Ibid., 26

³²Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 88.

³³Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 121.

³⁴Hubertus Van Mook was the Dutch Lieutenant Governor-General in the East Indies. He was born and raised in the East Indies and was educated in the Netherlands. After a career in the colonial authorities, he became the Lieutenant Governor-General in

board the *Tromp* and he was the commander of the Dutch Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA). The Dutch government ordered NICA to re-establish Dutch authority in the liberated areas.³⁵ Van der Plas's first impression was that he could re-establish authority very easily and only needed 100 troops.³⁶ Soon, he faced a different situation than any Dutch had anticipated. Dutch people in the East Indies had gone through horrible treatment during the Japanese occupation and had to stay in their camps to be protected against the Pemuda. Ironically, the only available forces to protect the Dutch were the remaining Japanese troops. Van der Plas did not expect the Indonesian hatred towards the Dutch. Furthermore, he wanted the local governments (Priyayi) to take control again, but most of them had joined the Republic. Although the situation surprised the Dutch, they still thought that the Republic could easily be defeated. The reports sent to Van Mook all underestimated the Republican capabilities and the Indonesian wish for independency. The Dutch NICA commander for Java said:

In my own opinion, this whole Republican movement does not amount to much. Some riots and pillaging will certainly occur during the takeover of Batavia – these are already happening now. But in my opinion after some show of armed power this whole business will fall apart like a house of cards, providing some of the leaders have been arrested, as is planned.³⁷

1942. During the Japanese occupation, he stayed in Australia where he tried to keep contact with both the East Indies and the Dutch Government in London. Between 1945 and 1949, he was the prime civilian representative of the Dutch government.

³⁵Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 117.

³⁶Penders, *The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia, 1945-1962*, 26.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 28.

The Dutch regarded the Republic as a minor and incapable organization but lacked the opportunity to deal with it. The SEAC did not allow the Dutch contingent on the *Tromp* to go on shore. The army had re-established the KNIL in Australia and they would soon re-integrate the former POWs, but it was far from operational. The Dutch Marine Brigade, trained and equipped in the United States, would not arrive before October 1945. Van der Plas proposed that British troops land and establish authority and that the Japanese would maintain order in the cities until the arrival of the British. After British seizure of the main cities, the Japanese would move inland and maintain order. Van der Plas also expected the Japanese to arrest the Republican leaders prior to the British arrival.³⁸

With the aggressive attitude of the local population on Java and Sumatra towards the Dutch and the erupting violence, the British assessed the situation extremely dangerous. Mountbatten wanted to prevent a colonial war and ordered the British forces to focus on liberating the POWs and repatriating the Japanese forces.³⁹ He stated that the British preferred a working relationship with the Republic.⁴⁰ Mountbatten ordered Van der Plas to get in contact with Sukarno, despite Dutch complaints about the Republican leaders being traitors.⁴¹ Van der Plas agreed on meeting with all Indonesian leaders, including the Sukarno group, and discussed matters proposed by the Queen's "7

³⁸Ibid., 28.

³⁹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 94

⁴⁰Penders, *The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia, 1945-1962*, 28.

⁴¹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 95.

December speech.” However, the British commander in Singapore declared that he would not allow British forces to operate outside the major cities on Java and Sumatra. Without sufficient military support, the NICA could not force its authority.⁴² The British Minister of Defense confirmed the message and Dutch-British relations deteriorated. However, the British intention of defusing the dangerous situation did not work the way they expected. The Pemudas and other groups saw the British statement as a sign of weakness and intensified their actions.⁴³

Early United States Involvement in East Indies

Until 1942, there were no traditional ties between the United States and the East Indies. However, after World War I the United States’ interests in the area started and continued for two decades.⁴⁴ When Japanese power started to rise, the United States recognized the importance of international relations to balance powers. The important players in Asia were the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Japan, and the United States. For the United States, it was important that a hostile force did not control the East Indies. The State Department recognized the Dutch authority but expected that colonial and local government influence would become equal in the near future.

Economically, the United States did not have many interests in the East Indies. It was aware of the available resources, but the East Indies did not represent a large portion

⁴²Penders, *The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia, 1945-1962*, 29.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 30.

⁴⁴Rupert Emerson, *The Netherlands Indies and The United States* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1942), 57.

of American foreign trade. The war made the United States realize that it was dangerous to rely on a flow of raw materials over great distances. However, between 1936 and 1942 the American business investments grew from 70 million to 200 million dollars. The United States saw the East Indies as a possible investment area, but recognized the claim of the Dutch.⁴⁵

When Germany occupied the Netherlands, the East Indies were on their own and the United States saw the need for American protection of the area. The British forces were engaged in Europe as well and the United Kingdom could not send many reinforcements to Asia. The United States noticed the strategic position of the East Indies related to the lines of communication to China. If the East Indies were occupied, the Philippines would be almost surrounded. For the United States, it was most important that the East Indies remained under friendly control.⁴⁶ After the Japanese occupation of the East Indies, the United States contemplated the future of the area. Any post-war situation would be a common effort so the international community should coordinate the decision on the East Indies.⁴⁷ The United States referred to Queen Wilhelmina's "7 December speech" and expected changes in the relations between the Netherlands and the colonies. It also anticipated post-war chaotic situations and did not desire the East Indies to be completely independent. The United States did not consider the local population to

⁴⁵Ibid., 62.

⁴⁶Ibid., 60.

⁴⁷Ibid., 74.

be able to establish complete self-governance.⁴⁸ The United States expected an international solution for the future of the East Indies under Dutch guidance.

Conclusion

It was clear that the Netherlands had no intention of accepting Indonesian independence. The Dutch government realized that changes were inevitable in colonial rule, so they implemented a start by introducing the “ethical politics.” Any change would take place under Dutch rule. The East Indies contained a large territory with many natural resources and especially after the war, the Dutch were more reluctant to give up because they needed the resources for their recovery. The Dutch people firmly believed that they needed the East Indies to survive economically. There were more reasons the Dutch did not want to give up the colony. First, despite the early conflicts and rise of nationalism most Dutch people lived in peace with Indonesians. They had no idea that at some point the Indonesians would want the Dutch to leave. The Dutch were unaware of the change in attitude. Second, the Dutch had their footprint in the East Indies for so long that people could not imagine the Netherlands without the East Indies. The Dutch government was used to having the colony.

In 1945, the United States government had little interest in the conflict. The policy towards the East Indies merely consisted of preventing enemy occupation and since Japan had surrendered, there was no need for United States protection anymore. The United States recognized the available raw materials and had trade interests in the

⁴⁸Ibid., 77.

region, but they agreed on the Dutch claim of the territory. Although the United States historically renounced colonialism, in 1945 it did not think the Indonesians could rule themselves. President Roosevelt agreed with the “7 December speech” and stated that parts of the East Indies might eventually become independent.⁴⁹ The United States government settled for Dutch rule over the colony, as it would satisfy Washington’s policy on friendly influence in the area and economic recovery of the Netherlands.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 67.

⁵⁰Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 141.

CHAPTER 3

START OF THE CONFLICT

Introduction

After the arrival of the British forces and Dutch representatives in September 1945, violence erupted in the East Indies. Most significant events took place on the islands of Java and Sumatra, the core of the Indonesian Republic. The Dutch government soon realized that restoration of authority would not be as easy as they thought. They wrongly believed that the population still supported the Dutch and that the Republic would disappear if they arrested the leaders. The conflict would turn into a full-grown war that would last for four years.

This chapter will go deeper into the initial British involvement and the take-over of the Dutch forces. The Netherlands got involved in negotiations with the Indonesian Republicans but also conducted major military operations. This chapter will provide the background for the negotiations and will cover the conditions for the US involvement.

British Involvement

When the British forces arrived, they had two essential tasks: the liberation of civil and military prisoners, and the redeployment of the Japanese forces. In September 1945, there were 250,000 Japanese soldiers in the East Indies.¹ As stated in the previous chapter, the East Indies were not Britain's first priority. British forces focused on Saigon and the Allies just added the East Indies to the area of the South East Asia Command

¹Petra Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950* (Den Haag: SDU uitgeverij, 1991), 18.

(SEAC) a few weeks prior to their arrival.² The British sent RAPWI-teams (Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees) inland to assess the situation; the first battalion arrived in Batavia on 29 September.³ The British planned to deploy troops only to the cities of Batavia, the capital, and Surabaya on the island of Java. This was against the wishes of the Dutch government who preferred all the main cities occupied by British forces. After intensive talks with the Dutch, Lord Mountbatten agreed to deploy forces to more cities on Java and send troops to Sumatra.⁴ The eastern part of the East Indies, called the 'Big East', which included Timor and the Moluccas, and was under command of Australian forces (see map on page 119). They had little problems liberating the camps and redeploying the Japanese troops. Soon after the British arrival, the first reports reached Mountbatten and he realized that the Indonesian Republic was more than his Dutch counterparts led him to believe. Van der Plas, the Dutch representative, had told Mountbatten that the Republic was ineffective and the Indonesian people supported the re-establishment of Dutch rule.⁵ Mountbatten decided that the only way to restore Dutch authority was to negotiate with the Republic. Van der Plas, got orders from the Dutch government not to do that because the Dutch government regarded Sukarno a traitor. When Mountbatten threatened to negotiate himself and withdraw the British support for the Dutch, Van der Plas had to give in and started to meet with moderate Indonesians.⁶

²Ibid., 19

³Ibid., 29

⁴Ibid., 33.

⁵Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 93.

The Dutch government in the Netherlands perceived this message as a betrayal by the British and Anglo-Dutch relations deteriorated. Because of the alliance the Dutch had with the British, they thought they had a right to British support.⁷

The arrival of Allied forces caused unrest amongst the Indonesians, especially the Pemoedas because they did not want any colonial rule restored.⁸ Dutch people started to return to their homes and some of the former KNIL POWs began to act as a police force.⁹ When the British commander, General Christison, stated that the British forces would not operate outside key areas, the Pemoedas saw that as an act of weakness because it seemed that the British did not dare to go inland. They intensified their actions and focused on the Dutch people and the Japanese forces. From 13 October on, some Pemoeda groups forbid Dutch people to buy food. Although the Japanese were supposed to maintain order, in most places they did not want to confront the Pemoeda masses.¹⁰ Apparently, the British would not enforce their command to maintain order. The Pemoedas got more aggressive and captured Japanese equipment which they used against the Dutch, and later the Eurasians and Chinese. There were too few British forces available to maintain order and many people were brutally murdered. This period is

⁶Penders, *The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia, 1945-1962*, 29.

⁷Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 97.

⁸Ibid., 99.

⁹Ibid., 92.

¹⁰Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 30.

known as the Bersiap period ('be ready').¹¹ Except for Dutch and Eurasians, the Pemoedas started to target everybody with any link to the Dutch or colonial past. Former Indonesian KNIL soldiers, returned from prison camps, got attacked and retaliated. Between October and December 1945, approximately 3,500 Dutch and Eurasians died in the revolt.¹²

The Republicans realized that their reliability was at stake and they tried to maintain order. On 5 October, they formed a national army, the TKR (*Tentara Keamanan Rakjat*) which had to replace the armed militias. The TKR was not very effective, so many militias and Pemoeda groups remained active. Most Pemoeda simply refused to take orders from the TKR. Especially on Java, the Pemoedas continued their hunt for Dutch people and anybody related to the colonial government. There were not enough British forces to protect Dutch civilians and former prisoners of war and the Republican leaders had to find a solution. In some places, British troops deployed hastily to protect the camps with civilians and former POWs.¹³ However, Republican leaders had 35,000 Dutch and Dutch-Indonesian civilians returned to camps because it was too dangerous for them outside. Indonesians or Japanese soldiers guarded them in these camps.¹⁴

The British forces saw themselves being drawn into the violence. In cities on both Java and Sumatra the Pemoedas approached the troops aggressively. However, the

¹¹Penders, *The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia, 1945-1962*, 30.

¹²Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 100.

¹³Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 33.

¹⁴Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 102.

British had several reasons to avoid any violence. As stated earlier, their focus was on Saigon and they had limited troops available for the East Indies. Mountbatten also realized that the Republic was more than just a local revolt, sponsored by the Japanese.¹⁵ Another important issue for the British was their involvement in other colonial issues. There was unrest in Palestine, Burma, Malacca and the British were involved in a civil war in Greece.¹⁶ Furthermore, most of the British forces were colonial troops consisting of British-Indian soldiers. Mountbatten realized that he could not use these troops to re-establish a colonial authority.¹⁷ Nevertheless, circumstances forced the British to act.

Pemoedas, armed with Japanese weapons, started to target British forces as these protected Dutch civilians and former POWs. In Surabaya, the Pemoedas almost overrun the deployed British 48th Brigade and they threatened almost every camp on Sumatra that the British protected.¹⁸ TKR troops tried to keep the peace in Surabaya but they were not able to prevent the Pemoedas from taking Dutch and Eurasian people out of their houses and moving them to the city prison. On a square, in front of the prison, many of them were slaughtered. When the 48th Brigade arrived, the TKR soldiers and Pemoedas attacked them together. The brigade was spread out over the city and 250 British soldiers died when Pemoedas and TKR soldiers overran their positions. When the British brigade

¹⁵Ibid., 93.

¹⁶Ibid., 82.

¹⁷Penders, *The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia, 1945-1962*, 30.

¹⁸Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 34.

commander was killed, General Christison ordered the complete 5th Indian Division into Surabaya.¹⁹ He was determined to capture and punish the offenders:

Unless the Indonesians who have committed these acts surrender to my forces, I intend to bring the whole weight of my sea, land and air forces and all the weapons of modern war against them until they are crushed.²⁰

The 5th Indian Division moved through Surabaya to the outskirts of the city. The British forces used tanks and RAF bombardments to defeat the resistance. The campaign took until December 1945 before things settled down. The violence not only erupted in Surabaya, but also in other areas on Java, the British fought against the Indonesians. In Magelang, British forces barely managed to rescue wounded former prisoners and in Semarang, the British had to defend the camps they protected. Japanese soldiers helped to defend the camps and in the city center of Semarang, British troops could only hold their positions with air support. Although the Dutch government criticized the British decision not to engage the Republic, almost 600 British soldiers died while protecting the Dutch people.²¹

During the fighting, the negotiations carried on. General Christison decided not to allow any Dutch troops to land while the fighting continued.²² Mountbatten emphasized the necessity to negotiate with the Republic and General Christison arranged the first meeting between Van Mook, who had returned from Australia, and Sukarno on 31

¹⁹Ibid., 34.

²⁰Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 114.

²¹Ibid., 115-116.

²²Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 34.

October 1945. Although the Dutch did not agree, the British government gave full decision authority to Lord Mountbatten who did not hesitate to accept the Republic as a partner in negotiations. The British remained involved in military operations to protect civilians and former prisoners and negotiations until they withdrew their forces between April and November 1946.

Dutch Negotiations and Actions

Clearly, the Dutch government did not agree with the British policy. Although the Dutch realized that the Republic was more than the “Java gangs” were in the “old colonial days,” they still wanted to restore colonial authority. They estimated that ninety percent of the population supported the Dutch return to power. When the first reports came in the Dutch found out the Republic had a lot of support, because almost the entire population on Java had turned against the them.²³ However, the Netherlands did not change its policy, military leaders just calculated to deploy more troops. In the meantime, any negotiation with the Republic was out of the question. The Netherlands expected to be able to restore authority with British and even Japanese support until the first Dutch troops would arrive.

In September 1945, the Dutch had few forces available. During the war, units formed in Australia and some troops deployed to Malacca with the British. There was a Marine Brigade in the United States and former KNIL POWs started to organize into units. These KNIL units were spread all over the area, as were the prison camps. Units formed in the Philippines, Bangkok, Borneo and several other places. In November 1945,

²³Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 118.

the Dutch had ten companies in Batavia. On Sumatra, 800 soldiers were available who had returned home after they left the POW camps. In the eastern part of the East Indies, there were 1,000 soldiers operational. The military leaders had a clear overview of what was available but there was no central command structure.²⁴ The first operational units were the companies in Batavia. These soldiers were already in the East Indies because they were in prison camps and all they did was get out of the camp, find a weapon and return home. Their main task was to protect Dutch people and their property. They erected random checkpoints and arrested everybody they suspected of support of the Republic. This behavior caused them to get a bad reputation.²⁵ When more operational Dutch units arrived between October and December 1945, the British did not allow them to land. In the meantime, Dutch commanders and politicians had to adjust their calculations of the amount of troops needed to restore authority. Because of the violence and the fact that the British nor the Japanese were willing to act upon the Republic, more troops were needed with every review. In August 1945, Van der Plas expected to restore order with a hundred soldiers. In November, Dutch leaders expected to occupy key terrain with 40,000 troops.²⁶ By December, the situation deteriorated so much that the Dutch identified the need to occupy the entire islands of Java and Sumatra with 75,000 troops to defeat the Republic and restore order.²⁷ These troops would not be available for

²⁴Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 35

²⁵Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 92.

²⁶Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 39.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 57.

months and the Dutch government had not decided yet on the deployment of a division of draftees. For the first months, the Dutch could do no more than try to persuade the British to act.

Van Mook and Van der Plas realized that they needed to talk to the Republic to prevent the British from withdrawing their support. Although they both considered the Republican leaders to be traitors, they accepted to meet them. When General Christison arranged the first meeting, there were no results, but it seemed that there would be a basis for dialogue.²⁸ However, the politicians in the Netherlands reacted furiously. They did not accept any discussion with the Republicans and ordered Van Mook to stop the talks with them. Apparently, they had no idea about the difficult position they put Van Mook in as he was caught between the demands of the British and the orders from his own government. The Dutch government just wanted to restore order at all cost. Finally, the minister of Foreign Affairs gave Van Mook permission to meet Sukarno, but he could not negotiate. Van Mook could talk with the Republicans and try to convince them to comply with Dutch demands. The Dutch people in the Netherlands supported the government's ideas; their vision of the East Indies was still one of happy and contented Indonesian people under a benevolent, just and socially committed colonial government.²⁹

Another problem for Van Mook was the Netherlands military command. Just like the government in the Netherlands, the generals held on to their colonial beliefs and wanted to crush the "inferior" Republic. Their behavior also influenced the relationship

²⁸Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 107.

²⁹Penders, *The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia, 1945-1962*, 32.

with the British because the Dutch military leaders just wanted to “shoot the lot”.³⁰ As the primary Dutch representative, Van Mook did not have much support when he tried to open discussions with the Republic.

When more reports came in about the amount of people supporting the Republic, the Dutch in Batavia realized that with every month it would become more difficult to restore order. Taking in account the British policy and limited Dutch assets, Van Mook changed his policy. He wanted to divide the Republic from the outer territories because the Republic had far less support in the “Big East.” The “Big East” was the Eastern part of the colony that included the Moluccas, Timor and Celebes. When the Dutch restored their authority in this area, it would give them a stronger position against the Republic.³¹ Van Mook wanted to first focus on the “Big East” and leave Java to the Republic, but he was convinced that eventually Java should be brought back under Dutch authority as well.

An opportunity to negotiate with the Republic appeared in the person of Sutan Sjahrir, another Republican. In October 1945, Republicans demanded Sukarno to spread authority in the Republic by creating a government committee.³² Both Sukarno and Hatta realized that they needed to change the face of the Republic to make it appear more democratic and less Japanese. Sutan Sjahrir became the chairman of a working committee that arranged day-to-day Republican business. Sjahrir was a nationalist who had been imprisoned in the 1930’s, but he refused to cooperate with the Japanese during

³⁰Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 117.

³¹*Ibid.*, 118.

³²*Ibid.*, 126.

the war. This made him a better partner in negotiations for the Dutch as they refused to talk to anyone who had cooperated with the Japanese. Sjahrir slowly rose and took over power in the Republic when he became the prime minister in December 1945.³³ He supported a democratic and social revolution and criticized the Japanese and the Pemoedas whom he said were influenced by fascist ideas.³⁴ This made him less popular with some nationalists and the Pemoedas. Sjahrir was very popular with the rest of the Indonesian population, but still held a weak political position. His life became more difficult when undisciplined Dutch KNIL units started to harass him in Batavia on 2 January 1946. On 4 January, the complete Republic government moved from Batavia to the city of Yogyakarta on Java. Sjahrir publically stated that he only wanted to negotiate with the Dutch if they were willing to give the Indonesians their right to self-governance.

Van Mook held meetings with Sjahrir on 3 and 10 December 1945 and he thought that Sjahrir was willing to cooperate but that his position was too weak. Sukarno was still the main leader of the Republic and the Pemoeda's did not like Sjahrir's discussions with Van Mook.³⁵ In December, Sjahrir and Van Mook agreed on the somewhat vague idea that they could find a solution, which included a final possibility for independence. Van Mook wanted to strengthen Sjahrir's position by conducting a military operation in West Java. This would clear the area from extremists and allow moderate Republicans to negotiate with the Dutch. The British agreed on this operation, but for other reasons. Mountbatten wanted to withdraw his troops as soon as possible but could only do so

³³Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 131.

³⁴Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 127.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 133.

when there was an agreement between the Dutch and the Republic. Furthermore, the fight against Indonesian nationalists affected the morale of the British Indian soldiers. The British troops did not agree with the behavior of the few Dutch KNIL units whom they thought irresponsible. It was clear that Mountbatten wanted to leave the Indonesian political and military swamp as soon as possible.

The next step for the Dutch was to arrange an agreement with the British on the military operation. There were still few troops available and the British still refused to allow Dutch troops to land. The British did not trust the Dutch troops because of their behavior and they disliked the colonial attitude of the military leaders who were only determined to launch a major offensive.³⁶ The Dutch wanted the British to act and criticized General Christison for his recognition of the Republic and the limited military actions. Finally, the British troops conducted Operation POUNCE, a limited action that only cleared Batavia and surrounding areas. The Dutch did not agree with the limited action but the British stated that Batavia was now safe and ready for negotiations between the Dutch and the Republic.³⁷ The relations between the Netherlands and Great Britain deteriorated and both parties accused the other of negligence. As a gesture of good will, the British replaced General Christison and the Dutch relieved the military leaders and replaced them with younger officers. Major General Simon Spoor became the new army commander and due to his personality and ideas, he was able to work better with the

³⁶Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 56.

³⁷Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 139.

British.³⁸ The situation got slightly better and the Dutch returned to negotiations with Sjahrir.

On 10 February 1946, the Dutch offered a new proposal to the Republic. It included the formation of a Commonwealth Indonesia that would be part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Netherlands would not recognize the Republic and the Republicans would only be allowed to rule over Java. This was not acceptable for the Republicans, and during the first official British-Dutch-Indonesian negotiations, on 13 March, Sjahrir offered a reaction. The Republic demanded sovereignty over the whole East Indies area and withdrawal of all Dutch forces.³⁹ After this, the Republic would form a temporary federation with the Netherlands. Sjahrir saw possibilities for a definite cooperation between Indonesia and the Netherlands. The Dutch still looked at the Republic as an unstable construction that might only survive at chaotic Java.⁴⁰ Both parties tried to get some concessions, if the Dutch would accept Republican rule over Java and Sumatra, an agreement was possible. The Republic would accept a place in a federation that included the Netherlands and the other Dutch colonies, Suriname and the Antilles. The negotiations moved back and forth and in April 1946, the whole delegation moved to the Netherlands to continue talks. Unfortunately, the Dutch government showed no intention of accepting any Republican rule, not even over Java. Both parties

³⁸Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 60

³⁹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 140.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 141.

refused to give in and the Dutch government stated that the Netherlands should prepare for a military confrontation.⁴¹

As stated earlier, the Republic had its base on Java and Sumatra. The Republican government was in Djokjakarta and ruled the Republic from there. There was significantly less support for the Republic in the other parts of the East Indies. On the island of Borneo, there was hardly any resistance to the return of the Dutch colonial government.⁴² On the Moluccas, the people did not want any link with the Republic and desired a direct connection with the Netherlands.⁴³ The Moluccas had always been most loyal to the Dutch and many men served with distinction in the KNIL. The only major Republican movement outside Java and Sumatra was on South-Celebes. The Dutch had only pacified this island at the beginning of the twentieth century and the local royals supported the Republic. Van Mook arranged a meeting with leaders from Borneo and the “Big East” and they signed the treaty of Malino on 29 July 1946.⁴⁴ The treaty stated that Borneo and the “Big East” would be separate states in the United States of Indonesia. It was meant to undermine the Republican claims to the entire East Indies. It seemed that any Dutch military main effort would be on Java, Sumatra and South Celebes.

⁴¹Ibid., 144 - 146.

⁴²Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 187.

⁴³Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 153.

⁴⁴Ibid., 159.

In the meantime, the Dutch troops started to relieve the British forces. The first brigades arrived in Batavia in March 1946 and took over the British positions.⁴⁵ Dutch military leaders started planning for major operations in case negotiations would fail.⁴⁶ Soon, Republican troops and Pemoeda militants started attacking Dutch forces. There were no major engagements where the Dutch troops could use their firepower against their opponents. After a major attack on Dutch troops in Batavia, in September 1946, the Republican military leaders concluded that it was not possible to remove the Dutch from Java with military action. If the Dutch would start an offensive, the Republicans would move into the mountains and start a guerilla war.⁴⁷ In September, a Dutch committee arrived in Batavia to discuss a cease fire and the disposition of Dutch and Republican troops. Former Prime Minister Wim Schermerhorn led the committee and he developed a good relationship with Sjahrir. Under the guidance of the British special commissioner for South East Asia, Lord Killearn, the parties signed a cease-fire on 14 October. Both parties made arrangements on the disposition of forces and the amount of troops on the islands. However, since the British troops were withdrawing, the Dutch could still deploy troops to relieve the British forces and prepare an attack on the Republic. Nevertheless, before the Dutch conducted their first major military operation, both the Dutch and Republic tried another round of negotiations.⁴⁸

⁴⁵Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 62.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 69.

⁴⁷Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 178.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 179.

The Linggadjati Agreement and its Aftermath

The same committee that agreed on the cease-fire travelled through the East Indies in September and October 1946. They visited the Republic and concluded that there was an atmosphere of peace and a desire to cooperate with the Netherlands.⁴⁹ After the cease-fire, Schermerhorn agreed on negotiations with the Republic. In November 1946, both parties met in the village of Linggadati on the island of Java. Although the relationship between Schermerhorn and Sukarno was surprisingly good, the negotiations were very difficult. The biggest problem was the exact position of the Republic in relation to the rest of the East Indies and the Netherlands. The main idea was to form the United States of Indonesia between the Republic, Borneo and the “Big East.” This federation would then form the Netherlands-Indonesian Union with the Netherlands. The Dutch wanted the Queen to be the head of this union and the Indonesians rejected that idea because it looked too much like the colonial situation. Finally, on 12 November 1946, the Dutch offered that the United States of Indonesia would be a sovereign state. For the Dutch this was just a matter of words but they had not offered this before and the Republican leaders agreed.⁵⁰ The Linggadjati Agreement meant that the Republic would have authority over Java, Sumatra and Madoera. Dutch troops would hand over their occupied areas to the Republic. Together with Borneo and the “Big East,” the Republic would form a sovereign and democratic federation, the United States of Indonesia. This federation would form the Netherlands-Indonesian Union with the Netherlands and the

⁴⁹Ibid., 178.

⁵⁰Penders, *The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia, 1945-1962*, 33.

Queen would be the head of state. Both parties agreed on arranging all this before 1 January 1949.⁵¹

Both parties had their own reasons for signing the agreement. The Republic knew that it was not able to remove the Dutch by military power. Their focus was on the sovereignty of the United States of Indonesia. This meant that after 1 January 1949, the Republic could make its own decisions and Sukarno thought that the Republic would soon cover the entire East Indies. Furthermore, a union with the Netherlands could benefit the Republic diplomatically and economically.

The Dutch had other reasons to sign the treaty. At that time, they had no military means to defeat the Republic. In addition, they realized that any military action, after the British had left, would give the Netherlands a bad reputation because the British had always emphasized on negotiations. It would seem that they stalled negotiations and waited until the British had left. The committee, led by Schermerhorn, confirmed Van Mook's messages about the popular support to Sukarno and realized that they needed to include the Republic in any treaty. The union with the United States of Indonesia would secure Dutch influence in the East Indies. However, opinions in the Netherlands were different. People did not accept any agreement with the Republic and the government in The Hague received many letters and delegations that renounced the treaty. Nevertheless, foreign countries like the United States and the United Kingdom supported the treaty and

⁵¹Robert McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1981), 33.

the Dutch government believed they had no choice but to agree with the Linggadjati Agreement.⁵²

Unfortunately, the government in the Netherlands decided to go against their delegation in Indonesia and they added two documents to the agreement. While the Indonesians agreed only to the basic treaty, the Dutch thought it was merely a guideline.⁵³ Dutch ministers wrote a statement that mentioned the union as a part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and that there would be a common policy on foreign affairs and defense. The document also claimed a separate status for New Guinea. The Dutch emphasized more Dutch influence than agreed.⁵⁴ Both parties signed the final treaty on 25 March 1947 while both the Netherlands and the Republic knew that the other party had another interpretation of the content. The Linggadjati Agreement did not solve the problems between the Republic and the Netherlands.⁵⁵ However, it included one important fact: it was the first time that the Dutch government recognized the legitimate existence of the Republic.⁵⁶

The First Police Action

After the Linggadjati Agreement, the Republic stuck to the fact that it would be a sovereign state while the Dutch emphasized the formation of the United States of

⁵²Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 188-189.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 191.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 193.

⁵⁵McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 34.

⁵⁶Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 183.

Indonesia by creating more federal states. However, Van Mook did not succeed in giving the Republic sufficient counterbalance. Borneo and the “Big East” could not compete with the Republic, which held fifty-five of the seventy million people in the East Indies. Borneo faced a growing group of Republican supporters while the “Big East” suffered internal problems like corruption of federal officials.⁵⁷ Furthermore, the Republic gained more international recognition by the British and the Americans. Both Allies recognized Republican sovereign authority over Java, Sumatra, and Madoera. The Dutch government indentified four different ways to continue.⁵⁸ First, they could agree with the original Linggadjati Agreement, without the Dutch additions and give the Republic what they wanted. In this case, the Netherlands would still have influence in the area. Second, the Dutch could try to convince the Republic of their vision on the agreement. They knew that the Republicans would most likely not accept this option. The third alternative was war with the Republic. The two main military options were to wipe out the Republic or to capture key economic locations on Java and Sumatra. The Dutch government realized that it was unsure whether these locations would remain undamaged. A military operation would also cost a huge amount of money, something the Netherlands could not afford shortly after World War II. In addition, a military victory might create a greater distance between the Indonesians and the Dutch. The last option was to hand the whole issue over to the United Nations. The Netherlands thought that if it would take the initiative, there would be more foreign support for the Dutch case from countries like the Unites States

⁵⁷Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 219.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 221.

and Great Britain.⁵⁹ However, the Dutch government never took this option seriously as they refused to give up their task in the East Indies. When talks about the interpretation of the Linggadjadi Agreement failed, the Netherlands prepared for war against the Republic.

Throughout 1946, Dutch troops continued to deploy to the East Indies and took over the British positions when the latter left the islands. The Dutch military leaders started planning for large scale operations to restore authority over the area.⁶⁰ Especially the KNIL forces, consisting mostly of former-POWs, yearned for action, as they wanted their pre-war lives back. Van Mook feared retaliation against the Republicans as soon as the British forces handed over their areas of operation. The Linggadjadi Agreement prevented such action as it was signed before the Dutch took over completely.⁶¹ Nevertheless, Dutch troops utilized every opportunity to react on any suspicion of Republican hostilities. A local commander seized more territory to secure the lines of communication between Batavia and Bandoeng and the navy blockaded almost the entire Java coast.⁶² Between December 1946 and March 1947, Dutch regional commanders Colonel A.A.J.J. Thompson and Colonel G.J. van der Meulen conducted several large-scale operations to clear areas suspected of Republican insurgency. On the side of the Republic, TRI troops kept attacking the Dutch troops as they did not withdraw as stated

⁵⁹Ibid., 222.

⁶⁰Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 80.

⁶¹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 179.

⁶²Ibid., 194.

in the Linggadjadi Agreement.⁶³ In June 1947, the Republic refused to agree with the Dutch interpretation of the Linggadjadi Agreement and the Netherlands decided to conduct a so-called Police Action.

On 3 June 1947, the Republican force changed its name from TRI to TNI (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*) which meant Indonesian National Army. The TNI had 110,000 soldiers on Java and 64,000 on Sumatra. Besides the regular forces, there were thousands of militants on both islands. The Dutch troops consisted of 44,000 KNIL soldiers, 70,000 Army soldiers and 5,000 marines and they held several key cities on Java and Sumatra. Although the Dutch were outnumbered, they possessed better equipment and training and the military leaders realized that there was a significant risk that the TNI would start a guerilla war when the Dutch decided to attack.⁶⁴ The Dutch developed several military plans but Van Mook insisted on a limited operation because he wanted to be able to negotiate with the Republic after any major operation.

Operation PRODUCT started on 21 July 1947 and the main effort was the occupation of key areas that would press the Republic to accept the Dutch version of the Linggadjadi Agreement. These areas needed to be economically important and viable for formation of a separate state in the United States of Indonesia. By only seizing key terrain, the Dutch wanted to prevent uprisings in the occupied areas.⁶⁵ Due to the political agitation, the Republic expected a major attack and started “scorched-earth” tactics at the end of June 1947. However, Dutch forces achieved their primary objectives, occupation

⁶³Ibid., 197.

⁶⁴Ibid., 223.

⁶⁵Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 98.

of key terrain on Java and Sumatra, without much Republican resistance. Most TNI troops avoided contact and in the few occasions where the TNI put up resistance, the Dutch troops defeated them.⁶⁶ The Dutch troops suffered only seventy-six casualties between 21 July and 5 August but did not achieve a decisive defeat of the TNI. TNI troops deserted, fled into the jungle or withdrew.⁶⁷

Although Operation PRODUCT was a military success, it did not bring the Republicans back to negotiations. Things got even worse when Sukarno successfully called for uprisings in the occupied territories. Dutch military leaders foresaw a long counter-insurgency operation, for which they did not have sufficient assets. The military commander, General Simon Spoor, called for a subsequent operation to seize Djokjakarta and capture the Republican leaders. However, as soon as the Dutch troops started Operation PRODUCT, many other countries protested. On 31 July, Australia and India brought the issue to the United Nations and the Security Council accepted a resolution on 1 August. The resolution simply called for a cease-fire between the Netherlands and the Republic and a peaceful solution of the conflict.⁶⁸ On 1 August, the United States offered the Dutch government to act as a member of a Good Offices Committee (GOC) that would act as a mediator.⁶⁹ The United Nations agreed on the formation of the GOC,

⁶⁶Ibid., 103.

⁶⁷Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 103.

⁶⁸Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 248.

⁶⁹Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 105.

which avoided an arbitrary procedure of the Security Council.⁷⁰ The Dutch government, caught between international criticism and the Republic's resistance, accepted the offer to negotiate with the Republic under guidance of the GOC. On 4 August, the Dutch forces and the TNI ceased fire and Operation PRODUCT ended. By accepting the formation of the GOC, the Dutch government turned the conflict into an international matter. Until June 1947, the Dutch emphasized that the East Indies conflict was strictly an internal affair.⁷¹ Negotiations would start all over again, while both parties remained in place, which meant that the Dutch forces would remain in their seized areas. Although the Dutch had weakened their political position with the operation, they had seized most of the economic facilities. The Republic had to start negotiations without the possibility to conduct foreign trade, a significant disadvantage for a new state.⁷²

United States Involvement

After World War II, the United States had great interest in the economic recovery of Europe.⁷³ It considered the Netherlands an important ally and supported Dutch claims on the East Indies, as it believed the situation would not lead to good self-governance.⁷⁴ On the other hand, the Truman Doctrine of 1947 supported any desire for freedom by

⁷⁰Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 254.

⁷¹Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 216.

⁷²Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 249.

⁷³Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 141.

⁷⁴Emerson, *The Netherlands Indies and The United States*, 77.

people, including those who were colonized or faced communist threats.⁷⁵ In October 1945, Sukarno pled with the United States to act as a mediator in the conflict. The United States, still uncertain about the political orientation of the Republic, did not agree to do this.⁷⁶ The fact that any conflict in the East Indies would hamper the important economic recovery of the Netherlands made the United States support the Dutch, although not openly. The conflict put the United States in a difficult position and therefore the Linggadjati Agreement was a welcome event.⁷⁷ The United States Secretary of State mentioned the agreement a major objective.⁷⁸

When negotiations between the Netherlands and the Republic over the interpretation of the agreement went bad, the United States still supported the Dutch cause. The Netherlands succeeded in explaining their demands to the United States State Department.⁷⁹ Several messages from American officials in both the Netherlands and the East Indies stated that the Republic stalled the negotiations. Despite Dutch efforts, the Indonesians wanted to provoke a Dutch attack to gain international support.⁸⁰ Besides the economic importance of the East Indies, it had a huge strategic value as well because of

⁷⁵Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 234.

⁷⁶Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 148.

⁷⁷Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 234.

⁷⁸Telegram Marshall to Foote, 7 May 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1972), 920.

⁷⁹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 235.

⁸⁰Telegram Baruch to Marshall, 10 May 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1972), 921.

its geographic position in relation to the Soviet Union, Indo China and the Philippines. The United States State Department feared a chaos in the region.⁸¹ The United States Consul General in the East Indies, Walter Foote, mentioned the danger of a rise of communism in the Republic.⁸² Although the United States supported the Indonesian wish for self-governance, the economic recovery of Europe, the issues of regional stability, and the possible rise of Communism were more important.

When the Dutch started Operation PRODUCT, opinions changed in the United States. American citizens protested in San Francisco against Dutch military actions.⁸³ Australia, India and the United Kingdom approached the United States to become more involved in solving the conflict.⁸⁴ The United Kingdom was reluctant to bring the cause to the United Nations, as the Russians might use the conflict to put the western world in a negative spotlight.⁸⁵ On 30 July, Secretary of State George C. Marshall briefed President Truman on the Indonesian situation. He stated that the best solution was to inform the Dutch government that the United States would act as a mediator. In this way, the United States would be able to prevent Dutch resentment of a United Nations action as well as

⁸¹Telegram Marshall to Baruch, 16 May 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1972), 924.

⁸²Telegram Foote to Marshall, 28 May 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1972), 929.

⁸³Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 154.

⁸⁴Aide Memoire by the British Embassy, 24 July 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1972), 987-989.

⁸⁵Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 246.

any communist propaganda.⁸⁶ The State Department made this offer to the Netherlands government on 31 July and the United States embassy in the Netherlands reported that the Dutch agreed on 2 August.⁸⁷ The United States became more involved in the solution of the conflict in the East Indies.

Conclusion

The Netherlands government displayed a very rigid attitude throughout the conflict. Although van Mook emphasized the need to talk to the Republic, the politicians in The Hague refused to do so. They were blind to the reports coming from the East Indies, indicating that the attitude towards the Dutch had changed significantly. The Netherlands' government realized that it needed to change the structure of government in the East Indies but in no way were they willing to give up Dutch influence. After World War II, the Netherlands had no military power and struggled to recover from four years of war. However, even in this situation, the Dutch politicians expected other nations to support them. They demanded British support and expected a former enemy, the Japanese, to restore order in the East Indies. The Netherlands government went too far in their expectations. They asked for support without giving anything in return and believed that most of the Indonesians supported the Dutch. Only when military action failed to

⁸⁶Memorandum Marshall to Truman, 30 July 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1972), 997.

⁸⁷Memorandum of Conversation by Lovett, 2 August 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1972), 1007.

force the Republic to accept their terms and international pressure grew, were they willing to accept United States mediation.

The United States was in a difficult position. Economic interests made it support the Dutch through 1945 and 1946.⁸⁸ The Dutch could provide stability in the region when they solved to problem and the United States would achieve its objectives. In a stable region where the Dutch could use the East Indies for their economic recovery, there would be no grounds for communist propaganda. When the Dutch failed to restore order with military action, the United States felt compelled to act, still in support for the Dutch cause.

⁸⁸Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 159.

CHAPTER 4

AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE CONFLICT

Introduction

After the first police action, the United Nations proposed to install a Good Offices Committee (GOC) to help the Netherlands and the Republic to reach a settlement.¹ When the United States offered to be part of the GOC, it became more actively involved in the negotiations to solve conflict. This chapter describes the actions of the GOC that led to the Renville Agreement and the shift of American support from the Netherlands government to the Indonesian Republic. The Dutch used military force again during the Second Police Action and faced more international pressure. The United States and the United Nations threatened sanctions against the Netherlands and finally, the conflict ended with the Round Table Conference. This chapter describes the diplomatic as well as military actions that forced the Dutch to negotiate. It will also set conditions for the explanation of the decisions made by the United States during the conflict.

The Good Offices Committee

The Netherlands government accepted the American offer of 31 July 1947 to serve as a member of a Good Offices Committee (GOC). The GOC was an initiative of the United Nations Security Council, but it would act only as a mediator without the authority of Security Council Resolutions. The matter would not be on the official agenda of the Security Council.² At that time, The Dutch stated that they would still conduct

¹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 264.

²Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 208.

clearing operations in the areas seized during Operation PRODUCT. They also considered continuing military operations to seize Djokjakarta and put an end to the Republic.³ However, the American offer to participate in the GOC prevented an arbitrary solution by the United Nations, so the Dutch decided not to continue the offensive. Undersecretary of State Robert Lovett also advised against further military action.⁴ Relations with the United States were still good and the Dutch wanted to keep it that way. The Indonesians, on the other hand, initially rejected the offer and preferred United Nations arbitration.⁵ After a discussion with the American consul in Batavia, Walter Foote, the Republic accepted the American offer in October 1947 and the GOC started preparing for the negotiations.

The GOC arrived in the East Indies and started talks on 3 November 1947 and negotiations took place on the American navy ship *USS Renville*. The GOC consisted of three main members, the American Frank P. Graham, the Australian Richard Kirby and the Belgian Paul Van Zeeland.⁶ The Republic asked Australia to represent its interests because the Australians supported Indonesian independence. The Netherlands asked Belgium to participate in the GOC because of its close ties and Belgium had colonies as

³Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 106-107.

⁴Memorandum of Conversation by Lovett, 18 August 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1972), 1035.

⁵Telegram Foote to Marshall, 17 August 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1972), 1034.

⁶Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 275.

well. The Dutch were also very pleased with the leadership of the United States because of its past support.⁷ Both the Netherlands and the Republic had one supporter so they regarded the United States as a neutral party that could influence voting in the GOC. Therefore, both parties wanted to explain to the American representative their side of the story. Although Dutch sources mention that Belgium was a bad choice to defend the Dutch cause, American documents describe Van Zeeland as a firm defender of the Dutch interests.⁸

The first session of the negotiations took place on 8 December 1947.⁹ One of the first issues the GOC had to deal with was the actual situation in the East Indies. The GOC dispatched a consular mission into the area to investigate the situation, specifically the disposition of troops and the cease-fire. The United States received reports that the Republic seemed capable of governing its territory and that the Indonesian people who had been in favor of the Republic now regarded the Netherlands as their main enemy. In the area occupied by Dutch forces, Indonesian officials stated they were very unhappy with the occupation.¹⁰ Other information that came from the counselor mission included ongoing violence, against both civilians and military forces.¹¹ The Dutch troops seized a

⁷Ibid., 265.

⁸Ibid., 275. Telegram Livengood to Marshall. Gleason, S. Everett. *Foreign relations of the United States 1947*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1972. P 1091.

⁹Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 228.

¹⁰Telegram Livengood to Marshall, 1 December 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1972), 1074.

¹¹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 266.

considerable amount of terrain during the police action but by doing so, they bypassed several Republican units. These units conducted guerilla warfare against the Dutch and destabilized the area.¹² The official cease-fire line was known as the “Van Mook line” and the Dutch claimed that many Indonesian infiltrations along this line were a violation of the cease-fire agreement.¹³ The “Van Mook line” was a major issue when the negotiations started. The Republic claimed that the Dutch only held a few positions in the area and therefore did not control it. They stated that “penetration is not occupation.”¹⁴ The Dutch flooded the GOC with reports of Indonesian infiltrations and TNI orders to conduct guerilla warfare.¹⁵ The US State Department did not take an official stand in this issue.¹⁶ The GOC initially decided to accept the “Van Mook line” being the division between Republic and Dutch governance. At the start of the negotiations, the GOC seemed to be in favor of the Netherlands.¹⁷

During the negotiations, the American delegate, Graham, informed the State Department about the progress. Graham used the American embassy and its staff for his analysis of the situation. The State Department provided guidance about American policy

¹²Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 112.

¹³Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 228.

¹⁴Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 273.

¹⁵Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 228.

¹⁶Telegram Lovett to Livengood, 18 December 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1972), 1084.

¹⁷Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 276.

on the conflict and during these communications, the Republic's opinions reached the State Department.¹⁸ Because the United States government heard both sides of the debate and the actions of the Dutch, the opinion of the American officials started to change.¹⁹ Each party accused the other of violations of the cease-fire and aggression. In December, Graham informed the US State Department that the Dutch had expanded their reach to Madura, an island close to Java (see map on page 120). The Dutch claimed that they restored the food supply for the population, but the Republic claimed that Dutch troops invaded the island. The cease-fire stated that the troops would remain in their current positions so the GOC saw this move as a violation.²⁰ The Dutch claimed that Republican troops remained active in areas occupied by Dutch forces by terrorizing the population. It was a strong argument until reports came in of similar behavior by Dutch troops. On South Celebes, the local population accused Dutch Special Forces of killing 40,000 Indonesians during their counterinsurgency operations, which started in December 1946.²¹ In November 1947, forty-six Republican POWs died because of negligence of their guards and on 9 December, Dutch soldiers killed several hundred people of the village of Rawaghede. This village was the objective during a cordon and search

¹⁸Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 219.

¹⁹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 276.

²⁰Telegram Livengood to Marshall, 1 December 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1972), 1075.

²¹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 161. The Dutch military authorized local commanders to shoot captured rebels without a trial. Today, the campaign on South Celebes is still a sensitive issue. Special Forces managed to restore order in an area of 62,284 km² with a force of 123 men. Different reports argue about the amount of rebels killed in fighting and innocent people that died as a result of brutal Dutch action.

operation by the Dutch army and although no weapons were retrieved, Dutch soldiers killed dozens of Indonesians. A Dutch Major decided to kill twenty captured Indonesians after he interrogated them.²² Besides these violations, the Dutch continued to undermine the position of the Republic by creating states in the occupied areas to become a part of the United States of Indonesia. These actions endangered the negotiations as the Republican delegation said they would leave unless the Dutch started “real talks.” The Indonesian delegation said the GOC bypassed the fact that the Dutch created more states.²³ When negotiations continued, reports from Graham to the State Department mentioned Dutch unwillingness to accept GOC proposals while the Republic wanted to accept these.²⁴ On 19 December, the State Department informed Graham that the United States should take a strong position the get both parties to stop accusing each other and reach an agreement.²⁵

The Renville Agreement and its Aftermath

On 21 December, Graham warned the Dutch delegation to stop trying to bypass the Republic by creating states within the United States of Indonesia.²⁶ To reach a

²²Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 230.

²³Telegram Graham to Marshall, 30 December 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1972), 1097.

²⁴Telegram Lovett to Graham, 19 December 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1972), 1084.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 1085.

²⁶Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 279.

settlement between the parties, the GOC prepared principles for an agreement. The most significant issue in these principles was that the Netherlands had to stop activities to create separate states in the occupied areas. Furthermore, the Dutch troops had to withdraw to their positions held before the offensive and they had to re-establish the Republican government in the occupied areas. Within one year, free elections would give the Indonesian population the opportunity to decide on the status of the Republic and the United States of Indonesia. During this process, the United Nations would monitor the situation.²⁷ Both parties assessed the principles and Undersecretary Lovett issued the US State Department policy on the East Indies to Graham. On 31 December, Graham received this policy, which included several statements. First, the United States considered the Netherlands an important ally in Europe and that it believed that the stability of the Dutch government would be undermined when the Dutch lost their influence in the East Indies. The State Department did not desire an immediate and complete withdrawal of the Dutch. Second, the United States favored self-government for everybody able to take proper responsibility. Therefore, the United States desired the East Indies to become completely independent after a limited period of Dutch authority over the area. Third, the United States wanted to develop Indonesian capability for world trade to support the Marshall Plan efforts in Europe. The State Department proposed that the Dutch would have an interim government and use that time to convince the Indonesian people of the benefits of a long lasting relationship. The United States did not propose a

²⁷Ibid., 280.

specific timeline, but mentioned that the Netherlands would have authority for a “limited time.”²⁸

The Republic was willing to accept the GOC principles, but the Dutch offered a reaction on 2 January 1948. The Dutch did not want to retreat from the occupied areas and did not even mention the Republic. They focused on the United States of Indonesia and stated that they still had authority over the entire East Indies. Graham changed the GOC proposal and emphasized the status of the Republic and future free elections. The Dutch wanted to ignore these changes, but the United States Secretary of State, George Marshall, intervened.²⁹ He thought the GOC proposals were fair and warned the Dutch government that acceptance of these proposals would influence the decision to support the Netherlands with the Marshall Plan.³⁰ The Dutch government agreed with a changed proposal, which included a continuing role of the GOC and Dutch control over the occupied areas.³¹ The US State Department convinced the Republic that its status would not change and Graham told the Republican leaders, “Whatever you are now, you are.”³²

²⁸Telegram Lovett to Livengood, 31 December 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1972), 1100.

²⁹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 282.

³⁰Telegram Marshall to Graham, 7 January 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 68.

³¹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 283.

³²Telegram Graham to Marshall, 28 January 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 84.

On 17 January 1948, the parties signed the Renville Agreement. The Republic had to concede most of its demands, as it had to accept that the Dutch remained in the occupied areas and the Netherlands would have interim authority over the East Indies. Nevertheless, there would be free elections and the Dutch would transfer authority over the East Indies to the United States of Indonesia.³³ Just like the Linggadjati Agreement, both parties had their own ideas about the meaning of this agreement. The Dutch thought that the Republic's role was diminished and that the Dutch would have freedom of action throughout the East Indies for the time being. On the other hand, the Republic leaders thought that they would continue their status ("whatever you are now, you are") and that they would be able to change things after the elections.³⁴ Regardless of the interpretation of the agreement, one thing had changed for sure, the United States government was suspicious of the Dutch intentions and support for the Dutch cause declined.³⁵

The Dutch government regarded the Renville agreement as a victory, however in the Republic, it caused political turmoil. The Dutch offensive caused the Republicans to unite but the Renville agreement had many opponents in the Republic. Prime Minister Amir Sjarifuddin, who had succeeded Sjahrir, expected support from all the parties in the Republic but several opponents withdrew from the government. On 23 January, only six days after the agreement was signed, Sjarifuddin resigned as prime minister. Sukarno asked his close friend Hatta to form a new cabinet. Sjarifuddin formed a new party opposing the Hatta administration, and this new party developed radical goals aiming

³³Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 231.

³⁴Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 231.

³⁵Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 231.

against feudalism and capitalism. This party, the FDR (*Front Demokrasi Rakjat*), wanted to align with countries free of capitalism.³⁶

Overall, the international community welcomed the Renville Agreement but supporters of Indonesian independence like the Soviet countries opposed it. In February 1948, Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet representative in the United Nations, excoriated the agreement. He said that the Renville Agreement should be mounted as a museum exhibit of a shameful document, drafted because the members of the United Nations had forsaken their interest in the plight of colonized people, purely to serve the capitalist greed of the United States and the European colonial powers.³⁷

When the parties signed the Renville Agreement, they confirmed the involvement of the GOC during the process that should lead to free elections and the formations of the United States of Indonesia. The United States government replaced its representative Graham with retired diplomat Coert DuBois. This man had been the United States' consul-general in Batavia between 1927 and 1930 so he knew the area. The Dutch welcomed DuBois as they thought he would be more pro-Dutch than Graham.³⁸ The GOC continued to work with both parties to make sure that everybody complied with the agreement.

As arranged in the Renville Agreement, the Republic started to withdraw all its forces from areas occupied by the Dutch troops. By the end of February, 35,000 TNI troops had returned to Republic territory. However, not all Republican soldiers returned

³⁶Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 284.

³⁷Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 232.

³⁸Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 287.

and roving bands remained active in the Dutch-controlled areas, amongst which were the Islamic Hizbullahs.³⁹ These Hizbullahs were not loyal to the Republic but fought, even with their small numbers, for an Islamic state on the island of Java.⁴⁰

The Dutch allowed Republican officials to enter Dutch-controlled areas to participate in government business, which was another part of the Renville Agreement. However, Van Mook continued to build his United States of Indonesia and created states to be part of this federation. To do this, he formed governments in areas with limited Republican support. After he created federal states in the “Big East” he continued on Java and Sumatra and got closer to Republican territory. He had limited success because of the internal problems he faced in these states like corruption. Nevertheless, these actions were against the Renville Agreement and annoyed the Republic.⁴¹

When negotiations started again on 18 March 1948, the Dutch repeated that they wanted the Republic to be a subordinate part of the United States of Indonesia, without its own foreign relations and without an army. DuBois tried to convince the Republic to give in to the Dutch demands as he thought that the Netherlands would transfer authority to the United States of Indonesia very soon.⁴² After six weeks of slow negotiations, DuBois visited parts of the Republic together with Sukarno, Hatta, and the Australian GOC representative. He was impressed by the support Sukarno had with the population and

³⁹Ibid., 285.

⁴⁰Ben Laurens, *Het Peloton* (Rotterdam: Ad. Donker, 1986), 7.

⁴¹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 286-290.

⁴²Telegram Livengood to Marshall, 6 April 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 134-136.

became convinced that the Republic was the rightful government in Java and Sumatra. DuBois informed the United States State Department of his opinion and stated that the Dutch demand to dismantle the TNI was not appropriate and he believed that it could lead to another war.⁴³

The Dutch noticed the change of Dubois's opinion and Van Mook called him "stubborn and stupid, almost senile."⁴⁴ Apparently, the Dutch did not realize why the opinion of the American representative had changed, just as Graham's opinion changed during the negotiations. Van Mook continued to work on his United States of Indonesia and held a conference with the states on 27 May 1948. He did not invite the Republic to this conference.⁴⁵ The GOC members thought that the Dutch had tried again to bypass the Republic and DuBois mentioned his concerns to the US State Department.

As we have repeatedly stressed, we believe Netherlands will serve its best interests by conciliating not bucking [*sic*] Republic, that Netherlands is fortunate having nothing worse deal with than present Republican government. We further consider future Dutch economic position will depend finally upon attitude of Indonesians and that Dutch will make great mistake if they endeavor such position by attempting confine Indonesian nationalist spirit and attempting gain guarantees in political agreement which Indonesian nationalists will accept only under great pressure.⁴⁶

⁴³Telegram Livengood to Marshall, 10 May 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 164-168.

⁴⁴Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 291.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 292.

⁴⁶Telegram Livengood to Marshall, 21 May 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 178-183.

DuBois wanted to try one more time to get the Dutch and the Republic together and on 6 June 1948, Secretary of State Marshall gave him the authority to do whatever it took.⁴⁷ The GOC developed a new proposal stating that the Republic was the only representative of the Indonesian people on Java, Sumatra, and Madura. Furthermore, it was necessary to hold elections as soon as possible to create a council that would appoint a president. This president would form a government with authority from both the Dutch colonial government and the Republic. The Dutch boldly refused to consider the proposal and quit the negotiations with the Republic on 16 June 1948.⁴⁸

Not only did Dubois forward his proposal for the sake of the Republic, he also considered United States' interests in South East Asia regarding communism. In June, he informed the State Department about his concerns that part of the Republic, especially Sjarifuddin's FDR, had a tendency to turn towards the Soviet Union. He stated that the Republic still looked towards the West, but that it might consider the Soviet Union as a last resort.⁴⁹

The Madiun Affair.

In 1920, Indonesian nationalists had formed a communist party, the PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*). The party aimed for independence from the Netherlands and equal

⁴⁷Telegram Marshall to Livengood, 8 June 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 229-231.

⁴⁸Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 292-293.

⁴⁹Telegram Livengood to Marshall, 12 June 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 240-243.

diversion of wealth amongst the population.⁵⁰ The PKI organized an uprising in 1926, which the Dutch quickly defeated and the PKI leaders ended up in prison camps.⁵¹ One of the PKI leaders, Musso, moved to the Soviet Union in 1936 and returned to the East Indies in the summer of 1948.⁵² At that time, the PKI had 3,000 members but was a growing minority.⁵³

In 1948, several communist issues arose in the Asian region. The Malayan Communist Party organized a strike in Singapore that paralyzed the local economy for twenty-four hours. Communists in Calcutta organized a conference accusing the United States of aggressive imperialism and Burmese communists revolted against their government.⁵⁴ In September 1948, the CIA reported to President Truman that the Soviet Union and local communist groups would exploit colonial tensions in Asia. The report stated that this trend would raise security problems for the United States. The CIA advised Truman to balance support of local nationalists and economic interests in Europe. In the interest of American long-term security, the United States should support revised relationships between the European countries and their colonies. Furthermore, the United States had to prevent Soviet influence in Asia by acting quicker and, if necessary, fill in

⁵⁰*Het Geheugen van Nederland*. (2003). Retrieved November 10, 2008, from Het geheugen van Nederland - Nederlands Indie: http://www.onderwijsbeeldbank.geheugenvannederland.nl//component/option,com_bbkb/vak,geschiedenis/hoofdthema,4/

⁵¹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 34.

⁵²There is no full name available for Musso. All sources cite him only as Musso, which is probably his last name.

⁵³McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 236.

⁵⁴Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 304.

any vacuum before the Soviets could establish any influence. Any Soviet propaganda of American imperialism if the United States filled in a vacuum was less important.⁵⁵ The political leaders in the Netherlands were aware of the American concerns of communism and exaggerated the strength of communist elements in the East Indies to emphasize the importance of restoring Dutch authority. Although exaggerated, the United States became more concerned about communist influence in the Republic.⁵⁶ The United States would watch developments closely through its new representative in the GOC, H. Merle Cochran, who replaced Coert Dubois in July 1948.⁵⁷

When Musso returned to the East Indies, Sukarno welcomed him as an old friend as they had been nationalists in the 1930's together. However, Musso would soon say that he returned to guide the Republic to a new path. The charismatic Musso took charge over the PKI and the FDR and formed a tight opposition for the Hatta administration.⁵⁸ Secretary Marshall was afraid that the actions of the Dutch would lead to the fall of Hatta. He feared that if the Hatta administration would fall, its replacement could very well be communist. Therefore, he emphasized the need for a quick settlement between the Republic and the Netherlands.⁵⁹ On 1 September, Musso announced the new

⁵⁵Central Intelligence Agency, *Review of the World Situation*, Secret report, 16 September 1948. Harry S. Truman Presidential Library (HSTPL), President's Secretary's files, National Security Council Meetings File, Box 177.

⁵⁶McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 236.

⁵⁷Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 310.

⁵⁸McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 238.

⁵⁹Telegrams Marshall to Livengood, 31 August and 1 September 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 312-314.

composition of his Politbureau although there is no evidence that he had Soviet support. Cochran reported to the United States that he had developed a new proposal for both parties and the State Department informed Belgium and Australia about its concerns, stating that the best way to support Hatta would be an agreement between the Republic and the Netherlands.⁶⁰ On 9 September, Marshall informed Cochran that the United States would assist the democratic non-communist government of Indonesia to resist communist tyranny.⁶¹ It was remarkable that the United States Secretary of State called the Republic a democratic government because the people did not chose it. Some American officials like GOC senior staff member James W. Barco, stated that if the Dutch would not comply, the United States needed to take steps to put the case to the United Nations Security Council again. Furthermore, the United States should consider withdrawing from the GOC, recognizing the Republic and starting direct trade relations.⁶²

On 14 September, TNI units, destined to be disbanded, revolted against the Republic. Loyal TNI units managed to defeat the rebels within two days but on 18 September local members of the PKI in the town of Madiun revolted. They formed a People's Front Government and Musso quickly joined them in Madiun, on the east side of Java. Republic president Sukarno called upon his people to defeat this revolt and

⁶⁰McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 239.

⁶¹Telegram Marshall to Livengood, 9 September 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 327.

⁶²Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 271.

Musso called him a Japanese traitor.⁶³ However, for the Indonesian people Sukarno was their only leader. TNI forces moved to Madiun and defeated the rebels who fled the city to start a guerilla campaign. Without support from the local population, this guerilla did not succeed and Musso was killed in a firefight on 31 October.⁶⁴ The Madiun affair, as the revolt was called, only lasted a month and a half but it gained more support for the Republic from the United States government.

Negotiations Fail

The Netherlands considered the communist uprising a good opportunity to start a new military operation against the Republic. If the Republic failed to deal with the communists or turned to the Soviet Union, the Dutch government would be compelled to act. However, Van Mook wanted to offer the Republic assistance to deal with the uprising. Hatta refused the offer and the Republic ended the uprising by itself.⁶⁵

After the Dutch refusal to consider the GOC proposal in June and the successful actions of the Republic against the communists, the GOC tried again to reach a settlement. Cochran sent a new proposal to both the Dutch and the Republic. This new proposal looked like earlier offers and included elections no later than 1 January 1949 and the formation of the United States of Indonesia. The Republic would be a part of the new government. The Dutch did not agree with the proposal and stated that the offer did

⁶³Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 308.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 308-309.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 310

not consider any of the Dutch wishes.⁶⁶ The Dutch felt offended by the fact that the GOC had not first discussed the matter.⁶⁷ On 17 September, Dutch Foreign Minister Dirk Stikker arrived in the United States and tried to influence the American opinion. He pointed out that the Dutch wanted to fight communism together with the Americans and that some of the points of the GOC proposal were unacceptable to the Dutch government. Secretary Marshall stated that all United States government elements involved in the matter thought the proposal was fair. He also mentioned the Philippines as an example of how American policy dealt with nationalism.⁶⁸ Finally, Marshall mentioned the trouble he had with Congress to get the European Recovery Program (Marshall Aid) started.⁶⁹ The meeting continued under the guidance of the undersecretary, Robert Lovett. The Dutch did not appreciate the attitude of George Marshall and the fact that he let his undersecretary lead the continuation of the discussion.⁷⁰ Lovett emphasized that both the GOC and the United States government wanted to contain the communist threat and that any Dutch aggression would lead to unification of the Republic and the communists in a

⁶⁶ Ibid., 311.

⁶⁷Telegram Cochran to Marshall, 11 September 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 334.

⁶⁸Memorandum of Conversation by Marshall, 17 September 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 343-345.

⁶⁹Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 272.

⁷⁰Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 312.

common front against the Dutch. The meeting did not result in a change of American policy.⁷¹

The Dutch government reacted to the GOC proposal with a list of violations of the cease-fire in the Dutch controlled areas of which they accused the Republic. They also send a letter with a counter-proposal to the GOC, which included a powerful position for a Dutch representative in the East Indies, which would leave the Republic with little influence.⁷² The US State Department considered the letter bold and especially the cover letter held statements it did not want the GOC to send to the Republic. In the letter, the Netherlands gave the Republic three weeks to agree on this plan and did not leave room for negotiations. The United States thought that the Republic might stop negotiations through the GOC and take the matter to the United Nations. The State Department advised the GOC to talk to the Dutch delegation to change the letter.⁷³

While negotiations continued without a settlement, the Dutch replaced Lieutenant-Governor General Hubertus van Mook with former Prime Minister Louis Beel. Van Mook felt abandoned by the government in the Netherlands and asked Queen Juliana to be relieved. Beel thought that there was no positive end to the negotiations and that military action was inevitable. He stated that the threat of communism, the infiltrations in the Dutch controlled areas and lack of authority by the Republic made it

⁷¹Memorandum of Conversation by Lovett, 17 September 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 347.

⁷²Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 312.

⁷³Telegram Cochran to Marshall, 5 October 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 384-388.

necessary to put an end to the Republic. He also mentioned that Cochran was untrustworthy. Beel shared the opinion of the Dutch military leaders in the East Indies, who completed their plan for a new offensive.⁷⁴

The Dutch did not change their message to the Republic, and Secretary of State Marshall concluded that the Dutch were stalling. The Dutch kept mentioning infiltrations in the occupied areas and blamed the Republic.⁷⁵ Several messages from US officials, like ambassador Herman Baruch in the Netherlands and consul general Charles Livengood in the East Indies stated that the Dutch put too much emphasis on procedures and that they did not compromise on any of their demands. On 12 October, Undersecretary of State Lovett expressed his dissatisfaction with the Dutch attitude in a letter to the American embassy in the Netherlands. He stated that the Dutch were too persistent in their case and their urge to follow the procedure of sending proposals. Lovett mentioned that the Dutch “delayed the negotiations on the ridiculous procedural matter.”⁷⁶

Dutch Foreign Minister Stikker traveled to the Republic in November to persuade Hatta to accept the Dutch terms. Hatta refused because the Dutch wanted the Republic to give up all authority and become just one of the states of the United States of Indonesia and disband the Republican army. Although Stikker saw grounds for further negotiations,

⁷⁴Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 313-314.

⁷⁵Telegrams Livengood and Baruch to Marshall, 8 October 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 391-396.

⁷⁶Telegram Lovett to Baruch, 12 October 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 411.

Beel and the military believed that an attack on the Republic would be the only solution. At the end of November, the Dutch government was convinced that military action was the only way to reach a settlement.⁷⁷

In October and November, the GOC continued to work on a settlement but in December, Dutch Foreign Minister Stikker told Cochran that they were considering military action. Cochran warned the Dutch that the United States would strongly oppose any action and that “his people would hit the ceiling.”⁷⁸ The Dutch delegation decided to try one more time to persuade the Republic to accept their terms. The Dutch did not consult with any of the other Indonesian states they had created and kept pushing for a solution. Hatta refused again to accept the subordinate role of the Republic and to disband the TNI.⁷⁹

The US State Department, in coordination with the GOC, sent an *aide memoire* to the Netherlands on 7 December 1948. The document indicated the United States’ confidence in the Hatta administration and emphasized the need for the Dutch to resume negotiations to reach a settlement. It also mentioned that the United States doubted a positive result of any military action and warned the Dutch government of negative effects in Europe. The State Department stated, “Action could result in weakening the newly emerging Western European structure to the lasting disadvantage of the component nations.” The *aide memoire* included a warning to the Dutch government that

⁷⁷Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 315-316.

⁷⁸Telegram Livengood to Lovett, 2 December 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 506-509.

⁷⁹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 316.

if the Dutch would not cooperate in a settlement, the United States would withdraw from the GOC and put the issue before the United Nations Security Council. In that case, the United States would mention that the GOC proposals were very fair. Finally, the document mentioned the good relations between the United States and the Netherlands and emphasized that the American people would not support the Dutch if they continued this way.⁸⁰ Originally, the document also contained a specific warning that military action would jeopardize continuance of Marshall Aid to both the Netherlands and the East Indies. The final document did not include this warning but the information had already reached the Dutch government.⁸¹⁸²

Although the messages from the United States were clear, the Dutch government did not consider them. The Dutch thought they could deal with any international reactions because the United Nations Security Council would not meet for a month after 15 December. Dutch politicians like the chairman of the Socialist Party, Marinus van der Goes van Naters and Dutch Foreign Minister Stikker advocated a quick campaign and formation of a new government in the Republic territory before the end of the year. By the time the United Nations Security Council would meet, everything would be over.⁸³

⁸⁰Aide Memoire by US State Department, 7 December 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 531-535.

⁸¹Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 291.

⁸²The original message that included the threat to stop the Marshall Aid is not cited. There are no sources that include this message, as the State Department never officially sent it to the Netherlands.

⁸³Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 318.

Between 10 and 13 December, the US State Department received messages from both the Netherlands and the East Indies stating that the Dutch did not agree with the American *aide memoire* and were unwilling to go back to negotiations.⁸⁴ Cochran mentioned that the Dutch government “disregarded the aide memoire and revealed reluctance to consider a reasonable basis for negotiation.” The American ambassador in Batavia, Charles Livengood, warned of serious damage to American-Dutch relations and Cochran mentioned that the GOC was about to become useless. American officials stated that the Dutch were unwilling to listen to neither the GOC nor the United Nations Security Council.⁸⁵

When Cochran informed Hatta about the situation, the Republic presented the Dutch with a new set of proposals on 14 December. This letter included more sacrifices from the Republic and the United States considered this action as evidence of the conciliatory attitude of the Republican Government.⁸⁶ The Dutch reacted by sending a response to the GOC and demanded an answer within twenty-four hours. Cochran felt irritated by both the content of the response, demanding the surrender of the Republic, and the short time period.⁸⁷ On 18 December, he sent a message to the US State Department, expressing his concerns and annoyance. He believed that the Dutch

⁸⁴Telegram from Netherlands Embassy to State Department, 10 December 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 544-548

⁸⁵Telegrams Livengood to Lovett, 11 and 13 December 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 548-554.

⁸⁶Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 292.

⁸⁷Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 321.

government had “lost its temper and balance which would likely lead the Dutch to lose their cause.” The Dutch did not give in to their point of view and even asked more from the Republic, their surrender, then at the start of the negotiations. He described the Dutch government as “adamant and threatening” with asking the surrender of the Republic and used words like “unreasonable ultimatums” and “erratic errands.”⁸⁸ Undersecretary of State Lovett informed the American representative at the United Nations about the situation and mentioned that the United States government had no proposal at that time on how to react to a breach of the cease-fire orders given by the United Nations.⁸⁹

On Saturday morning, 18 December, the Netherlands government decided that it would authorize Beel to start military action against the Republic. The Second Police Action would start at 00.00 hours on 19 December 1948.⁹⁰

Second Police Action

Dutch military leaders had been planning a new offensive since the end of the first Police Action. The events around the communist uprising in Madiun sped up their preparations as they expected to receive the order to attack on short notice. When the Dutch government did not issue the order for an offensive during the Madiun uprising,

⁸⁸Telegram Livengood to Lovett, 18 December 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 574-576.

⁸⁹Telegram Lovett to Jessup, 18 December 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 578.

⁹⁰Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 322.

The Dutch army commander, General Simon Spoor, and his staff continued preparations.⁹¹

A new offensive would focus on the elimination of the Republic as an entity. The objectives of Operation KRAAI (Crow) were to occupy Republican government centers on Java and Sumatra, occupy Java as a whole and as much territory on Sumatra as possible. Directives from the military headquarters indicated that the Dutch forces had to emphasize speed, disruption of the enemy, gaining cooperation with the local population and quick clearing operations after entering an area.

To conduct the operation, the Dutch had 60,000 operational forces on Java and 18,000 operational forces on Sumatra. The Army would have air support from six Air Force squadrons and several Navy ships would provide naval gunfire and amphibious capacity. The Republic claimed to have 463,000 soldiers in both the TNI and the militia. Dutch intelligence expected 100,000 regular troops on Java, of which only forty percent would be armed, and 40,000 regular troops on Sumatra of which twenty-five percent was expected to be armed. Apparently, the Republic also had a small air force of ten Japanese fighter planes, a seaplane and two transport planes.⁹² Dutch intelligence did not have accurate numbers of the militia, armed groups that were outside the Republican command structure. Besides the TNI and the militia, there were several autonomous fighting groups like the Islamic Darul Islam or Hizbullahs. Dutch military leaders expected that the Republican commanders would order their troops to avoid direct confrontations and

⁹¹Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 137-138.

⁹²*Ibid.*, 141-144.

withdraw into the mountains to start guerilla warfare.⁹³ Dutch military leaders assessed their forces less capable of dealing with a guerilla and therefore they aimed to go for the Republican leadership to discourage TNI soldiers conducting guerilla warfare and to encircle the major TNI formations. Furthermore, Netherlands intelligence claimed that TNI soldiers starting a guerilla war would not get much support from the local population, as the Indonesians were tired of the conflict.⁹⁴

Dutch soldiers were anxious to start operations as the situation in the occupied areas deteriorated. There were many violent incidents and the Dutch troops struggled to control the area.⁹⁵ General Spoor reported rising numbers of incidents and blamed Republic infiltrations for the unrest. The incidents varied from troops-in-contact to assassinations of local officials and destruction of infrastructure. Events occurred all over the occupied areas but the situation in West-Java was extreme because 80 percent of all the violent incidents took place in this area. Dutch intelligence claimed that 11,000 TNI infiltrators, 12,000 Islamic fighters, and 9,000 militia members were active in West-Java. These numbers gave military leaders a reason to plead for a new offensive.⁹⁶

⁹³The majority of Dutch military operations encountered an enemy that conducted irregular warfare. Veterans who discuss their experiences always emphasize the difficulties they faced when the Indonesian fighters avoided contact and lured them into ambushes.

⁹⁴Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 145-146.

⁹⁵Veterans explain that there were few troops available to conduct patrols and that most soldiers spent all their time at combat outposts. Many of these conscript soldiers spent four years in Indonesia and never left the outpost to get some R&R.

⁹⁶Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 150.

Operation KRAAI started with airborne landings on the airfield near Djokjakarta.⁹⁷ After the Special Forces Regiment secured the airfield, the Dutch Air Force flew in reinforcements and the troops advanced to the Republican capital. Several Republican military commanders fled the city to start a guerilla campaign in the mountains. Sukarno, Hatta and several other leaders decided to wait for the arrival of the Dutch troops rather than being arrested while escaping the city. Seven hours after the airborne landings, Dutch troops captured the Republican capital without major resistance and placed the leaders under house arrest.⁹⁸

While the Republican capital was in Dutch hands, ground forces moved to secure key terrain and defeat major TNI units. Dutch troops expected to encounter little resistance and overall the offensive was a success. However, TNI soldiers did avoid the Dutch advance, but did not go into the mountains. They regrouped near occupied cities to start night attacks and disruption of the lines of communication. In some places, TNI forces put up heavy resistance, only to be defeated by the Dutch troops who used close air support.⁹⁹

Despite the capture of Djokjakarta, Dutch commanders were not satisfied. Bad weather and roads slowed down the advance and Dutch troops did not really control the area they occupied. Republican commanders were also not happy with the outcome of the

⁹⁷The Parachute Company of the Special Forces Regiment conducted the first Dutch airborne operation ever. Many of the soldiers of the Special Forces Regiment who captured the Republican leaders originated from the Moluccas.

⁹⁸Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 321.

⁹⁹Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 179-181.

offensive since they lost communication with their major formations and not all forces withdrew into the mountains, but remained near the cities. However, the TNI did not suffer a decisive defeat and was still able to mount its planned guerilla warfare on both islands.¹⁰⁰

As soon as the Dutch troops started their operations, the international community responded. Dutch politicians expected to fight a quick war during the recess of the United Nations Security Council, but other nations such as India and Australia called for a reaction. The US State Department initiated a resolution aimed at restoring the *status quo ante* in the East Indies.¹⁰¹ However, the United States government was careful to consider the action it should take against the Netherlands. In a meeting with Undersecretary Lovett, the Australian ambassador, Norman Makin, urged the United States to consider sanctions against the Netherlands or withhold Marshall Aid. Lovett answered that the United States government would give it serious consideration if the United Nations Security Council decided on sanctions and that the United States was contemplating withholding funds the Dutch could use to procure materials for the East Indies. Lovett made the same statements in a secret meeting with a Republican representative.¹⁰² On 23 December, the US State Department informed the American representative at the United Nations about the American objectives for any Security Council action regarding the East Indies. The United States wanted an immediate cease-

¹⁰⁰Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 322-323.

¹⁰¹Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 298.

¹⁰²Memorandum of Conversation by Lovett, 20 December 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 589-592.

fire and return to the status quo. However, it expected that the Dutch would not accept any Security Council action and urged that other nations would join the United States to create public pressure to the Netherlands. The United States also wanted to show the Indonesian people its support in development of self-governance, which was an essential aspect of the Truman Doctrine, and have the Netherlands take full responsibility over the police action. There was no intention on the side of the United States to propose or support any sanctions against the Netherlands in Europe. The Americans wanted to prevent any direct or indirect support to the Dutch military actions and were prepared to back sanctions against the Dutch in Indonesia. Lovett also informed the American representative, Philip Jessup, that the US “cannot tell other delegations what we may or may not do in event SC passes your joint resolution and Dutch defy it.”¹⁰³

At this time, the United States Government was involved in several different discussions. Within the US Government, Secretary Acheson and Undersecretary Lovett realized that the Dutch would not comply with a United Nations Security Council Resolution and that the United States needed to take “unpleasant” actions towards the Dutch. However, they were not sure what actions would be appropriate as they still considered the Dutch an important ally.¹⁰⁴ Secretary Acheson was very careful about taking the final step towards sanctions. Towards the Netherlands, the US Government still tried to convince the Dutch leaders that it was in everybody’s best interest to reach a

¹⁰³Telegram Rusk to Jessup, 23 December 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 597-601.

¹⁰⁴Telegram Lovett to Diplomatic and Consular officers abroad, 31 December 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 620.

settlement. The US Government did not threaten sanctions and kept arguing that a settlement would be the best solution for the conflict. The example of the change of an original document that contained such a threat clarifies this. To the outside world, including the American population, the US Government did not want to appear weak and stated that the United States was willing to take action in accordance with any United Nations resolution. The US State Department was unwilling to explain what sanctions it would take as it had not decided yet and did not want to offend the Netherlands.

The United Nations Security Council met on 22 December 1948 in Paris and condemned the Dutch action. From Batavia, Beel suggested that the Republic did not exist anymore and therefore the issue was an internal one, but the UNSC did not accept this position. On 28 December, the United Nations accepted two resolutions demanding an immediate cease-fire and the release of Republican leaders. In the Netherlands, political leaders were surprised that the Security Council met during recess and that they could not finish the conflict. The Dutch representative at the United Nations stated that military operations would finish by the end of December and that Republican leaders would regain freedom of movement. The Dutch promise did not meet the resolution, as military operations would continue for some days. The Republican leaders would only have freedom of movement and would not be able to return to Djokjakarta to resume their duties. However, the Security Council accepted the Dutch statement.¹⁰⁵

There was much indignation in the United States about the Dutch offensive. Philip Murray, chairman of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, demanded an

¹⁰⁵Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 324-325.

immediate end to all economic support to the Netherlands.¹⁰⁶ At that time, the State Department realized it had different discussions with the parties involved. Undersecretary Lovett stated that the Dutch caused the problems themselves and the United States needed to condemn their actions. The American representative at the United Nations, Philip Jessup, condemned the Dutch actions openly for the first time on 11 January 1949 and developed a working paper for the Security Council.¹⁰⁷ It included an immediate cease-fire, return of the Republican Government to Djokjakarta, establishment of an interim federal government by 15 March and transfer of authority to the United States of Indonesia by 1 April 1950.¹⁰⁸ The Netherlands vigorously objected to the new proposal and the Netherlands representative, Herman van Roijen, stated:

The Netherlands have not guided the development of Indonesia for three hundred and fifty years to surrender their responsibility at the last minute before the final consummation of that development: the achievement of Statehood for Indonesia.¹⁰⁹

Despite the Dutch objections, the United Nations accepted the proposal on 28 January. The resolution also included a continuation of the Good Offices Committee to guide the negotiations until a final settlement. The GOC transferred in the United Nations Commission for Indonesia (UNCI) but still had the same members.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 326.

¹⁰⁷McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 271.

¹⁰⁸Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 328.

¹⁰⁹McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 272.

¹¹⁰Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 329.

The United States kept putting pressure on the Dutch government to accept the resolution and H. Merle Cochran, now a member of the United Nations Commission for Indonesia, met with the Dutch leaders in the Netherlands. In a conversation with the Prime Minister and the ministers for Foreign Affairs and Overseas Areas, he stated that the United States wanted to protect its old friend and ally. However, he also mentioned that the United States might be compelled to take further action if the Netherlands would not accept the UNSC resolution. He stated that he would not mention any possible sanctions and insisted that he was speaking entirely on his own behalf.¹¹¹

The Dutch still tried to turn the situation to their favor, but faced several problems. First, they did not expect the swift reaction of the United Nations and wanted to end the offensive quickly. However, they encountered massive international condemnation of their actions both from the United Nations and from individual countries like India and Australia. Another important issue was that the Dutch forces were not able to secure the area and faced guerilla activities they could not end.¹¹² The violence and the fact that the Dutch government had not discussed the upcoming offensive caused some other Indonesian states to withdraw from the federation, which had always been the backbone of the Dutch policy. The governments of two important states, Pasoendan and East-Indonesia, resigned after the offensive.¹¹³ Still, the Netherlands defied the UNSC resolution and aimed for a federal Indonesia with little

¹¹¹McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 278.

¹¹²Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950*, 198.

¹¹³Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 326.

Republican influence and the Dutch Queen as the Head of State. The Dutch government presented a compromise proposal on 26 February to both the UNCI and the Republic that stated that the Netherlands agreed with the aims of the United Nations but suggested other ways to achieve these. The Dutch suggested a round table conference with all Indonesian parties, including the Republic, and formation of an interim government by 1 May. The transfer of authority would take place on 1 July, one year earlier than the date proposed by the UNSC.¹¹⁴ However, the Dutch mentioned that they could not re-establish the Republican government prior to the conference, they were willing to proceed without the Republic and they did not include a cease-fire. The Dutch proposal did not meet with the initial demands of the Security Council.

In the US State Department, Dean Rusk, the assistant secretary for United Nations affairs, feared that the Dutch offer would only lead to an agreement on Dutch conditions and that the return of the Republican leaders to Djokjakarta would lead to another impasse.¹¹⁵ There were also other important factors within the US government. The *New York Times* published articles about American replenishment of Dutch military assets in the East Indies.¹¹⁶ The amount of Marshall Aid to the Netherlands equaled the amount the Dutch government spent on maintaining the armed forces in the East Indies. Former Vice President Henry Wallace stated that, "Marshall Plan aid has been used to maintain

¹¹⁴McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 281.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 283.

¹¹⁶A.M. Rosenthal, "US urges Dutch to end Indies row," *New York Times*, 4 January 1949. 14

Europe's colonial system by force of arms."¹¹⁷ In Congress, there was strong condemnation of the Dutch offensive. Democratic Senator Claude Pepper from Florida stated: "It is not America's role to strengthen the hand that wields the dagger against freedom."¹¹⁸ On 29 March, Republican Senator George Aiken of Vermont linked the Indonesian crisis to the Atlantic Pact, and especially the Military Assistance Program (MAP). The MAP was a key component of the North Atlantic Treaty and the State Department believed that the Indonesian crisis directly threatened American foreign policy, the Marshall Aid and the Atlantic Pact. Democratic Senator Elbert Thomas from Utah said: "the Foreign Relations Committee confronts a hard struggle before it approves a treaty linking the United States to the Netherlands."¹¹⁹ Until that time, the communications with the Netherlands did not include any threats of sanctions but Secretary Acheson and Undersecretary Lovett realized that they needed to put more pressure on the Dutch. The only course of action left was to threaten to discontinue all economic assistance.¹²⁰

On 31 March 1949, Secretary of State Dean Acheson met with Dutch Foreign Minister Dirk Stikker. Acheson was very clear and related the Indonesian crises to the Marshall Aid and the MAP. He also mentioned that the Dutch were wrong and that it was essential for the Dutch to reach a settlement in Indonesia. He said that in his opinion "in the absence of a settlement in Indonesia, there was no chance whatever of the Congress

¹¹⁷McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 285.

¹¹⁸Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 296.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, 297.

¹²⁰McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 291.

authorizing funds for military supplies to the Netherlands.”¹²¹ Acheson and Stikker met again on 5 April and Acheson emphasized the importance of the return of the Republican leaders to Djokjakarta and the withdrawal of Dutch troops from Republican areas. At the end of the meeting, Stikker agreed that the Indonesian conflict had to be settled as it “was adversely affecting every important problem in Europe.”¹²²

Negotiations between the Dutch and the Republic started on 14 April 1949 under the guidance of the United Nations Commission for Indonesia. The Dutch representative in the United Nations, Herman van Roijen, led the delegation, and Mohammad Roem led the Republic delegation. Despite the situation, the negotiations took place in a good atmosphere and both parties worked towards an agreement. H. Merle Cochran drafted a proposal for the return of the Republican leaders that was accepted by both parties on 6 May. The so-called Van Roijen-Roem Agreement included a personal guarantee by Sukarno and Hatta of a cease-fire and cooperation to restore order. The Republic agreed on participation of a Round Table conference and the Netherlands agreed on the release of the Republican leaders and their return to Djokjakarta. The Dutch, facing a deteriorating military situation and the political pressure from the United States, also agreed to include the Republic in the United States of Indonesia with half of the available seats in the government.¹²³

¹²¹Dean Acheson, *Memorandum of Conversation 31 March 1949*, HSTPL, Memoranda of Conversations File, 1949-1953, Box 65.

¹²²McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 295.

¹²³Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 342.

The agreement paved the way for a conference about the future and arranged for a cease-fire and the return of the Republican leaders to Djokjakarta. On the Dutch side, the agreement had some opponents. Dutch High Representative Louis Beel and army commander General Simon Spoor still aimed for defeat of the Republic. Beel resigned after the agreement and Anton Lovink replaced him.¹²⁴ General Spoor died of a stroke on 23 May.¹²⁵ Louis Beel and General Simon Spoor were both hardliners and did not wish to reach a settlement with the Republic. When they were replaced, the Dutch had a more positive attitude towards the Republic. There were also opponents of the agreement on the Republican side, but on 6 July, the Republican government returned united to Djokjakarta.¹²⁶

The Round Table Conference

On 23 August 1949, Dutch, Republican, and United Nations delegations were present in the Netherlands at the start of the Round Table Conference. The United Nations Commission for Indonesia wanted to let the parties work out an agreement by themselves and had a supporting role at the beginning of the conference. During the negotiations, several issues could lead the conference into a stalemate. The first discussion was about the union between the Netherlands and the United States of Indonesia. After some fruitless debate, Cochran designed a solution that described the

¹²⁴Ibid., 342.

¹²⁵The death of general Spoor led to a lot of controversy in the military because he was very well liked. Today, many still believe that the general was murdered because of his firm posture towards the Republic.

¹²⁶McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 297.

union as a voluntary bond between two sovereign states. Although the Dutch were always against this kind of union, Cochran convinced the Dutch that it was the best solution and they agreed on 13 October.¹²⁷ Cochran also intervened during the negotiations on the issues of debt and the status of Dutch New Guinea. The Netherlands wanted the Republic to assume the total debt of the East Indies but the Republic only agreed on a part of the debt. The parties reached a compromise that the Netherlands would reduce the debt with two billion guilders and Indonesia would assume all foreign debts. None of the parties was really satisfied and the issue would haunt the relations between the Netherlands and Indonesia.¹²⁸ Although the Netherlands never paid much attention to New Guinea, it was a sensitive topic during the negotiations as the Dutch wanted to keep some presence in the Far East. The Dutch claimed that New Guinea was not a part of Indonesia due to the historical background and ethnic and cultural differences. When the Round Table Conference neared its proposed end, the United Nations Commission for Indonesia suggested keeping New Guinea under Dutch control and reviewing the issue a year later. Both parties agreed on this.¹²⁹ The Round Table Conference ended on 2 November with an agreement between the Netherlands, the Republic, the Indonesian federal states and the United Nations Commission for Indonesia. It left an open issue on New Guinea and also the debt was still a sensitive topic but there was an agreement on the independence of Indonesia. On 27 December 1949, the transfer of authority took place at joint

¹²⁷Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 346.

¹²⁸McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 301.

¹²⁹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 348-351.

ceremonies in Amsterdam and Jakarta. Indonesia became a sovereign, independent nation.¹³⁰

Conclusion

The participation in the Good Offices Committee gave the United States an active role in the conflict in the East Indies. To protect the European interests, the United States supported the Netherlands until the Second Police Action. The Dutch stuck to their ideas of Dutch control over the area and wanted to keep the East Indies within their influence. They rejected any thought of leaving the area. Even when the Netherlands failed to maintain order, the United States refused to condemn the Dutch actions in public until after the second Police Action. In direct communications with the Netherlands, the US State Department tried to convince the Dutch to reach a settlement using the argument that it would be for all parties' best interest. It was the rigid Dutch attitude and the way the Republican leaders acted that changed the minds of the American representatives. The defeat of the communist uprising proved the capability of the Republic to become a non-communist state that could maintain internal order. However, the State Department hesitated to take firm action against the Dutch until after the second police action. When the Dutch refused to comply with United Nations Security Council resolutions, the United States felt compelled to act. When members of Congress also linked the Dutch actions in the East Indies to the Atlantic Pact and Marshall Aid in Europe, the new Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, took action. Acheson finally made the clear statement to the Dutch that the United States considered to stop economic aid if the Dutch failed to

¹³⁰McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 303.

reach a settlement. The Dutch faced a deteriorating situation in the East Indies with an ongoing guerilla war that led to more casualties than during the police actions and a huge loss of reputation in the international environment. Although the Dutch thought they could handle these issues over time, the American threat delivered by Acheson forced them to comply and reach a settlement. Once the negotiation started, there was little American influence besides Cochran's personal interventions to come up with solutions. The North Atlantic Treaty was an important issue for the United States and it considered the Netherlands an important ally in Europe that would be a member of NATO. When members of Congress stated that the United States should not be associated with a nation that refuses freedom for the Indonesian people and defies United Nations resolutions, the Dutch policy affected the American policy for European security. If the United States would not allow the Netherlands to be a part of NATO, it could have weakened the alliance. The agreement of the Netherlands to start negotiations satisfied Congress as the opponents of the Dutch policy insisted on a settlement. The Round Table Conference released the pressure on the Marshall Aid and the North Atlantic Treaty since Congress would no longer oppose a connection between the Netherlands and the United States. The Netherlands could be a member of NATO and therefore, the Round Table Conference supported the American interests in Europe. The next chapter will analyze the reasons for the American involvement in the East Indies and the political interventions.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS

Introduction

In 1949, the Dutch government finally complied with the urgings of the United States to reach a settlement in the East Indies. The United States had been involved in the conflict since 1945 and played a major part during the negotiations when it chaired the Good Offices Committee. Several American officials, like Secretary of State Marshall and Undersecretary Lovett, had put pressure on the Dutch to end the conflict but it was Secretary of State Dean Acheson who finally told the Dutch that economic aid would be threatened if they could not reach a settlement with the Republic.

American Interests in the East Indies.

As described in the second chapter, the United States did not have major interests in the East Indies in the beginning of the twentieth century. It recognized that there were oil and rubber resources but also accepted Dutch rule over the area. Although American investments in the East Indies increased after World War I, the area was not a major concern for the United States. In the 1930s, colonial possessions became an issue for President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In 1933, he expressed his horror at the living conditions of colonized people in Asia and Africa.¹ However, the Japanese attack at Manchuria caused concern in the United States about the security in the region.² The rise of Japanese power in the Asia moderated the American concern about living conditions within the

¹Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 88.

²Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 54.

colonies. In the late 1930s, the American embassy sent several reports regarding Indonesian nationalism to the State Department. The American consul in Batavia, Kenneth Patton, reported that Indonesian nationalists denounced the Japanese attack on Manchuria as an imperialist action that violated the right of self-determination. However, Patton also reported that the rise of Asian power might trigger Indonesian action against the Dutch government.³ When the Dutch took action against Indonesian nationalists and banished several leaders in the 1930s, the new American consul, Walter Foote, warned that these actions might increase resistance against the Dutch. However, American officials were more concerned about the situation in French Indo China. The Dutch treated their prisoners humanely, but the French took a more violent approach and killed many nationalists, which attracted more attention.⁴ The United States showed its interest in colonial issues but did not directly try to influence the Dutch government to change the situation.

Any focus on colonial issues changed due to the Japanese attack on the East Indies in 1942. During the war, President Roosevelt still emphasized the right of self-determination, but Queen Wilhelmina's "7 December speech" in which she promised changes in colonial policy satisfied him.⁵ American policy during the Japanese occupation of the East Indies focused on denying any enemy the access to available natural resources. When the war ended, the priority American interest in the East Indies was to have a friendly party controlling the area and its resources to deny these to any

³Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 90.

⁴*Ibid.*, 92-93.

⁵Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 67.

enemy. The right of self-determination was important American policy but it had to make space for security issues as it did during the rise of Japanese power.

American Interests in the Region

The United States was involved in several areas in South East Asia. The most important ones were the Philippines, the East Indies, and French Indo China. Before World War II, the Philippines presented a major American interest in the region. The Philippines were a financial drain for the United States and President Theodore Roosevelt mentioned independence for the Philippines in his State of the Union in 1908.⁶ The American recognition of primary Dutch access to the natural resources in the East Indies and the lack of resources in the Philippines made the region less economically important. The Americans focused their interests in the region on security, especially with the rise of the Japanese Empire.

After World War II, the United States was aware of the economic and strategic importance of South East Asia.⁷ Although the United States did not have any direct economic plans for the region in 1945, it had two concerns. First, the Philippines, the East Indies and Indo China occupied a strategic position in the region. Second, the right of self-determination of people remained important for the Americans. The Philippines became independent in 1946 and the Americans were critical of the French reassertion of its colonial presence in Indo China. However, after the proclamation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the United States feared a linkage between the communists in

⁶Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 71.

⁷Ronald McGlothlen, *Controlling the Waves* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993), 163.

China and Ho Chi Minh's movement in Indo China.⁸ Concerned about the security in the region, the Americans supported the French backed government in Indo China.

The United States' interests in South East Asia were based on stability and security in the region and friendly control over natural resources. It used economic assistance to develop and stabilize countries like Thailand, Pakistan, Burma, and India.⁹

American Interests in Europe.

The main effort of the United States after World War II was the recovery of Europe. Most countries in Europe were in ruins and the United States put much effort in rebuilding European security and economy. In June 1947, Secretary of State Marshall proposed an extensive aid program for Europe, the European Recovery Program (ERP).¹⁰ The ERP became known as the Marshall Plan. The plan included shipments of goods from the United States to Europe, as well as financial aid to help rebuild industry. In total, the United States contributed \$13,015,000,000 to European recovery.¹¹

With Eastern Europe under control of the Soviet Union, the United States wanted to support Western Europe. In 1948, American policy towards Europe had two pillars. One was to rebuild American forces and the second pillar was military support to European countries. This support included provision of arms and a guarantee of

⁸William Hitchcock, *France Restored* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 116-117.

⁹McGlothlen, *Controlling the Waves*, 164.

¹⁰Theodore Wilson, *The Marshall Plan* (New York: Foreign Policy Association Inc., 1977), 5.

¹¹Charles Mee, *The Marshall Plan, The Launching of the Pax Americana* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 258.

American aid in case of any attack.¹² In 1949, the United States and several European countries, including the Netherlands, signed the North Atlantic Treaty, which started NATO. A part of the North Atlantic Treaty included the Military Assistance Program that supported NATO members with funding and American military equipment. In that way, the North Atlantic Treaty continued aspects of the Marshall Plan.¹³

After World War II, the United States invested a large amount of money and resources in the recovery of Europe. The amount only clarifies the American interests in European economy and security. Furthermore, the guarantee of American military support in case of any attack emphasizes the involvement of the United States in European matters. The formation of NATO was an important step for European security as it united its members for a possible attack from the Warsaw Pact. For the United States, NATO helped to contain the rise of communism in Europe.

The Rise of Communism

After World War II, the Soviet Union controlled the eastern part of Europe. Its intentions were not entirely clear but in 1948 there were many indications of an increasing rigidity in the Soviet attitude, an insistence on the fundamental hostility between the capitalist world and the Soviet Union.¹⁴ The Soviet Union posed a direct threat to Western Europe and the United States supported its European allies. Although

¹²John Campbell, *The United States in World Affairs 1948-1949* (New York: American Book-Stratford Press, Inc, 1949), 7-10.

¹³Mee, *The Marshall Plan, The Launching of the Pax Americana*, 261.

¹⁴Campbell, *The United States in World Affairs 1948-1949*, 35.

there is no evidence of any Soviet plans to expand its influence to South East Asia, the United States feared that instability in the region could lead to chaos and the rise of communism.¹⁵

There were several communist parties active in the region and in 1948, India, Burma, and Singapore encountered communist uprisings. The Madiun affair confirmed communist activities in the East Indies and the United States was concerned that the Republic would become a communist state. Since the area had a strategic position and natural resources, it was of utmost importance to the United States that communist influenced would be limited.

American Visions of the Netherlands

The Netherlands had been an ally of the United States for a long time and both countries had close ties. After all, part of America was a Dutch colony until 1678 and the Netherlands was the first country that recognized the United States after the Declaration of Independence. During World War II, American troops liberated parts of the Netherlands and the United States regarded the Dutch as an important partner during the recovery of Europe. As part of the Marshall Plan, the United States allocated \$651,000,000 of aid to the Netherlands.¹⁶

Regarding the East Indies, the United States wanted friendly control over the area. President Roosevelt had expressed his concerns about self-determination of the

¹⁵Central Intelligence Agency, *Review of the World Situation, Secret report*, 16 September 1948. Harry S. Truman Presidential Library (HSTPL), President's Secretary's files, National Security Council Meetings File, Box 177.

¹⁶Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 196.

Indonesians but Queen Wilhelmina's "7 December speech" in 1942 satisfied him since the Queen promised significant changes in Dutch policy in the East Indies.¹⁷ When the conflict in the East Indies started in 1945, the State Department thought that the Dutch could not avoid any changes made in the "7 December speech" and that the East Indies would eventually be independent. The security of the area was a bigger concern to the State Department. According to reports from the CIA and the American embassy in Batavia, any chaos in the area could lead to a rise of communism. Dutch authority over the East Indies with more autonomy for the Indonesian people would meet the American policy in South East Asia: the area would be stable and eventually, the Indonesians would become independent. Therefore, the United States welcomed the agreements of Renville and Linggadjati as they promised stability and friendly control over the East Indies. It also meant that the relationship between the United States and the Netherlands would not be harmed.

In 1948, several incidents caused a change in American policy towards the Netherlands. Uprisings in South East Asia confirmed the rise of communism and its potential threat in the region. The Netherlands always emphasized the threat of communism and used the Madiun uprising to make a point to the international community about the importance of the restoration of Dutch rule. However, the Republic was able to deal with the uprising itself and proved two important facts to the outside world. First, the Republic was not a communist state and not intended to become one. Second, the Republic was capable of dealing with internal unrest and had enough potential to become a stable part of the international community. Another issue that

¹⁷Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 67-68.

influenced American policy towards the Netherlands was the Dutch failure in reaching a settlement with the Republic and restoring order in the East Indies. The police action in 1947 did not achieve the political objectives and the Republic did not give in to the Dutch demands. Violence increased in the East Indies and without restoration of order, the situation could lead to chaos throughout the archipelago. This would not be a favorable situation for the United States, as it wanted to prevent chaos in the region. When the Republic defeated the communist uprising, it eliminated the immediate threat of becoming a communist state. Because the Republican government proved itself to the United States, the US Government favored a settlement between the Republic and the Netherlands to end the violence. That way, the East Indies could become a non-communist and stable country.

The United States still considered the Netherlands an important ally in Europe so the best way to solve the crisis without harming European interests was to reach a settlement between the Dutch and the Republic. However, in April 1949 the State Department's Economic Division stated in a memorandum that the Dutch expenditures on the campaign in the East Indies almost equaled the Marshall Aid allocated to the Netherlands.¹⁸ After the second Dutch police action in December 1948, the United States had stopped the Marshall Aid allocated to the East Indies, a remaining \$11,200,000 of \$72,000,000 already allotted.¹⁹ The US State Department made this decision in coordination with the Economic Cooperation Administration, which coordinated the Marshall Plan, to force the Dutch to start negotiations again. Since it only involved a

¹⁸Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 196.

¹⁹Campbell, *The United States in World Affairs 1948-1949*, 318.

small, remaining, portion of the funds, it was merely a symbolic measure. However, the Dutch government realized that the Americans could decide to suspend funding for the Netherlands as well.²⁰ This measure could not stop the turmoil that erupted in Congress. On 22 January 1949, Secretary of State Dean Acheson mentioned the proposal of Senator Pepper to cut all aid to the Dutch and that this “should be watched closely”.²¹ In March 1949, the State Department prepared a report for the National Security Council (NSC-51). The NSC-51 report stated that the Dutch had “irrational and self-defeating demands and were guilty of continuing colonial policies.” The report also mentioned that the Republic was the “most virile expression” of nationalism and the “the American people had no inclination to underwrite this Dutch imperialism with Marshall Aid.” NSC-51 got a lot of support in Congress and the State Department realized that the Dutch actions in Indonesia directly threatened the Marshall Aid in Europe and the Military Assistance Program (MAP). With the MAP as a key component of the North Atlantic Treaty, the Dutch actions also threatened the formation of NATO.²²

Restoration and the security of Europe was still a priority in American foreign policy. The Dutch actions not only increased the possibility of chaos and eventual communism in the East Indies, they also threatened the security of Europe if Congress would not support the North Atlantic Treaty. This was a direct threat to the security of the United States as it saw NATO as an important alliance against the Soviet Union.

²⁰Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 298.

²¹Dean Acheson, *Memorandum of conversation, 22 January 1949*, HSTPL, Memoranda of Conversations File, 1949-1953, Box 65

²²McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 291.

Another issue that changed American policy towards the Netherlands was the Dutch defiance of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions. Although the Dutch stalled negotiations with the United Nations, they simply refused to comply with the Security Council's demands to restore the Republican government. The United Nations, formed in 1945, was still a young organization and the Dutch refusal to comply with the resolutions threatened its credibility. The United States backed the resolutions and President Harry Truman supported the United Nations and the American role in the affairs of this organization. In December 1949, President Truman stated his support to the United Nations in a letter to H. Merle Cochran in which the President thanked him for his service and his help in increasing the respect for the United Nations.²³

In March 1949, Dutch actions to defeat the Republic by military means threatened Marshall Aid and the formation of NATO in Europe, increased instability and the possible rise of communism in the East Indies and threatened the credibility of the United Nations. These actions influenced the security of the United States as it considered NATO essential to contain communism in Europe. This could weaken the position of the United States in this early stage of the Cold War and forced Secretary of State Dean Acheson to act. After several attempts to mediate and putting political pressure on the Dutch, Acheson finally threatened the Dutch to stop the Marshall Aid. The Dutch government agreed to a cease-fire and further negotiations so the United States did not have to fulfill its threats.

²³Harry S. Truman. *Letter to H. Merle Cochran, 28 December 1949*. HSTPL, President's Secretary's Files, Foreign Affairs File, 1940-1953, Box 157

Relations between the United States and the Netherlands did not suffer from the American political intervention. In 1950, the United States believed that the Dutch opinion could be slightly hostile in some quarters as “hostile propaganda” might convinced some of the Dutch people of American business interests in Indonesia. Some of the army veterans blamed the United States for the Dutch withdrawal and their “fruitless” deployment to the East Indies. A few socialist parties used some propaganda to blame the loss of the colony on the Americans. However, the State Department believed that the successful conclusion of the Round Table Conference led to a more positive attitude towards the United States. The Netherlands was still an important partner in Europe and the rise of the Soviet Empire convinced the Dutch of the importance of a good relationship.²⁴ In 1950, a Dutch infantry battalion fought as a part of the US Army Second Infantry Division in Korea. That unit consisted of numerous veterans from the East Indies and there was no animosity towards the United States.²⁵

Reasons for American Involvement.

The reasons for the United States to get involved went through several stages during the conflict. In 1945, the United States wanted friendly control over the area, as it did before World War II. The right of self-determination was important but the United

²⁴Gleason, S. Everett. *Foreign Relations of the United States 1950, Volume III*. Washington: The Government printing office, 1977. 1523-1529

²⁵Dutch veterans that returned from the East Indies had fought there for four years and some of them participated in World War II as well. After nine years of war, many veterans had problems adjusting to peacetime conditions and the first rotation for the battalion that went to Korea had four times as many volunteers as they could deploy. The US Army was impressed by the combat experience of the Dutch and no veteran ever mentions problems with American soldier due to the Indonesian conflict.

States was convinced the Dutch would change the status of the Indonesian people as the Queen had promised in her “7 December speech.” At the beginning of the conflict in August 1945, the United States had no reason to get involved in the conflict. That changed in 1946 as it became clear that the Dutch had no intentions to accept the Republic and insisted on keeping Dutch authority over the East Indies. The situation in the East Indies was violent but there were no signs yet that the archipelago would turn into chaos. The United States put pressure on the Dutch government to settle the situation and fulfill the promises the Queen had made in 1942. At this time, the right of self-determination was an important issue for the United States. The Truman Doctrine, declared in 1947, clearly pledged that the United States would support people that fought for their freedom. When the conflict turned more violent and the Netherlands were unable to restore order, the danger of a chaotic situation increased. The most important reason for the United States to lead the GOC was to avoid a chaotic situation in the East Indies and to prepare eventual independence for Indonesia. When the conflict continued and the threat of communism increased, stability and non-communist control became the American priority. With the Netherlands not capable to restore order, Dutch presence only increased the possibility of a communist Indonesia as described in the fourth chapter. By 1948, the State Department did not mention the right of self-determination of the Indonesian people as its goal but the stability of the Republic as a democratic state.²⁶ This stability would include the independence of Indonesia but it would also prevent Indonesia from becoming a communist state as the Republic had proved itself as being non-communist. A democratic Republic supported the American interests in Asia.

²⁶Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 311.

After the second police action in 1948, the Dutch actions and defiance of the United Nations threatened American interests in both Asia and Europe. With European security as the American top priority, this was the main reason for the United States to intervene in the conflict by threatening the Dutch to stop the Marshall Aid.

During the whole conflict, the right of self-determination of the Indonesian people was important to the United States. However, the Dutch determination to restore its rule over the colony did not cause the United States to intervene in the conflict. It was the increase of possible chaos in the East Indies and the rise of communism that forced the United States to act. The danger to European security forced the Americans to act in a way the State Department had wanted to prevent since the beginning of the conflict.

Conclusion

Many factors influenced American policy towards the Netherlands. Dutch policy in the East Indies caused members of Congress to protest against a treaty that linked the United States to a country that withheld freedom for the Indonesian people. This threatened the North Atlantic Treaty and influenced European security. This threat to European security due to Dutch actions forced the United States to tell the Dutch that they would stop Marshall Aid. To really understand the reasons for the American involvement other scenarios must be contemplated. What would have happened if the Dutch had not complied after Dean Acheson told the Dutch that the United States would stop Marshall Aid? There is no evidence that the United States would actually go as far as to cut all aid to the Netherlands. All internal communication of the United States stated that every sanction towards the Netherlands should be watched closely. Would the Netherlands still sign the North Atlantic Treaty if they would be cut off from Marshall

Aid? What would the impact be on the rest of Europe if the Netherlands would not be a member of NATO? It is unclear what the results would be if the Dutch had not agreed on a cease-fire and further negotiations. It is a fact that European security and the formation of NATO was America's top priority in 1949. A successful formation of NATO was more important to the US government than any sanctions against the Dutch. Secretaries of State Marshall and Acheson were careful with applying sanctions because the possible effects on the relationship with the Netherlands and possible reactions of other European countries. If sanctions against the Dutch would have driven a wedge between European countries, the United States would not have stopped the Marshall Aid for the Netherlands.

Another interesting aspect is the possible Dutch restoration of power. What would the United States policy have been if the Dutch had managed to restore authority in 1946? The Netherlands might have given up the colony eventually, but probably not by 1949. Would the independence of the Indonesian people be important enough for the United States to get involved in the matter and put pressure on the Dutch? It is unlikely that American involvement would be as much as it was during the actual conflict. After all, if the Dutch managed to restore order, colonial matters would be an internal Dutch issue and the East Indies would be under friendly control. The rise of communism would also play an important part. The situation in French Indo China turned out differently from the situation in the East Indies. President Roosevelt had condemned the French colonial policy in Indo China throughout the 1930s and 1940s.²⁷ However, when the Soviet Union recognized Ho Chi Minh's movement on 30 January 1950, the United

²⁷Gouda, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies / Indonesia*, 18.

States considered immediate military support to French forces in Indo China.²⁸

Countering communism was more important than the independence of the people of Indo China. Eventually, this situation led to the Vietnam War. Would the United States have supported the Dutch troops if the communist uprising in Madiun had succeeded or the Republic had turned to communism? It is most likely that if there had been a significant communist presence in the East Indies, the United States would have rather supported the Dutch then put pressure on them. America's fear of communism in the 1950's might even have led to a heavy American military presence in the East Indies. There is no proof of American plans for any military intervention but the Korean War in 1950 is an example of the determination of the United States to contain communism. The support of the United States to the French in Indo China is another example of the American effort to contain communism in Asia.

The involvement of key players indicated the interests of the parties during the several stages of the conflict. On the side of the United States, Undersecretary of State Robert Lovett was involved in most of the discussions with the Dutch government. During his visit in September 1948, Dutch Foreign Minister Stikker was dissatisfied that Secretary of State Marshall let Lovett lead the majority of the talks.²⁹ Marshall was only involved in some of the discussions about American policy towards the East Indies while Lovett was the counterpart for the Dutch during meetings. When Dean Acheson became the Secretary of State in 1949, he talked with Minister Stikker and mentioned that the Dutch could not expect the Marshall Aid to continue if there would be no solution for the

²⁸Hitchcock, *France Restored*, 117.

²⁹Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indie*, 312

conflict in the East Indies. This may have been a difference in personality between Acheson and Marshall but it also indicated the importance of the matter to the State Department since at this stage the actions of the Dutch threatened American interests in Europe.

President Truman got involved in some of the issues during the conflict. Both Marshall and Acheson informed the president about the situation and President Truman provided guidance in some of the cases. Most of the time the President was careful in his actions. In June 1947, President Truman was reluctant to join the United Kingdom to form a Good Offices Committee and preferred direct communication with the Dutch and the Republic.³⁰ Only when the Security Council was about to discuss the conflict did President Truman agree to offer the service of good offices.³¹ President Truman got frequent updates from the State Department and on 20 December 1948 Undersecretary Lovett met with the President regarding the offensive of the Dutch in the East Indies. The President emphasized that the United States should wait to label the Dutch action until full factual reporting was available. He also mentioned that the United States should avoid taking any premature action in the United Nations Security Council. The President did not want the government to “place the United States in positions which it would be unable to maintain, wither through the defection of our allies or because of the

³⁰Memorandum by Marshall, 16 June 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1972), 948.

³¹Memorandum of conversation by Lovett, 31 July 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1972), 1002.

inadequacy of its own facilities.”³² This meant that he was very careful and did not want to put the United States in a position they could not sustain and that might cause damage to its reputation. Although President Truman was not much involved in the conflict in the East Indies, it is possible to analyze his policy. The President was weary of putting the United States in a position it could not hold and eventually had to give up. In 1947, he did not want to join the United Kingdom in the GOC because the British wanted a more firm posture towards the Dutch. Keeping American allies close was an important issue for him. Although the President announced the Truman Doctrine on 12 March 1947, he never mentioned the self-determination of the Indonesian people in his guidance towards the State Department. In his letter to H. Merle Cochran, President Truman did not thank him for the independence of the Indonesian people, but for the credibility of the United Nations.³³ Even in the statement the President sent to the Indonesian people on 28 December 1949, he welcomed the new sovereign country into the international community and did not mention the right of self-determination. The President stated that both the Netherlands and Indonesia contributed to the development of the United Nations and that he looked forward to Indonesian membership of the UN.³⁴ The credibility of the United States, the development of the United Nations, and the relationships with allies were the top priorities for President Truman during the conflict in the East Indies.

³²Memorandum of Conversation by Lovett, 20 December 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948 Volume VI*, Edited by Everett Gleason (Washington: Government printing office, 1976), 587.

³³Harry S. Truman. Letter to H. Merle Cochran, 28 December 1949. HSTPL, President’s Secretary’s Files, Foreign Affairs File, 1940-1953, Box 157.

³⁴Harry S. Truman. Statement to the people of Indonesia, 28 December 1949. HSTPL, President’s Secretary’s Files, Foreign Affairs File, 1940-1953, Box 157

Scenarios that describe a different outcome of events and the involvement of key players clarify American interests in both Europe and Asia. The most important issue for the United States during the conflict in the East Indies was to stop the spread of communism in the world. In 1948, the Republic proved to be the best option in the East Indies to stop communism in the East Indies. Therefore, the Dutch had to reach a settlement that would restore order and set conditions for the Republic to become a stable non-communist state. In Europe, NATO would be an important alliance to counter a possible Soviet threat to Europe. Any threat to the signature of the North Atlantic Treaty would endanger the security of Europe and therefore the Netherlands had to stop being a point of discussion in Congress. That way, Congress would support the North Atlantic Treaty and NATO would form a block against the Soviet Union. Overall, the start of the Cold War led to the American political intervention in the East Indies.

APPENDIX A

MAPS

Title: Map of Indonesia

Source: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/indonesia.gif

Title: Map of Java

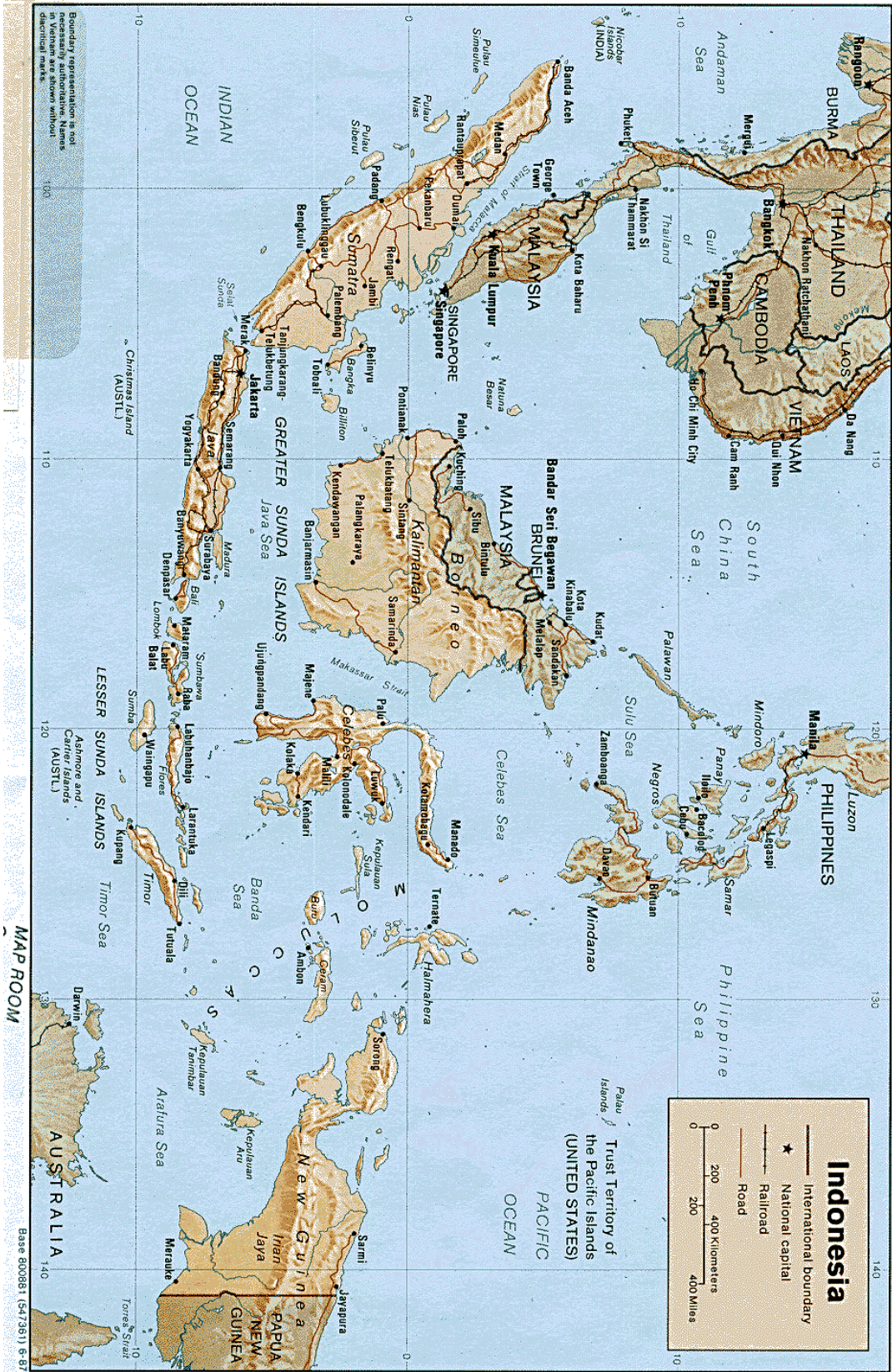
Source: Petra Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950* (Den Haag: SDU uitgeverij, 1991). Map is property of National Institute for Military History

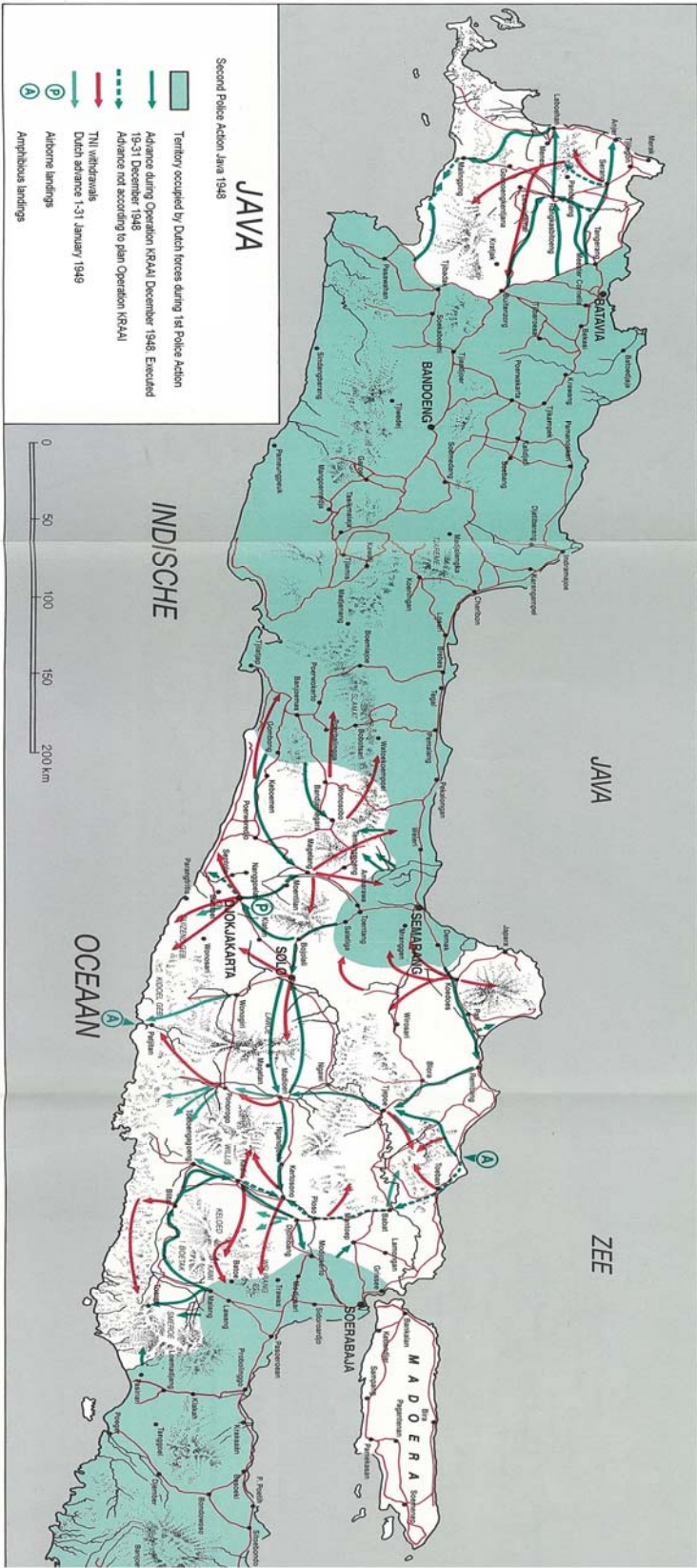
Title: Map of South Sumatra

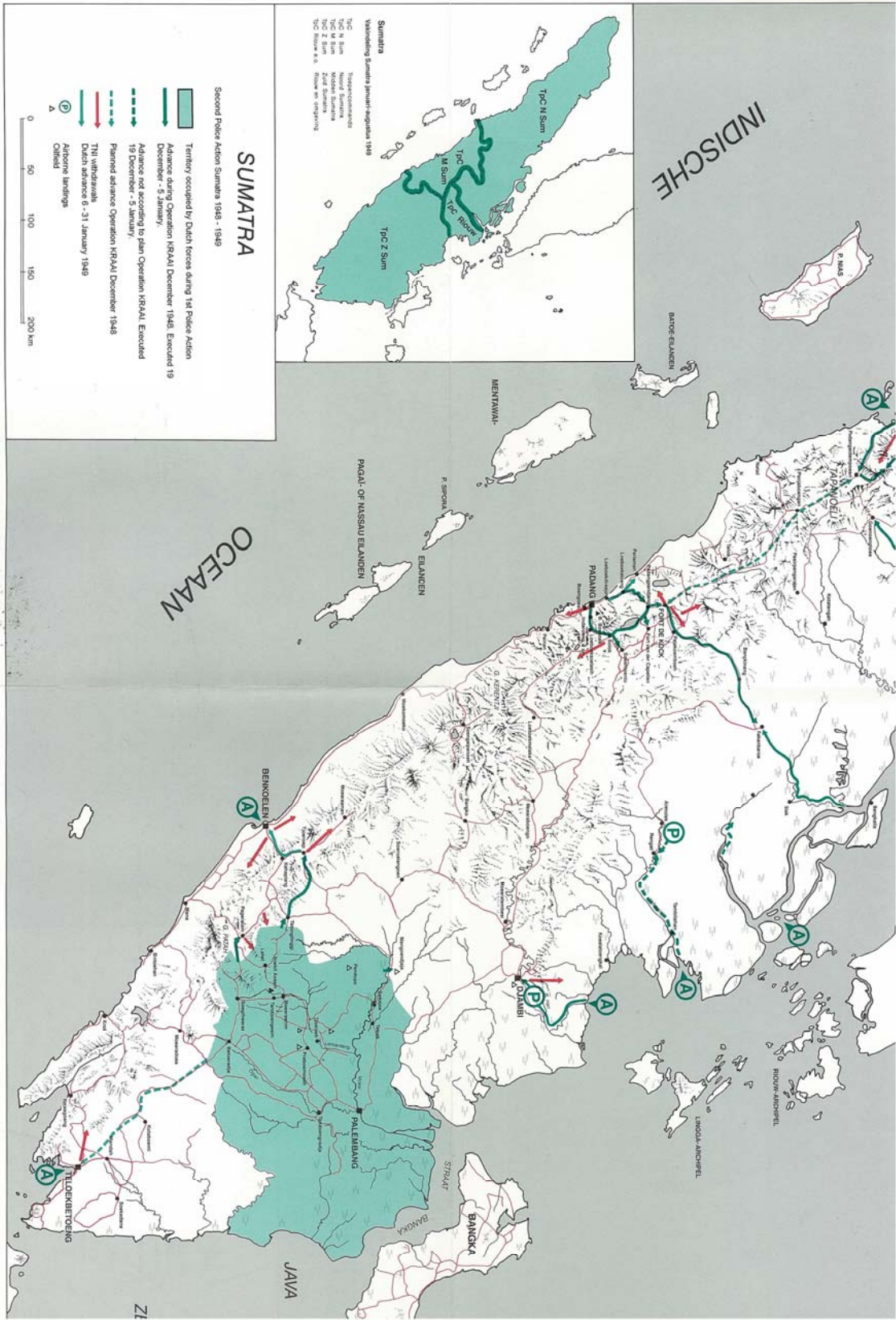
Source: Petra Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950* (Den Haag: SDU uitgeverij, 1991). Map is property of National Institute for Military History

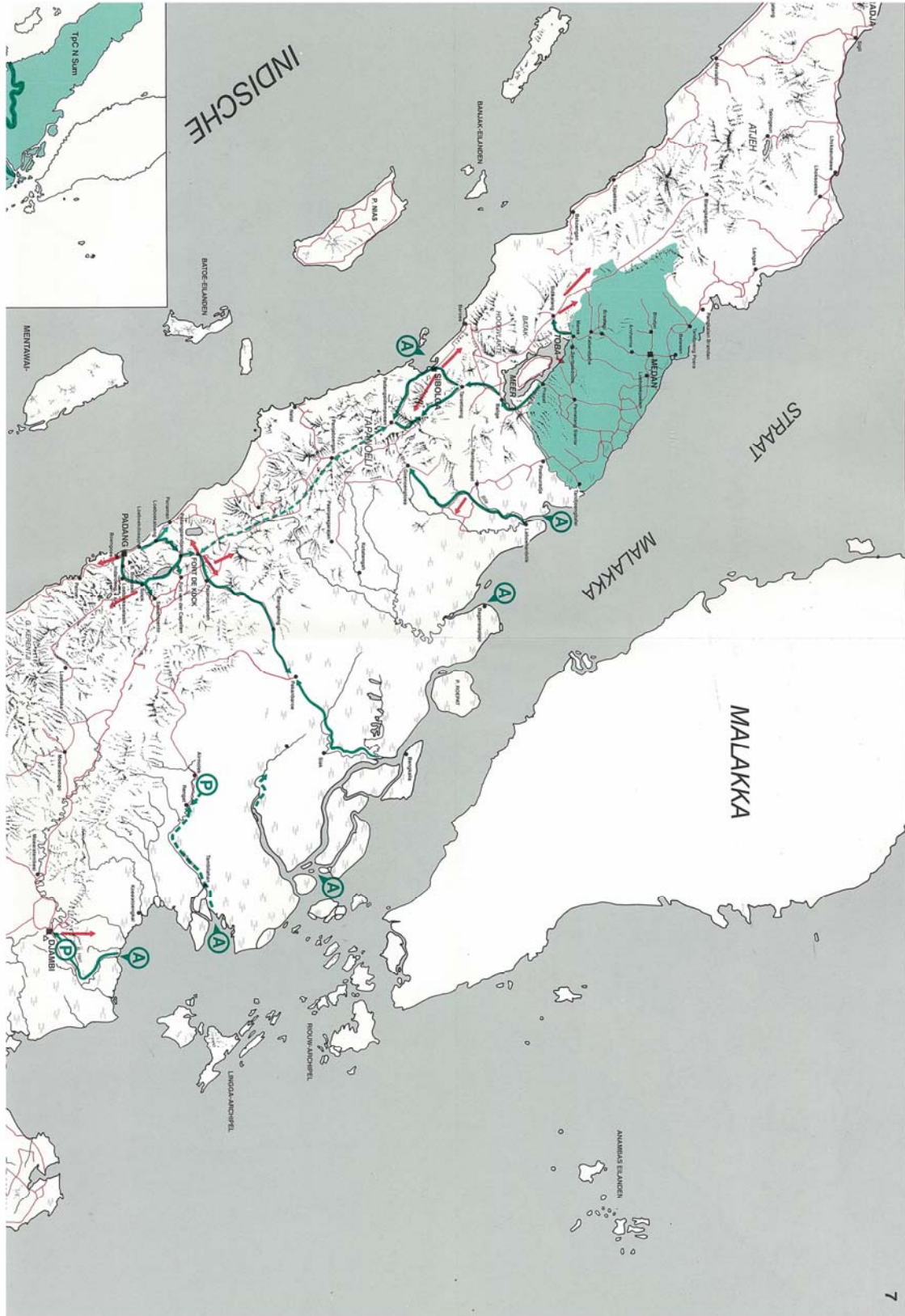
Title: Map of North Sumatra

Source: Petra Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair strategisch beleid in Indonesie 1945-1950* (Den Haag: SDU uitgeverij, 1991). Map is property of National Institute for Military History









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