

WILLIAM J. RUST

THE MASK of
NEUTRALITY

THE UNITED STATES AND
DECOLONIZATION IN
INDONESIA

1942–1950

Praise for

The Mask of Neutrality: The United States and

Decolonization in Indonesia, 1942–1950

“William Rust once again reminds us that we can find no better guide to the labyrinthine origins of America’s tragic entanglements in Southeast Asia. Deeply researched in a broad spectrum of archives and uncovering a range of hitherto little known or even unknown intelligence activities, *The Mask of Neutrality* explores the twists and turns of the US posture toward the decolonization of Indonesia with insight, nuance, and historical sensibility. A sobering account, it will remain the go-to history for years to come.”

— Richard Immerman, Temple University

“William Rust likes to say he prefers origin stories. *The Mask of Neutrality* is just that—for the nation of Indonesia, emerging from its centuries as a Dutch colony. In a history eerily similar to that of Vietnam—and, where the author shows us, Dean Rusk had a ringside seat and ought to have learned the lessons—nationalists have gained the heart of the nation, but Dutch colonialists negotiate insincerely, then fight, to change that. Rust delivers a deep tale of World War II anxieties, inter-allied intrigues, American doubts and internal squabbles, CIA machinations. Its predecessor agency, the OSS, even resorts to kidnapping in order to recruit agents. This is a splendid account, a detailed diplomatic history, and an eye-opening peek at a significant piece of history. Everyone interested in America’s role in the world should read *The Mask of Neutrality*.”

— John Prados, author of *Safe for Democracy: The Secret Wars of the CIA*

“William Rust has done it again. *The Mask of Neutrality: The United States and Decolonization in Indonesia, 1942-1950*, is another tour de force about American intervention in Southeast Asia after World War II. As with his books about Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, Rust looks at the dynamic trends of dying colonialism, the emerging Cold War, and American efforts to influence events in the region through diplomacy, espionage, and military pressure. His look at the efforts of CIA and its predecessor agencies to field an intelligence service with eyes and ears on the ground is especially revealing.”

— John Nixon, author of *Debriefing the President: The Interrogation of Saddam Hussein*

THE MASK OF NEUTRALITY

The United States and Decolonization in Indonesia, 1942–1950

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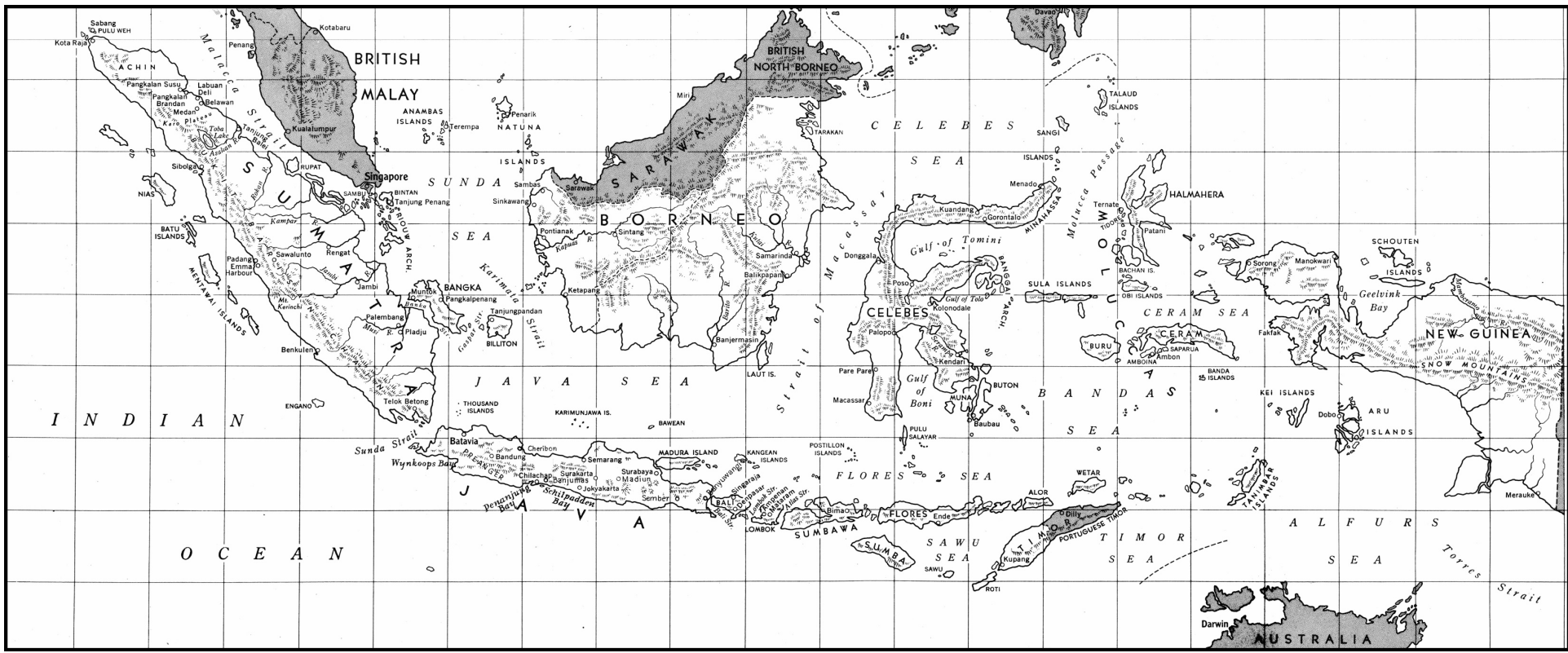
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Map of Indonesia produced by the Netherlands Information Bureau during World War II. (National Archives and Record Administration)

Abbreviations

ABDACOM	American, British, Dutch, and Australian Command
AIB	Allied Intelligence Bureau
ANETA	<i>Algemeen Nieuws en Telegraaf Agentschap</i> (General News and Telegraph Agency)
APRA	<i>Angkatan Perang Ratu Adil</i> (Armed Forces of the Righteous Ruler)
APRI	<i>Angkatan Perang Republik Indonesia</i> (Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia)
APRIS	<i>Angkatan Perang Republik Indonesia Serikat</i> (Armed Forces of the Republic of the United States of Indonesia)
CBI	China-Burma-India Theater
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIG	Central Intelligence Group
CMI	Central Military Intelligence
COI	Office of the Coordinator of Information
DCI	Director of Central Intelligence
ECA	Economic Cooperation Administration
ERP	European Recovery Program
FE 22	Far East No. 22
FO	Foreign Office
GOC	Good Offices Committee
HRC	High Representative of the Crown

IBT	India-Burma Theater
IRIS	Interim Research Intelligence Service
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
KNIL	<i>Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger</i> (Royal Netherlands East Indies Army)
KNIP	<i>Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat</i> (Central Indonesian National Committee)
KVP	<i>Katholieke Volkspartij</i> (Catholic People's Party)
MDAP	Mutual Defense Assistance Program
MO	Morale Operations
MSA	Mutual Security Act
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEFIS	Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service
NEI	Netherlands East Indies
NIA	National Intelligence Authority
NICA	Netherlands Indies Civil Administration
NII	<i>Negara Islam Indonesia</i> (Islamic State of Indonesia)
NSC	National Security Council
OIR	Office of Intelligence Research
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
OWI	Office of War Information
PETA	<i>Pembela Tanah Air</i> (Defenders of the Homeland)
PKI	<i>Partai Komunis Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Communist Party)
PNI	<i>Partai Nasional Indonesia</i> (Indonesian National Party)
POW	Prisoner of War

PPKI	<i>Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia</i> (Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence)
PRC	People's Republic of China
PvdA	<i>Partij van de Arbeid</i> (Labor Party)
R&A	Research and Analysis
RAPWI	Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees
RI	<i>Republik Indonesia</i> (Republic of Indonesia)
RIS	<i>Republik Indonesia Serikat</i> (Republic of the United States of Indonesia)
RMS	<i>Republik Maluku Selatan</i> (Republic of the South Moluccas)
RTC	Roundtable Conference
SC	Security Council
SEAC	Southeast Asia Command
SI	Secret Intelligence
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service (MI6)
SO	Special Operations
SSU	Strategic Services Unit
SWPA	Southwest Pacific Area
TNI	<i>Tentara Nasional Indonesia</i> (Indonesian National Army)
UNCI	United Nations Commission for Indonesia
UP	United Press
USI	United States of Indonesia
USIS	US Information Service
VVD	<i>Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie</i> (People's Party for Freedom and

Democracy)

X-2 Counterintelligence

Additional Abbreviations Used in Notes

BDFA *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print, Part IV, from 1946 through 1950, Series E, Asia*

CDBP Coert du Bois Papers

CDF Central Decimal File

DAP Dean Acheson Papers

DCER *Documents on Canadian External Relations*

EIE *Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*

FAOHC Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection

FDRL Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

FPGP Frank Porter Graham Papers

FOIA Freedom of Information Act

FRUS *Foreign Relations of the United States*

HD *Historical Documents*

HSTL Harry S. Truman Library

HSTOHP Harry S. Truman Oral History Program

MRP Map Room Papers

NAA National Archives of Australia

NARA National Archives and Record Administration

NAPF	Naval Aide to the President Files
ORE	Office of Reports and Estimates
PSF	The President's Secretary's File
RG	Record Group (at NARA)

Introduction

We Bow to Coercion

The US embassy in The Hague, the seat of the Netherlands government, transmitted a disturbing top-secret message to the State Department on May 16, 1949: Foreign Minister Dirk U. Stikker had denounced American diplomacy and diplomats to the foreign editor of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Irving P. Pflaum. In his summary of the interview for the embassy, Pflaum boiled down Stikker's thirty-minute diatribe to a single sentence: "Everything is lost in Indonesia and [the] US [is] to blame."¹

Stikker, according to Pflaum, said that Secretary of State Dean Acheson had threatened to cut off US economic assistance to the Netherlands if the Dutch did not comply with UN Security Council resolutions aimed at ending their nearly four-year conflict with the revolutionary Republic of Indonesia. The Dutch cabinet's initial response to Acheson's warning, the foreign minister claimed, was a refusal to sign the pact establishing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the acceptance of a "shut-off" of American economic aid. But after further deliberation, the cabinet "ordered Stikker [to] submit [to the] Secretary of State[']s terms and sign [the] treaty."²

The Netherlands ministers, Pflaum reported, had concluded that the loss of US aid "would cause [an] economic collapse at home with strikes and unemployment within six months." Stikker's remarks to the journalist included bitter personal attacks against US officials in Indonesia—one was a "fellow traveler," another was a "drunkard," and another was "able" but unduly influenced by "Republican hospitality." These Americans, said Stikker, had "given incorrect information and bad advice" to Acheson and his predecessor, George C. Marshall.

Using “false reports from the field,” the State Department had “manipulated US public opinion,” creating “strong popular support” for Indonesian nationalists and “substantial anti-Dutch sentiment.”³

In Washington, State Department officials were alarmed and perplexed by the anti-American comments from Stikker, who had seemed friendly to the United States and relatively moderate when discussing Indonesia. Only a week before, Stikker expressed “deep appreciation” to Acheson for acknowledging his contribution to a Dutch-Republican agreement reached in Batavia, the city known today as Jakarta. After years of fruitless negotiations, the talks assisted by the United Nations Commission for Indonesia (UNCI) appeared to be moving toward a peaceful transfer of sovereignty to the Indonesians by the end of 1949. Seeking an explanation for Stikker’s “incredible *volte-face*,” the State Department “urgently” requested more information from the embassy in The Hague: How credible was Pflaum? What were Stikker’s motives for such comments? Were they personal opinions or the views of the Netherlands government?⁴

Herman B. Baruch, the American ambassador in The Hague, replied that his press attaché considered Pflaum a reliable reporter but suggested that the department was in a “better position [to] ascertain his credibility.”⁵ A graduate of the University of Chicago and a lawyer, Pflaum had edited a newspaper on the Mediterranean island of Majorca and covered the Spanish civil war for United Press in the 1930s. During World War II, he joined the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI), the intelligence and propaganda agency that preceded the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). In London, he worked with the BBC and the covert British Psychological Warfare Executive on projects aimed at undermining German morale. He left OSS to teach at Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism and pursued a successful postwar career

as a foreign correspondent for the *Chicago Times* and the *Chicago Sun-Times*. In short, Pflaum was an experienced journalist with intelligence connections.

Baruch and his embassy colleagues were “frankly puzzled at Stikker’s apparent readiness to risk antagonizing [the] US Government and jeopardizing US aid” to the Netherlands. H. R. van Houten, a Dutch diplomat who had served in the embassy in Washington during the war and who had arranged the interview with Pflaum, told an American official that he deplored Stikker’s “bull in [a] china shop” remarks. When asked why the foreign minister had made such statements, van Houten replied that it was the “emotional outburst of an honest direct sincere man.” Queried further, he said most Dutch agreed with Stikker that the Netherlands had “given in” to the Republic under pressure from the United States.⁶

US and Dutch officials urged Pflaum to tone down his explosive story. Ambassador Baruch, insisting that Stikker’s “unusual and sensational” remarks were out of character, told the journalist he should submit a transcript of his interview to the foreign minister for approval and seek official permission for publication. Pflaum refused. Van Houten asked him to “go easy” on Stikker and not quote him directly because much of the conversation was not-for-attribution background information.⁷

The US and Dutch appeals appear to have had an effect on Pflaum’s reporting. The article printed in the *Chicago Sun-Times* was a watered-down version of his interview. For example, there was no mention of Stikker’s belief that all was lost in Indonesia and that the United States was responsible for it. His allegations of false reporting by US diplomats and State Department manipulation of American public opinion were essentially reduced to: “The United States, according to Dutch leaders, was badly misinformed from the start.” And although briefly discussing Stikker’s threat to withhold his signature from the NATO treaty, the article did not

refer to his talks with Acheson, the potential loss of economic aid, or the deliberations of the Dutch cabinet. Instead, Pflaum provided a cryptic quote from Stikker: “We bow to coercion. We bow but with a smile. What else could we do?”⁸

Despite the story’s neutered content, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement denying the accuracy of Pflaum’s reporting:

The picture which this journalist draws which in some respects contains a basis of truth is an incorrect reproduction of what the Minister said to this correspondent because of its over-simplified summarization of a complicated matter. What the correspondent also wrote concerning happenings in Washington before the signing of the Atlantic Pact can only be seen as a personal statement of the journalist’s speculations. The expressions in this regard ascribed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs were never made by the latter.⁹

An awkward aspect of the Dutch refutation was its premature release. Pflaum’s story about the United States, the Netherlands, and Indonesia was published on May 21. The Dutch foreign ministry, however, attacked it on May 19, the publication date of the first of a series of articles by Pflaum about European perspectives on economic and military affairs. His first story was a general overview that made no mention of Dutch-Indonesian relations, much less US “coercion.” A likely explanation for the Dutch public relations misstep was that Pflaum provided the US mission in The Hague with an advance copy of his second article and the initial publication date of the series. This information was then forwarded to, and conflated by, the foreign ministry.

To the relief of State Department officials, the “repercussions” from Pflaum’s article were minimal.¹⁰ US economic pressure on the Netherlands, however, was, in fact, key to compelling the Dutch government to change its policy in Indonesia. Acheson’s unambiguous threat of suspending Marshall Plan economic assistance, made to Stikker in Washington on March 31, 1949, and in subsequent meetings, was a response to the second Netherlands “police action” (a Dutch euphemism for large-scale military offensive), launched in December 1948, and to Netherlands defiance of the resulting UN Security Council resolutions. Combined with the unanticipated strength of Republican resistance and the unexpected intensity of international condemnation, the threat of US economic sanctions helped force the Netherlands to abandon its insistence on controlling the terms and timing of Indonesian independence.

The often-contentious asymmetrical power relationship between the United States and the Netherlands is a central focus of *The Mask of Neutrality: The United States and Decolonization in Indonesia, 1942–1950*. A deeply researched account of evolving US foreign relations before, during, and after the Indonesian revolution, the book examines three periods of American engagement with the archipelago and the forces battling for control there: (1) the World War II years, 1942–1945, when the US government’s rhetoric was more anticolonial than its policy; (2) the Indonesian revolution, 1945–1949, when the ostensible US policy of neutrality in the conflict initially leaned toward the Netherlands and then shifted against it; and (3) the first year of Indonesia’s internationally recognized independence, 1950, when the legacy of colonialism created internal security problems and when the United States began pressing the Indonesian government to take a more forthright anticommunist stand in the cold war. The book’s appendix, a chronology of US-Indonesian relations, 1951–1953, further develops key themes in a compact form through the end of the administration of President Harry S. Truman.

During the early months of the war in the Pacific, Japanese forces quickly conquered Indonesia, then known as the Netherlands East Indies (NEI). The Netherlands government-in-exile in London was alarmed by the anticolonial declarations of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and other US officials. Americans hostile to Dutch policy in the NEI were particularly conspicuous in OSS, the wartime intelligence and covert action agency. In the immediate postwar period, when there were more US spies than diplomats in the NEI, Dutch officials resented what they considered “American neutrality” in the burgeoning Indonesian revolution.¹¹

From 1946 until the middle of 1948, US policy tilted sharply in favor of the Netherlands, backing Dutch diplomacy and claims of sovereignty over a multiethnic archipelago of more than 13,000 islands spanning some 3,200 miles across the Pacific and Indian oceans. Although prioritizing European recovery and a cold war ally over Indonesian independence and noncommunist Asian nationalists, the United States opposed forceful measures by the Netherlands to reassert its control of the NEI, a source of wealth and prestige for the empire for more than three centuries.

The ambiguity of US policy was evident in the attenuated American response to the first Dutch military offensive in 1947. On the one hand, the United States agreed with a Dutch suggestion for limiting the Security Council’s inevitable intervention in the conflict. On the other hand, Under Secretary of State Robert A. Lovett warned the Netherlands that the United States would not defend the Dutch from UN sanctions if they continued attacks prohibited by the Security Council. Joseph Luns, then a diplomat engaged in Indonesian affairs and later a Dutch

foreign minister, said that Lovett's warning discouraged the Netherlands from "resuming military operations."¹²

Coert du Bois, the second US representative on the Good Offices Committee (GOC), established by the UN Security Council to encourage Dutch-Indonesian negotiations, personified the American diplomatic shift away from the Netherlands toward the Republic. An advocate for the Dutch when he arrived in Batavia, he grew disillusioned with their policies, negotiating tactics, and representatives. A journey through central Java with Sukarno, the charismatic president of the Republic, helped persuade du Bois of its mass appeal and political strength. Traveling with Sukarno, according to a trip report drafted by a US official and endorsed by du Bois, "removed whatever doubt one might have entertained as to the force the Republic represents."¹³

In June 1948, du Bois and Australian GOC delegate Thomas Critchley submitted a controversial proposal for a political settlement that was accepted by the Republic but rejected by the Netherlands. In Batavia, The Hague, and Washington, coordinated Dutch denunciations of the du Bois-Critchley paper led to the American's resignation from the GOC. Despite the furor created by the document, State Department officials found it useful and revised the proposal without informing the Netherlands. Dutch officials, who had been led to believe they were working with the department on an approach to resuming negotiations, felt betrayed when du Bois's successor, Merle H. Cochran, suddenly submitted a new, unilateral US proposal for a political settlement.

The Republic accepted the so-called Cochran plan as a basis for negotiations. The Netherlands, however, balked, objecting to both the substance of the paper and the deceptive manner of its presentation. By the end of October 1948, State Department officials were in

“general agreement” that the United States “should take a firm line with the Dutch” to gain their acceptance of the Cochran plan.¹⁴ A US aide-mémoire, delivered to Foreign Minister Stikker in The Hague and Ambassador Eelco N. van Kleffens in Washington on December 7, criticized the Dutch for submitting an alternative proposal “of wholly different design,” blamed them for the breakdown in negotiations with the Republic, and warned that a resumption of open warfare would “jeopardize continuation” of Marshall Plan assistance to the Netherlands.¹⁵

Stikker refused to accept the aide-mémoire because of its “tone and contents.” Ambassador van Kleffens suggested changes to the diplomatic note, which Under Secretary of State Lovett approved. State Department officials claimed that these changes, including the deletion of the reference to jeopardizing Marshall Plan aid, “did not alter the fundamental nature of the aide memoire.”¹⁶ The Dutch government accepted the revised document, but like the Cochran plan, the note failed to achieve the anticipated result of persuading the Netherlands to take a more compromising approach toward negotiations. Less than two weeks after receiving the aide-mémoire, the Dutch launched their second major military offensive.

Among the questions raised by the failure of US diplomacy to prevent the second Dutch military action is this: During the run-up to the offensive in the fall of 1948, would a more straightforward, forceful US threat of cutting off all economic aid to the Netherlands have changed the Dutch cabinet’s decision to attack the Republic? The Australian government, one of the severest critics of the Netherlands Indonesia policy, certainly thought so. On the first day of the offensive, John W. Burton, Australia’s secretary of External Affairs, told a US embassy representative in Canberra that he “could not understand [the] US failure to use” Marshall Plan aid as a “lever” with the Netherlands.¹⁷

Dutch sources, however, suggest that more explicit threats of US economic sanctions would have been counterproductive before the offensive. According to J. H. van Roijen, then the Dutch ambassador to Canada and the acting chief of the Netherlands UN delegation, the US aide-mémoire of December 1948 “consolidated the determination of the Dutch Cabinet to go ahead with [the] police action.” More direct warnings of US sanctions would likely have been even more offensive to the Netherlands cabinet, increasing its resolve to resist American coercion. Moreover, some Dutch officials were confident that their second military action would be a swift, successful campaign leading to the “complete liquidation of the Republic as a political entity.”¹⁸

On November 2, 1949, Dutch and Indonesian leaders agreed to an unconditional, irrevocable transfer of sovereignty by the end of the year. “In the end all parties had to concede much more than they had originally intended,” wrote British diplomat A. C. Stewart. Despite the inclusion of provisions disagreeable to both sides, there was shared recognition that an agreement ending the costly struggle was needed to avoid “complete chaos” in Indonesia.¹⁹

The transfer of sovereignty changed the role of US diplomacy in Indonesia. Merle Cochran’s task shifted from mediating a conflict under UN auspices to serving as the first American ambassador to a country whose leaders tended “to regard official U.S. professions of friendship and desire to help Indonesia as being at variance with the overall U.S. record in the past.”²⁰ Cochran was a more successful peacemaker during the colonial conflict than a diplomatic combatant in the cold war. Initially sensitive to Indonesia’s pursuit of an independent foreign policy and its desire to remain neutral in the global ideological struggle, Cochran began pushing the country’s leaders to take a stronger public stance against communism. Describing Chinese intervention in the Korean War as part of an “overall Soviet plan to control Asia,” the

ambassador told Sukarno: “Indonesia must be awake to and admit [the] danger of [the] Communist movement southward and formulate its policies accordingly.”²¹

As would be the case in two other Southeast Asian nations emerging from colonialism, Cambodia and Laos, US dissatisfaction with Indonesia’s cold war neutrality and its approach to dealing with the local communist threat would ultimately lead to a counterproductive covert attempt to overthrow an essentially pro-Western government.

Primarily a diplomatic history, this book has a secondary interest: US intelligence activities in Indonesia during World War II and through 1950. *The Mask of Neutrality* details OSS espionage operations in Sumatra, which had no bearing on the outcome of the Pacific war but did reflect a larger truth about the organization: OSS contributions to the allied victory in World War II were less significant than the experience American spies gained in tradecraft and operations. Richard M. Helms, an OSS operative in the European theater and the director of Central Intelligence from 1966 to 1973, thought that the impact of OSS on the outcome of the war “was probably minimal.” What OSS did do, he said, was provide an education in intelligence for many of the CIA’s first generation of officers and preparation for their postwar careers. Many OSS operators in Southeast Asia played significant roles in the agency and in Indonesia during the 1950s and 1960s. All OSS secret intelligence operations in Sumatra were “unsuccessful,” according to the organization’s official history. The details of these operations not only are an untold American espionage story but also provide evidence of the institutional self-promotion that contributed to what Helms called the “mythology” of OSS.²²

This book also examines the role of OSS and its immediate successor agency, the Strategic Services Unit (SSU), at the beginning of the Indonesian revolution. After World War II, the first Americans to contact Sukarno and other leaders of the Republic were intelligence officers not diplomats. Until the middle of 1946, pro-nationalist SSU officers and pro-Dutch Consul General Walter A. Foote provided Washington with sharply differing assessments of the forces at work in the NEI. SSU, transitioning from a temporary intelligence agency into CIA, provided reports that the State Department valued. Foote, however, did not appreciate competing political analyses from American intelligence officers. In 1946, a report to Washington from SSU's Southeast Asia headquarters declared: "Consulates everywhere, except in Batavia, are still giving our work an enthusiastic welcome."²³

The official records of OSS and SSU have undergone comprehensive declassification, providing rich details about their operations. The same cannot be said for their successor organizations, the Central Intelligence Group (CIG) and CIA, the latter established by the National Security Act of 1947. A complete understanding of CIA activities in Indonesia is precluded by the continued classification of records that the agency deems "operational" or that expose intelligence "sources and methods." Nonetheless, documents in the records of other government agencies and in private archives reveal at least a partial glimpse of CIA operations in Indonesia. In addition to discussing the espionage and reporting of the CIA station in Batavia, *The Mask of Neutrality* provides a detailed picture of the establishment and early days of a covert program to arm and train the Mobile Brigade of Indonesia's national police. One of the earliest CIA initiatives to train a Southeast Asian paramilitary unit, the Indonesian national police became a force that the agency described as "the backbone of anti-Communist security activity" in Indonesia.²⁴

A tertiary interest of this book is news reporting about Indonesia in the 1940s and the official use and misuse of public information. It is often easier to point out examples of English-language propaganda failures by the Netherlands than to identify specific successes of the United States. Yet there is little doubt that the US government waged an effective public information campaign that paralleled its diplomatic tilt away from the Netherlands in the second half of 1948. In October of that year, when the Dutch were resisting Cochran's plan for a political settlement, the diplomat declared to the State Department that the "American press could do its part" to make the Netherlands more reasonable. He recommended a long list of topics the department should promote, including the "idealistic struggle of Republican leaders for freedom," the Dutch "refusal" to even discuss the du Bois-Critchley proposal, and the Netherlands threat of military action while the "Republic exhausts its meager resources fighting Communists." A "sympathetic writer," wrote Cochran, could tell the story of Indonesians trying to educate their children "after 300 years of illiteracy under [the] Netherlands."²⁵

Secretary of State Marshall expressed interest in Cochran's suggestions, the classification of which was upgraded from secret to top secret.²⁶ State Department officials thought that their propaganda efforts were effective. In late 1949, after Indonesian and Dutch leaders agreed to the transfer of sovereignty, William S. B. Lacy discussed with a colleague the topic of working with reporters who would be "cooperative" in explaining "the true doctrine" of events in another troubled area of Southeast Asia: Indochina. Then the acting director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs, Lacy observed: "Selected members of the press have been well briefed over the past 18 months on Indonesian developments. This has paid off splendidly."²⁷

The Netherlands could also claim propaganda successes. Perhaps the most notable was a Dutch-sponsored visit to Indonesia by fifteen American journalists in June and July of 1949. Before arriving in Batavia, the reporters spent two days in the Netherlands, where they were briefed by Dutch officials. In Indonesia, the journalists were granted access to Dutch and Republican sources and were free to travel anywhere and speak with anyone. Willard A. Hanna, chief of the US Information Service (USIS) in Batavia, observed that the American journalists were “deeply impressed with the sincerity, the competence, the objectivity of the local Dutch authorities.”²⁸

The journalists spent three weeks in Indonesia, filing scores of published stories, most of which reflected the Dutch point of view. Influenced by the intensifying cold war and the impending “loss” of China, the American reporters were particularly susceptible to a talking point emphasized by their Dutch hosts: “The United States has underestimated the danger of communism in Indonesia and, consequently has not understood the true seriousness of the gamble which her own policy has been largely instrumental in imposing on Holland.” The overstated communist threat, however, did not acknowledge that the Republic had reduced the Indonesian Communist Party to a “barely tolerated sect.”²⁹ Tragically, thirteen of the fifteen reporters died in a plane crash on their return journey to the United States.

In sum, this book—like my earlier histories of the United States in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia—is an “origin story,” one that not only contextualizes the troubled US relations with Indonesia in the 1950s and 1960s, but also illuminates America’s disastrous engagement with Indochina. Fundamentally, all of my books have sought to explain why the United States went to

war in Vietnam, a country of no strategic value to America's national security. My previous research about policy formulation and execution in Southeast Asia was rooted in the notion that a meaningful understanding of the origins of the Second Indochina War required knowledge of US relations not only with Vietnam but also with Laos and Cambodia. The underlying concept for this book is that insight into America's fraught relations with Southeast Asian countries requires familiarity with the US response to decolonization in the 1940s.

The vacillating Indonesian policy described here was certainly less destructive than the US reaction to decolonization in Vietnam, which included diplomatic, financial, and military support for French forces until the end of the First Indochina War in 1954. Yet the differing US approaches to Vietnam and Indonesia in this period was a consequence of ideological rigidity rather than a discriminating understanding of either nation. Essentially, American policymakers applied a cold war litmus test to the revolutionary leaders of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Republic of Indonesia: Ho Chi Minh was a communist who should be defeated or, at the very least, contained in northern Vietnam; Sukarno was a noncommunist who received belated, conditional US support that depended on the strength of his commitment to "the free world." Misguided notions about the threat to US national security posed by "international" communism in Southeast Asia, combined with domestic politics and ignorance of the region's history, politics, and cultures, led the United States into war in Vietnam—a war that, in the words of historian George C. Herring, could not "have been won in any meaningful sense or at a moral or a material price Americans would—or should—have been willing to pay."³⁰

¹ Herman B. Baruch to State Dept., May 16, 1949, National Archives and Record Administration Record Group (hereafter RG) 59, Central Decimal File (CDF), 1945–1949, box 6441.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. The officials denounced by Stikker were the three successive US representatives on the UN Security Council's Good Offices Committee: Frank P. Graham ("fellow traveler"), Coert du Bois ("drunkard"), and Merle H. Cochran ("able" but unduly influenced by "Republican hospitality").

⁴ Baruch to State Dept., May 9, 1949, and State Dept. to Baruch, May 17, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6441.

⁵ Baruch to State Dept., May 18, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6441.

⁶ Ibid.; Baruch to State Dept., May 19, 1949, no. 437, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6441.

⁷ Baruch to State Dept., May 18, 1949, and May 19, 1949, no. 437.

⁸ Pflaum, "Dutch Bow to US 'Coercion' in Indies," *Chicago Sun-Times*, May 21, 1949.

⁹ Baruch to State Dept., May 19, 1949, no. 442, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2158.

¹⁰ Rusk to Lucius D. Battle, June 1, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6441.

¹¹ Headquarters, India-Burma Theater (IBT), "Daily G-2 Summary," December 3, 1945, RG 493, Entry UD-UP 20, box 3.

¹² Everett F. Drumright, memorandum of conversation, August 26, 1947, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 6.

¹³ Charlton Ogburn Jr, trip report, May 10, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13.

¹⁴ John D. Hickerson to Robert A. Lovett, October 27, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2152.

¹⁵ State Dept. to The Hague, December 6, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6440.

¹⁶ Stikker, *Men of Responsibility*, p. 139; State Dept. to Loyd V. Steere, December 8, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2153.

¹⁷ Andrew B. Foster to State Dept., December 20, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6440.

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- ¹⁸ Philip C. Jessup to State Dept., January 17, 1949, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1949, Vol. VII*, d. 122; CIA, “Intelligence Memorandum No. 113,” January 4, 1949, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ¹⁹ Stewart to Bevin, “Indonesia: Annual Review for 1949,” January 26, 1950, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs (B DFA), 1950, Vol. 11*, p. 147.
- ²⁰ Willard Hanna, “Observations on Trip to Jogjakarta, November 17–19, 1949,” RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6442.
- ²¹ Cochran to State Dept., December 8, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 681.
- ²² SSU, *War Report, Vol. II*, p. 405; Helms, interview by Christof Mauch, April 21, 1997.
- ²³ Thomas L. Fisher II to SSU, “Chief of Mission Report–December,” January 10, 1946, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 26.
- ²⁴ CIA, *Current Intelligence Weekly*, August 14, 1953, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ²⁵ Cochran to State Dept., October 19, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2152. This document is the unredacted version of the telegram reproduced in *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 334.
- ²⁶ James W. Barco to Dean Rusk and Harding F. Bancroft, October 21, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2152.
- ²⁷ Lacy to Livingston T. Merchant, November 23, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6442.
- ²⁸ Charles A. Livengood to State Dept., June 27, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6441.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*; Ruth T. McVey, “Teaching Modernity,” *Indonesia*, October 1990.
- ³⁰ Herring, *America’s Longest War*, p. xiii.

Chapter 1
The Old Order Will Not Return
(1942–1944)

On Thursday, February 26, 1942—eighty-one days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor—Consul General Walter Foote made the decision to evacuate the US diplomatic mission in Batavia, a city on the northwest coast of Java and the capital of the Netherlands East Indies. Japan’s military juggernaut had recently seized air bases to the west on Sumatra and to the east on Bali. Scores of Japanese warships and troop transports were steaming toward Java’s northern coast. Although an invasion of the island, home to two-thirds of the NEI’s total population of 70 million, had been likely since the fall of Singapore on February 15, Foote wanted to avoid an unseemly early evacuation of the last six American diplomats in the NEI. (US consular offices in Surabaya and in Medan, Sumatra, had already been closed.) Foote delayed shutting down the Batavia consulate until he received a midnight warning from allied headquarters in Java’s interior: “The Japanese attack would begin at any minute.”¹

Blackout restrictions prevented the immediate burning of the consulate’s classified documents, but by 8:00 a.m., February 27, all such papers were destroyed. With little routine work remaining—the vast majority of the approximately 800 American citizens living in the NEI had already fled the archipelago—the consulate closed at noon, and Foote turned over US diplomatic affairs to the neutral Swiss mission. At 6:30 p.m., Major General Wijbrandus Schilling, commander of the 1st Division of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (*Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger*, or KNIL),

called on Foote at his home. Responsible for the defense of Batavia, Schilling was apparently unaware of the Anglo-American decision to abandon Java and conserve allied military resources to fight another day. He optimistically told Foote that the impending arrival of Australian troops and US aircraft would mean a successful defense of the island. The American diplomat interrupted his friend: “Wyb, I do not know this, but I feel sure that your superior officers have not informed you of the true situation. The Australian Army Corps is not coming and there will be no arrivals of airplanes or troops. On the contrary, they are being evacuated as rapidly as possible.”²

That night Foote left Batavia by automobile for the 185-mile drive to Tjilatjap, a port on Java’s southern coast. After a harrowing ride in blackout conditions, he arrived at the harbor, which was filled with allied warships, auxiliary vessels, and civilian freighters preparing to flee to Australia or Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Frightened refugees packed the docks, and black smoke filled the air, as Dutch forces burned anything that might be of military value to the Japanese. Adam Malik, a future vice president of the Republic of Indonesia and then a twenty-four-year-old radical nationalist waiting to be transported to an off-shore Netherlands prison camp, recalled the “utter chaos and confusion” in Tjilatjap.³ Foote and eight other Americans boarded the *Zaandam*, a Dutch cargo-passenger ship chartered by the British consulate. On March 1—the day Japanese troops landed on Java’s northern coast—the *Zaandam* left Tjilatjap with more than 1,200 people filling its decks, corridors, and lounges.

“Most of the ships which entered or sailed from Tjilatjap were sunk by Japanese bombers, submarines or cruisers,” Foote later reported to the State Department. He attributed the successful escape of the *Zaandam* to its speed, which allowed the ship “to

zig-zag sufficiently and quickly enough to evade submarine attacks.”⁴ Foote and his consular party—which increased by one with the rescue at sea of the US assistant naval attaché from Chungking—landed safely in Freemantle, Australia, on March 5. Four days later, the commander of allied ground forces in Java, KNIL Lieutenant General Hein ter Poorten, announced the surrender of the island.

Indonesians did not witness the heroism of Dutch naval forces defeated in the battles of the Java Sea and Sunda Strait before the invasion. What they did see was the quick surrender of the Dutch colonial army and the flight of NEI military and civilian leaders who had been instructed to avoid capture by Governor General A. W. L. Tjarda van Starkenborgh Stachouwer. Unwilling to abandon his post, the governor general chose to remain in Java. Along with his family and approximately 100,000 Dutch and other Europeans, he was interned by the Japanese for the rest of the war.

“The Dutch will find it difficult to regain their former control over the various tribes of Java, who were completely bewildered by the evacuation of the Americans, the British, and some Dutchmen,” Foote wrote to the State Department. “Needless to say, the white race lost face which will be most difficult to regain, unless the Japanese love of loot becomes stronger than any desire to win the support of the natives.”⁵

An affable diplomat, Walter Ambrose Foote was fond of mint juleps and liked to be called “Uncle Billy.” Born in Greenville, Texas, he graduated from East Texas University in 1906 and served in the US Navy from 1907 until 1915. When the United States entered World War I, he returned to active duty as a lieutenant. He began his work for the State

Department in 1920, spending the next decade at a variety of diplomatic posts, including Medan, a commercial center in North Sumatra. In 1931, Foote was assigned to Washington, where he worked as assistant chief of the Division of Current Information, the State Department's press office. He simultaneously studied international relations at American University, receiving a master's degree and a PhD. From 1934 to 1938, he served as consul general in Batavia, and after a two-year assignment as consul in Melbourne, he returned to the NEI in 1940.

“Uncle Billy was the epitome of the United States before Pearl Harbor, insular and avuncular, whom everyone liked because they thought he was on their side,” wrote Albert C. Cizauskas, a Foreign Service officer who worked with Foote after the war. Charles Wolf Jr., a vice consul under Foote in postwar Indonesia, observed: “Much of his life, his feelings, his values, and recollections, were inextricably bound up with the prewar pattern of colonial existence. His attitude toward the plight of the Dutch was naturally one of sympathy.”⁶

Foote's attitude toward the “natives,” however, was paternalistic and condescending. When he returned to Washington in the spring of 1942, he characterized the diverse Indonesian peoples as “docile, essentially peaceful, contented and, therefore, apathetic towards political moves of any kind. There is no real anti-Dutch sentiment among them.” He made this comment in a forty-page memorandum to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, which despite its forward-looking title, “Future of the Netherlands Indies,” was notably lacking in prescience. In an indirect reference to Sukarno, a nationalist leader and gifted orator whom the Dutch had imprisoned and exiled before the war, Foote wrote: “A firebrand leader occasionally arises and speaks in a loud voice of the

oppression of his people, but he never gains the support or even the respect of the mass of the people.”⁷

Defending Dutch colonial administration, Foote reported to Hull that since his return to Washington he had heard sincere but uninformed comments about the NEI from unnamed pundits and even some government officials: “The colonies must not go back to their original owners,” and “the people of the Indies should be independent.” Foote found these opinions “strange and immature.” While discussing the future status of the NEI, he declared: “The natives of the Netherlands Indies are most definitely not ready for independence. That condition is fifty or seventy-five years in the future.” Foote acknowledged that the “old order will not return” but concluded that the “only feasible solution” for the archipelago was “to remain under Netherlands sovereignty.”⁸

With the outcome of the war against the Axis powers still in doubt, a definite US policy for postwar governance of the NEI and other occupied European colonies had not yet been formulated. In principle, President Franklin D. Roosevelt opposed colonialism and supported independence and self-determination. The Atlantic Charter, an expression of wartime goals signed by Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill in August 1941, had proclaimed that the United States and the United Kingdom “respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live.”⁹ Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles, an influential Roosevelt adviser who helped draft the charter, amplified this idea in a Memorial Day speech at Arlington National Cemetery the following year: “The age of imperialism is ended. The right of a people to their freedom must be recognized, as the civilized world long since recognized the right of an

individual to his personal freedom. The principles of the Atlantic Charter must be guaranteed to the world as a whole—in all oceans and in all continents.”¹⁰

Such lofty statements heartened Asian nationalists, but America’s European allies resisted the idea of relinquishing control of their colonies. “Much thought,” Churchill told Roosevelt, would be needed before he agreed to the charter’s “application to Africa and Asia.”¹¹ The Dutch government, which had evacuated to London after the German invasion of the Netherlands in May 1940, endorsed the Atlantic Charter but warned against “thoughtlessly project[ing] Western ideas into situations to which they are not—or at least not yet—adapted.” In an article for *Foreign Affairs*, Dutch Foreign Minister Eelco N. van Kleffens wrote: “The Charter is an instrument for good, and as such is to be applied intelligently. Viewed in this light, Dutch colonial policy is in keeping with the Charter.”¹²

The Netherlands government-in-exile repeatedly stated its intention to “revisit and revise the traditional administrative structure of the Dutch empire.” In a statement issued on January 27, 1942, the government confirmed that a postwar conference would be convened “to prepare the way for carrying through political reforms” in the kingdom. Attendees would include representatives from the Netherlands, the NEI, and the smaller overseas territories of Surinam in South America and Curaçao in the West Indies. The work of this conference would “be of an advisory nature.”¹³ In other words, the postwar meeting would discuss Dutch policy in the NEI but not necessarily change it.

The declarations of the Netherlands government-in-exile were not the firm policy commitments sought by President Roosevelt. Yet his own administration’s support for the right of self-government was qualified. Secretary of State Cordell Hull, “whose

opposition to European colonialism was rooted in his devotion to free trade,” according to historian Robert J. McMahon, said in a national radio address: “We have always believed—and we believe today—that all peoples, without distinction of race, color, or religion, who are *prepared and willing to accept the responsibilities of liberty*, are entitled to its enjoyment. We have always sought—and we seek today—to encourage and aid all who aspire to freedom to establish their right to it by *preparing themselves to assume its obligations*.”¹⁴ Such statements dodged the question of who would determine when colonized peoples were ready for independence.

On November 17, 1942, H. J. van Mook, the Dutch minister of colonial affairs and the lieutenant governor general of the NEI, talked about the archipelago at the annual Forum on Current Problems, sponsored by the *New York Herald Tribune*. Overshadowed by President Roosevelt, who spoke briefly by radio about the US-British invasion of North Africa and the US naval victory in the Solomon Islands, van Mook read an address by Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands. Observing that the allies’ purpose was “to uphold human liberty and establish [a] happy balance between the rights and duties of the individual and those of the community,” the queen claimed that such a balance had already been achieved in the NEI. “A happy parallelism existed between the aspirations of the native intelligentsia and my compatriots from Holland,” read van Mook. “Both wanted progressive emancipation of the gifted races living there.” The queen’s speech included the Dutch constitution’s declaration that the NEI was not a colony “but a component part” of the Netherlands kingdom.¹⁵

It is difficult to assess how much of Wilhelmina's remarks reflected the views of van Mook, a large and thoughtful man whom one Dutch diplomat described as "a solitary elephant with exceptional intellectual gifts coupled with an enormous capacity for hard work."¹⁶ Prone to melancholy, van Mook had been and would long remain a central figure in the struggle to define the NEI's relationship with the Netherlands. "His love is more for the Indies than for the Netherlands," Walter Foote reported to the State Department. "The Queen, who probably knows all this, may have tried to place him more directly under her thumb by appointing him Minister of Colonies."¹⁷

Born to Dutch school teachers in Java in 1894, van Mook received his primary and secondary education in the NEI and graduated from Leiden University in the Netherlands. Returning to Java as a civil servant, van Mook advanced such progressive ideas as more autonomy for a multi-ethnic NEI that would have a larger say in The Hague's imperial decision-making. These notions earned van Mook the nickname "Indies Bad Boy."¹⁸ Rising in the NEI bureaucracy to become director of the department of economic affairs, he partially redeemed his reputation in The Hague by taking a tough prewar stance toward Japanese demands for strategic raw materials, including guaranteed quantities of oil. "I am no damned oil broker!" van Mook told an aggressive Japanese delegation in Batavia. "If you want to buy some oil, see the oil companies."¹⁹

In January 1942, after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor but before the fall of Singapore and the invasion of Java, van Mook traveled to Washington to discuss American support for the NEI. White House economic adviser Lauchlin Currie told Roosevelt that van Mook had made off-the-record comments to a reporter criticizing "the lack of American cooperation and offensive spirit" in the defense of Southeast Asia. Van

Mook was particularly harsh in his assessment of the “cautious policy” of Admiral Thomas C. Hart,²⁰ the sixty-four-year-old commander of the naval forces of the American, British, Dutch, and Australian Command (ABDACOM). Established by the United States and United Kingdom on December 30, 1941, with headquarters in Batavia, ABDACOM was a poorly coordinated, militarily weak, and short-lived effort by the allies to defend the so-called Malay Barrier, extending from the Malay Peninsula to northern Australia.

Van Mook apparently received assurances in Washington that allied planes and troops were on their way to the NEI. But when he returned to Java on February 21, 1942, he was shocked to discover that ABDACOM headquarters and the NEI government had moved from Batavia to more secure locations in the island’s interior. Van Mook and other Dutch officials were embittered by the conduct of US and UK civilian and military leaders, who not only made strategic decisions about Southeast Asia without consulting them but also were unwilling to put up much of a fight to defend the NEI. On February 25, 1942—the date of the “dissolution” of ABDACOM headquarters—its commander, General Sir Archibald Wavell, reported: “[The] Dutch thought [the] situation [was] by no means hopeless and felt [the] British and Americans were too pessimistic about [the] prospect of giving [the] Japanese hard knocks and fighting [a] prolonged delaying action.”²¹

Van Mook was one of the Dutch ministers who encouraged Queen Wilhelmina to make a radio address about the political future of the NEI—if only to placate President Roosevelt and other anticolonial Americans. Broadcast in December 1942, the one-year anniversary of the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, the queen’s English-language speech

discussed the planned postwar conference with representatives from the Netherlands and the “overseas parts of the Kingdom.” Declaring that the connection between the Netherlands and the NEI “had long since passed the era of colonial relationship,” the queen said: “I visualize, without anticipating the recommendations of the future conference, that they will be directed towards a commonwealth in which the Netherlands, Indonesia, Surinam and Curaçao will participate, with complete self-reliance and freedom of conduct for each part regarding its internal affairs, but with the readiness to render mutual assistance.”²²

Queen Wilhelmina’s speech had its intended effect on US audiences. President Roosevelt was “gratified” by the broadcast,²³ and reporters and opinion-makers were impressed by the queen’s apparent commitment to self-rule. The *New York Times* favorably compared her remarks with Churchill’s statement one month earlier that he did not intend “to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire.” *Time* magazine, with typically uninhibited overstatement, reported that “good Queen Wilhelmina flatly rejected Empire, plunked for Commonwealth,” and “gave bone, meat, [and] flavor” to the Atlantic Charter. Despite praise from the US press, Wilhelmina had, in fact, promised little more than convening an imperial conference after the war. Had Indonesian nationalists heard the queen’s broadcast, according to historian Elizabeth Buettner, they would have greeted it “with the same derision and disbelief as countless earlier colonialist portrayals of the Netherlands’ Indies policy as enlightened and progressive.”²⁴

American anticolonialism was an enduring source of wartime anxiety for van Mook and other Dutch officials, who worried about the possibility of US military administration of a reoccupied NEI. Dutch leaders, wrote historian Jennifer L. Foray,

“were especially concerned that the Americans, widely expected to be among the first forces to liberate the colony, would gain the upper hand in the region and deny the Dutch the right to return as colonial rulers.”²⁵

Van Mook, who returned to Washington in December 1942 and January 1943, was “apparently unable to obtain any direct statements of opinion or promises concerning the future of the Netherlands Indies,” according to Walter Foote. On his last afternoon in the capital, van Mook called on Foote’s wife, Margaret, who wrote to her husband that the minister “could not have gone any deeper into the depths of despair.” From Australia, where he maintained contact with the evacuated remnants of the NEI government, Foote speculated that van Mook’s mood was partly influenced by the absence of any information about his wife and children, who were still in Java.²⁶

During these visits to the United States, van Mook met with OSS Director William J. “Wild Bill” Donovan and his subordinates. Van Mook was eager to collaborate with the fledgling American intelligence agency because of the failure of clandestine NEI operations run by the Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service (NEFIS), established in 1942 and based in Australia. “Van Mook’s attitude,” according to a senior OSS operative, “was to encourage any channel which might bring word from [the] occupied Indies.”²⁷ For his part, Donovan was eager to take advantage of Dutch knowledge of the NEI to develop plans for espionage, guerrilla warfare, and other covert missions.

The operational ambitions of van Mook and Donovan were thwarted by General Douglas MacArthur, commander-in-chief of the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA), which encompassed all of the NEI except Sumatra. Despite Donovan’s attempts to convince the

general of the value of OSS, MacArthur refused to allow the agency in his theater. His intelligence chief, Brigadier General Charles A. Willoughby, assured MacArthur that OSS was unnecessary. There were also concerns about controlling Donovan's operatives. A highly decorated veteran of World War I and a successful Wall Street lawyer between the wars, Donovan reported to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) but still maintained a direct line to President Roosevelt. According to D. Clayton James, MacArthur's biographer, the SWPA commander "was not about to have Allied personnel in his theater who were not under his control, as would have been the case with the OSS."²⁸

Donovan had better luck with Sumatra, an island larger in area, smaller in population, and richer in natural resources than Java. Part of the China-Burma-India Theater (CBI), Sumatra was then the responsibility of Lieutenant General Joseph W. Stilwell. Nicknamed "Vinegar Joe" for his astringent personality, the CBI commander authorized the creation of Detachment 101—the first OSS unit in Asia. Stilwell initially prohibited the detachment from operating in China, believing that the country's complex politics "would only be aggravated by steps to introduce American clandestine operations there." He was, however, willing to have OSS help him retake northern Burma. "By the middle of 1943," according to the official OSS history, "Detachment 101 had established its usefulness to Stilwell, and he approved plans for the expansion of the organization."²⁹

On November 26, 1943, Stilwell authorized the "activation" of an OSS espionage project called "Far East No. 22 (Sumatra)." The overall goal of FE 22 was to address "the most striking fact about the islands of the Netherlands East Indies": the absence of

current information about them. Before launching allied psychological, sabotage, and military operations, it was deemed “imperative” to collect intelligence about Japanese intentions and capabilities in Sumatra. With assistance from Abdulkadir Widjojatmodjo, a high-ranking NEI civil servant who received US training in recruiting spies, OSS had identified potential Indonesian agents. Two OSS officers with prewar experience in the NEI, Ray F. Kauffman and Robert A. Koke, had been providing them with espionage training in the United States.³⁰

The OSS official with overall responsibility for FE 22 was S. Dillon Ripley II. A tall (nearly six feet, four inches), lean (approximately 170 pounds), and prematurely balding thirty-year-old, Ripley had been born into a patrician family—a great grandfather was the founding chair of the Union Pacific Railroad. A graduate of Yale, class of 1936, he participated in two prewar scientific expeditions to the NEI and other South Pacific islands. The title of his Harvard PhD dissertation was “The Bird Fauna of the West Sumatra Islands: A Study in Speciation.”³¹

Ripley began his intelligence career in the Office of the Coordinator of Information, established by President Roosevelt five months before the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor and superseded by OSS in June 1942. Ripley’s fluency in colloquial Malay, the lingua franca of the NEI, and his firsthand knowledge of the region were considered especially valuable by COI’s Research and Analysis (R&A) Branch. Receiving training in espionage, sabotage, and other clandestine skills, he officially joined OSS in January 1943 and was assigned to the Netherlands East Indies desk of the Secret Intelligence (SI) Branch.³²

Leaving Washington in June 1943 to direct FE 22 in the field, Ripley traveled to Ceylon via London, Cairo, and New Delhi, making contacts with various allied officials and picking their brains. He later wrote to Donovan: "It is an obvious but often unstressed fact that one can find out the intentions of a man by rifling his brains quite as well as rifling his desk or safe." When combined with government bulletins and other quasi-open sources, such conversations could "be tied together by trained observers into reports of a highly classified nature."³³

Stilwell's authorization of FE 22 meant that Ripley could establish camps in Ceylon for training agents and communicating with them within the theater. The project also required the approval of Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, supreme allied commander of the predominantly British Southeast Asia Command (SEAC). Mountbatten's organizational mechanism for overseeing allied intelligence operations in his theater was a coordinating committee called Priorities Division, usually referred to as "P" Division. According to Samuel Halpern, who served in the R&A Branch of OSS/SEAC, "P" Division "was simply a means for the British to keep an eye on what the hell the Americans were doing."³⁴

Such vigilance reflected the mutual suspicions of allied officials about each other's political and economic intentions in Asia. "The raising of the Union Jack over Singapore," declared Stilwell's political adviser, John Paton Davies Jr., "is more important to the British than any victory parade through Tokyo."³⁵ Maberley Esler Dening, Mountbatten's political adviser, was equally unsparing in his assessment of US motives. He warned the UK Foreign Office: "American imperialists in the armed forces, backed by ubiquitous businessmen in uniform, are determined to do what they please in

the Far East, both during and after the war, without regard to any other interest concerned. By voicing their suspicions of British imperialism, they have put us on the defensive, and in the absence of any clearly defined policy of our own, our defence is not a very good one.”³⁶

In late November 1943, “P” Division formally approved FE 22, as did the SEAC chief of staff. Lieutenant Colonel Richard P. Heppner, chief of OSS in Southeast Asia, informed Admiral Sir James Somerville, commander-in-chief of the British Eastern Fleet, of SEAC’s approval of the project and FE 22’s requirement for submarines to transport agents to Sumatra. Like many naval commanders, Somerville was not eager to use his submarine fleet as “a taxi service” for spies. In January 1944, he insisted to Mountbatten that some British clandestine “operations were not justified and seemed to have no obvious military purpose or much chance of success.”³⁷

Although Somerville was eventually persuaded of the value of such missions, access to submarines remained a problem for British and American intelligence operations in the NEI during 1944. Captain Arthur H. McCollum, intelligence officer for the US Seventh Fleet, often referred to as “MacArthur’s Navy,” explained to Willoughby: “The success which our submarines are attaining in destroying enemy shipping indicates that they are contributing materially to the direct support of the operating plan of the Commander in Chief [MacArthur]. They should not, therefore, be diverted to other uses.”³⁸

In January 1944, van Mook returned to Washington, where he received permission from the State and War departments to speak with General MacArthur about “the broad outlines of civil administration in the Netherlands Indies during and after invasion.” Despite Dutch fears about American anticolonialism, State Department officials assumed that the Netherlands would be the territorial sovereign of a reoccupied NEI. They hoped, however, that the Dutch and other European powers would “be willing to take steps looking toward the gradual improvement of the political and economic status of the natives of their colonies.”³⁹

Two letters to the War Department indicated the State Department’s concerns about the colonial policies of European allies. In one, James C. Dunn, director of the Office of European Affairs, wrote that the department thought it “inadvisable” for US military officers to serve in a civil affairs capacity on Mountbatten’s staff. Such appointments “would further increase the belief among the peoples of India and presumably throughout the Far East that our policy and that of the British in Asia are the same.” In a second letter, Dunn expressed the department’s view that any agreement reached by MacArthur and van Mook should not “prejudice the right of the United States” to raise issues related to the Atlantic Charter and other international declarations. In other words, according to Cordell Hull, “we did not want agreements made between our military commander and Netherlands authorities which would militate against our presentation of proposals relating to the eventual independence of the Netherlands Indies.”⁴⁰

In March 1944, van Mook and MacArthur signed off on a draft agreement for the administration of NEI territory in the SWPA. MacArthur would have authority to take all

necessary military measures to expel the Japanese from those islands, and the Dutch government would “resume as rapidly as possible, even in combat areas, full responsibility for the civil administration of reoccupied Netherlands territory.” These arrangements would “in no way affect the sovereignty of the Netherlands Government.” The draft agreement included much discussion of the jurisdiction of the Dutch civil authorities but made no mention of improving the political and economic status of Indonesians in liberated areas.⁴¹ In April, van Mook signed a similar agreement with Mountbatten covering Sumatra.

The State Department took no immediate action on the draft MacArthur-van Mook agreement. The continuing absence of an official US policy toward liberated colonial territories, Foote speculated, was the likely cause of van Mook’s nagging suspicions about American intentions. “Van Mook admires General MacArthur and believes implicitly in his integrity,” Foote observed in a report for the US Army. “He fears, however, that there are some people in Washington who are not very friendly towards the Dutch in general.”⁴²

Among the Americans van Mook considered unfriendly were officials in the Office of War Information (OWI), the agency responsible for overt “true” propaganda, both domestically and overseas. (Covert “black” propaganda designed to deceive the enemy was the responsibility of OSS.) OWI officials did, in fact, take a dim view of Dutch imperialism. Robert E. Sherwood, the director of overseas operations, had told the chief of the government-in-exile’s Netherlands Information Bureau that OWI would not use Dutch scripts for propaganda broadcast from the United States into the NEI and that the Dutch role in preparing such broadcasts would be “purely advisory.” Members of

OWI's committee on "Indonesia," a name for the archipelago favored by nationalists but not officially adopted by the Netherlands until September 1948, feared that American support for the return of Dutch rule would damage US "prestige and long-range interests in Asia."⁴³

Americans hostile to Dutch policy in the NEI were also found throughout OSS, which Edmond L. Taylor, a senior operative in Southeast Asia, later characterized as the "faithful secular arm" of anticolonial "fundamentalism" within the US government.⁴⁴ An R&A report emphasizing the Netherlands "economic stake" in the NEI declared that "the Dutch have no intention of applying the [Atlantic] Charter literally to their overseas Empire." Cora Du Bois, an anthropologist who had conducted research in the NEI in the late 1930s, was the OSS analyst responsible for the paper. The report described the NEI as "a vast commercial enterprise based on production of essential raw materials."

According to a Dutch estimate, almost 14 percent of the Netherlands prewar income originated directly or indirectly from the NEI.⁴⁵ Du Bois's report alleged that more than one-quarter of the top thirty-four representatives of the Netherlands government were "associated" with large commercial enterprises in the archipelago. Because of these conflicts of interest, R&A concluded that Dutch political promises about the NEI "must be viewed with reserve."⁴⁶

In a separate memorandum, Yale sociologist Raymond Kennedy, an authority on the NEI who worked as a consultant for OSS and the State Department, described "the dark and devious Dutch policy toward native political movements" to Abbot L. Moffat, chief of the department's Division of Southwest Pacific Affairs. Noting that Indonesian advocacy for independence could be construed as treason under NEI law, Kennedy

wrote: “All through the 1920’s and 1930’s, every time an Indonesian party showed signs of real power and effectiveness, the Dutch, on one pretext or another, jailed its leaders or spirited them off to exile in New Guinea or some other remote section of the Islands.” Kennedy warned that unless the Dutch changed their policy of “smothering native political activity,” they would “face an accelerating vicious cycle of revolt followed by suppression followed by revolt.”⁴⁷

Despite such criticism of colonialism in Southeast Asia, the Roosevelt administration’s opposition to the restoration of European hegemony in the region flagged as the war went on. The British, in particular, resisted proposals for temporary international supervision of colonial territories that would eventually become fully independent. For Roosevelt and his senior advisers, the risk of disaffecting Southeast Asians by accepting the return of colonial powers was less threatening to US interests than jeopardizing cooperative relations with European allies. Summarizing a policy dilemma that persisted after the war, Hull wrote in his memoirs: “We could not alienate [Western allies] in the Orient and expect to work with them in Europe.”⁴⁸

In December 1944, the State Department finally approved the MacArthur-van Mook agreement on civil administration in the NEI. Despite awareness within the department that the return of Dutch rule could breed unrest and instability, the only change made in the March draft of the accord was a minor military revision submitted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Their change deleted an allied commitment to the “speedy” expulsion of the Japanese from the NEI.⁴⁹

The JCS revision reflected the conviction of US military leaders that most of the NEI was a sideshow in the war against Japan. The Dutch were eager for an allied

invasion to liberate the main island of Java, but MacArthur's primary interests in the archipelago were the sparsely populated eastern islands along his planned advance to the Philippines. Winston Churchill had been a longstanding advocate of attacking Sumatra, which could be used as a base for air raids against Japanese targets in the region and as a steppingstone toward the reoccupation of British Malaya. In the view of American strategists, however, Churchill's proposed offensive, codenamed CULVERIN, would divert resources from the fight against Germany and the drive to the Japanese home islands. In a letter to Churchill, drafted by Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall, Roosevelt wrote: "I fail to see how an operation against Sumatra and Malaya, requiring tremendous resources and forces, can possibly be mounted until after the conclusion of the war in Europe."⁵⁰

¹ Paul Paddock and V. Lansing Collins Jr., "Work of the Consulate General, Batavia, December 8, 1941–February 28, 1942," RG 84, Entry UD 2732, box 1.

² Foote, "The Fall of the Netherlands Indies," May 29, 1942, RG 84, Entry UD 2732, box 1.

³ Malik, *In the Service of the Republic*, p. 115.

⁴ Foote, "The Fall of the Netherlands Indies," May 29, 1942.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Gardner, *Shared Hopes, Separate Fears*, pp. 25–26.

⁷ Foote, "Future of the Netherlands Indies," June 27, 1942, RG 84, Entry UD 2732, box 1.

⁸ Ibid.

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- ⁹ “Joint Statement by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill,” August 14, 1941, *FRUS, 1941, Vol. I*, p. 367.
- ¹⁰ Frank L. Kluckhohn, “Welles Predicts Post-War World Policed by Allies,” *New York Times*, May 31, 1942.
- ¹¹ Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War Against Japan*, p. 116.
- ¹² Van Kleffens, “The Democratic Future of the Netherlands Indies,” *Foreign Affairs*, October 1942.
- ¹³ Foray, *Visions of Empire*, p. 155; “Statement of the Netherlands Government,” January 27, 1942, Netherlands Information Bureau, www.dbnl.org.
- ¹⁴ McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, p. 68; Hull, July 23, 1942, quoted in “Statements by the United States on the Colonial Question,” undated, c. April 1952, RG 59, Entry A1 1381, box 18. Emphasis added.
- ¹⁵ “President on Air,” *New York Times*, November 18, 1942; “Problems of War and Peace,” November 17, 1942, Netherlands Information Bureau, www.dbnl.org.
- ¹⁶ Henri van Vredenburg, quoted in Gouda, *American Visions*, p. 55.
- ¹⁷ Foote, “Future of the Netherlands Indies,” June 27, 1942.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ Foote, “The Fall of the Netherlands Indies,” May 29, 1942.
- ²⁰ Currie to Roosevelt, January 15, 1942, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (FDRL), The President’s Secretary’s File (PSF), Netherlands, 1942.
- ²¹ Wavell to chiefs of staff, February 25, 1942, FDRL, Map Room Papers (MRP), Wavell Personal.
- ²² Wilhelmina, “Towards a Netherlands Commonwealth,” December 6, 1942,

Netherlands Information Bureau, www.dbnl.org.

²³ Lloyd Gardner, "FDR and the 'Colonial Question,'" in *FDR's World*, Woolner et al, editors, p. 129.

²⁴ Harold Callender, *New York Times*, December 7, 1942; "Brave New Commonwealth," *Time*, December 14, 1942; Buettner, *Europe after Empire*, pp. 81–82.

²⁵ Foray, *Visions of Empire*, p. 164.

²⁶ Foote to State Dept., July 16, 1943, RG 59, CDF, 1940–1944, box 5310.

²⁷ Richard P. Heppner, "Relations with Dutch," May 10, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 51.

²⁸ James, *The Years of MacArthur, Vol. II*, p. 511.

²⁹ SSU, *War Report, Vol. II*, pp. 362 and 369.

³⁰ OSS, "Far East No. 22 (Sumatra)," April 19, 1943, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 25.

³¹ <https://www.worldcat.org/title/bird-fauna-of-the-west-sumatra-islands-a-study-in-speciation/oclc/53963812>.

³² Ripley personnel file, RG 226, Entry A1 224, box 646.

³³ Ripley to Donovan, April 18, 1945, www.foia.cia.gov.

³⁴ Halpern, interview by Maochun Yu, June 16, 1997.

³⁵ Davies, "Anglo-American Cooperation in East Asia," November 15, 1943, RG 226, A1 110, box 52.

³⁶ Dening to Foreign Office (FO), December 9, 1944, quoted in Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War*, p. 378.

³⁷ Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War*, p. 247.

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- ³⁸ McCollum to Willoughby, February 15, 1944, quoted in Powell, *War by Stealth*, p. 155.
- ³⁹ Laurence E. Salisbury, February 5, 1944, RG 59, CDF, 1940–1944, box 5310.
- ⁴⁰ Dunne to John H. Hilldring, February 24 and February 28, 1944, *FRUS, 1944, Vol. V*, d. 1185 and d. 1186; Hull, *Memoirs, Vol. II*, p. 1600.
- ⁴¹ Foote to State, March 19, 1944, RG 84, Entry UD 2732, box 1.
- ⁴² Foote, “The Government of the Netherlands Indies,” undated, c. June 1, 1944, RG 84, Entry UD 2732, box 1.
- ⁴³ R. Gregory Thomas to Allen W. Dulles, August 26, 1942, RG 226, Entry A1 180G, microfilm reel 116; OWI, “Summary of Discussion of Meeting Held September 20,” September 27, 1944, RG 59, CDF, 1940–1944, box 5310.
- ⁴⁴ Taylor, *Awakening from History*, p. 352.
- ⁴⁵ Marc Frey, “Decolonization and Dutch-American Relations,” in Krabbendam et al, editors, *Four Centuries of Dutch-American Relations*, p. 610.
- ⁴⁶ OSS, “Background Information on the Dutch Promises Regarding the Netherlands Indies,” January 26, 1943, RG 226, Entry NM–54 8, box 3. Perhaps because of its politically sensitive allegations, this report was only distributed within OSS.
- ⁴⁷ Kennedy to Moffat, October 24, 1944, RG 59, CDF, 1940–1944, box 5310.
- ⁴⁸ Hull, *Memoirs, Vol. II*, p. 1599.
- ⁴⁹ William D. Leahy to Edward R. Stettinius Jr., December 4, 1944, RG 59, CDF, 1940–1944, box 5310.
- ⁵⁰ Roosevelt to Churchill, February 25, 1944, quoted in Matloff, *Strategic Planning*, p. 438.

Chapter 2

We Had to Take Risks

(1944–1945)

Although Sumatra was not a priority for US strategists, OSS officers in Southeast Asia were responsive to British interest in the island and eager to demonstrate the value of their intelligence service. In March 1944, Colonel Heppner's headquarters in New Delhi agreed to a SEAC request for OSS operatives to escort two British engineers on a survey of a possible site for a landing strip on Simalur (Simeulue), a small island some 90 miles off the west coast of northern Sumatra. The operation, codenamed SUGARLOAF II, would be the first OSS mission in the Sumatra island group. In addition to surveying a possible airfield, the operation would reconnoiter a track from the site of the landing strip to an anchorage on the east coast of the island to determine the trail's suitability for transporting construction equipment.¹

The commanding officer selected for SUGARLOAF II was Lieutenant Commander Kenneth M. Pier, a thirty-eight-year-old maritime specialist who had led the first OSS submarine operation in Southeast Asia—the infiltration of two ethnic Karen agents into southern Burma. A Hollywood cameraman and celebrated yachtsman before the war, Pier was a US Navy reserve officer called to active duty to serve as a combat photographer for filmmaker John Ford, most notably during the invasion of North Africa and the Battle of Midway. In the CBI Theater, Pier took aerial photographs behind enemy lines and escorted agents who parachuted into Rangoon. “When it comes to being in

action, he has ice water in his veins,” said Heppner. “He is a good leader of men. He knows his business.”²

The plan for SUGARLOAF II called for one OSS officer and three enlisted men to guard and escort the British engineers on Simalur. Training for the mission was conducted at Camp “Y,” a partially completed OSS base and communications facility near Trincomalee, Ceylon, headquarters of the British Eastern Fleet. Constructed on a site acquired by Dillon Ripley, Camp “Y” was the training center for all OSS agents in Southeast Asia. Arriving at the camp on April 13, members of Pier’s reconnaissance team began a physical conditioning program that included running, swimming, and paddling small rubber boats. The team practiced scouting, surveying, and camouflage techniques and rehearsed night landings on nearby Pigeon Island. There, they received instruction in living off the land, a skill that included catching and eating raw shellfish and other sea life. A twelve- and a twenty-hour practice operation provided opportunities to test communications equipment and procedures. An ammunition shortage, however, precluded extensive target practice. Pier was unconcerned, observing that “all of the men were fairly proficient” with small arms.³

After little more than two weeks of training, briefings, and planning, the SUGARLOAF II team boarded the submarine HMS *Truculent* for the 1,100-mile voyage from Trincomalee to Simalur. At 2:00 a.m. on May 8, the British engineers and their American escorts shoved off from the submarine in two inflatable rubber dinghies and paddled toward the shore some 1,200 yards away. To keep their camouflage jungle suits dry, the men wore nothing but “Mae West” flotation vests. “The boats were lost sight of

before reaching the surf,” wrote Lieutenant Commander Robert L. Alexander, the skipper of the *Truculent*.⁴

The gentle waves splashing on the beaches of northeastern Ceylon had not prepared the SUGARLOAF II team for the ten-to-fifteen-foot breakers pounding Simalur’s west coast. The three men in boat one—First Lieutenant Roy C. Peterson, the leader of the shore party; Flight Lieutenant Malcolm C. Bunting, a Royal Air Force engineer; and Technical Sergeant Eric Eckhardt, a demolition and sabotage specialist—ignored instructions to get into the water when approaching the beach and to hold on to the dinghy’s lifeline to control the craft in the heavy surf. A large wave dumped men and equipment into the sea. Eckhardt was a poor swimmer whose “carelessly tied” Mae West was torn off by the surf, according to Pier’s after-action report. Peterson grabbed Eckhardt and helped him ride the waves into shore. Bunting seized floating equipment bags that had been tied together and brought them to the beach.⁵

The second boat also encountered landing difficulties. Lieutenant Donald Lowe of the Corps of Royal Engineers and photographer’s mate Harry R. Martin got out of their dinghy, hung on to its lifeline, and arrived safely on the beach with their equipment. Radioman Robert H. Flaherty, however, refused to leave the craft. Tossed from the boat by a wave, he disappeared into the churning surf. Flaherty subsequently appeared on the beach “some distance away, unhurt but badly shaken.” All members of the shore party, according to Lowe, felt “the effects of the crash landing.” Because of their disorientation, the men neglected to inform the *Truculent* of their arrival, causing “a great deal of concern on the submarine.”⁶

Some twenty-four hours after landing, the reconnaissance team radioed, “All well,” a message that was received with “considerable relief,” according to Alexander. One day later, however, the shore party concluded that it could not complete the mission in the four days allotted by the operational plan. The island’s streams and mangrove swamps, its thick, trackless jungle, and its steep, slippery hills were slowing the team’s progress. The second transmission to the *Truculent* reported “rough going” and asked the submarine to wait at the rendezvous site until day ten of the mission. Because of problems with the team’s radio, this message was the last communication received by the *Truculent* until the very end of the operation. Lowe and others subsequently agreed that the second transmission might well have saved the lives of the men on Simalur. “If no message had been received and the schedule had been strictly adhered to,” wrote Pier, “the party would probably not have been picked up.”⁷

On day three of the mission, the SUGARLOAF II team pushed on in heavy rain that made Simalur’s hills particularly treacherous. At 11:00 a.m., the men reached a field that was the site for the proposed airstrip. Undetected by two Indonesians cutting down trees and a family outside a hut on four-foot stilts, the engineers gathered information and collected soil and water samples. Harry Martin took pictures of the area. “We got a very good view of all the land,” Lowe wrote in his report of the operation. Attempts to locate the trail leading to the island’s east coast, however, were unsuccessful. By day five, the shore party was convinced that the track “did not exist.”⁸

On the sixth day, the reconnaissance team abandoned its search for the trail and headed for the rendezvous point some forty miles away. All of the men were showing signs of exhaustion, particularly Peterson. Then thirty-three, “Pete” Peterson was a

mechanical engineer from Miles City, Montana, who had demonstrated “unusual persistency and judgment” as a demolition and mapping instructor for the Special Operations (SO) Branch of Detachment 101. Leading his shore party by example, Peterson insisted that he alone carry the nearly fifty-pound pack for radio communication with the *Truculent*.⁹

Harry Martin, despite being dangerously fatigued, volunteered for a two-mile swim to see if a river flowed in the direction of the pickup site. (It did not.) Sergeants Flaherty and Eckhardt exhibited less selfless behavior. Their decision to lighten their packs by reducing the number of K-ration boxes they carried contributed to a food shortage during SUGARLOAF II. The team’s most serious problem, however, was deficient footwear, which “almost caused the failure of the mission and the loss of the party.”¹⁰ Unable to acquire suitable jungle boots before the operation, the men decided to wear canvass sneakers. The shoes not only disintegrated after a few days of wear on the island, but also collected mud and gravel that scraped off skin. Peterson’s feet were “an appalling sight,” Lowe reported, “just lumps of raw meat.”¹¹

The shore party finally reached the east coast of Simalur on day nine. All wore strips of signaling cloth for shoes and were “in dreadful condition.” Martin “arrived at the beach on his hands and knees, unable to speak, and lay down, unable to move another step.” After a rain-soaked night and ineffective attempts to contact the submarine, the men found a few coconuts on the beach, as well as small, red crabs that “tasted delightful.” At 5:20 p.m. on May 17, the tenth day of SUGARLOAF II, Lowe saw what he described as “the most grand sight” he had ever seen—the *Truculent* surfacing some

300 yards off shore. Sighting white men on the beach, the submarine signaled: “O.K. tonight,” then dove beneath the sea.¹²

Some ninety minutes later, the submarine surfaced and communicated with the shore party using “handy-talkie” radios. Without being asked, the men on the beach reported on their condition, using the traditional GI acronym “SNAFU [situation normal, all fucked up].” Commander Pier and Staff Sergeant John Achelis served as the OSS pickup crew, each paddling a rubber dinghy from the submarine to the beach. Although the surf was light on the east coast of the island, jagged coral reefs near the shoreline lurked a few inches beneath the surface of the sea. The shore party endured an agonizing walk to deeper water where the pickup dinghies would not ground under the weight of men and equipment. “We soon arrived at the submarine which seemed so close it was incredible,” wrote Lowe. “Eager hands then guided what was to us ‘Heaven.’”¹³

Commander Alexander treated the “raw, swollen, and infected feet” of the men, all of whom appeared to be in good spirits. “Dinner,” he reported, “went down quite well.”¹⁴ Yet the ordeal for the shore party was not over. Within two weeks of the pickup, every member of the shore party developed a high fever from various tropical diseases. Peterson, whose temperature reached 105 degrees, was barely conscious when carried by stretcher to the sick bay on a submarine tender in Trincomalee.¹⁵ Suffering from malaria and hepatitis, he was in and out of military hospitals for the rest of the war.

According to an internal history of Detachment 404 written during the war, “the painful experience of the party on Simalur” provided useful lessons for OSS officers Kauffman and Koke at Camp “Y.”¹⁶ Perhaps the most important was providing operatives with sufficient training for clandestine missions. In his after-action report for

SUGARLOAF II, Commander Pier wrote that all members of his team believed more time for physical conditioning would have been beneficial: “Although they were in good shape, it could not be said that they were in top physical trim.” Pier also reported that the large waves at Simalur had been anticipated, but insufficient training time had precluded practice landings in southwest Ceylon, where the breakers were heavier than the surf near Trincomalee.¹⁷

The successful completion of SUGARLOAF II was initially hailed as an “outstanding achievement” by OSS/SEAC: “Because of its strategic implications, it is believed that this is the most important accomplishment of OSS in the Far East, and possibly the most important by any mission since the North African invasion.” The operation’s significance, a report to Washington declared, could be judged by a personal message from Churchill “inquiring about the mission and its results.”¹⁸ For an organization eager to prove its mettle, the prime minister’s interest was validation of a high order. Of course, OSS officers in Kandy, Ceylon, where Colonel Heppner had moved his headquarters to stay close to Mountbatten’s, had no way of knowing that US strategy in the Pacific would prevail over Churchill’s CULVERIN fixation. There would be no airfield on Simalur and no invasion of Sumatra. After the war, the official history of OSS described SUGARLOAF II as “an arduous, dangerous and ultimately valueless reconnaissance.”¹⁹

HMS *Tradewind* cast off from a submarine tender in Trincomalee Bay and set sail for the NEI just before sunset, June 8, 1944. The boat’s mission, codenamed RIPLEY I, was the

initial operational phase of project FE 22. The goals of RIPLEY I were to reconnoiter coastal areas of Sumatra and Java, capture a small fishing boat for future operations, kidnap its occupants to gather intelligence, and find a suitable site for landing an Indonesian agent who was aboard the *Tradewind*. Subsequent phases of the mission would attempt to develop an espionage network in Sumatra.²⁰

The OSS operative leading RIPLEY I was Ray Kauffman, a thirty-eight-year-old civilian who had sailed throughout the South Pacific before the war and written *Hurricane's Wake*, a best-selling book about his adventures circumnavigating the globe in a forty-five-foot ketch. Kauffman's knowledge of the NEI and his skill in handling small boats attracted the attention of OSS officials, who provided him with training in sabotage, espionage, and communications. Kauffman, in turn, trained Indonesian agents in OSS camps in the United States and Ceylon. Chronic illnesses acquired in the tropics occasionally sidelined Kauffman during the war, but his superiors considered him a shrewd, practical man, with "a fine talent for getting on with people, both native and white."²¹

The *Tradewind* entered Kroe Bay off the coast of south Sumatra on June 17. The submerged submarine sighted a small sampan with a square sail and two outriggers that was "ideal for our purpose," according to Lieutenant Commander Stephen L. C. Maydon, the commanding officer of the *Tradewind*. A thirty-year-old South African who had been raised and educated in England, Maydon gave the order to close within thirty yards of the sampan before surfacing. The terrified boatmen—a farmer-fisherman and his seventeen-year-old son—tried desperately to paddle away from the menacing warship. To discourage further flight, the *Tradewind* fired short bursts from a Vickers machine gun at

the sampan's sail. J. F. Mailuku, the Indonesian OSS agent selected for the landing in the NEI, came up to the bridge and shouted through a megaphone that the allied forces were "friends."²²

Lacking any better option, the sampan's occupants surrendered. Kauffman, along with his deputy, Captain Robert Koke, and Indonesian agent Johannes "Johnny" Kalalo, received the prisoners on the deck of submarine. The sampan was hoisted aboard the *Tradewind*, dismantled, and stored in the torpedo compartment. Kalalo, who had been recruited from a Netherlands military camp in Canada, stayed with the captives and was "invaluable in overcoming their fear and reluctance to talk." The prisoners provided the RIPLEY team with information about Japanese coast watching and control measures and with clothing and money that Mailuku could use when he entered enemy territory.²³

On the morning of June 19, the *Tradewind* cruised along on the coast of West Java to find a landing site for Mailuku, whose codename was HUMPY. Born in East Java, the son of an Ambonese father and a Javanese mother, he planned to contact relatives and friends in Batavia, then travel across the Sunda Strait to establish residence near Palembang, Sumatra. The island's second largest city, Palembang was the site of oilfields and a refinery valuable to the Japanese. Specific objectives of Mailuku's mission included identifying a coast-watching site, setting up a "letter box" for secret messages, and recruiting other agents. OSS officers would return in three months to deliver supplies and additional agents and to pick up Indonesian recruits who would be trained in Ceylon and returned to Sumatra.

Then twenty-six, Mailuku, was a former air force cadet in the NEI armed forces who had been evacuated to Australia before the Dutch surrender. Eventually arriving at

the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School at the US Army air base in Jackson, Mississippi, Mailuku was recruited by OSS and received SI training from Kauffman and Koke. Dillon Ripley, who had been appointed chief of Detachment 404's SI Branch, admired Mailuku's "ingenuity, pluck and intelligence." In a report to Washington, Ripley wrote: "He is one of the finest individuals of any race that has been trained by OSS."²⁴

After Commander Maydon and the RIPLEY team selected Mailuku's landing site, an uninhabited beach near Third Point, West Java, the submarine spent the rest of June 19 three miles offshore on the bottom of the sea, awaiting darkness. The *Tradewind* surfaced a few minutes after 9:00 p.m. and almost immediately encountered a drifting twenty-foot sailboat. Its occupants, two sleeping Javanese fishermen, were quickly captured and questioned on local conditions. According to Maydon, the poor, emaciated Indonesians "had recently been beaten by the Japanese for minor offenses [and] were glad to be prisoners."²⁵

At 11:00 p.m., Mailuku and his escort, Kalalo, slipped into a collapsible kayak and paddled the half-mile from the *Tradewind* to the beach. "We rowed and stopped rowing many times for listening and trying to penetrate the darkness," Mailuku later recalled. He disembarked at the shoreline, weighed down by a wireless telegraph set, a hand-cranked generator, two pistols, and other equipment. He walked only a few yards before slipping on loose coral: "I fell, but fortunately my radio box protected my face and body." Unfortunately, both of his "legs were badly hurt and cut."²⁶

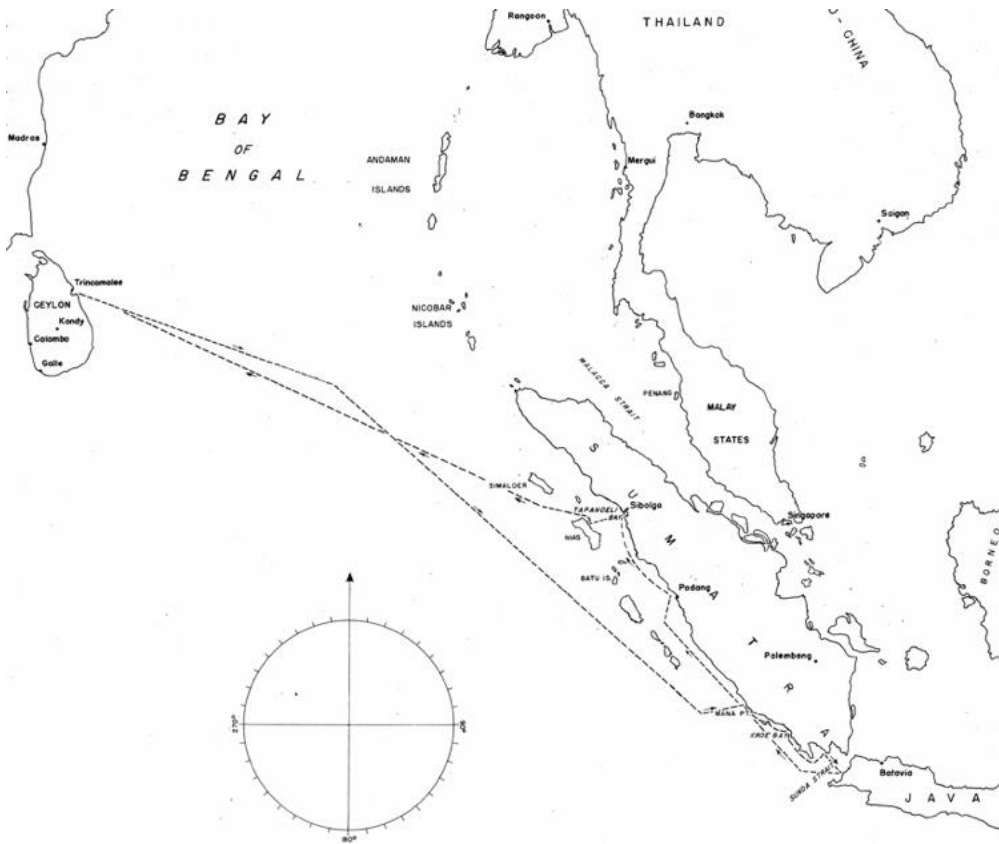
Kalalo, unaware of Mailuku's injury, quickly returned to the *Tradewind*, where Commander Maydon was eager to pursue a thirty-five-foot junk that had passed within a half mile of the submarine. Maydon wanted "no witnesses of our activities left in the

neighborhood,” according to his after-action report. The seizure of the boat and its eleven occupants went smoothly. Maydon planned to tow the junk out to sea for a thorough inspection during daylight hours. At 3:45 a.m., however, the craft capsized, breaking the towrope to the submarine. During the salvage attempt, Robert Koke swam to the boat to search for travel documents, local currency, and other items of intelligence value. “A good sea was running and the force of the water had washed the entire contents out of the junk,” according to Kauffman. “Koke repeatedly dived under the wreck.” His efforts, however, were unavailing. The sinking junk was abandoned, and the wreckage drifted out to sea.²⁷

The successful completion of RIPLEY I was gratifying to OSS officials in Ceylon and Washington. The submarine’s crew and the OSS team had landed an agent in occupied territory, seized a sampan for future missions, and captured fifteen Indonesians who provided operationally useful clothing, local currency, and travel passes. Carleton F. Scofield, the OSS operational planning officer for Southeast Asia, declared that interrogations of Indonesian prisoners produced “the largest single parcel of intelligence yet available on Japanese-occupied Java and Sumatra.” OSS/SEAC chief Heppner reported to William Donovan: “I feel we are really beginning to pierce the veil of silence in the East Indies and Malaya.”²⁸

Donovan was eager to report the operation’s success to the JCS and President Roosevelt. Some of Donovan’s subordinates, however, questioned whether a paper on RIPLEY I warranted the attention of the president and his most senior military advisers, who were then overseeing massive military campaigns in Europe and the Pacific. “Actually,” wrote Alvah W. Sulloway, a lawyer who worked in the OSS secretariat, “this

was a very simple operation consisting merely of the infiltration of an agent into Java.” Donovan asked his assistant director, Charles S. Cheston, to review a summary of RIPLEY I and determine the appropriateness of its distribution to Roosevelt and the JCS. Despite three redrafts of the report, Cheston “did not think it was of sufficient intrinsic importance to send on.”²⁹



The track of HMS *Tradewind* from Ceylon to West Java and back for the OSS intelligence mission RIPLEY I, June 1944. (National Archives and Record Administration)

A key obstacle to effective OSS intelligence missions in Sumatra was a shortage of agents. After landing Mailuku on Java in RIPLEY I, the SI Branch in Southeast Asia had only three Indonesian agents available for operations: Johnny Kalalo, Soegihadja, and Hari Harjono. (Although OSS records do not indicate their ethnicity or place of birth, the agents were likely from the predominantly Christian island of Ambon, which had long provided the core of the KNIL.) One of the agents, Harjono, was judged unsuitable for espionage missions by Dillon Ripley and by Willem A. Nyland, whose OSS responsibilities included censoring the Indonesians' mail. Harjono, wrote Nyland, "seems completely unbalanced and love sick and definitely not in the right frame of mind and heart to do OSS work."³⁰

The global pool of potential Indonesian agents was theoretically large. Candidates for recruitment included Indonesian seamen in Bombay, students in Cairo, religious pilgrims in Jeddah, and immigrants in Surinam and the Netherlands West Indies. Only a small number of physically fit expatriate Indonesians, however, possessed such basic qualifications as the literacy to code communications and the willingness to undertake dangerous missions to restore Dutch control of the NEI. Walter R. Mansfield, a US Marine Corps captain who tried to recruit OSS agents for SEAC in New York City, noted "an almost universal anti-Dutch sentiment" among the Indonesians living there. Some of the "more progressive, intelligent natives," Mansfield reported, considered the Pacific war a fight between the Japanese and Dutch over who "was going to *rule* them."³¹

Because Indonesians were considered Dutch subjects, recruiting them for OSS required permission from the Netherlands government. Although an ally, the Netherlands competed with the United States for Indonesian agents who might serve in either NEFIS

or OSS. Captain Mansfield wryly observed: “The Dutch have been, and probably will continue to be, most cooperative in giving us lists of their subjects whom they do not want.”³²

Mansfield, who was then between assignments in Yugoslavia and China, had a particular interest in recruiting Indonesians as saboteurs for his branch, Special Operations. He discovered, however, that the Dutch government was “strongly opposed to training and sending native saboteurs into the N.E.I.” Commander Gerlof B. Salm, the first chief of NEFIS, explained to Mansfield that this policy was “based on the Dutch desire not to have native saboteurs floating around the N.E.I. after the war is over.”³³

Vice Admiral C. E. L. Helfrich, commander-in-chief of Netherlands forces in the Far East, cooperated only grudgingly with OSS in Ceylon. He preferred to work with the saboteurs and spies in Force 136, the Asian branch of Britain’s Special Operations Executive, which had established an Anglo-Dutch section. As far as Helfrich and other Dutch officials were concerned, the British had “first priority” on all potential Indonesian agents in SEAC.³⁴

OSS officers in Kandy decided that abducting Indonesians was “the surest means of securing an adequate supply of recruits for future operations.” Heppner, who described the seizure of civilians in RIPLEY I as “nothing less than piracy on the high seas,” estimated that at least five of those fifteen captives were “potential agent material.”³⁵ Yet the apparent willingness of kidnapped Indonesians to participate in clandestine operations was often short-lived. In August 1944, Dillon Ripley was shocked by a report that the Indonesian prisoners felt compelled to volunteer for such missions and that they “mistrusted” their OSS countryman, Johnny Kalalo.³⁶

Ray Kauffman, the leader of RIPLEY I, said that he found it “extremely difficult to indoctrinate” captured Indonesians. He described them as “apathetic, passive, and almost entirely lacking in any strong motivating force such as hatred of the enemy or a nationalistic or patriotic spirit.” Kauffmann acknowledged that “snatches” and other unidentified forms of “mild” coercion “aggravate[d] the already sparse motivation that any native has to fight on our side.” His approach to strengthening that motivation included patience, understanding, and personal friendship. “Slow, though necessary, training” of Indonesian agents, he told the OSS Schools and Training Branch, was one of the reasons for the delay in OSS/SEAC operations in Sumatra.³⁷

During a dispute at SEAC over who controlled the Indonesians captured during RIPLEY I, Admiral Helfrich voiced grave doubts about using them as agents: “How can we know what these people are really like?” Dillon Ripley acknowledged the difficulty of answering the admiral’s question. According to his own notes of the conversation, Ripley “implied that we had to take risks in order to get started.”³⁸

The risks that OSS/SEAC was apparently prepared to assume included skimping on training for two of the RIPLEY I prisoners: Amat, an illiterate forty-year-old fisherman, and Noerh, his twenty-two-year-old brother, who had attended school for four years. Neither had any military experience. Yet after only five weeks of training at Camp “Y,” both boarded the submarine *Tradewind* to participate in Operation CAPRICE, a mission to establish an OSS communications base and relay station in the Batu Islands, an archipelago of three relatively large islands and forty-eight smaller ones off the west coast of Sumatra.

On September 8, 1944, HMS *Tradewind* sailed from Trincomalee for CAPRICE I and for RIPLEY II, the planned rendezvous with agent Mailuku in South Sumatra. OSS officials hoped that he would provide general intelligence, particularly on Japanese shipping, and report on the condition of an oil refinery in Palembang that had recently been bombed by B-29s from the US Twentieth Air Force (Operation BOOMERANG). If contact were made with Mailuku, two additional Indonesian agents onboard the *Tradewind* would be landed to supplement and extend his reporting.

Ray Kauffman was the commander of both SI missions, with Captain Koke serving again as his deputy. The two Americans were reunited with the *Tradewind*'s skipper, Lieutenant Commander Maydon, who, in Ripley's words, had "a commendable interest in clandestine operations."³⁹ Maydon's overriding responsibility, however, was the safety of his submarine, and he was authorized to cancel any intelligence operation that posed an "undue risk" to his boat. As the *Tradewind* approached the islet of Trega in the Batu Islands on September 14, he exercised this authority, canceling CAPRICE I because a damaged foremast periscope exacerbated the navigational hazards of operating in unfamiliar coastal waters.⁴⁰

Kauffman objected, noting the "exceptionally fine" weather, the calm seas, and the serviceable low-power aft periscope. According to his after-action report, Kauffman "stated that he did not see the risks involved and expressed a strong desire to carry out the operation as originally agreed upon." Maydon relented, agreeing to go forward with the landing—but with certain conditions. They included dispensing with the OSS escort for the shore party and leaving the area as soon as the landing boats were launched. After

conferring with Hari Harjono, the leader of the shore party, Kauffman agreed to Maydon's terms. Less than a mile from shore, Harjono boarded a rubber dinghy powered by an electric outboard motor. Amat and Noerh, the Indonesian fisherman captured during RIPLEY I and recruited as agents, sailed the outrigger seized in that operation. All three landed safely with their equipment and soon established radio communication with Camp "Y" on Ceylon.⁴¹

Resuming its regular patrol along the coast of Sumatra, the *Tradewind* torpedoed a 5,000-ton Japanese merchant ship on September 18. Diving deep to evade counterattacking escorts, the submarine neither rescued nor even saw any survivors. The sinking of the large Japanese freighter, according to Kauffman, "greatly improved the morale of all hands aboard the [*Tradewind*]." ⁴² Their mood would have been very different had they known that the ship, *Junyo Maru*, was carrying allied prisoners of war and Indonesian slave laborers. The loss of 5,500 lives from the torpedo attack was "one of the deadliest maritime disasters of the Second World War."⁴³

On September 21, OSS operatives aboard the *Tradewind* attempted their planned pickup of agent Mailuku at the southern tip of Sumatra. There was, however, no visual or radio signal from him at the prearranged rendezvous site. The search for him continued for three days, with the *Tradewind* closing to within 200 yards of shore. The submarine then sailed to the fallback pickup site, Third Point, Java, where Mailuku had originally landed. The shallows there kept the *Tradewind* 2,000 yards from shore. Because the damaged main periscope limited the submarine's ability to detect any visual signal from Mailuku, Kauffman went ashore with Kalalo, who called out for the agent in Malay. With the ever-present possibility of the submarine being forced to abandon the shore party, and

with the near certainty of a captured spy being executed by the Japanese, OSS later deemed Kauffman's actions, and presumably Kalalo's, to be "certainly beyond the call of duty."⁴⁴

The search for Mailuku was abandoned on September 25, and the *Tradewind* returned to Ceylon some ten days later. In his after-action report, Kauffman observed that CAPRICE I had successfully established a radio station in the Batu Islands that was capable of relaying messages from the Sumatra-Malaya area to Trincomalee. The importance of this achievement, however, was diminished by the failure of RIPLEY II and by the lack of any other agent landings in the region. In other words, without Mailuku or other spies, the relay station in the Batu Islands had no agent reports to transmit to OSS headquarters in Ceylon. "It is hoped," wrote Kauffman, "that other agents may be established" in the Sumatra-Malaya area.⁴⁵

Despite the meager results of RIPLEY and CAPRICE, William Donovan sent General Marshall an enthusiastic assessment of the operations, citing them as "examples of the special techniques devised to overcome the peculiar handicaps of distance and lack of current intelligence encountered in the Southeast Asia Theater." Donovan acknowledged that the operations had not been "completely successful," but his emphasis on the techniques of spying in Southeast Asia—for example, transporting agents by submarine and kidnapping natives for intelligence purposes—allowed him to overlook the net results of SI operations in Sumatra: After eighteen months of planning and training for espionage missions, OSS had landed precisely one Indonesian spy, and he was nowhere to be found.⁴⁶

The Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA), a quasi-military organization established in 1944 to restore Dutch authority in areas formerly occupied by the Japanese, began its operations in West New Guinea, the easternmost part of the NEI and the Dutch half of the world's second largest island. By the fall of that year, MacArthur's forces had defeated Japanese troops on the northern coast of Dutch New Guinea. The peoples of that territory, ethnically and linguistically distinct from Indonesians, not to mention the Dutch, included a diverse array of indigenous groups. Although vast in size—approximately three times the area of Java—densely forested Dutch New Guinea had a small number of inhabitants, estimated at 200,000, compared with forty-eight million in Java and nine million in Sumatra.⁴⁷

Dutch New Guinea was a test case for the resumption of Netherlands control of the NEI. In March 1945, Abbot Moffat traveled to New Guinea to observe NICA in action. Then forty-three, Moffat was relatively new to the State Department. A liberal Republican who eventually switched to the Democratic Party, he was a graduate of Groton School, Harvard College, and Columbia Law School. After working as an attorney for a few years, he was elected to the New York Legislature, where he served from 1929 to 1943. To contribute more directly to the war effort, he joined the State Department, initially in the Office of Foreign Economic Cooperation.⁴⁸

During his visit to West New Guinea, Moffat observed attempts by NICA to care for the people by establishing primitive health facilities and schools. "The native populations in liberated New Guinea appear friendly to the return of the Dutch," he wrote

in his trip report. The NICA personnel, although few in number, seemed to Moffat “an unusually able group.”⁴⁹

The commander of the NICA detachment was Colonel Abdulkadir Widjojoatmodjo, a protégé of van Mook’s. Then forty, Abdulkadir was a member of the Javanese nobility who had attended the Bestuursacademie in the Netherlands for training in public administration. A diplomat and civil servant before the war, he was evacuated from Java by the Dutch and traveled to New York City, where he worked for the Netherlands Information Bureau, the government-in-exile’s news agency. His assistance with recruiting Indonesian agents for OSS operations in Sumatra prompted Dillon Ripley to call him “our star performer.” Before his NICA assignment, Abdulkadir worked with NEI officials in Brisbane to plan the restoration of Dutch rule in the archipelago. Moffat, like most Westerners, found the well-educated, multilingual Indonesian “a man of much charm.”⁵⁰

From his conversations with Abdulkadir and other NICA officials, Moffat “learned of the extreme dislike which the Dutch have for the Australians.” This hostility was rooted in Australia’s opposition to colonialism, which was deemed incompatible with the country’s long-term interests in Southeast Asia. The Australian government had endorsed the notion of internationally supervised trusteeships for dependent areas, including the NEI. A proposed “partnership” with the Dutch to assist Indonesians after the war was rebuffed by the Netherlands government.⁵¹ According to Moffat, the Dutch were “greatly distressed” by General MacArthur’s planned use of Australian troops to liberate Borneo and Java. The NICA representatives, wrote Moffat, “particularly fear[ed]” Australian reluctance to withdraw from liberated Dutch territory.⁵²

Although they appeared to have cordial relations with US military officers, the Dutch in New Guinea were “exceedingly perturbed” by incidents that exposed their inability to protect the population from the remaining Japanese troops on the island. Sensitive to the loss of Dutch prestige caused by the Japanese occupation of the NEI, the NICA detachment worried that its obvious military dependence demonstrated “that the Dutch alone are impotent and can function against the Japanese only when American troops are present.” NICA personnel, Moffat wrote, “believe this situation is having a bad effect in New Guinea; they are convinced that, if a similar situation develops in Java or other more advanced areas of the NEI, it will have [a] very serious adverse effect on Dutch restoration.”⁵³

Despite these NICA concerns, Moffat reported to the State Department: “All the Dutch believed that the great mass of Indonesians were loyal to the Dutch and would welcome them back.” This notion, then the conventional wisdom among the allies, was repeated in a State Department policy paper, dated June 22, 1945. Representing the department’s “considered views” about postwar conditions in the Far East, the document optimistically predicted “a generally quiescent period in the relations between the Dutch and the native population of the Netherlands East Indies.” The only “major political struggle” foreseen by the department was between the Dutch in the NEI who sought greater autonomy—van Mook, for example—and officials in The Hague who might “wish to limit it.”⁵⁴

As risible as such estimates might appear in hindsight, senior officials in the State Department were aware of “a problem” that the United States faced in postwar Asia: harmonizing the policy objectives of “increased political freedom for the Far East and the

maintenance of the unity” with European allies. While favoring the “principle” of independence for prewar colonies, “after an adequate period of preparation,” the State Department recommended that the United States “avoid any course of action which would seriously impair the unity” of the wartime allies. US policy in the NEI, the department declared, “is one of non-intervention.”⁵⁵

OSS Director Donovan, unlike many of the soldiers and civilians who served under him, was more emphatic in defending European colonialism. Concluding that the Soviet Union would emerge from the war “as a far more formidable power in Asia,” Donovan submitted to President Harry S. Truman an OSS policy paper on future relations with that country. The paper declared that the United States should recognize

its interest in the maintenance of the British, French and Dutch colonial empires. We should encourage liberalization of colonial regimes in order to better maintain them, and to check Soviet influence in the stimulation of colonial revolt. We have at present no interest in weakening or liquidating these empires or championing schemes of international trusteeship which may provoke unrest and result in colonial disintegration, and may at the same time alienate from us the European states whose help we need to balance the Soviet power.⁵⁶

During the final months of the Pacific war, military operations in much of the NEI remained a secondary concern for the United States. With the forces of Admiral Chester

W. Nimitz in the Central Pacific and those of General MacArthur in the Southwest Pacific converging on Japan, the Joint Chiefs of Staff were eager for the latter to concentrate on the final push to the enemy's home islands. The JCS proposed to their British counterparts that Mountbatten's Southeast Asia Command assume responsibility for a larger area of the Southwest Pacific, including the rest of the NEI. "The British Chiefs of Staff were not enthusiastic," according to an internal history of the JCS. SEAC resources were already stretched thin, and British military leaders "did not care to become bogged down in the Netherlands East Indies and risk having no part at all in the main operations against Japan."⁵⁷

The decision to enlarge Mountbatten's geographic responsibilities was made in July 1945, when allied civilian and military leaders met in Potsdam, Germany, to discuss postwar Europe and Japan's inevitable surrender. SEAC's new boundaries would encompass not only the NEI but also southern Indochina, increasing the land area of Mountbatten's command by fifty percent. The JCS proposed a turnover date of August 15. The British Chiefs of Staff, however, replied that Mountbatten was fully engaged with military operations and that he would be unable to assume his new responsibilities so quickly. Splitting the difference, the combined US and British chiefs of staff wrote to Mountbatten: "It is desirable that you assume command of the additional areas as soon as practicable after the 15th August, 1945."⁵⁸

With the atomic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the entry of Soviet forces into the fight against Japan, the Pacific war came to a sudden end on August 14. Mountbatten's postwar mission in the NEI was to disarm the Japanese military, repatriate allied prisoners of war and internees, and "prepare for the eventual handing over of this

country to the Dutch civil authorities.”⁵⁹ It was a straightforward-sounding assignment for which SEAC was wholly unprepared. “Neither men nor ships were immediately available,” wrote a British military observer in Java. “There were heavy commitments in Malaya, Thailand and Indo-China, and there were thousands of released civilian internees and prisoners of war to be shipped back to England or Australia, and thousands of tons of urgently needed stores to be shipped into these territories.”⁶⁰

Limited manpower and shipping were not the only problems facing SEAC. The failure of NEFIS and OSS to penetrate Java and Sumatra deprived Mountbatten of intelligence about the political and military environment in which his occupation and recovery forces would operate. The slow-moving British mission to the NEI, called Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees (RAPWI), had few insights into the wartime growth of Indonesian nationalism and the strength of indigenous forces trained by the Japanese. Dutch optimism about the Indonesians’ reaction to their return further hampered British understanding of the situation. On August 12, van Mook, who had resigned as minister of overseas territories to function solely as the acting governor general of the NEI, wrote to his ministerial successor J. H. A. Logemann: “I expect no great difficulties on Java, with the exception of the chance of local brigandage.”⁶¹ When van Mook subsequently arrived at SEAC headquarters in Ceylon, he gave Mountbatten “no reason to suppose that the reoccupation of Java would present any operational problem, beyond that of rounding up the Japanese.”⁶²

At 10:00 a.m. on August 17—approximately one month before advance elements of Mountbatten’s RAPWI mission arrived in Java—Sukarno proclaimed the independence of Indonesia. Speaking to a small crowd in front of his home at 56 Pegangsaan East in Batavia, he was accompanied by fellow nationalist leader Mohammad Hatta and Latief Hendraningrat, an officer in the Japanese-trained homeland defense force, *Pembela Tanah Air* (PETA). Sukarno observed that Indonesians had been struggling for freedom for decades, even centuries, with “waves” of progress and setbacks. But even during the wartime occupation, when “it merely appeared that we lean[ed] upon” the Japanese, “we still continued to build up our own powers, we still believed in our own strengths.”⁶³

Sukarno concluded his remarks by reading a two-sentence proclamation that he and Hatta had signed: “We, the people of Indonesia, hereby declare Indonesia’s independence. Matters concerning the transfer of power and other matters will be executed in an orderly manner and in the shortest possible time.” Latief Hendraningrat then hoisted the red and white national flag, and the assembled group sang the national anthem “Indonesia Raya,” originally composed in the 1920s.⁶⁴

The next day a draft constitution for the *Republik Indonesia* was approved by nationalist leaders at a meeting of the Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence (*Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia*, or PPKI), a group established by Japanese military authorities anticipating their imminent defeat. The preamble of the constitution described the Republic’s philosophy, first articulated by Sukarno on June 1, 1945. Called *Pantja Sila*, this philosophy comprised five principles: belief in “the One Diety,” humanitarianism, Indonesian unity, representative government, and social welfare. These principles, Sukarno said, could be reduced to a single Indonesian term,

gotong royong (mutual cooperation) “between the rich and poor, between the Muslim and the Christian, between non-Indonesians and those of foreign descent who become Indonesians.”⁶⁵

Among the changes to an earlier draft of the constitution was the elimination of a requirement that all Muslims observe Islamic law. (A suggestion that the Republic’s president must be a Muslim had already been rejected.) Although approximately 85 percent of Indonesians were at least nominally Muslim, Sukarno and other more secular nationalists wanted to establish, in Hatta’s words, “a united, undivided, Independent Indonesia”⁶⁶ and a Republican government that could attract the allegiance of the archipelago’s Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist minorities. The elimination of the Muslim religious requirement, according to historian Robert E. Elson, “became a continuing source of Muslim bitterness, nourished by the deepening failure of Islamism to gain political traction in post-independence Indonesia.”⁶⁷

The approved constitution’s new, transitional regulations allowed the PPKI to elect Sukarno as president of the Republic and Hatta as vice president. Granted full executive powers by the constitution, the president could appoint and dismiss cabinet ministers at will. In his autobiography, Sukarno said that he reacted casually to his appointment as president: “My momentous words of acceptance which will now be recorded for posterity were, ‘Okay.’ That was it. That was all I said. ‘Okay.’ I didn’t make any fuss. Nobody made any fuss. There was too much to do.”⁶⁸

During the last week of August 1945, a new, more broadly representative political body absorbed and replaced the PPKI: The Central Indonesian National Committee (*Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat*, or KNIP). Initially a purely advisory body, the KNIP

had 135 members who were selected by Sukarno, with assistance from Hatta. KNIP members were not merely “amenable political stooges,” according to historian George McT. Kahin, but men and women whom Sukarno and Hatta “deemed to be the most important leaders of the chief ethnic, religious, social, and economic groups in Indonesia.”⁶⁹

Despite his professed nonchalance at being appointed president of the Republic, Sukarno’s selection was the culmination of two decades’ work to establish a united, independent state of Indonesia. Born in East Java in 1901, Sukarno received his early education at his father’s primary school in the city of Mojokerto. He attended a Dutch secondary school in Surabaya, Java’s second largest city and a port that provided his initial exposure to political thought. In Surabaya, he was a boarder in the home of Umar Sayed Tjokroaminoto, the charismatic leader of the anticolonial mass movement *Sarekat Islam* (Islamic Association). Sukarno received an engineering degree from the Technical Institute in Bandung, but his true calling was the pursuit of *merdeka*—independence. His political organizing and gift for oratory led to his arrest for sedition in 1929 and a public trial that solidified his reputation as the leading Indonesian nationalist. Imprisoned for one year, Sukarno was arrested again in 1933 and exiled to Flores, a remote island in the eastern NEI. After a bout of malaria, he was moved to South Sumatra, where he remained until the Japanese invasion.

Released from exile, Sukarno returned to Java in July 1942. In Batavia, Lieutenant General Imamura Hitoshi, commander of the victorious Japanese 16th Army,

asked for Sukarno's cooperation in administering the island. The general, who attributed his quick military success not only to the prowess of the Japanese troops but also to the "anti-Dutch and pro-Japanese sentiments" of the Javanese, told Sukarno that he was unable to discuss Indonesian independence. This was a matter for the Japanese government to decide. Imamura did, however, pledge that his administration would "definitely result in greater political participation by the people and greater welfare than in the Dutch period." After discussing the request with fellow nationalists, Sukarno told Imamura that he and other Indonesians would cooperate with the Japanese: "However, I clearly state here that I retain my freedom of action after the end of the war."⁷⁰

Collaborating with the Japanese provided Sukarno with both an opportunity to soften the impact of a brutal occupation and a pulpit for preaching Indonesian nationalism to the masses. Under instructions from the Japanese, Sukarno made speeches that "attacked the Allies, extolled the Japanese and called upon the population to support the war effort," wrote Kahin. "An examination of these speeches, however, will support Soekarno's contention that '75 percent of their content was pure nationalism.' Moreover, they were full of subtleties and double talk which generally passed over the heads of the Japanese monitors but were meaningful to the population."⁷¹

Despite Sukarno's nationalist goals, the moral compromises of collaboration were great. His acquiescence to the *romusha* program of forced Indonesian labor was particularly troubling. To most Dutch, he was simply a "quisling, a tool of the Japs,"⁷² a point of view more or less shared by Indonesian leftists who resisted the occupation. Yet even van Mook, who considered Sukarno a "rather vain and unstable character," acknowledged after the war that the nationalist leader "seemed to exert a strange and

bewitching influence, somehow to embody the fundamental desire for independence.” Van Mook further admitted that “in all his objectionable activities he [Sukarno] was always governed by the objective of an independent Indonesia.”⁷³

Japan’s harsh, exploitive occupation not only undermined its efforts to win the loyalty of Indonesians and but also intensified resistance to both Japanese imperialism and the return of Dutch rule. Perhaps the most significant unintended consequence of the occupation was the creation of Indonesian military and paramilitary forces that were formed to defend the Japanese empire but ended up providing leaders and soldiers for the Republic’s revolutionary army. With PETA battalions and other Indonesian units dissolving after Japan’s surrender, Sukarno urged these fighters to join the Republic’s emerging internal security force. During his first major radio broadcast as president on August 23, 1945, he declared: “The time will come when you will be called on to become soldiers in the Indonesian National Army.”⁷⁴

As mentioned earlier, internal wartime developments in the NEI were only vaguely known to the allies and the British RAPWI mission preparing to occupy Java and Sumatra. There were, however, troubling intelligence reports to Mountbatten’s headquarters indicating that surrendering Japanese troops had turned over their weapons to Indonesians. “The British fear a definite uprising in Java due to the Japanese disposal of arms to the Javanese,” OSS headquarters in Ceylon reported to Washington in early September. “Incredulous of Van Mook’s assertions that the Javanese are well disposed to the Dutch, the British at SEAC anticipate that the situation in Java will be the most critical in Southeast Asia.”⁷⁵

Ali Sastroamijoyo, who was appointed as Indonesia's first ambassador to the United States in 1950 and later served as prime minister of the Republic, recalled in his memoir: "All the Dutch officials in Australia could resort to was to shout vociferously to the whole world that our independent nation was a Japanese creation which would soon disappear as soon as our leaders, especially Sukarno and Hatta, had been arrested, tried, and punished as war criminals. The Dutch had their eyes closed to reality."⁷⁶

¹ Pier, "Report on SUGARLOAF II Operation," undated, c. June 12, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 154, box 156.

² Heppner, interview by Robert Warner, undated, c. August 1945.

³ Pier, "Report on SUGARLOAF II Operation."

⁴ Ibid.; Alexander, "Report of Operation SUGARLOAF II," undated, c. June 1, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 154, box 156.

⁵ Pier, "Report on SUGARLOAF II Operation."

⁶ Ibid.; Lowe, "Narrative of Shore Party," May 25, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 154, box 156.

⁷ Alexander, "Report of Operation SUGARLOAF II"; Lowe, "Narrative of Shore Party"; Pier, "Report on SUGARLOAF II Operation."

⁸ Lowe, "Narrative of Shore Party."

⁹ Peterson personnel file, RG 226, Entry 224, box 600.

¹⁰ Pier, "Report on SUGARLOAF II Operation."

¹¹ Lowe, "Narrative of Shore Party."

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

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- ¹⁴ Alexander, “Report of Operation SUGARLOAF II.”
- ¹⁵ Pier, “Report on SUGARLOAF II Operation.”
- ¹⁶ Robert Warner, “History,” undated, c. April 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 52.
- ¹⁷ Pier, “Report on SUGARLOAF II Operation.”
- ¹⁸ OSS/SEAC, mission report, May 31, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 99, box 59.
- ¹⁹ SSU, *War Report, Vol. II*, p. 405.
- ²⁰ OSS, “Operational Report RIPLEY I,” undated, c. July 13, 1944, and Stephen L. C. Maydon, “HMS ‘TRADEWIND’—Report of Special Operation ‘RIPLEY I,’” July 3, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 154, box 154.
- ²¹ SSU, “Plan for Post War Secret Intelligence Operations in India-Burma and Southeast Asia,” undated, c. November 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 310.
- ²² Maydon, “HMS ‘TRADEWIND’—Report of Special Operation ‘RIPLEY I’”; OSS, “Operational Report RIPLEY I.”
- ²³ OSS, “Operational Report RIPLEY I.”
- ²⁴ Ripley to Whitney H. Shepardson, June 13, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 154, box 154.
- ²⁵ Maydon, “HMS ‘TRADEWIND’—Report of Special Operation ‘RIPLEY I.’”
- ²⁶ Mailuku, “Ripley I,” undated, c. September 30, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 216, box 9.
- ²⁷ Maydon, “HMS ‘TRADEWIND’—Report of Special Operation ‘RIPLEY I’”; Kauffman, Koke personnel file, RG 226, Entry A1 224, box 400.
- ²⁸ Scofield to “P” Division, August 23, 1944, and Heppner to Donovan, July 18, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 154, box 153 and Entry A1 110, box 51.
- ²⁹ Sulloway to Cheston, September 12, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 99, box 64.
- ³⁰ Nyland to Ripley, July 26, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 154, box 156.

³¹ Mansfield to Carl O. Hoffmann, May 23, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 148.

Emphasis in original.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ripley to Heppner, July 29, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 215.

³⁵ OSS/SEAC monthly report, July 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 99, box 60; Heppner to Donovan, July 18, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 51.

³⁶ Ripley to Koke, August 10, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 154, box 156.

³⁷ Kauffman to Shepardson, November 10, 1944, NARA, CIA Records Search Tool; Kauffman, "Interviews with Returned Men," November 11, 1944, RG 226, Entry 161, box 2.

³⁸ Ripley to Heppner, July 29, 1944.

³⁹ Ripley to Shepardson, June 13, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 154, box 154.

⁴⁰ Kauffman, "Operational Report, CAPRICE and RIPLEY II," October 7, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 99, box 64.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Lizzie Oliver, "The Sinking of Prisoner of War Transport Ships in the Far East," Imperial War Museums, www.iwm.org.uk.

⁴⁴ Amos D. Moscrip, "Clandestine Operation Ripley II," c. June 1945, Koke personnel file, RG 226, Entry 224, box, 400.

⁴⁵ Kauffman, "Operational Report, CAPRICE and RIPLEY II."

⁴⁶ Donovan to Marshall, December 21, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 99, box 64.

⁴⁷ “OSS Maps and Charts Used in NEI Survey,” undated, c. 1942–1945, RG 165, Entry NM–84 79, box 1742.

⁴⁸ Warren Moscow, “Abbot Low Moffat Quits Assembly to Accept State Department Post,” *New York Times*, August 17, 1943.

⁴⁹ Moffat, “Observations, Dutch New Guinea,” June 5, 1945, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 1.

⁵⁰ Ripley to Heppner, February 8, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 76; Moffat, “Observations, Dutch New Guinea,” June 5, 1945.

⁵¹ F. C. van Aerssen to John Curtin, May 14, 1943, *Historical Documents (HD)*, Vol. VI: 1942, July–1943, December, d. 192.

⁵² Moffat, “Observations, Dutch New Guinea,” June 5, 1945.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ State Dept., “An Estimate of Conditions in Asia and the Pacific at the Close of the War in the Far East and the Objectives and Policies of the United States,” June 22, 1945, *FRUS*, 1945, Vol. VI, d. 386.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Donovan to Truman, May 5, 1945, and OSS, “Problems and Objectives of US Policy,” April 2, 1945, Harry S. Truman Library (HSTL), Rose A. Conway Files, box 9.

⁵⁷ Hayes, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, p. 699.

⁵⁸ Combined Chiefs of Staff to Mountbatten, July 20, 1945, *Terminal Conference*, p. 177.

⁵⁹ Mountbatten to British Chiefs of Staff, November 21, 1945, University of Luxembourg, www.cvce.eu.

⁶⁰ R. B. Smith, “Java Today,” October 28, 1945, RG 226, Entry 210, box 489.

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- ⁶¹ Van Mook, quoted in Cheong, *H. J. van Mook*, p. 39. In February 1945, the name of the Dutch “Ministry of Colonial Affairs” was changed to the more progressive sounding “Ministry of the Overseas Territories.”
- ⁶² Mountbatten, *Post Surrender Tasks*, p. 289.
- ⁶³ Sukarno, August 17, 1945, quoted in G. Kahin, “Sukarno’s Proclamation of Indonesian Independence,” *Indonesia*, April 2000.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*; Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, p. 84.
- ⁶⁵ Sukarno, “The Pantja Sila,” Feith and Castles, editors, *Indonesian Political Thinking*, p. 49.
- ⁶⁶ Hatta, *Mohammad Hatta*, p. 241.
- ⁶⁷ Elson, “Another Look at the Jakarta Charter Controversy of 1945,” *Indonesia*, October 2009.
- ⁶⁸ Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, p. 110n; Adams, *Sukarno*, p. 222.
- ⁶⁹ “Preamble to the 1945 Constitution,” Feith and Castles, editors, *Indonesian Political Thinking*, p. 50; Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, p. 140.
- ⁷⁰ Imamura, *Memoirs, Vol. IV*, excerpted in Reid and Oki, editors, *The Japanese Experience in Indonesia*, p. 38 and pp. 72–73. For Sukarno’s recollection of the conversation, see Adams, *Sukarno*, pp. 175–176.
- ⁷¹ G. Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, p. 108.
- ⁷² Stanley K. Hornbeck to State Dept., November 13, 1945, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6448.
- ⁷³ Van Mook, *The Stakes of Democracy*, pp. 151–153; G. Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, p. 105.

⁷⁴ Sukarno, quoted in Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, p. 105.

⁷⁵ Cheston to James F. Byrnes, September 10, 1945, RG 59, Entry A1 399, box 6.

⁷⁶ Sastroamijoyo, *Milestones on My Journey*, p. 115.

Chapter 3

Hard Feelings with the British and Dutch

(1945)

On August 12, 1945, when it was clear that Japan's surrender was imminent, Colonel John G. Coughlin established a small intelligence planning committee at his OSS headquarters in Kandy, Ceylon. Heppner's successor, Coughlin was both the senior OSS officer in the India-Burma Theater (IBT) and the commander of Detachment 404 in Southeast Asia.¹ He appointed four of his subordinates to the planning committee: Lieutenant Commander Edmond Taylor (chair), the theater intelligence officer who oversaw the SI, R&A, and Counterintelligence (X-2) branches; Cora Du Bois, chief of R&A; W. Lloyd George, chief of SI; and Dillon Ripley, the former head of SI who was then serving as a special assistant to Coughlin. With the liberation of Southeast Asia at hand, the committee selected Singapore, Saigon, and Batavia as locations for new OSS field stations and decided to increase the size of the existing mission in Bangkok. In each capital, an OSS team would locate prisoners of war (POWs), gather information about Japanese war crimes, and assess the condition of prewar US property. These overt activities, however, were largely cover for the more important covert task of collecting and reporting political, economic, and military intelligence.²

Frederick E. Crockett, a major in the SI Branch, was named commander of the proposed OSS station in Batavia, codenamed ICEBERG. Then thirty-eight, "Freddy" Crockett fit the OSS stereotype of an affluent, well-connected adventurer. The son of a Boston physician, he had left Harvard after his sophomore year to join naval explorer

Richard E. Byrd's mission to the Antarctic, 1928–1930. Crockett's prewar professional experience included leadership of a scientific expedition in the South Pacific, a twenty-six-month, 30,000-mile sea voyage sponsored by the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. His co-leader and wife, anthropologist Charis Denison Crockett, also joined OSS; the expedition's ornithologist was Dillon Ripley. During the war, OSS chief William Donovan initially considered Crockett an ideal candidate to train and lead behind-the-lines guerrilla groups engaged in sabotage operations. OSS evaluators did not share this assessment, giving Crockett only "average" scores in demolitions, weapons, and physical stamina. He did, however, score "excellent" and "superior" marks in espionage subjects—for example, social relations, military intelligence, and reporting.³

Crockett's ICEBERG mission reflected a fundamental conviction of Donovan and his senior associates: The United States needed a postwar "central intelligence agency"—that is, an independent secret service that would collect and report "information obtained through its own sources on foreign intentions, capabilities and developments as seen and interpreted by Americans."⁴ Unlike other major powers, the United States did not have a peacetime espionage organization equivalent to the United Kingdom's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), also known as MI6. A key rationale for establishing an agency that centralized all foreign intelligence was the unwillingness of the Army, Navy, FBI, and State Department to coordinate their collection and analysis of information. This proprietary approach to assessing enemy intentions and capabilities was thought to have been a major factor in the intelligence failure at Pearl Harbor.

The OSS intelligence plan for Batavia and other Southeast Asian capitals was approved by Lieutenant General Raymond A. "Speck" Wheeler, commander of US

Forces in the IBT. Unlike many regular army officers, he supported the espionage, paramilitary, and psychological warfare activities of OSS. Wheeler's opinion of OSS had been informed by his own experience with Detachment 101 while managing logistics in Burma and by the views of his daughter and only child, Margaret, who worked in the New York office of OSS for two years before becoming Colonel Coughlin's administrative assistant. In an "eyes alone" message to Donovan, Coughlin wrote: "She is an ardent supporter of OSS and will be a help to the organization. She has great influence over her father, who has great confidence in her."⁵

The OSS plan to expand its regional activities also required the authorization of the SEAC commander, Admiral Mountbatten. Although his intelligence coordinating committee, "P" Division, was responsible for overseeing all allied clandestine operations in Southeast Asia, Detachment 404 resisted aspects of British supervision. During the war, Coughlin provided the British with tactical intelligence about OSS operations in Southeast Asia but withheld political and economic information that might influence the formulation of US policy. In the application to "P" Division seeking approval of ICEBERG, Detachment 404 described the operation's overt tasks but made no reference to its covert objectives. The collection of intelligence, according to Crockett's top-secret operational plan for OSS, would "have to be conducted with extreme discretion, as it is largely of a Control nature."⁶ In other words, much of the information gathered by the ICEBERG mission would not be shared with the British or other allies.

Netherlands officials in Kandy were "extremely reluctant" to allow a US intelligence team in Batavia. Determined to resume control of the NEI, the Dutch argued that the archipelago was not within the American "sphere of influence." Moreover, they

declared that OSS operatives would duplicate the work of Dutch and British intelligence organizations, which would tell the Americans everything they “needed to know.” To OSS officers, Dutch opposition to US observers appeared to be “not simply an attitude of arbitrary non-cooperation” but an attempt to control perceptions of political and economic conditions. Because Mountbatten had authorized American participation in all SEAC activities, the Dutch were obliged to approve the ICEBERG mission.⁷

Yet the British were also apprehensive about an OSS presence in the NEI and other prewar colonial territories. In his chief of mission report for August 1945, Coughlin commented to Washington on SEAC’s “great reluctance” to assist OSS operations. A thirty-seven-year-old graduate of West Point, where he had been a heavyweight boxer and a pitcher for the baseball team, Coughlin helped establish the first OSS field base in Burma and served as the OSS chief in China before his assignment in Kandy. Writing to Donovan on September 2, 1945, he reported that British intelligence officials had been surprised and amazed by his plan to station eighty-five OSS personnel in Singapore. “What would [you] need that many people for?” they asked. Coughlin did not record his reply, but he envisioned Singapore as a regional headquarters for US intelligence operations in Malaya and the NEI. Faced with British opposition and the inevitable postwar reduction of American military personnel in Southeast Asia, he decreased the recommended size of the OSS mission in Singapore to no more than twenty.⁸

Coughlin proposed to Donovan that once operations for recovering POWs were over, four-person teams—each with specialists in SI, R&A, and X-2—could form the core of US intelligence stations in Southeast Asian capitals. “[The] smaller we keep our missions the less difficulty we will have at carrying out our work,” he wrote. “We will

attract much less attention.” The intelligence collected “while not as voluminous, should be of a much higher grade.” A new postwar intelligence agency, Coughlin suggested, “should be much smaller [than OSS] and consist of highly specialized and well trained personnel. The bulk of our personnel would not qualify, in my opinion, but an excellent nucleus is present.”⁹

Despite his doubts about the professional competence of much of his command, Coughlin was enthusiastic about the OSS team selected for Batavia. He wrote to Donovan that Major Crockett was “very able,” eager, and trained in SI techniques. Coughlin also thought that OSS civilian Jane Foster would be a “very valuable” member of the ICEBERG team. The daughter of a San Francisco physician and a graduate of Mills College, Foster was a thirty-two-year-old artist who worked in Morale Operations (MO), the OSS branch responsible for deceiving the enemy with black propaganda. She was transferred to SI for Operation ICEBERG because she had lived in the NEI before the war, acquiring knowledge about the Indonesians, their language, and their customs that OSS recruiters had “found almost impossible to duplicate.” A background fact unknown to those recruiters was that Foster had joined the Communist Party in 1938. In her autobiography, she made the vague assertion that she left the party “of my own free will, some years later.”¹⁰

Traveling with an advance group of RAPWI and NICA officials aboard the British heavy cruiser *Cumberland*, Major Crockett arrived at Tanjung Priok, the port for Batavia, on September 15, 1945. He was accompanied by two OSS subordinates: Lieutenant Richard

F. Staples, a communications officer who would encode and decode messages and operate a feeble 15-watt field radio; and John E. Beltz, a Dutch-American whose qualifications for the mission included the ability to speak colloquial Malay. The intelligence operatives were billeted in two rooms at the Hôtel des Indes, a venerable establishment that served as an allied military headquarters.¹¹

One of Crockett's first meetings was with Lieutenant Commander Thomas A. Donovan, the senior American POW in Java. He had been serving on the escort carrier *Langley* on February 27, 1942, when it was attacked by Japanese aircraft south of Java and then scuttled. Although suffering from malnutrition and other debilitating effects of three-and-a-half years of imprisonment, Donovan played a leading role in the repatriation of US POWs. Jane Foster, who arrived in Batavia on a nearly empty C-54 transport aircraft that returned to Singapore with the first forty American POWs, recalled that the emaciated naval officer "was yellow from Malaria and, no matter how many K rations we gave him, it did not seem to do much good." Without regard for his health, according to Crockett, Donovan "made a complete plan for the evacuation" of POWs and "volunteered to remain in Java until evacuation proceedings were in full swing."¹²

A less inspiring aspect of the RAPWI mission was the anguish caused by the differing approaches of the United States and its British and Dutch allies. Crockett had been ordered to evacuate the US POWs, who numbered in the hundreds, as quickly as possible. This directive, he observed later, was "directly contrary to the policy of the British and Dutch," who had to tell tens of thousands of their POWs and civilian internees that an immediate release was "impracticable." For their safety, the European prisoners—mostly Dutch civilians—had to remain in their camps. Crockett reported that

expediting the release of Americans not only caused “hard feelings with the British and Dutch RAPWI” but also “a lessening of morale” among their internees and POWs.¹³

One of ICEBERG’s objectives was to learn about the fate of RIPLEY I agent J. F. Mailuku. Injured during his landing and subsequently captured by local security forces, he had been in jail during the operation’s scheduled pickup. His cover story as a traveling tradesman held up under interrogation, and he was released after three weeks of captivity. Mailuku spent the rest of the war in Java, initially working as a gardener for his aunt. Making contact with underground groups resisting the Japanese occupation, he tried to get a message to OSS in Ceylon but was unsuccessful. His failure to make contact with OSS typified the poor wartime record of SI operations in Sumatra.¹⁴

Mailuku did, however, provide the postwar ICEBERG team with information about the NEI that “would not otherwise have been obtainable.”¹⁵ When the *Cumberland* arrived in Batavia, Mailuku sought out allied authorities, who introduced him to Crockett. Mailuku was interviewed by Jane Foster on September 20. “Throughout the Indies, but particularly Java,” he said, “the great mass of the people are violently anti-Dutch. The British are looked on with more favor, and the prestige of the Americans is very high.” Refuting claims that Indonesians would welcome the return of the Dutch, he reported that Charles O. van der Plas, then the senior Netherlands official in the NEI, had re-embarked to the *Cumberland* for his own safety. Mailuku, who characterized Sukarno and Hatta as “the chief Japanese puppets during the occupation,” said that “the Dutch intend to execute both men.”¹⁶

Mailuku was “certain that the Indonesians want nothing short of independence.” Van der Plas and other Dutch officials had been repeating Queen Wilhelmina’s vague

pledge of a postwar conference to discuss NEI autonomy in internal affairs and participation in a Netherlands commonwealth. Such declarations, the agent said, “in no way” satisfied the demands of the Indonesian nationalists. Although some favored “direct armed action against all Europeans,” Sukarno was reportedly “willing to hold discussions with the Allies before resorting to arms.”¹⁷

At Mountbatten’s headquarters in Kandy, British apprehension about “possible disorders” in Java was increasing. On September 22—one week before the first British unit, the 1st Seaforth Highlanders, landed on the island—the head of “P” Division, Royal Navy Captain G. S. Garnons-Williams, addressed a top-secret memorandum to the three main allied intelligence organizations operating in the NEI: OSS, Force 136, and the Inter-Services Liaison Department (the Asian branch of SIS). Information, he wrote, was “urgently required” on such topics as the leadership of anti-Dutch movements, their military strength, and the proportion of the population likely to support forcible resistance to the restoration of Dutch rule.¹⁸

That same day Rear Admiral William R. Patterson, commander of the Fifth Cruiser Squadron and then the ranking British officer in Java, summoned Crockett to the *Cumberland* and asked him “to discuss and pass on intelligence from [his] headquarters which was of allied concern.” It is not clear what information Crockett shared with Patterson. A comment in his summary report on ICEBERG, however, suggests that the OSS operative might have been less than forthcoming: “Intelligence that the Batavia mission collected was mostly of a U.S. eyes alone nature, especially where this information was of a political nature. There was almost no intelligence that we were able

to gather of mutual interest which could be considered of any real value to the Dutch or British.”¹⁹

During his meeting with Patterson, Crockett received permission to establish an independent OSS headquarters in Batavia. In messages to Kandy, both Crockett and Foster had indicated that the Hôtel des Indes was not a secure location for clandestine meetings with Mailuku and other sources of information. Following a recommendation from the admiral, Crockett moved OSS headquarters to a marble mansion that was the former residence of the governor of West Java. Within days of moving his headquarters, Crockett was disturbed by a British decision to turn over the mansion to Lieutenant General Sir Philip Christison, the commanding officer of the SEAC forces arriving in Indonesia. In his ICEBERG report, Crockett alleged that the move was part of a British attempt “to obstruct” the work of his team.²⁰

OSS Director Donovan summarized the fragmentary intelligence from Java for President Truman on September 26. The political situation was “increasingly tense,” wrote Donovan, and “most of the natives” appeared to be “as strongly anti-Dutch” as they were anti-Japanese. A connoisseur of propaganda, the spy chief noted: “All over downtown Batavia slogans, painted in English in three-foot letters for the benefit of the Allies, advocate independence.” Donovan seemed to be of two minds about the defeated Japanese. On the one hand, they appeared to be “complying with Allied demands.” On the other hand, he suspected they were playing a double game by “subversively promoting strife.” Sukarno, whom the Dutch reportedly planned to try and execute along with Hatta, was, in Donovan’s words, “still at large.”²¹

On September 27, Jane Foster and Kenneth K. Kennedy, a lieutenant colonel in the US Army's Military Intelligence Service, made the initial American contact with Sukarno, Vice President Hatta, and ministers in the Republican cabinet. The meeting was held at the home of Foreign Minister Achmad Soebardjo. Kennedy, who conducted the interview, stressed that his sole purpose was gathering information. This conversation, he said, should not be construed as approval of the nationalists' "movement." Sukarno replied that this "was understood by all present."²²

Among the topics Kennedy raised was the nationalists' attitude toward the Japanese. The Indonesians explained that they had been willing to work with any country supporting independence and that during the war they had been "more or less pro-Japanese." Although Japan's promises of independence turned out to be false, Sukarno and his ministers acknowledged residual gratitude for the occupation: The Japanese, either inadvertently or purposefully, had helped unify the Indonesians and, through military training, prepared them for taking forceful measures "to preserve their independence."²³

When asked by Kennedy about their attitude toward allied occupation forces, the Republican ministers pledged full cooperation with the British. The Indonesians would, however, oppose any Dutch who tried to occupy their country. The nationalists appeared to have an open mind about the possibility of an international trusteeship to oversee a transition to Indonesian independence. What would not be tolerated, they said, was interference in the country's internal affairs or any "attempt to reinstate Dutch rule on the pre-war basis."²⁴

An optimistic overstatement by Sukarno and his ministers was their professed ability to maintain “law and order.” The Republic had been able to administer Batavia’s communications, transportation, and other basic public services. Looting, however, was commonplace, and armed Indonesians were growing increasingly hostile to Europeans. Contributing to urban disorder were revolutionary *pemuda*, Indonesian youth who found Sukarno and the older nationalists’ pursuit of independence too timid. *Pemuda* leaders, who had briefly kidnapped Sukarno and Hatta before the declaration of Indonesian independence, were neither predictable nor easy to control.

During the final days of September, allied intelligence reports from Java intensified anxiety among SEAC officials. Mountbatten’s initial plan to restore Dutch civil authority envisioned the Japanese as the enemy to be disarmed. The prospect of suppressing a large-scale Indonesian revolt against the Dutch was more than he had bargained for. According to Charles W. Yost, a State Department official who served as political adviser to General Wheeler, Mountbatten urged van der Plas to confer immediately with nationalist leaders and recommended a Dutch announcement offering the Indonesians “some degree of independence.” Mountbatten “made it clear” to van der Plas that British forces would not “become involved in internal politics in [the] NEI.”²⁵

British civilian and military officials made public statements to this effect in Singapore, which SEAC forces had reoccupied in early September. John J. “Jack” Lawson, the secretary of state for war, was quoted as saying that British obligations in Southeast Asia did not include fighting “for the Netherlanders against Javanese Nationalists.” On September 29, General Christison told reporters of his intention to meet with Sukarno and to assure him that “the British do not plan to meddle in the internal

affairs of Java.” He also said that he had insisted upon a conference between nationalist leaders and Dutch administrators.²⁶

These comments infuriated Dutch officials, many of whom never forgave the British for the general’s politically charged public declarations. The Netherlands, unable to provide a significant military force of their own, protested to London and issued a statement to the press denouncing efforts in “certain British circles to recognize the so-called Soekarno Government as the de facto government and to persuade us to have discussions with them.” The Dutch statement, which characterized Sukarno as “a tool and puppet of the Japanese,” included a categorical refusal to “sit at the conference table with this man who may have certain demagogic gifts but who had proved to be a mere opportunist in choosing the means to attain his end.” Stanley K. Hornbeck, the US ambassador in The Hague, reported to Washington that virtually all of the embassy’s Dutch contacts were bewildered by and indignant over the British approach to occupying the NEI.²⁷

An executive order signed by President Truman officially dissolved OSS, effective October 1, 1945. The liquidation of the wartime agency was quicker than Donovan wanted or anticipated. According to Donovan’s biographer, Truman recognized the importance of a peacetime intelligence service but “did not want Donovan or his OSS to be a part of it.”²⁸ During the war, OSS had encroached on the turf of military intelligence agencies, the FBI, and the State Department. Donovan’s bureaucratic enemies opposed his proposed central intelligence organization and were eager for his return to private life.

“A lot of people resented his close ties with Roosevelt,” recalled Fisher Howe, a special assistant to Donovan. “And he was totally dependent on those ties.”²⁹

Truman’s executive order transferred SI and other OSS operational branches to the War Department, a temporary expedient to preserve their capabilities for possible future use. Renamed the Strategic Services Unit (SSU), the group was led by Donovan’s deputy for intelligence, Brigadier General John Magruder. The State Department absorbed the R&A Branch, which was renamed the Interim Research Intelligence Service (IRIS). Truman wanted Secretary of State James F. Byrnes “to take the lead in developing a comprehensive and coordinated foreign intelligence program.”³⁰ State Department officials, however, resisted the notion of a centralized intelligence organization and thought that the department’s geographic desks should control the collection and analysis of foreign intelligence.

The organizational changes in Washington had little immediate impact on the operations of intelligence stations in the field. In Batavia, the preprinted words “Office of Strategic Services” on outgoing telegrams were simply blacked out, replaced by “Strategic Services Unit.” And while Donovan may have been driven out of Washington, the field station in Batavia continued its planned growth. In addition to Crockett, Foster, Staples, and Beltz, the station’s personnel included Major Thomas L. Fisher II (SI), Captain Richard H. Shaw (X-2), Second Lieutenant Richard K. Stuart (R&A), and Private First Class Tek Y. Lin (MO/interpreter).

Ironically, perhaps the most important SSU officer operating in Indonesia, Robert Koke, was not a full-time member of the ICEBERG team in October 1945. Then a major and the commanding officer of the SSU mission in Singapore, he had been conducting

clandestine operations in Southeast Asia longer than almost any other American intelligence officer. Koke was an occasionally moody operative whose temperament was described as “mercurial” by one colleague.³¹ Evaluations of his ability as an intelligence officer, however, were universally favorable. Edmond Taylor called him one of the “most brilliant and creative planners” in the SI Branch. A postwar SSU assessment of Koke’s potential for further clandestine work declared: “He has a great facility for gaining the loyalty and friendship of natives and usually succeeds in making friends among such reserved and potentially hostile individuals as Dutch businessmen.”³²

Born in Pasadena in 1910, Robert Alden Koke attended UCLA, worked at MGM studios, and owned a hotel in Bali before the war. While living there, he learned to speak Dutch and Malay and introduced the sport of surfing to the island. Recruited by OSS because of his knowledge of the NEI and his language ability, Koke trained agents, escorted them on submarine operations, and led a clandestine intelligence unit supporting the British XV Indian Corps on the Arakan coast of Burma. After the surrender of Japan, Koke was the commanding officer of the OSS team that accompanied British forces reoccupying Singapore. In addition to helping release and repatriate POWs, he established an OSS mission in Singapore that served as a regional supply base and a clearing point for intelligence communications from Malaya and Indonesia. He advised the OSS station in Kuala Lumpur on operations and made several visits to Batavia. According to a commendation in his personnel file, Koke “was remarkably successful in collecting much valuable information at the top levels of military and local government circles in Java.”³³

On October 9, 1945, one day after the death of the first British soldier in Java, Koke and three other SSU officers interviewed Sukarno and representatives of his government. Seeking speedy negotiations to resolve the question of Indonesian independence, the Republican officials wanted intervention by the United Nations and expected the British to be their means of communicating with the recently established world body. The SSU officers offered little encouragement on either count. British authority, they said, was restricted to military occupation and to the repatriation of POWs and internees. Moreover, the Indonesians' preferred approach to negotiations would be "difficult" because the UN did not recognize the Republic.³⁴

During this meeting, Sukarno and his ministers voiced their fears about the Dutch "using the British occupation as a cover to achieve a coup d'etat." Flatly refusing to deal with NICA, the Indonesians warned that the situation was "rapidly deteriorating." They described provocations by Dutch troops, who had just started to arrive in Java in small numbers. A number of Javanese, the Republicans said, had been killed by "irresponsible shooting" from nervous, "trigger happy" Dutch forces. Many of these assaults were "made from trucks with the marking 'USA' on them," and "many of the Dutch are dressed in U.S. uniforms." Koke explained that the trucks and uniforms were Lend-Lease supplies issued in Australia. "The U.S.," he said, "had no responsibility for it." Sukarno replied that Indonesian leaders knew this. The masses, however, did not, and they have concluded that "the U.S. approves of these assaults."³⁵

That same day, Koke and other SSU officers were eyewitnesses to the kind of Dutch provocation mentioned by Sukarno and his ministers. Down the street from SSU headquarters, shouting Dutch soldiers waved their weapons while forcibly evicting some

twenty-five Indonesians from a building facing the headquarters of KNIL commander Lieutenant General L. H. van Oyen, who had arrived in Batavia a few days earlier. When asked what the soldiers were doing, a Dutch officer replied, “Moving the Indonesians out as they did not want them across the street from Gen. van Oyen.” The officer further observed that “the Indonesians were spies.” American intelligence operatives, however, subsequently learned that the building facing van Oyen’s headquarters was a relief and welfare center and that the alleged spies were in their mid-teens. It seemed that the Indonesians’ only “crime” had been occupying a building flying the ubiquitous red-and-white nationalist flag.³⁶

While Koke and others waited to see if the prisoners would be carried off in trucks with US markings, a passing automobile with a nationalist flag on the windshield backfired. Two Dutch guards immediately fired automatic weapons at the vehicle, which crashed into a low wall at SSU headquarters. The driver was dead, his three passengers were wounded, one mortally, and all four were unarmed. “The Dutch officer who came up to the car after the shooting stopped seemed dazed and at a loss as to why it had happened,” Foster reported to Lloyd George, the SI chief in Kandy. The SSU officers who witnessed the incident concluded that nervous Dutch guards had erroneously connected the car with the evictions and “opened fire out of sheer panic.”³⁷

A less blatant manifestation of Batavia’s dangers was the disappearance of agent Mailuku. He and an acquaintance who reportedly worked for Dutch intelligence went to a meeting of Indonesian nationalists but never returned from it. According to one account, the two spies were last seen riding in a car flying a red-and-white flag. “On each side of them there were other men perhaps guards,” said an SSU source whose codename was

PENNY. Because there had been no word from Mailuku nor ransom demands from his captors, PENNY believed that Mailuku was “executed” for associating with a Dutch agent.³⁸

Charles Yost, the State Department representative at SEAC headquarters, forwarded his views on British policy in Southeast Asia to Washington on October 9, 1945. Then thirty-seven, Yost was an astute diplomat who years later achieved the highest professional rank in the Foreign Service, career ambassador. In his report to the department, he observed that the British were “acutely embarrassed” by their position in the NEI and Indochina. They sought to restore “Occidental prestige” in these areas because nationalist “successes” there would have unwelcome “repercussions” in British Malaya. Yet neither the Netherlands nor France, wrote Yost, appeared willing to make necessary concessions to the nationalists. Moreover, the United Kingdom had no desire, much less domestic political support, for spending “British blood and treasure in the reconquest” of the NEI and Indochina.³⁹

Commenting on British policy toward the United States, Yost acknowledged the two countries’ generally close cooperation around the world. There was, however, “ample evidence” that most British officials in Southeast Asia, and at least some in London, found increasing US interest in the region “both disconcerting and profoundly irritating.” The American commitment to maintaining political and economic stability in the region was valued by the UK, but any US actions to support these goals “should always be carried out in a manner agreeable to Britain.” Although he doubted that

differing US and UK views about Southeast Asia would interfere with the overall bilateral relationship, Yost predicted that the United States could expect vigorous British resistance to threats to their prewar “political, commercial and aeronautical preeminence” in the region.⁴⁰

Dutch unhappiness with the United Kingdom was conveyed to the State Department on October 10, when Alexander Loudon, the Netherlands ambassador to the United States, presented his government’s official view of recent events in the NEI. In a meeting with Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Loudon delivered a report, based on an assessment of the situation by van Mook, that criticized SEAC’s late-arriving, “extremely weak” occupation force in Java and “the unfortunate initial statements” of General Christison and Jack Lawson. These statements boosted the confidence of Indonesian leaders, whom the Dutch characterized as “very young and completely irresponsible individuals.” The report further claimed that the British policy of non-intervention “played into the hands of extremists” and made “it extremely difficult to establish contact with loyal and moderate Indonesians who under present conditions risk their lives in doing so.” The record of this meeting shows no substantive response from Acheson, who said that he would share the Dutch government’s views with Secretary of State Byrnes.⁴¹

In Java, Major Crockett faced the consequences of his own difficulties with the British: His assignment as OSS/SSU chief of station was over because of a British request for his relief. “They asked for my recall as being uncooperative,” he wrote in his ICEBERG report. In Crockett’s view, however, it was the British who had been unhelpful, refusing essential supplies, commandeering OSS vehicles, and denying access

to essential local currency: “They stalled us, they sidetracked us, they deceived us in every possible way.”⁴²

Crockett’s principal conclusion about ICEBERG was that it symbolized a new kind of unilateral “enterprise” for OSS in Southeast Asia: “Contrasted with wartime operations where as an American unit we were recognized as a part of a team with a mutual objective, the Batavia mission could at no time be considered a joint and cooperative mission.” Showing little understanding of SEAC’s problems in Indonesia, Crockett appeared to have a monolithic view of British and Dutch interests. The Europeans, he alleged, were “very worried that U.S. observers would report unfavorably, even though accurately, on their subtle endeavors to restore a virtual ‘status quo ante bellum.’”⁴³

Like many other anticolonial Americans, Crockett failed to recognize that the SEAC occupation of Indonesia was more of a threat to traditional Anglo-Dutch solidarity than a colonial conspiracy. A few days after Crockett left Batavia on October 10, Dutch Foreign Minister van Kleffens amplified the report Loudon had delivered to the State Department, telling Ambassador Hornbeck that the United Kingdom had “let down” the Netherlands and that the British performance in the NEI was “a typical example of their notorious habit of ‘muddling through.’” In London, the Netherlands ambassador informed UK Prime Minister Clement Attlee: “If the British did not give better help to the Dutch, it would adversely affect future British-Netherlands relations.” Sir George Sansom, a senior UK diplomat in Washington, called this threat “outrageous.”⁴⁴

One week after Crockett’s recall, Jane Foster left Batavia—a departure that was also involuntary. Her SSU superiors, apparently unwilling to risk the repercussions from

any harm that might befall her, seemed to have decided that the NEI was too dangerous for a woman. They had made a similar decision once before, when Christison's forces first landed in Java. Anticipating trouble, Crockett requested a British security force for OSS headquarters but was informed that such troops were neither available nor necessary. Foster, temporarily evacuated to Singapore, complained to Lloyd George that she "could not understand why Major Crockett should be made more responsible for my safety than for the other members of the mission."⁴⁵

British officials were undoubtedly pleased by Foster's permanent removal from Java. Crockett praised her "skill and diligence" in collecting political intelligence and "her dealings with the nationalists' representatives"—activities the British likely perceived as unhelpful meddling in their RAPWI mission. Detachment 404's summary report for October 1945 noted that the British had objected on several occasions "to any contact on our part with the leaders of the Nationalist cause. As a result of this, contact which had been established was required to lapse temporarily until more subtle means of communication could be established."⁴⁶

The members of ICEBERG who remained in Batavia shared a postwar longing that was contributing to a theater-wide turnover of SSU personnel: American citizen-spies wanted to go home. In a message to Kandy, Major Thomas Fisher, Crockett's successor as SSU station chief, used the military's phonetic alphabet to communicate this urge: "All eligible here desire return to Uncle Sugar [the United States] as soon as can be spared."⁴⁷ A graduate of West Point, Fisher had led the fifty OSS personnel attached to the British

34th Indian Corps in postwar Malaya and established an OSS field station in Kuala Lumpur. With the war over, he indicated a desire to resume his career with the regular army but volunteered to stay in Batavia as an intelligence officer as long as necessary.

Like all SSU operatives, Fisher was under strict instructions to be apolitical in his conversations with Indonesians, the British, and the Dutch. But also like his fellow intelligence officers, Fisher had little sympathy for the Dutch in the NEI. Two significant exceptions to the anti-Dutch sentiment within the SI Branch had been Amry Vandebosch, a professor of political science and an authority on the NEI, and Willem Nyland, a chemist who had worked in the NEI before the war. Both were Dutch Americans who thought OSS officers in Southeast Asia were insufficiently cooperative with their ally and who resigned from the organization before the end of the war. Dillon Ripley, who disparaged their performance as intelligence officers, reported to OSS headquarters in Washington: "All the Dutchmen that we have had, Nyland included, seem to have ended up by being somewhat more pro-Dutch than pro-American, and I don't believe have been of any significant help to OSS."⁴⁸

Major Fisher thought that the absence of American newspaper reporters writing about the "true situation" in the postwar NEI was allowing the "Dutch view" to prevail in the United States. Moreover, he believed that the US government recognized neither the seriousness of the conflict in Java nor the need for "some channel of negotiation." On October 15, 1945, he wrote a top-secret, "eyes only" cable to the theater chiefs of SSU and US military intelligence, informing them that the nationalists would likely accept a "trusteeship with a definite promise of independence" at a fixed future date. Without negotiations toward that end, they would fight the Dutch, who continued to be "blindly

provocative.” The only solution, according to Fisher, was “for the British army to take firm control of the Dutch, keep them orderly and out of harm’s way, and allow no more Dutch to land” in Java until negotiations through a third party were safely underway. “Every hour of stalemate,” he warned, “brings anarchy closer.”⁴⁹

SSU director Magruder forwarded the substance of this and other intelligence reports from Batavia to Colonel Alfred McCormack, a lawyer and military intelligence officer whom Secretary Byrnes had recently appointed his special assistant for intelligence and the head of IRIS. Because the State Department still lacked a representative in Batavia, SSU reporting informed portions of a well-publicized speech by John Carter Vincent, director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs. A forty-five-year-old China specialist whose career was subsequently destroyed by Senator Joseph McCarthy’s reckless search for communists in the US government, Vincent discussed American objectives and policies in the Far East at the annual forum of the Foreign Policy Association in New York on October 20. Commenting briefly on Southeast Asia, Vincent acknowledged that the situation was not “to the liking” of Americans, Europeans, or Asians. The United States, he declared, did not question the sovereignty of the French in Indochina nor the Dutch in Indonesia. US officials did, however, “earnestly hope” that the Europeans would reach “an early agreement” with the nationalists opposing them. “It is not our intention to assist or participate in forceful measures for the imposition of control by the territorial sovereigns,” he said, “but we would be prepared to lend our assistance, if requested to do so, in efforts to reach peaceful agreements in these disturbed areas.”⁵⁰

The US offer to facilitate negotiations in Southeast Asia seemed encouraging to nationalists in Indonesia, who had long hoped that the United States or the United Nations would impose a settlement upholding their independence. Perhaps assuming that such a significant announcement could only come from a member of President Truman's cabinet, Indonesians initially attributed Vincent's statement to Treasury Secretary Frederick M. Vinson. Dutch officials, however, knew who had made the offer and were disturbed by it. They insisted that the crisis in the archipelago was an internal affair of the Netherlands government. Any form of third-party mediation would imply recognition of the nationalists and the validity of at least some of their claims. Henri L. F. K. van Vredenburg, counselor in the Dutch embassy in Washington, asked the State Department to whom its offer of "assistance" was addressed. Vincent replied, somewhat implausibly, that his offer was "addressed to no one. It is a simple indication of our *willingness* to be helpful."⁵¹

¹ In October 1944, the CBI theater was abolished and divided into two separate theaters: China and India-Burma. SEAC was not responsible for India, but the new US theater was, including the OSS detachments there. The designation "OSS/SEAC" was eventually phased out when referring to OSS in Southeast Asia in favor of "Detachment 404."

² Coughlin to Donovan, August 18, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 20. According to a subsequent SSU report on "future intelligence activities," a decision was made—undoubtedly by Donovan—on August 4, 1945, to change the OSS wartime mission in India, Burma, and Southeast Asia to providing "permanent strategic intelligence." (Peter Karlow to director, October 17, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 345.)

³ Crockett personnel file, RG 226, Entry A1 224, box 154.

⁴ Donovan to Harry S. Truman, August 25, 1945, *FRUS, 1945–1950, Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment (EIE)*, d. 3.

⁵ Coughlin to Donovan, June 24, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 20. Wheeler, somewhat controversially, included Margaret in his party to observe the official Japanese surrender in Singapore. “He justified Peggy’s going by saying that Eisenhower took his son [John] with him every place that he went,” wrote Coughlin. Mountbatten approved her travel but “thought that Peggy should wear slacks and the correspondents should not know about it.” (Coughlin to Donovan, August 18, 1945.)

⁶ OSS Kandy to “P” Division, August 11, 1945, and Crockett, “Basic Plan, ICEBERG,” August 14, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 25.

⁷ Crockett to Coughlin, August 29, 1945, and Coughlin, “Chief of Mission Report—August,” September 1, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, boxes 28 and 20.

⁸ Coughlin, “Chief of Mission Report—August,” and Coughlin to Donovan, September 2, 1945, RG 226, Entry NM–54 6, box 8.

⁹ Coughlin to Donovan, September 2, 1945.

¹⁰ Coughlin to Donovan, August 18, 1945; Foster personnel file, RG 226, Entry A1 223, box 154; Foster, *An Unamerican Lady*, p. 83.

¹¹ Crockett, “Operational Report—ICEBERG,” October 25, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 25.

¹² Foster, *An Unamerican Lady*, p.143; Crockett, “Lt. Comdr. T. A. Donovan, Commendation,” October 19, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 31.

¹³ Crockett, “Operational Report—ICEBERG,” October 25, 1945.

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- ¹⁴ Mailuku, "Ripley I," undated, c. September 30, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 216, box 9; SSU, *War Report, Vol. II*, p. 405.
- ¹⁵ William C. Wilkinson Jr., "Chief of Mission Report—October 1945," November 5, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 20.
- ¹⁶ Foster, "Current Political Situation," September 20, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 21.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ G. S. Garnons-Williams, memorandum, September 22, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 28.
- ¹⁹ Crockett, "Operational Report—ICEBERG," October 25, 1945.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*; Crockett to Coughlin, September 20, 1945, and Foster to George, September 20, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 25.
- ²¹ Donovan to Truman, September 26, 1945, HSTL, Rose A. Conway Files, Box 10.
- ²² Kennedy, memorandum of conversation, September 27, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 21.
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ Yost to War Dept., September 29, 1945, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6443.
- ²⁶ "British Units Begin Occupying of Java," *New York Times*, September 30, 1945; "Daily G-2 Summary," October 2, 1945, RG 493, Entry UD-UP 20, box 3.
- ²⁷ Hugh S. Cumming Jr., memorandum, October 8, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Vol. VI*, d. 846; Hornbeck to State Dept., October 5, 1945, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6443.
- ²⁸ Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan*, p. 4.

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- ²⁹ Howe, interview by Charles Stuart Kennedy, February 3, 1998.
- ³⁰ Truman to Byrnes, September 20, 1945, and John J. McCloy to Magruder, September 26, 1945, *FRUS, EIE, 1945–1950*, d. 15 and d. 95.
- ³¹ James A. Hamilton to Heppner, September 5, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 52.
- ³² Taylor to Coughlin, March 26, 1945, and SSU, “Plan for Permanent Secret Intelligence, Far East,” February 1946, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 22 and Entry A1 210, box 516.
- ³³ Koke personnel file, RG 226, Entry A1 224, box 400.
- ³⁴ Foster to George, October 9, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 21.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶ Foster to George, October 11, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 21.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*
- ³⁸ Foster, “Interview with Penny re disappearance of Humpy,” undated, c. October 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 21.
- ³⁹ Yost to State Dept., October 9, 1945, RG 84, Entry UD 3269, box 2.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁴¹ Netherlands embassy to State Dept., October 10, 1945, RG 84, Entry UD 3269, box 2; Acheson, memorandum of conversation, October 10, 1945, *FRUS, 1945, Vol. VI*, d. 853.
- ⁴² Crockett, “Operational Report—ICEBERG,” October 25, 1945. According to Lieutenant Colonel William C. Wilkinson Jr., Coughlin’s successor as commander of OSS/IBT, British complaints about Crockett were only part of the reason for his relief. The US military’s IBT headquarters alleged that Crockett had improperly promised free transportation to the United States for the fifty-three US civilian internees evacuated from

Java. An investigation after Crockett's recall revealed that this allegation was based on a "misunderstanding" among some interneers. Another reason for his relief was Wilkinson's belief that Crockett had committed errors in judgment and made OSS/SSU too conspicuous in Java. (Wilkinson to Magruder, October 17, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 29.)

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Hornbeck to State Dept., October 14, 1945, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6439; Moffat, memorandum of conversation, October 18, 1945, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6448. The latter document is the unredacted version of the memorandum reproduced in *FRUS, 1945, Vol. VI*, d. 855.

⁴⁵ Foster to George, October 5, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 21.

⁴⁶ Wilkinson, "Chief of Mission Report–October," November 5, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 20.

⁴⁷ Fisher to Howard Maxwell, October 11, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 21.

⁴⁸ Ripley to Aubrey D. Hutcheson, November 8, 1944, RG 226, Entry A1 154, box 156.

⁴⁹ Fisher to Wilkinson and R. B. Pape, October 15, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 211, box 9.

⁵⁰ Vincent, State Dept. press release, October 18, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 21.

⁵¹ Vincent, memorandum, October 22, 1945, *FRUS, VI*, d. 850. Emphasis in original.

Chapter 4

Both Sides Are Beginning to Dislike Us Equally

(1945–1946)

On October 21, 1945, Walter Foote realized his wartime ambition of returning to Batavia to reopen the US consulate. The three-and-a-half years since his flight from the invading Japanese army had not been good ones for him professionally. In the summer of 1942, the State Department instructed him to establish an office in Melbourne for maintaining relations with NEI officials who had been evacuated to Australia. His principal—and confidential—duty was to provide US military intelligence with “any information he may acquire with regard to the Indies.” A secondary responsibility was reporting directly to the State Department “on political matters pertaining to the Netherlands.” His office was “completely separate” from other American consular and diplomatic missions in Australia, and the department provided him with his own set of codes.¹

Foote described his assignment in Australia as “tiresome and sometimes depressing.”² One reason for his unhappiness was the difficulty of collecting meaningful information from Dutch officials, many of whom transferred to the military and were reluctant to share confidential information with a civilian. And despite angling for a job with MacArthur, he never received an appointment to the general’s staff. Exacerbating Foote’s discontent was the State Department’s tendency to ignore him. In January 1944, he observed to his superiors in Washington: “I have been and am now working in the dark.”³

On May 1, 1944, the State Department instructed Foote to return to Washington to prepare for an assignment as consul general in Surinam. By the time Foote reached Washington, the State Department had shifted his posting to Curaçao. The consular assignment in the Caribbean was difficult, according to a letter from Foote to the department's chief of personnel: "I have had a tough time here but my only gripe is that I have not been able to do as much constructive work as I had planned."⁴ (As would be the case in his despatches from postwar Batavia, Foote claimed that insufficient support from the State Department prevented him from being more productive.) In February 1945, he gratefully received instructions to return to Washington for a temporary assignment in advance of his appointment as consul general in the NEI. According to van Mook, the US government had planned to appoint someone younger than Foote, then approaching the age of sixty. Van Mook, however, urged the State Department to select Foote because of his familiarity with the NEI and its returning Dutch officials.⁵

In his first postwar report to the State Department, dated October 25, 1945, Foote described Batavia as "nearly dead." Food, water, and local transportation were scarce; the city's streets were "unsafe at night"; and thousands of Dutch women and children remained in internment camps that were "far from safe." The Indonesians and Dutch were politically deadlocked, and Sukarno's "movement" was "far deeper than thought." The Dutch, wrote Foote, felt bitter toward their allies, especially the British, who had recently revealed "Dutch atrocities" to the press. He summed up the situation as "confused" and "chaotic," with "no solution in sight."⁶

Foote's initial message to the department was reasonably balanced, but he soon began parroting the Dutch point of view in his despatches. On November 12, for

example, he reported “growing opinion” in Batavia that the nationalists’ cause was not a “real freedom movement” but a Japanese-inspired effort “to create chaos.” Colonel Simon H. Spoor, chief of NEFIS, pedaled a similar line to SSU officers, claiming that the unrest in the NEI was a continuation of World War II: “The world should be informed that the allies are still fighting the Japanese and that the political situation should not confuse the basic aim.”⁷

The Dutch propaganda mischaracterized both the Indonesians and the Japanese. Japanese troops were under orders from both SEAC and their own high command to protect POWs and internees until relieved by allied forces. Although some had turned over weapons to the nationalists, and others even fought alongside the Indonesians against the British, many more Japanese troops were engaged in operations on behalf of the understrength occupation forces. According to a report by SSU station chief Thomas Fisher, leaders of the British 37th Indian Infantry Brigade said that the 4,000 Japanese soldiers performing security duties in Bandung were “cooperating 100 percent in carrying out any orders given to them.” And after visiting the coastal town of Semarang, SSU officer Richard Shaw quoted Brigadier Richard B. W. Bethell’s one-word assessment of the Japanese troops under his command: “magnificent.”⁸

The Dutch undoubtedly influenced Foote’s conviction that General Christison was largely responsible for their problems in Java. In November 1945, J. W. Meijer Ranneft, vice president of the NEI parliament before the war and a member of the Netherlands Council of State after it, wrote to Foote, describing Christison as “an ignorant British general.” Meijer Ranneft, who considered Foote’s appointment as consul

general “the only good point” in the current state of affairs, declared that Christison “acts like a traitor of Western civilization.”⁹

Although Foote’s own comments about Christison lacked such racist venom, the American diplomat agreed with Dutch officials that a leading cause of the burgeoning Indonesian revolution was the general’s initial public comment about “not going to the Netherlands Indies to return the country to the Dutch.” Foote also faulted Christison’s policy of never firing first on the Indonesians. “This,” Foote wrote to the State Department, “was interpreted as indicating British sympathy for the Indonesian movement.”¹⁰ According to W. Macmahon Ball, Australia’s political representative in Christison’s command, Foote believed “that an immediate show of Allied force [was] necessary” and “deplored the fact that the American Government [was] too sentimental to accept his expert advice.”¹¹

Foote’s pro-Dutch bias disturbed Sutan Sjahrir, the first prime minister of the Republic. His appointment was part of a broader restructuring of the government that curbed the near-absolute power of the presidency and transformed the KNIP from an advisory council into a parliamentary body. Sukarno, under fire from *pemuda* fighters for his timidity with the British and Dutch, agreed to share legislative power with the KNIP. A smaller KNIP working committee, chaired by Sjahrir, exercised day-to-day authority on behalf of the legislature. On November 14, the Republic announced the formation of a cabinet led by Sjahrir and accountable to the KNIP. In his inaugural speech as prime minister, Sjahrir discussed the recent proclamation encouraging the establishment of a new, multiparty political system: “The Republic will ban no political organization as long as its tenets or actions do not run counter to recognized democratic principles.”¹²

A thirty-six-year-old intellectual, Sjahrir had studied law in the Netherlands, suffered exile in a Dutch concentration camp for his prewar nationalist politics, and resisted the Japanese during the war. The State Department described him as “thoughtful, reserved, tolerant, and self-possessed.”¹³ Critical of the Republic’s founders for their collaboration with the Japanese, Sjahrir was a socialist who acknowledged the Republic’s need for investment by Western capitalists. Preferring *diplomasi* (negotiations) over *perjuangan* (struggle), he was a nationalist leader with whom the Dutch were willing to speak. At his initial meeting with van Mook and Christison on November 17, Sjahrir felt that Dutch and British officials were issuing orders and that the attitude of Mountbatten’s political adviser, Denning, was “bullying and insulting.” Sjahrir told SSU operatives Robert Koke and Richard Stuart that he wanted a neutral representative to be present at any future meeting with the Europeans: “He would prefer such a man to be an American but he does not want Foote.”¹⁴

SSU officers had their own doubts about the consul general. “He is more Dutch than the Dutch themselves,” one operative observed. “To do him justice, he likes the Indonesians, but his affection for them is too much of the typical colonial ‘nice children’ sort.”¹⁵ Edmond Taylor, the SSU theater commander in late 1945, praised the work of his officers to Director Magruder and criticized Foote, although not by name: “Owing to their training and to the fact that they have no other responsibilities than to report, SSU field representatives sometimes appear to have a broader and more objective approach to the intelligence problems with which they are confronted than other official observers. This is perhaps particularly marked in Batavia.”¹⁶

For his part, Foote did not appreciate competing political analyses from American intelligence officers. A report from SSU's Southeast Asia headquarters, which moved from Kandy to Singapore in late November, declared: "Consulates everywhere, except in Batavia, are still giving our work an enthusiastic welcome." Robert Koke, who became the SSU station chief in Batavia on December 2, 1945, worried that he might have difficulties with Foote. Don S. Garden, head of SI's Southeast Asia section in Washington, discussed the matter with an unidentified representative of the State Department who said that Koke had "nothing to fear." Because the department valued SSU intelligence reports from Batavia, "Foote would get his ears pinned back if he got obstreperous."¹⁷

In Java, the final months of 1945 were the most chaotic, violent period of the Indonesian revolution. Not just anticolonial warfare, the so-called *Bersiap* ("be prepared") period was also a lawless social upheaval in which xenophobic and opportunistic forces largely beyond the control of the Republic murdered thousands of Dutch, Indo-European, and Chinese civilians. "The Indonesian Revolution was not totally pure," observed Abu Hanifah, a revolutionary leader in West Java who served in the first cabinet after independence. Without an effective police force and "a real army," he wrote in his memoir, it was "impossible" to punish or prevent atrocities by "wild men and undisciplined armed irregulars."¹⁸

During the *Bersiap* months, organized violence in Java escalated from small-scale skirmishes between Indonesian and Dutch forces—"with equal provocation on both

sides,” according to SSU¹⁹—to a division-strength operation by the British to occupy the port of Surabaya. From late October until the end of November, the guerrilla warfare in that city was the revolution’s most intense sustained combat. The British 49th Indian Infantry Brigade was decimated, suffering 427 casualties.²⁰ Estimated losses for Indonesian fighters, who lacked the firepower, training, and experience of the British troops, were approximately 7,000. An SSU analysis of Surabaya’s occupation observed that the Indonesians had fought courageously and that their street-fighting tactics had been “elementary but reasonably effective.” Despite the severe Indonesian losses, SSU reported that travel outside of the city’s defensive perimeter was “safe only for combat units of considerable strength.”²¹

During the fighting and the appeals by Republican leaders to end it, US officials walked a diplomatic tightrope, balancing a desire to be a good ally to the Netherlands with their rhetorical commitment to self-determination. The difficulty of maintaining this posture was evident from the perceptions of the principal groups in the NEI. Most nationalists admired the United States for defeating Japan and for espousing independence and self-government. But according to SSU officers Koke and Stuart, US prestige was jeopardized by the failure to make a “specific statement” supporting the Republic. The intelligence officers criticized a recent declaration by Secretary of State Byrnes prohibiting the use of US-marked military equipment for “political purposes.” Indonesians, they wrote, “recognize the statement for what it is—a measure which hurts no one, helps no one, and clarifies nothing.” Continued silence about the nationalists would be interpreted as US “agreement with Dutch and British policy.”²²

Equivocation by the United States also bothered Dutch officials. “The Dutch,” according to an SSU report from Batavia, “resent American neutrality in the present Indonesian situation and believe that the U.S. has failed to live up to its wartime agreements by not giving aid to the Dutch.” In The Hague, Dutch diplomats used more tactful language to communicate a similar message to Ambassador Hornbeck. They suggested that US policy lacked a “sympathetic understanding of the situation in the Indies.” As an example, they cited the unwillingness of the United States to equip former Dutch prisoners of war in the Philippines and transport them to the NEI.²³

US officials, however, agreed with the British that landing additional Dutch troops on Java at this time, December 1945, “would only aggravate an already intolerable situation.” The United Kingdom recognized Netherlands sovereignty in the NEI, and “British propaganda directives for the Far East” stressed the avoidance of language indicating that the Indonesians had “either a Government or an army.” Nevertheless, the British continued to encourage the Dutch to make “some constructive concessions” to the Republic.²⁴

As the occupying force in the NEI, the United Kingdom faced what the Foreign Office called “the problem of maintaining friendly co-operation with the Dutch without putting herself into antagonism with the general cause of nationalism in Asia.”²⁵ In a message to Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin, Mountbatten reported that he was trying to execute his RAPWI mission in the NEI without “annoying” the Dutch and Indonesians. He concluded, however, that “both sides are beginning to dislike us equally.” Complicating UK relations with the region’s nationalists was the awkward fact that most of the SEAC troops in the NEI were from India, which was on the brink of achieving its

own independence from the British. In the words of a US military intelligence report, the United Kingdom was “in the unfortunate position of subduing an Asiatic people mainly with Asiatic troops.”²⁶

State Department officials asked the UK government if it would be helpful for Ambassador Hornbeck to informally encourage the Dutch to continue “discussions with all Indonesian factions.” Lord Halifax, the British ambassador in Washington, delivered the UK reply to Byrnes on December 10. While appreciative of the US offer, the Foreign Office believed that the problem was not Dutch reluctance to meet with Indonesian leaders but the inability of those “leaders to control extremists.” The United Kingdom preferred a more general public statement from Washington “expressing the hope that negotiations would continue.” Seeking to distance themselves from Dutch objectives in the NEI, British officials thought that it would be “particularly helpful” if the US statement acknowledged SEAC’s “important Allied task” in Java: “completing [the] surrender of [the] Japanese and looking after Allied prisoners of war and internees.”²⁷

With Byrnes and Halifax agreeing that “a political settlement was the only practical solution” in the NEI, the State Department issued a press release on December 19. In accordance with British wishes, the statement emphasized SEAC’s responsibilities for repatriating disarmed Japanese and allied POWs and internees. This mission, the news release declared with diplomatic understatement, had “been complicated by the differences between Indonesians and the Netherlands authorities.” With talks between the Republicans and Dutch apparently suspended, the United States urged an early resumption of “conversations” that could potentially lead to “a peaceful settlement recognizing alike the natural aspirations of the Indonesian peoples and the legitimate

rights and interests of the Netherlands.” Referring to the principles and ideals of the UN charter, the statement declared: “Extremist or irresponsible action—or failure to present or consider specific proposals can lead only to a disastrous situation.”²⁸

Foote reported to the State Department that British and Dutch officials in Batavia found the statement constructive. He was, however, unable to get an immediate reaction from Sukarno or Sjahrir, who were in Jogjakarta, a nationalist stronghold in Central Java that would soon become the Republic’s capital. On December 24, Richard Stuart interviewed three Indonesian cabinet ministers, who were gratified by the expression of US interest in Indonesia. They particularly appreciated the statement’s reference to the UN, which the Republic was eager to join. Yet the ministers claimed to be “puzzled” by the statement’s mention of the “legitimate rights and interests” of the Netherlands. Justice Minister Soewandi acknowledged Dutch “capital interests,” which the Republic had “no intention of harming.” He said, however, that he was unaware of any other Dutch “rights” in Indonesia.²⁹

During his conversation with Republican ministers, Stuart asked about communism in Indonesia. Dutch officials had alleged that the Republic was not only inspired by the Japanese fascism but also influenced by Soviet communism. Yet investigators from the US Army Counter Intelligence Corps who traveled to Java in the fall of 1945 found “no connection between the Indonesian National Movement and Soviet Russia,” according to a military intelligence summary. “All Russians interviewed by these observers are reported to be White Russians and very bitterly anti-Soviet.”³⁰

Minister Soewandi explained to Stuart that few members of the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, or PKI) understood communist doctrine

and that a majority of them “might better be termed socialist.” Most Indonesians, because of religious, cultural, or ideological convictions, approved of some form of socialism. Moreover, the country’s politics could not “be neatly divided into a pro-Soviet Left and an anti-Soviet Right,” in the words of Ruth T. McVey, an authority on Russian and Indonesian communism.³¹ The PKI, founded in 1920 and crushed by the Dutch later in the decade, resisted the Japanese during the war and was now a small but legal part of the Republic’s inclusive polity.

Stuart, who had studied Malay at a specialized Army training program at Yale, was an R&A analyst in Detachment 404 who transferred to the SI Branch after the war. At the end of 1945, when the SSU in Southeast Asia was attempting to achieve Washington’s “double objective of maintaining current intelligence output and quality, and of preparing the way for future permanent American intelligence activities in this area,” Stuart was commended for his reporting by Thomas Fisher, who had been promoted to SSU chief of mission in the IBT. In his monthly report for December, Fisher praised Stuart “for continuously maintaining the highest output of valuable intelligence, both spot and background research reports, in the Theater.”³²

In early January 1946, SSU Captain Marion C. Frye, a thirty-three-year-old Iowan who had been a manufacturing executive before the war, visited the headquarters of the British 26th Indian Division in Padang, Sumatra. The mission of the division was to make Padang and two other cities on the island—Medan, some 325 miles to the north, and Palembang, an equivalent distance to the south—safe for evacuating some 13,000 allied

internees and prisoners of war still languishing in camps because of a lack of shipping. “The British are only maintaining a perimeter around these locations and are making no attempt to push on,” Frye reported to SSU’s regional headquarters in Singapore.³³

The occupation of Sumatra was “a lower priority than that of Java,” according to Mountbatten’s original instructions from the British Chiefs of Staff.³⁴ During much of the island’s occupation, nationalist resistance had been limited to sniping and other small-scale acts of violence. A harbinger of greater unrest, however, occurred in December 1945, when a British major and a female Red Cross worker did not return from a planned swim near Emmahaven, the port for Padang. After a few days of searching, their mutilated bodies were discovered, buried in shallow graves. “In retaliation,” Frye reported, “British troops burned kampongs [villages] for a distance of six miles along the road where the two bodies were found.” Brigadier H. P. L. Hutchinson, who was responsible for the reprisal, was “very disturbed” by Frye’s survey of the destruction, according to the SSU officer. Apparently concerned about the possibility of unfavorable publicity, Hutchinson claimed that the “area had not been burned by the British but that someone had ‘accidentally dropped a match.’”³⁵

As in Java, Japanese soldiers in Sumatra performed security duties for the British occupation forces. The Japanese, wrote Frye, “are strictly obedient to British commands and do exactly as the British say.”³⁶ Japanese troops were ordered to quell disturbances in Sumatra, particularly in the northern province of Atjeh, where the fiercely independent Muslim population had long resisted Dutch control. The bold clearing of troubled areas by the Japanese increased their prestige among the British and Dutch. According to one SSU report, many British officers described their wartime enemies as “good blokes.” And

Dutch officials declared that Japanese “brutality” was the “only method [to] control [the] ‘natives.’”³⁷ Another SSU report, however, indicated that the Dutch were “split internally” over measures for restoring control in Sumatra. On the one hand, older prewar colonial administrators were “convinced that all the trouble could be settled in one or two months by a vigorous secret service and a couple thousand troops.” On the other hand, some of the younger Netherlands officers realized that “the problem is far deeper than this.”³⁸

Perhaps the most “vigorous secret service” operative in Sumatra, and later South Celebes (Sulawesi), was First Lieutenant Raymond P. P. Westerling, a Dutch intelligence officer whose preferred method for restoring order was the summary public execution of suspected “terrorists.” Born and raised in Turkey, Westerling received commando training from the British during World War II. As a member of Force 136, he was one of the first allied officers to parachute into Sumatra after the surrender of Japan. Assigned to the British 26th Indian Division, Westerling went about his counterintelligence work “thoroughly and brutally,” according to Captain Joseph W. Smith, commander of the SSU field station in Medan. Noting the price nationalists had put on Westerling’s head, Smith incorrectly predicted to SSU officials that the Dutch operative would “eventually be killed by the Indonesians.”³⁹

Smith’s assignment in Medan was the result of an agreement between Admiral Mountbatten and Major General Thomas A. Terry, Wheeler’s successor as IBT commander. In November 1945, Mountbatten had recommended to the British government that SSU be withdrawn from Southeast Asia. The SEAC commander told General Terry that he had “no further need” of SSU’s services.⁴⁰ This declaration was a

diplomatic way of saying that Mountbatten and his staff wanted to rid themselves of US spies in the theater, particularly in British territory. But with prompting from Prime Minister Attlee's cabinet, which sought to maintain good relations with the United States, Mountbatten agreed to allow SSU to operate in areas where American consulates were not yet fully established. In January 1946, SSU ordered Smith to Medan to collect military, political, and economic intelligence that would interest the State and War departments.⁴¹

Smith, who was later known within the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as "Big Joe" Smith to distinguish him from a shorter agency operative, Joseph B. "Little Joe" Smith, was a graduate of Yale, class of 1942. He had majored in international affairs and possessed an exceptional ability for learning foreign languages. After an injury ended his service as a paratrooper, he joined OSS and was assigned to R&A. Arriving in Southeast Asia in 1944, he specialized in order-of-battle intelligence. After the war, he waded ashore with the British forces who reoccupied Malaya, where he helped establish, and later led, the OSS field station in Kuala Lumpur.⁴²

One of Smith's first tasks in Sumatra was to determine the fate of the Indonesian agents from CAPRICE, the wartime OSS operation to establish a radio station on the Batu Islands. In January 1945, friendly villagers had sighted the OSS team, but even with the help of a sympathetic headman, the operation was doomed by compromised security. The CAPRICE party, which expanded from three agents to seven in the unrealized hope of penetrating Sumatra, fought a series of gun battles with Japanese regulars and their Indonesian auxiliaries in the spring of 1945. The action ended with the last two living members of the CAPRICE team reportedly drowning during a desperate attempt to

escape. Although OSS officials hoped that at least some of their agents survived, British and US attempts to find them failed. Smith, who reviewed the available evidence and interviewed villagers who had helped the CAPRICE team, informed his superiors: “It would appear that there is little doubt that the entire party is dead.”⁴³

Smith’s reporting from Sumatra indicated that political developments on the island were closely aligned with the policies of the Republican government in Java. The Republic’s political gains, however, were threatened by conflict among the diverse peoples of Sumatra, who spoke no less than fifteen distinct languages, each with several dialects: “The Indonesians in Sumatra are tending to split into mutually distrustful groups along ethnic, political or economic lines, with a general increase in the strength of the extremists.” Targets of revolutionary attacks included the sultans of East Sumatra, the Indonesian aristocrats who had traditionally ruled the coastal districts on behalf of the Dutch. “The Sultans,” Smith reported, “have been in contact with the Dutch and their general aim is to bring together all elements loyal to the old regime.” Commenting on the “rapid and violent” reaction to this plan by “extremists,” Smith observed: “The death rate among the nobility is exceedingly high.”⁴⁴

Like many other SSU operatives, Smith briefed State Department officials when he returned to the United States. At a meeting attended by William S. B. Lacy and Charlton Ogburn Jr.—two new department officials who subsequently played significant roles in US-Indonesian relations—Smith declared that the Indonesians were “certain to achieve ultimate independence.” Although the predominant feeling among Indonesians was “hatred of all whites,” Smith said that American prestige remained relatively high and that the United States had “a golden opportunity to bring Indonesian leaders into the

sphere of American influence.” Fearful that US inaction would allow the Soviet Union to become the dominant power in the archipelago, he recommended that the United States maintain contact with Indonesians at all levels of government and give “unofficial assurances” to Republican leaders of US sympathy for “their aims of independence.” As tangible expressions of American support, the United States should immediately send food to the islands and encourage Indonesian scholars to study in the United States. In an indirect criticism of Walter Foote and his diplomatic mission, Smith also suggested that the United States “improve and increase its State Department representation” in Batavia.⁴⁵

The notes of Smith’s debriefing show no response by State Department officials. Moreover, his observations had no immediate influence on government policy, which remained unchanged: The United States backed the Netherlands as the territorial sovereign, balked at assisting the Dutch in forceful measures to reassert their control, and encouraged bilateral negotiations between the Netherlands and the Republic. This ostensibly neutral policy, however, favored the Netherlands, which in 1946 was steadily building up its military force in the NEI. “In the post-war years,” Ogburn wrote later, “we allowed Indonesia to be brought to the brink of disaster by our persistence in approaching the Dutch-Indonesian conflict on the basis of our relationship with the Dutch.”⁴⁶

In May 1946, US government consultant Raymond Kennedy publicly observed that the State Department was “dominated by a European point of view” and declared that the lack of American support for the nationalists was “the crucial factor which turned the balance against Indonesian independence.” Speaking at a conference of sociologists at Columbia University, Kennedy said that the Truman administration’s “hands off” policy

in Indonesia was partially attributable to US attitudes on race: “The provincialism, ignorance and isolation of the American public and many American statesmen is applying a ‘Jim Crow’ attitude to the world. White people, we think, are superior and should be kept in charge over the dark-skinned people of the world.”⁴⁷

Although an incisive critic of Dutch policy in the NEI, Kennedy had a monolithic view of Western colonialism that ignored postwar realities and relationships. As a consultant to the State Department and OSS/SSU, he should have been aware of the United Kingdom’s diminished imperial power, its diplomatic battles with the Dutch, and its disputes with the United States in Southeast Asia. Kennedy maintained, however, that the British were working “to make sure that the Indonesians did not win independence, for this would deal a mortal blow to the whole scheme of colonialism.” He further declared: “The Anglo-American bloc is a reality, and in it, on colonial issues, the British set the policy line.”⁴⁸ For Kennedy, the idea that each Western democracy would pursue its own perceived self-interest in Asia was apparently unpersuasive. In some respects, his flawed analysis of postwar colonialism resembled the thinking of US cold warriors who believed in a monolithic communist conspiracy, with Moscow efficiently directing various Southeast Asian insurgent movements that actually operated with considerable autonomy.

In the spring of 1946, SSU was a secret service winding down its organizational existence. Despite its contributions to policymakers, SSU was not, in the words of its own director, “a complete or adequate world-wide clandestine intelligence agency.” A

key weakness of the organization, evident in Batavia and elsewhere, was that foreign governments and their intelligence services were familiar with its people. Whitney H. Shepardson, chief of SI for OSS and SSU, estimated that “85% of the intelligence personnel, through exposure to foreign representatives and agents in covert activity, have been compromised for any future secret intelligence activities.”⁴⁹

Another shortcoming of SSU was that OSS, the source of its personnel, had not conducted rigorous security investigations of its recruits. The exigencies of war had not allowed it. In October 1945, however, the Security Division of SSU began “a special sifting” of personnel records to ensure the “exclusive loyalty” of its employees to the United States. According to Andrew Sexton, chief of the Security Division, “new extreme security measurements” led to terminations of employment.⁵⁰ It seems likely that the new security measures were responsible for Jane Foster’s release from SSU. Despite her stated interest in continuing an intelligence career, and an endorsement from her SI branch chief in Kandy, Lloyd George, Foster was “involuntarily separated” from SSU in January 1946.⁵¹

That same month President Truman signed a directive that established the National Intelligence Authority (NIA). Comprising the secretaries of state, war, navy, and a personal representative of the president, the NIA would have the ultimate responsibility for coordinating the collection, evaluation, and dissemination of national security intelligence. To assist the NIA in its work, the departments of state, war, and navy were directed to contribute personnel and facilities that would collectively form the Central Intelligence Group (CIG), led by a director of Central Intelligence (DCI) appointed by the president. In addition to coordinating intelligence, the DCI would perform “services of

common concern” to US intelligence agencies, as well as other unspecified “functions and duties.” For reasons of security, the vague language in the presidential directive did not reveal the understanding that CIG would operate “a clandestine service for procurement of intelligence abroad.”⁵²

Sydney W. Souers, former deputy chief of the Office of Naval Intelligence, was the first DCI. His initial directive established a board of senior military and civilian intelligence officials who would make recommendations about preserving SSU functions and assets after the organization’s “liquidation.”⁵³ Creating an entirely new clandestine intelligence service untainted by association with OSS may have been theoretically desirable but was not feasible. At a time of increasing US anxiety about the postwar intentions of the Soviet Union, SSU was “a going concern” employing many experienced, committed officers who provided valuable intelligence to the State Department, War Department, and other government entities. “Any cessation in the gathering and dissemination of such intelligence,” the fact-finding board concluded, “would definitely impair the work of the customer agencies.” Recommending that SSU “should be placed under CIG and properly and closely supervised, pruned and rebuilt,” the board emphasized “the need for security both as to the existence of the CIG operation and to its activities.”⁵⁴

To preserve the future usefulness of experienced operatives in Asia, SSU headquarters made every effort “to get OSS personnel with long-range intelligence potentialities back to the United States or completely disassociated from OSS in the Far East.” SSU planners recognized that key officers would not be able to work in the region “for a considerable period of time, unless they lived there before the war and have a

prewar occupation to which it is perfectly logical and natural for them to return.” Major Robert Koke, who returned to the United States in March 1946, fit this profile. He had expressed an interest in continuing intelligence work while ostensibly resuming his career as a hotel proprietor. “It will undoubtedly take him some little time to re-establish his cover,” an SSU planning document noted, “but once this is done he should be in an ideal position to establish himself as an observer and letter box at first, later possibly as an agent.”⁵⁵

Before he left Batavia, Koke and other intelligence officers responded to a request from SSU theater headquarters for ideas about establishing a postwar espionage network in Indonesia. The operatives warned that any American observer “planted” in Java and Sumatra would have to be “particularly cautious in his activities.” With the British planning their withdrawal and the Dutch assuming greater military control of the archipelago, security would likely be tightened: “Even at present, phone tapping is being employed by Dutch security people. It may be stated conservatively that for the next three or more years any observer in the NEI must assume he is under wartime surveillance.”⁵⁶

Alfred Deakins Brookes, Ball’s successor as Australia’s political representative in Batavia, was even more emphatic in his characterization of Dutch intelligence activities. A former military officer in the Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB), the centralized intelligence organization for MacArthur’s wartime command, Brookes wrote to the Department of External Affairs on May 15, 1946: “The methods adopted by N.E.F.I.S. can only be described as Gestapo methods.”⁵⁷

As an “interim expedient” to continue a minimal intelligence capability in Southeast Asia, SSU had a small number of operators released from the armed forces and assigned to consulates in Bangkok, Batavia, Kuala Lumpur, Saigon, and Singapore. In each capital, an intelligence officer and a cryptographer ostensibly employed by the consulate worked for SSU. The consulates provided communications facilities, but SSU officers had their own codes and ciphers. Under the so-called consular-designee system, SSU envisioned employing people with SI training who would “pick up messages through a cut-out” but would “not operate as an undercover man.” Lloyd George, SSU’s deputy director for SI in the Far East, described such officials as a “red herring” who might “draw attention away from true undercover operations.”⁵⁸

From the start, the so-called consular-designee system proved “unsatisfactory” to SSU because of “the lack of cooperation from the State Department.”⁵⁹ The fundamental problem was control over reporting. In Saigon, for example, Consul Charles S. Reed II “insisted that SSU should give him all reports for filing to State.” In Batavia, Walter Foote “again claimed for himself alone the privilege of political reporting,” according to SSU. “He did this before, when SSU was operating as a military unit, but our boys managed to circumvent his decree, much to the delight of the South East Asia division of the State Department.”⁶⁰

SSU quickly scrapped the consular-designee system in Southeast Asian capitals, with the exceptions of Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur. The two SSU civilians in Batavia—Richard Stuart and cryptographer George W. Thomas—withdraw from the consulate on June 18 and returned to the United States. Despite the temporary loss of intelligence

operatives, Lloyd George reported that SI's China and Southeast Asia sections had "made considerable progress toward establishing some strictly undercover personnel."⁶¹

On July 16, 1946, CIG "activated" the Office of Special Operations (OSO), which was responsible for espionage and counterespionage abroad. In the second half of 1946, CIG absorbed some 800 SSU personnel. Of that total, 171 transferred to OSO, "constituting the nucleus" of its operators. Although SSU operations were shut down globally on October 19, 1946, "OSO started functioning along the unchanged lines inherited from SSU."⁶²

Characterized as "a step-child of three separate departments" by its general counsel, Lawrence Houston, CIG lacked the authority and budget to be an effective central intelligence organization. Lieutenant General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Souers's successor as DCI and a future Air Force chief of staff, helped persuade President Truman that the organization and staffing of CIG was "unworkable" and that "only a fully funded, formally established, independent intelligence service would suffice."⁶³ On September 18, 1947, CIG was officially dissolved and replaced by CIA.

As has often been observed, many of CIA's first generation of officers—including future DCIs Allen W. Dulles, Richard M. Helms, and William E. Colby—were veterans of OSS. Among the Detachment 404 officers who later worked for the agency were Lloyd George, Samuel Halpern, Ray Kauffman, and Robert Koke. "Big Joe" Smith, chief of station in Jakarta in the early 1960s, became deputy chief of CIA's Far East Division. Richard Stuart pursued his long intelligence career at the State Department, working in

the Bureau of Intelligence and Research and directing its liaison activities with CIA. And Thomas Fisher served in OSS and its successor agencies for five years before joining the US Air Force as an intelligence officer. Frederick Crockett worked for CIA in the early 1950s but spent the last twenty-four years of his life as a commercial real estate broker.

Perhaps the best-known veteran of Detachment 404 was Dillon Ripley, who led the Smithsonian Institution from 1964 to 1984. Although never publicly candid about all of his work for OSS and SSU, he played a leading role in planning espionage operations in Southeast Asia for a permanent post-World War II intelligence agency. In March and April 1945, when he was in Washington and the war was turning inexorably against Japan, Ripley wrote to William Donovan about establishing a long-range US intelligence capability in the Far East, with an emphasis on appropriate cover. Ripley believed that trained American operatives whose cover work required temporary travel through specific countries would attract less attention from foreign security services than spies who were permanent US residents. An “ideal example” of such a clandestine operation, he wrote, would be a scientific expedition sponsored by a museum or philanthropy.⁶⁴

When he returned to Ceylon in early June 1945, Ripley was no longer chief of Detachment 404’s SI Branch. Instead, he had a new job developing plans for long-range intelligence in the Far East and traveling to India, China, and elsewhere in Asia to recruit potential operatives for a postwar agency. Commander Taylor, then the detachment’s intelligence officer, advised Colonel Coughlin that General Donovan was “very interested in Dillon’s assignment.” Taylor thought it “important that Dillon should be given some suitable cover functions and afforded unlimited freedom of movement to

carry out his mission.” He predicted that Ripley “no doubt will pick up a certain amount of current material in his wanderings but this is a minor aspect of his mission.”⁶⁵

On September 21, Ripley sent Donovan a progress report on developing long-range intelligence assets in Asia. Perhaps for security reasons, he did not write down his own postwar plans. Ripley did, however, emphasize the importance of American espionage in the region: “I feel just as convinced as ever that parts of the Far East, particularly South East Asia, will be the ‘Balkans’ of the next war and deserve watching ‘clandestine-wise’ as never before.”⁶⁶

Ripley reported that he had recruited American operatives in India, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, and Thailand. He did not mention their names but included their professions—for example, researcher, journalist, missionary, and banker. He also identified potential recruits in China and French Indochina, although he anticipated that “considerable coverage” of the latter could be obtained from Thailand: “I have already set in motion an undercover network in Siam and Indo China of Siamese agents. This network is completely independent of the present [Free Thai] underground movement.”⁶⁷

In December, Ripley and Lloyd George drafted a 100-page SSU plan for India-Burma and Southeast Asia for possible execution by a new peacetime intelligence agency. Discussing personnel, cover, communications, and other operational topics, the plan identified Ripley as a likely part-time operative who had been asked “to lead a combined University-Museum expedition” to Asia in 1946. Acknowledging his renown as an OSS officer in the region, the paper argued that his cover as a scientist was valid and that his recognized interest in political developments and intelligence would “favor rather than hinder high level conversations and exchanges of information.” Ripley, who

co-authored the plan but was referred to in the third person, was “definitely interested in continuing secret intelligence work under this cover.”⁶⁸

In the winter of 1946–1947, Dillon Ripley led the Yale-Smithsonian Expedition to India. This mission included a controversial visit to Nepal, then closed to foreigners. Pretending “to be a close acquaintance and confidant of Jawaharlal Nehru,” then leader of the Interim Government of India, Ripley convinced Nepalese officials of Nehru’s interest in the expedition.⁶⁹ Once admitted to Nepal, Ripley met with the maharajah-prime minister, attended court ceremonies, entertained military leaders with ribald stories, and acquired travel permits for a more extensive follow-up expedition. Neither the 1945 SSU planning document mentioning this trip nor the public record of Ripley’s expedition proves that the globetrotting ornithologist engaged in espionage. His trip to Nepal, however, was consistent with his stated aspirations and plans for postwar US intelligence operations.

¹ State Dept. to US legation, Canberra, July 8, 1942, RG 84, Entry UD 2732, box 1.

² Foote to State Dept., May 24, 1944, RG 84, Entry UD 2732, box 1.

³ Foote to State Dept., January 21, 1944, RG 84, Entry UD 2732, box 1.

⁴ Foote to Nathaniel P. Davis, February 2, 1945, RG 84, Entry UD 2732, box 1.

⁵ J. C. R. Proud to William Dunk, September 25, 1945, *HD, Vol. VIII: 1945*, d. 267.

⁶ Foote to State Dept., October 25, 1945, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6448.

⁷ Foote to State Dept., November 12, 1945, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6448; SSU Kandy to War Dept., November 21, 1945, RG 226, Entry NM–54 6, box 8.

⁸ Fisher to Herbert J. Bluechel, November 18, 1945, and Shaw to Bluechel, November 22, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 21.

⁹ Meijer Ranneft to Foote, November 6, 1945, and November 27, 1945, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 1.

¹⁰ Foote to State Dept., January 14, 1947, and February 1, 1946, RG 59, CDF 1945–1949, boxes 6449 and 6448.

¹¹ Ball to John W. Burton, November 10, 1945, *HD, Vol. VIII: 1945*, d. 379.

¹² Sjahrir, quoted in R&A 3417, “The Cabinet of the Republic of Indonesia,” RG 226, Entry NM–54 8, box 50.

¹³ State Dept., Division of Biographic Information, August 22, 1947, RG 84, Entry 2732A, box 1.

¹⁴ Headquarters, IBT, “Daily G-2 Summary,” December 3, 1945, RG 493, Entry UD–UP 20, box 3; SSU Kandy to War Dept., November 19, 1945, RG 226, Entry NM–54 6, box 8.

¹⁵ Quoted in Alfred H. Jenkins to Wayne L. Morse, July 16, 1964, *Congressional Record—Senate, 1964*, p. 18875. Jenkins, a Marine Corps major and OSS officer during the war, attributed this quote and others to letters from eyewitness “friends of mine in the Office of Strategic Services.”

¹⁶ Taylor, “Chief of Mission Report—November,” December 6, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 20.

¹⁷ Fisher, “Chief of Mission Report—December,” January 10, 1946, and Taylor to Koke, January 5, 194[6], RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 26, box 26 and box 30.

¹⁸ Hanifah, *Tales of a Revolution*, pp. 175–176.

¹⁹ SSU Kandy to War Dept., October 27, 1945, RG 226, Entry NM–54 6, box 8.

²⁰ McMillan, *The British Occupation of Indonesia*, p. 32.

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- ²¹ Bluechel and Warren L. Barnette to War Dept., December 28, 1945, RG 226, Entry UD 200, box 1.
- ²² Koke and Stuart to Taylor, December 21, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 21.
- ²³ Headquarters, IBT, “Daily G-2 Summary,” December 3, 1945, RG 493, Entry UD-UP 20, box 3; Hornbeck to State Dept., December 10, 1945, *FRUS*, VI, d. 859.
- ²⁴ Headquarters, IBT, “Special G-2 Summary,” December 12, 1945, RG 493, Entry UD-UP 20, box 3; John F. Cady, “Memorandum Covering British Propaganda Directives for Indonesia,” December 5, 1945, RG 59, Entry A1 399, box 12.
- ²⁵ Quoted in Tarling, *Britain, Southeast Asia and the Onset of the Cold War*, p. 87.
- ²⁶ Mountbatten to Bevin, November 25, 1945, Mountbatten Papers, MB1/C30/17; Headquarters, IBT, “Special G-2 Summary,” December 12, 1945.
- ²⁷ Byrnes, memorandum of conversation, December 10, 1945, *FRUS*, VI, d. 860.
- ²⁸ State Dept. to Foote, December 19, 1945, *FRUS*, VI, d. 862.
- ²⁹ Foote to State, December 23, 1945, *FRUS*, VI, d. 865; Stuart to Bluechel, December 26, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 21.
- ³⁰ Headquarters, IBT, “Daily G-2 Summary,” November 11, 1945, RG 493, Entry UD-UP 20, box 3.
- ³¹ Stuart to Bluechel, December 26, 1945; McVey, *The Soviet View*, p. 9.
- ³² Fisher, “Chief of Mission Report—December,” January 10, 1946.
- ³³ Frye to Bluechel, January 9, 1946, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 21.
- ³⁴ Mountbatten to British Chiefs of Staff, November 21, 1945, University of Luxembourg, www.cvce.eu.
- ³⁵ Frye to Bluechel, January 9, 1946.

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- ³⁶ Ibid.; Foote to State Dept., May 29, 1942, RG 84, Entry UD 2732, box 1.
- ³⁷ Colin L. Campbell to War Dept., January 24, 1946, RG 226, Entry UD 200, box 1.
- ³⁸ Joseph W. Smith, "Background of General Situation," February 4, 1946, RG 226, Entry UD 153A, microfilm reel 1.
- ³⁹ Smith, "Contacts in Medan Area," March 8, 1946, RG 226, Entry A1 214, box 5.
- ⁴⁰ Amos Moscrip to Magruder, December 21, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 30.
- ⁴¹ Taylor to Magruder, December 6, 1945, and Fisher to Smith, January 14, 1946, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 443 and Entry A1 110, box 25.
- ⁴² Smith personnel file, RG 226, Entry A1 224, box 723; SSU, "SSU in Southeast Asia," undated, c. March 1946, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 513.
- ⁴³ Smith to SSU Singapore, February 20, 1946, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 25.
- ⁴⁴ Smith, "Estimate of the Situation," March 8, 1946, RG 226, Entry UD 153A, microfilm reel 1.
- ⁴⁵ Memorandum of conversation, May 15, 1946, RG 59, Entry A1 399, box 12.
- ⁴⁶ Ogburn to Everett F. Drumright, July 23, 1954, *FRUS, 1952–1954, XII, Part 1*, d. 266.
- ⁴⁷ Kennedy, quoted in "Sociologist Scores U.S. Policy in the East," *New York Times*, May 5, 1946.
- ⁴⁸ Kennedy, "The Test in Indonesia," *Asia and the Americas*, August 1946. (Thanks to Robert Shaffer for providing a copy of this article.)
- ⁴⁹ Magruder, "Establishment of Clandestine Collection Service for Foreign Intelligence," February 14, 1946, *FRUS, 1945–1950, EIE*, d. 103; CIG fact-finding board, "Secret Intelligence Branch, SSU," undated, c. March 1, 1946, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 314.

⁵⁰ CIG fact-finding board, meeting minutes, February 20, 1946, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 314.

⁵¹ George to Garden, September 19 and September 22, 1945, and Foster personnel records, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 24, and Entry A1 224, box 154. In 1957, a federal grand jury indicted Foster and her husband, George Zlatovski, for multiple counts of espionage on behalf of the Soviet Union. They denied the charges. The case did not go to trial because the United States was unable to extradite them from France, the couple's home since 1949. According to Hayden B. Peake, a retired CIA officer and intelligence historian, Foster and her husband both "spied for the Soviets" in postwar Austria, where Zlatovski worked for US Army intelligence. (Peake, "OSS and the Venona Decrypts," *Intelligence and National Security*, July 1997.) In a generally sympathetic account of Foster's life and the charges she faced, author and journalist Jennet Conant concluded that Foster and Zlatovski were "deeply enmeshed" in a Soviet espionage ring: "How they became caught up in the Soviet network, and whether or not there were mitigating circumstances, is another matter." (Conant, *A Covert Affair*, p. 334.)

⁵² "Presidential Directive on Coordination of Foreign Intelligence Activities," January 22, 1946, and "Establishment of Clandestine Collection Service for Foreign Intelligence," February 14, 1946, *FRUS, 1945-1950, EIE*, d. 71 and d. 103.

⁵³ DCI, "Central Intelligence Group Directive No. 1," February 19, 1946, *FRUS, 1945-1950, EIE*, d. 104.

⁵⁴ "Memorandum from the Fortier Committee to the Director of Central Intelligence," March 14, 1946, *FRUS, 1945-1950, EIE*, d. 105.

⁵⁵ SSU, “Plan for Permanent Secret Intelligence, Far East,” February 1946, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 516. OSS/SSU and their successor organization, CIA, used differing nomenclature for operational personnel. SSU defined an “observer” as an individual, most often an American, who obtained information in the course of everyday activities and communicated that information to an “agent.” An SSU “agent” was the equivalent of a CIA “case officer”—an intelligence professional whose responsibilities include managing the operational activities of foreign nationals. CIA refers to such sources as “agents.” For both SSU and CIA, “letter box” had the same basic definition—a secure means of transmitting messages from a clandestine source to an intelligence officer.

⁵⁶ SSU, “Post-War Intelligence Activity in Java,” March 11, 1946, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 200.

⁵⁷ Brookes to William Dunk, May 15, 1946, *HD, Vol. 9: 1946, January–June*, d. 245.

⁵⁸ George to Carter Nicholas, April 2, 1946, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 305.

⁵⁹ SSU Progress Report, Far East Division, Secret Intelligence, May 1946, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 379.

⁶⁰ SSU Progress Report, Far East Division, Secret Intelligence, April 1946, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 379.

⁶¹ George to Stephen B. L. Penrose Jr., June 12, 1946, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 379.

⁶² EFH to ABD, “OSO from July, 1946 to December, 1946,” May 8, 1952,

www.foia.cia.gov

⁶³ Immerman, *The Hidden Hand*, p. 17; Helms, *A Look*, pp. 80–81.

⁶⁴ Ripley to Donovan, March 2, 1945, www.foia.cia.gov.

⁶⁵ Taylor to Coughlin, May 16, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 20.

⁶⁶ Ripley to Donovan, “Post-hostilities Plans in the Far East,” September 21, 1945, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 305.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ SSU, “Plan for Post War Secret Intelligence Operations in India-Burma and Southeast Asia,” undated, c. December 1945, RG 210, Entry A1 210, box 310. The plan used codenames for individuals, but the detailed description of SO-44 unambiguously identifies the operative as Ripley.

⁶⁹ Michael L. Lewis, “Scientists or Spies?” *Economic and Political Weekly*, June 15–21, 2002. Also see Roger D. Stone, *The Lives of Dillon Ripley: Natural Scientist, Wartime Spy, and Pioneering Leader of the Smithsonian Institution*, 2107, pp. 76–78.

Chapter 5

A Decided Turn for the Worse

(1946–1947)

On October 19, 1946, Alexander Loudon, the Netherlands ambassador to the United States, delivered a message to the US chief of Naval Intelligence, Rear Admiral Thomas B. Inglis, who described it as “undiplomatic, if not to say unpleasant.” Loudon, a veteran diplomat, had not previously met Inglis but sought him out at a cocktail party hosted by the Dutch embassy’s assistant naval attaché. The situation in the NEI, Loudon said, had “deteriorated to such an extent that nothing can be done about it now.” According to Inglis’s notes of the conversation, the ambassador implied that “the United States and Great Britain had let the Dutch down.” Declaring that the Netherlands had been the only force unifying the peoples and cultures of the NEI, he predicted that communists would fill “the vacuum created by the absence of Dutch influence.” In an apparent reference to the United States and United Kingdom, Loudon said that nations other than the Netherlands “would suffer, and that ‘blood would flow.’”¹

A diplomat’s harangue to a stranger at a cocktail party might naturally be attributed to the effects of alcohol. Admiral Inglis, however, observed that Loudon was “cold sober.” A similar assessment of the ambassador’s sobriety was made by William Lacy of the State Department’s Division of Southeast Asian Affairs, who endured a nearly identical tirade after a dinner at the Netherlands embassy on October 29. “The situation in the Netherlands East Indies is probably hopeless,” Loudon said. The British had “sabotaged” the influence of the Dutch, which would lead to “the end of western influence in Southeast Asia.” The Soviet Union would try to “create chaos” in the archipelago and would “successfully infiltrate their agents” and subvert the

Republican government. The State Department, Loudon declared repeatedly, had ignored his suggestions, which “might have averted the disastrous state of affairs in the NEI.” According to Lacy’s account of their talk, the ambassador said that “blood would flow, not Dutch blood either,” implying again that the Americans and British would be fighting communists in Indonesia.²

Such outbursts, wrote historian Frances Gouda, might have been influenced by Loudon’s “private feelings of frustration” with State Department officials, who had been advising the ambassador that Dutch policy in the NEI was “on a bad wicket as regards to worldwide opinion.”³ Yet Loudon’s comments to Inglis and Lacy, virtually identical in content and delivered to both military and civilian representatives of the US government in similar social settings, might also have been an intentionally blunt, informal expression of views that Dutch officials had communicated through more decorous diplomatic channels. Among their complaints, Ambassador Hornbeck reported from The Hague, was the failure of the British and Americans to deliver “a whispered firm intimation” to the Republic that they were “favorably disposed” to the Netherlands point of view. Without such backing, Dutch negotiators in the NEI were inclined “to concede a large measure of independence to the Javanese and Sumatran Nationalists,” a compromise that disturbed Ambassador Loudon and many other Dutch officials.⁴

The Netherlands had been engaged in frustrating, intermittent negotiations with Prime Minister Sjahrir since February 10, 1946, when the Dutch government formally proposed the establishment of “a Commonwealth of Indonesia” that would be “a partner in the Kingdom.” The commonwealth would have autonomy in internal affairs, with the crown retaining “certain

special powers to guarantee fundamental rights, efficient administration and sound financial management.” The proposal did not mention foreign or military affairs. After an undefined “period of transition,” Indonesia would be “completely free to decide its political future.” Acknowledging that many details remained to be ironed out, the Netherlands government summarized the “grave but simple” choice facing Indonesians and their leaders: “self-determination in our time” or “the continuation of a fruitless and destructive internal war.”⁵

The Dutch press in the NEI praised the proposal, with one newspaper commenting: “If the Netherlands Kingdom lasts for another 300 years people will still say this was their finest hour.”⁶ In the Netherlands, the press response to the government plan was less enthusiastic, with conservative and some liberal newspapers claiming that it went “too far in admitting the Indonesians’ eventual right to self-determination.” The liberal *Nationale Rotterdamsche Courant*, however, described the government’s proposal as a good blend of “consideration and progressiveness.”⁷

The editorial page of the *New York Times* unequivocally supported the Dutch plan of February 10, declaring that it “definitely ends the colonial era in Indonesia.” Not content with supporting the proposal and urging the nationalists to accept it, the *Times* editorial belittled the legitimacy of Indonesian leaders with dismissive quotation marks around the term “republic” and Sjahrir’s title, “premier.” Citing the prime minister’s own writings to discredit Sukarno and Hatta as wartime collaborators, the *Times* described Indonesian youth as “infected with Japanese propaganda of fascism and race hatred.” A follow-up editorial characterized Sjahrir as “merely a little less radical than [the] Japanese-sponsored President, Soekarno.” Henri van Vredenburg, then director of political affairs at the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was pleased by

the editorializing in the *Times*, telling Ambassador Hornbeck that such articles “were very helpful to [the] Dutch cause.”⁸

Indonesian nationalists, however, found little new or promising in the Dutch plan. Walter Foote informed the State Department that Sjahrir thought the prospects for negotiations hopeless. The Netherlands proposal, said Sjahrir, meant “Dutch domination” and the “liquidation of the Republic of Indonesia.” A pessimistic Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, a special British envoy who served as a mediator between the Republic and the Netherlands, told Foote that he had agreed with Sjahrir that the Dutch proposals were “unacceptable in [their] present form” but urged the prime minister to accept them as a basis for talks. Kerr observed to Foote that the Republicans would “gain by stalling,” because “my people won’t fight them,” and the Dutch lacked the military strength to do so.⁹

In early March, Sjahrir conferred with Sukarno in Jogjakarta, where the president and other Republican officials had moved because of security concerns. (Despite “attempts on his life” by Dutch colonial troops, according to SSU, Sjahrir was “determined to remain in Batavia.”)¹⁰ The prime minister left Jogjakarta with a counterproposal, which he presented to van Mook on the thirteenth. While praising the Netherlands declaration of “an inherent right of self-recognition,” the Republican counterproposal objected to Dutch claims that the Indonesians were “not yet ready for the exercise of their inherent right of independence.” The Republic’s first principle for further discussions with the Dutch was recognition that it enjoyed “the rights of a sovereign State in the territory of the former Netherlands Indies.”¹¹

This notion was wholly unacceptable to the Netherlands government. Van Mook’s political adviser, W. F. L. van Bylandt, told an American diplomat that the Republicans were living in a “dream world.” Yet the Dutch, too, were inhabiting a fantasy land, according to

historian John D. Legge: “The conviction of so many Dutchmen in the Indies and at home that they had been good colonial rulers, that they were still loved by their former subjects and that Sukarno and his colleagues were a small and unrepresentative minority, must rank as one of the major pieces of self-deception in the annals of empire.”¹²

By the end of March, van Mook and Sjahrir had narrowed their differences considerably, prompting a brief moment of optimism in the negotiations. In the Netherlands, however, hostility to the Republic and to Sukarno, in particular, produced “unexpectedly strong opposition” to the van Mook-Sjahrir understandings. Moreover, Indonesian and Dutch officials exchanged charges and countercharges of backsliding on earlier commitments. On May 19, Walter Foote wrote to the State Department that the prospects for peacefully settling the conflict were “receding into [a] gloomy fog of distrust and uncertainty.”¹³

The faltering negotiations were interrupted in late June, when Sjahrir and other officials were kidnapped by military and civilian opponents of *diplomasi* aligned with ultranationalist Tan Malaka. A charismatic communist, he was not officially a member of the PKI and was often called a Trotskyite. He had been thrown out of the Third (Communist) International for his nationalist principles and “was unwilling to accept any direction from Moscow,” according to George Kahin. Tan Malaka considered the Republican government a tool of the Dutch and advocated armed struggle to achieve complete independence throughout the archipelago. A State Department biography described him as “perhaps the most notorious of the Indonesian Communists.”¹⁴

With the consent of Sjahrir’s cabinet, Sukarno assumed full control of the Republican government and demanded the prime minister’s immediate release in a national radio broadcast. “Speaking ‘more in sorrow than anger,’” wrote historian Benedict Anderson,

Sukarno described an opposition group that did not understand the difference between opposition and destruction. While the state needed an opposition if it was to be based on democracy, the opposition must know its limits. Stability must be maintained. The kidnapping of the Prime Minister and other high officials would permit the Dutch to say to the world that Indonesia could not rule herself, and that chaos and disorder prevailed everywhere.”¹⁵

Sjahrir was set free, but his release did not end the attempted coup d'état. On July 3, some of the conspirators boldly, if unwisely, traveled to Jogjakarta to confront Sukarno. Among their demands were the dismissal of the Sjahrir government and the delegation of military authority to the commander of the army, General Sudirman, and political authority to a handpicked cabinet that included Tan Malaka. The plotters were promptly arrested. To this day, details of the so-called July third affair are unclear. For example, what role did Sudirman play in the conspiracy? A devout Muslim, a prewar teacher, and a former PETA battalion commander, he was “a gifted tactician and leader of men,” according to Hatta. The general sympathized with Tan Malaka’s uncompromising militancy but had publicly warned him that he “must take [the] consequences for trying to split [the] united nationalist front.”¹⁶

Although aspects of the July third affair remain murky, its consequences were clear. The failed coup “gave the government grounds to crush Tan Malaka’s movement definitively.”¹⁷ General Sudirman’s position “was notably weakened,” according to Anderson, with Sukarno emerging from the crisis as “the one man whom all groups could agree to support.” Moreover, “a powerful precedent for the future” had been set: “In times of national emergency and threats,

internal or external, to the state, it would be natural to turn to Sukarno, who had come to represent Indonesian nationalism as no other man could.”¹⁸

Throughout the summer of 1946, Walter Foote continued to promote the Dutch view of the NEI and to attack British actions there. He was particularly critical of Gilbert Mackereth, the UK consul general in Batavia. “It is certain that he is anti-Dutch and pro-Indonesian,” Foote wrote to the State Department.¹⁹ Then fifty-three, Mackereth was a decorated World War I veteran who had joined the diplomatic service in 1919. Assigned to posts in the Middle East and Africa, Mackereth was consul general in Rabat, Morocco, before his assignment in Batavia. Foote’s poor opinion of Mackereth was likely influenced by a confidential report from the US consulate in Rabat, which described the British diplomat and his wife, Muriel, as “anti-French” and “sympathetic” to Moroccan nationalists: “Mackereth would like to give Morocco back to the Moroccans today, but he would be considerably annoyed at having to work out the details of educating and preparing the Moroccans for the next 30 years for the day when they might be able to govern themselves.”²⁰

Two days before Sjahrir’s kidnapping, Foote reported—and endorsed—Dutch accusations that Mackereth was “fostering growing dislike” between the Indonesians and the Netherlands. Citing a “top secret record of conversation” between Mackereth and Sjahrir—a document most likely provided by NEFIS—Foote alleged that the British diplomat had supplied names of Indonesians loyal to the Dutch who were subsequently arrested by the Republic. Moreover, Mackereth had reportedly assured Sjahrir that Indonesians “would be far better off” under an international trusteeship than under van Mook’s proposals for eventual independence.

The Dutch, Foote wrote, were “worried” that Mackereth was exceeding his instructions from London by advising and assisting Sjahrir in negotiations.²¹

The State Department summarized Foote’s reporting for the American ambassador in London, W. Averell Harriman, instructing him to ask the Foreign Office about Mackereth’s alleged views and his diplomatic role in the NEI. Was he taking an active role in advocating the terms of a settlement or merely encouraging talks between the Dutch and Indonesians?²²

Maberley Dening, then the UK assistant under secretary of state for foreign affairs, emphasized to Harriman that the British were only acting as “go between,” not mediating the dispute.

Acknowledging that the kidnapping of Sjahrir had complicated negotiations, Dening blamed both the Dutch and Indonesians for the lack of progress. Harriman reported to Washington that Dening was “pessimistic about [the] situation in Java” and fearful of “serious trouble” unless “forward steps” were taken. The British diplomat said that direct negotiations between the Republic and Dutch should be exhausted before any offer of third-party mediation or a possible referral to the United Nations. “It would appear from Dening’s remarks,” wrote Harriman, “that if [Mackereth] made [the] statements quoted by Foote they were not under instructions.”²³

For Foote, British behavior in the NEI remained an obsession. “Nearly all British officers in Java” were “openly anti-Dutch,” he alleged. They insulted the Dutch in ways “no American could stand” yet were “cordial” to Indonesians. On July 10, he informed the State Department: “I am convinced beyond doubt [that the] British have some ulterior motive re [the] NEI.” He believed, for example, that the United Kingdom was “undermining Dutch sovereignty in Sumatra” and seeking to “control” the island for commercial advantage. Foote wanted the department to issue a statement, either in conjunction with the British or unilaterally, declaring that the United States “would not condone or support any action which might result in [a] change

of sovereignty or [the] establishment of [a] foreign sphere of influence over Sumatra.”²⁴ No such statement was made, perhaps because the United States had never questioned Dutch sovereignty in Sumatra and saw no need for a declaration that the UK might find offensive.

Foote was convinced that officials in Washington were receiving inaccurate information about the NEI from the British and others. When asked by the State Department to comment on US policy in the NEI, Foote began his reply of August 30 by observing that perceptions of the archipelago had been influenced by factual “errors,” “pure prejudice,” “preconceived ideas,” and “nebulous” ideology. Apparently intending to instruct his Washington colleagues on the “facts”—which were “well known by those who have made honest appraisals of the situation”—Foote produced an entirely one-sided account of the archipelago’s recent history. Before the war, he wrote, Indonesians “were friendly, cordial, helpful, had a fine sense of humor, and taken as a whole were happy and definitely making progress all along the line.” The diplomat made no mention of nationalist political activity in the 1920s and 1930s nor Dutch efforts to suppress it. In Foote’s telling, the Indonesian revolution was solely attributable to the Japanese occupation and the British RAPWI mission: “The desire of the British to avoid bloodshed gave the Indonesians time to train and equip their men.” Dismissing Sukarno as a collaborator, he repeated a familiar Dutch canard: “It cannot be said that the war with Japan is over.”²⁵

Foote was unsympathetic to the department’s concerns about the impact of Indonesian nationalism on “other dependent areas in the Far East” and about “the prestige and goodwill of the US among all classes of inhabitants of this region.” He responded that “many of the best classes of Indonesian nationalists know that the people are not ready for independence.” For Foote, the ideal nationalist was Abdulkadir Widjoatmodjo, the Dutch-educated Indonesian who had worked for the NEI government before the war and for NICA during and after it and who

was then an adviser to van Mook. Abdulkadir and other “well-informed and educated native nationalists,” Foote wrote, sought “independence through constitutional means rather than by riot, bloodshed and the resulting chaos.” The “great masses of the people,” however, were apt to throw themselves “into the arms of selfish, fanatical or unscrupulous leaders.”²⁶

Claiming that he intended no criticism of American policy in the NEI, Foote reported that the United States had “been accused of having been a little too aloof at times.” On the one hand, Dutch officials felt that the United States had “failed them in their hour of need.” On the other hand, Indonesian leaders thought that the Atlantic Charter and similar idealistic declarations by the United States were meaningless rhetoric. “Even if we assume that our policy has done no harm to our interests,” Foote concluded, “I am positive that it has not improved our position.”²⁷

With the restoration of Sjahrir as prime minister and the arrival of a three-person negotiating committee from The Hague, formal talks between the Republic and the Netherlands resumed in October 1946. Sjahrir, who was also foreign minister, and Defense Minister Amir Sjarifuddin led the Republican delegation. Since the July 3 affair, Sjahrir’s position had weakened, and political pressure compelled him to include cabinet ministers who disagreed with his policy of *diplomasi*. Sjahrir’s willingness to negotiate with the Netherlands, according to Ali Sastroamijoyo, “ran into very strong opposition because in general it was regarded as being too moderate and too conciliatory towards our enemy.”²⁸

The Dutch negotiating committee, called the commission general, was chaired by Willem Schermerhorn, former prime minister of the first postwar government and socialist co-founder of the Labor Party (*Partij van de Arbeid*, or PvdA). Schermerhorn represented a more progressive

Dutch approach to the transfer of sovereignty to the Indonesians. The other two members of the committee, M. J. M. van Poll of the Catholic People's Party (*Katholieke Volkspartij*, or KVP) and F. de Boer, the unaffiliated mayor of Amsterdam, were expected to take a tougher line with the Republic. Lieutenant Governor General van Mook also served on the commission general.

This committee reflected the political divisions within the coalition cabinet established after the parliamentary elections of May 1946. A so-called Roman-Red cabinet, with seven Catholic and seven Labor ministers, the government was led by Prime Minister Louis J. M. Beel (KVP). A first among equals, Beel had few formal powers to impose his policy and personnel preferences on the cabinet. The Netherlands was generally well served by its collegial approach to achieving consensus from a mix of ideologies. When the topic was decolonization, however, the contradictory impulses of ministerial "hawks" and "doves" produced results that satisfied neither. Political scientist Arend Lijphart observed that the conflict in the NEI created "serious strains in Dutch domestic politics, similar in nature but to an even greater extent than the internal political tensions in the United States over the Vietnam issue."²⁹

Assisting the negotiations between the Republic and the commission general was the UK special commissioner for Southeast Asia, Lord Killearn, who was assigned to Batavia to facilitate the talks. Such help was not always welcomed by the Netherlands. When Lord Killearn visited Sjahrir, a gesture that Dutch foreign ministry officials thought would delay an agreement, their reaction "was one of 'stupefaction,'" according to J. Webb Benton, the US chargé in The Hague. In Batavia, Dutch diplomats insisted that "interference" and "meddling" by the United Kingdom had strengthened the Republic's "intransigence."³⁰ The US embassy in London, however, found little evidence to support such apprehensions. Waldemar J. Gallman, the American chargé in London, reported that the Foreign Office had been very "frank" in sharing its

communications with Mackereth and Lord Killearn. “We find,” wrote Gallman, “every indication that British representatives are in fact being extremely careful to avoid taking sides.”³¹

The British did, however, have an ulterior motive in promoting a peaceful settlement in the NEI. Gallman, citing Foreign Office instructions to Lord Killearn, wrote that the UK’s “primary interest” was avoiding “anti-occidental strife anywhere in Asia.” Such conflict would likely turn the peoples of the region against Europeans, jeopardizing the peaceful resolution of the UK’s own colonial “problem” in India and the transition to postwar independence in other areas of Asia. “Britain,” wrote Gallman, “cannot afford to have popular movements in various areas flare into mutually sympathetic heat.”³²

The Dutch and Republican negotiators finally reached an agreement in the mountain village of Linggadjati near the north coast of Java. Initialed on November 15, the accord called for mutual cooperation in establishing a federal “sovereign democratic state” called the United States of Indonesia (USI). One of the three states in the USI would be the Republic of Indonesia, which the Netherlands government recognized as exercising “*de facto* authority” in Java, the nearby island of Madura, and Sumatra. These three islands represented the vast majority of the archipelago’s population and natural-resource wealth. The other two USI states would be Borneo and the islands east of Borneo and Java, traditionally known as the Great East and henceforth designated East Indonesia. Under the terms of the agreement, the Republic and the Netherlands would cooperate in forming a crown-led “union consisting on the one hand of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, comprising the Netherlands, Surinam and Curaçao, and on the other hand the United States of Indonesia.” The target date for establishing the USI and the Netherlands-Indonesian Union was January 1, 1949. Disputes over interpretation of the agreement would be settled by “arbitration.”³³

State Department officials, acknowledging that parts of the Linggadjati agreement were “vague,” characterized the accord as “an equitable and workable compromise.” In the Netherlands, however, there was resistance to the initialed but unsigned agreement. Ambassador Hornbeck reported to Washington that “general public opinion apparently was not prepared for such [a] broad measure of independence.” J. A. Ringers, the independent minister of public works and reconstruction, resigned from the cabinet in protest. His “main objection,” wrote Hornbeck, “appears to be that [the] commission general has gone too far too fast and that [the] product of long years of Dutch effort in the Netherlands East Indies is being swept away through confused thinking.”³⁴

From Batavia, Foote reported that initial reactions to the Linggadjati agreement were varied, indicating a “high degree of confusion. Some Dutch believe [the] draft agreement is fair and just, others believe its ratification will end Dutch and other occidental influence here, some have confidence in Indonesian leaders while others have none, some believe Indonesians will live up to [the] agreement and others believe they have no intention of doing so and all believe that with each day’s delay in [the] Netherlands [the] chances of success tend to fade out.”³⁵

Within the Republic, there was considerable resistance to the Linggadjati agreement. The two largest political parties, the Masjumi, a coalition of Muslim organizations, and the secular Indonesian National Party (*Partai Nasional Indonesia*, or PNI), led by civil servants, teachers, and professionals, objected to several articles in the accord—for example, the declaration that the king or queen of the Netherlands would lead the proposed Netherlands-Indonesian Union. To ensure ratification of the agreement, Sukarno proposed a large increase in the membership of the KNIP, including “representatives selected from political parties more favorably disposed to the Agreement.”³⁶

The uncertainty surrounding the Linggadjati accord prompted an unusual message from Foote to the State Department. Responding to a request for comment on US policy in the NEI, he wrote: "I regret that it is impossible to make any recommendation or to comment on the Department's policies until after we know with whom we must deal and under what laws."³⁷ Unable to offer any suggestions to the US government on its current and future relations with the NEI, Foote decided one week later to report once again on the origins of the "chaos" in the archipelago: the Japanese wartime occupation and, "more especially," the British RAPWI mission. His despatch—eight single-spaced, legal-sized pages—concluded with an assessment of the three "main reasons" for the "troubles" in the NEI.³⁸

Foote began by blaming General Christison for his initial public announcement that "he was not going to the Netherlands Indies to return the country to the Dutch but simply to receive the surrender of the Japanese forces and to relieve prisoners of war and internees." Foote's other two explanations for the Indonesian revolution were more novel: "discontented" Indian troops, who "were decidedly friendly towards the Indonesian movement, both for political and religious reasons"; and "officers of the various British Indian regiments [who] were afraid to discipline their men" because of nationalist unrest in India and Burma. He declared: "The British Indian forces left behind them a name which will not be forgotten for a long time both by Europeans and Indonesians. They distinguished themselves chiefly by raping and looting and by insulting wherever possible any white man, regardless of his nationality. All Java and Sumatra heaved a sigh of relief when the last British Indian was evacuated."³⁹

There can be no doubt that Dutch officials and Indonesians welcomed the end of the British occupation, which coincided with the formal dissolution of SEAC on November 30, 1946. According to Charles Wolf Jr., then a US vice consul in Batavia, "the British left behind a

residue of bad feeling toward themselves on the part of the Indonesians and, *in an extreme form*, on the part of the Dutch.”⁴⁰ Yet Foote’s allegations—most likely inflamed by propaganda from NEFIS,⁴¹ which the diplomat cited as a source for his despatch—advanced an illogical stereotype of Indian troops who simultaneously sympathized with Indonesians and abused them. He appeared unwilling to acknowledge that most of the Indian forces were Hindu and therefore had no religious motivation to be “friendly” with the predominantly Muslim nationalists. He also overstated the political affinity between the professional Indian soldiers and the Indonesian revolutionaries. “While it was natural that Indian Army personnel should feel a certain amount of sympathy with the Indonesian national cause,” wrote historian Richard McMillan, “it is also true to say that they felt at times a strong antipathy towards Indonesians, largely when the latter committed atrocities.”⁴²

Foote’s charge of insulting behavior by Indian troops toward “any white man” also seems exaggerated. There was indeed friction between the Indians and the Dutch, but the latter may have taken the leading role in giving offense. A British military intelligence report commented on Indian “bitterness” toward the Dutch, who had allegedly displayed a “cold, foreign, contemptible and disgraceful attitude.” Acknowledging that this characterization was “possibly an overstatement,” the report stated: “There is no doubt that since Dutch people do not understand our method of treating all our troops as equals their attitude is therefore inclined to treat Indians as they do their own locals.”⁴³

Foote’s hyperbolic, partisan despatch exemplified his limitations as a diplomat. The inadequacy of his political reporting, often slow and sometimes unresponsive to the department’s requests, was noted by his colleagues in Washington. Abbot Moffat, chief of the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs, complained about “the difficulty experienced by the Department in

securing complete and accurate reporting” from the NEI.⁴⁴ John H. Morgan, associate chief of the Division of Northern European Affairs, found Foote’s communications “scanty.” And Lord Inverchapel, the UK ambassador to the United States, reported to London that the State Department had “not much confidence in his [Foote’s] information or judgment.”⁴⁵

Such uncomplimentary assessments of Foote’s performance raise an inevitable question: Why did the State Department wait until the summer of 1947 to announce his recall? Foote’s closeness with the Dutch had been a key reason for his return to Java, but this cozy relationship had outlived its usefulness. Although US policy tilted toward the Netherlands, Foote’s biased reporting was of limited help to department officials responsible for assessments of the situation in the NEI and for American actions there. The most likely reason for the dilatory recall of Foote was the postwar shortage of experienced US diplomats, not to mention the lack of Foreign Service officers with the language skills and area knowledge required in the NEI. Compared to the Soviet threat in Europe and the civil war in China, the archipelago was a low priority for the State Department.

Under a large portrait of Queen Wilhelmina at Rijswijk Palace in Batavia, Dutch and Republican officials signed the Linggadjati agreement on March 25, 1947. The delay between initialing the document the previous November and signing it four months later was partially attributable to Dutch “elucidations” of the accord. A parliamentary motion declared that the Netherlands would be bound only by its interpretation of the agreement. For example, the transition period between signing the document and establishing a sovereign USI would “be used to define and strengthen the bonds between the Republic and the Netherlands.” The implication of this notion, according

to CIG analysts, was that the Republic would “remain permanently within the Netherlands Union and the United States of Indonesia.”⁴⁶

The Sjahrir cabinet, which viewed the USI as a transitional step to a unified, independent nation, refused to accept any unilateral Dutch interpretations of the Linggadjati agreement. Yet Republican politics also contributed to the delay in signing the accord. The debate in the KNIP over Sukarno’s proposal to enlarge its number of representatives did not occur until the legislative session of February 25–March 5. An unusually forceful speech by Hatta, which described the crisis facing the Republic and threatened his and Sukarno’s resignation, persuaded the KNIP to accept the proposal. “My speech seemed to have the desired effect,” Hatta recalled in his memoirs. On March 5, the enlarged KNIP approved the Linggadjati agreement. At the signing of the accord, Sjahrir observed that there still remained “a great deal of uncertainty, a great deal of doubt and also distrust with regard to this important event. It is still very unclear to the majority of the people in this country what the future has in store.”⁴⁷

The State Department instructed Walter Foote to express to van Mook, Sjahrir, and Sukarno the “gratification” of the US government for achieving the settlement. Foote obeyed but was pessimistic about the effect of the Linggadjati agreement, informing the department that the Republic’s “de facto authority” would provide opportunities for Indonesian “extremists” to either “torpedo” or “greatly delay” the formation of a federal government.⁴⁸ As Foote and others recognized, the agreement’s imprecise language permitted differing interpretations of the sovereignty of Java, Madura, and Sumatra. “The fundamental conflict,” CIG analysts observed, “is between the Dutch view that the Netherlands will continue to be the sovereign power in the Indies until the USI is formed, and the Republic’s view that Netherlands sovereignty does not extend over Republican territory in the interim period.”⁴⁹

Negotiations over implementing the Linggadjati agreement were deadlocked by disagreements over such issues as the Republic's authority to conduct diplomatic relations with foreign governments and to control the import and export of commodities. (The Dutch were preventing trade by the Republic with a naval blockade.) The Netherlands, which desperately needed foreign exchange from the sale of Indonesian commodities, thought that the Republic's negotiators were stalling. For their part, Republican officials were convinced that the Dutch sought to strengthen, rather than withdraw, their military forces on Java and Sumatra. On May 15, the US embassy in London reported the Foreign Office's pessimistic view of the situation: "Dutch-Indonesian relations have taken a decided turn for the worse and indeed contain explosive possibilities."⁵⁰

The possibility of a Dutch military move against the Republic was becoming increasingly likely. Admiral Helfrich, then commander-in-chief of the Royal Netherlands Navy and a longstanding advocate of "immediate drastic action" against the nationalists, had dismissed the Linggadjati agreement by rhetorically asking, "How much longer [do] we still have to play this little game?"⁵¹ Dutch civilian officials also contemplated a military solution. On May 18, economic adviser H. M. Hirschfeld told British consul general Mackereth that "perhaps [it would be] best if [the] Dutch launched military operations to destroy [the] Republican opposition." An influential civil servant who was responsible for administering his country's Marshall Plan aid, Hirschfeld argued that the inevitable outcry from the Americans and British "would be placated" by the resumption of normal international trade. And according to the State Department, a US "naval observer in Batavia"—presumably Captain Daniel J. McCallum, the consulate's naval attaché—reported "increased Dutch sentiment in favor [of] military action."⁵²

Under instructions from the Foreign Office, Frederick C. Everson, first secretary of the British embassy in Washington, met with State Department officials on May 23 to discuss the dangerous situation in the NEI. He informed Abbot Moffat and other representatives of the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs that the British government had approached Dutch officials in The Hague, London, and Batavia, “deploring” the possible use of military force by the Netherlands. Prime Minister Attlee, said Everson, had personally warned the Dutch ambassador to the UK of the “adverse world reaction” to abandoning negotiations and resorting to force. When Everson asked what action, if any, the United States was considering, Moffat replied that “the problem raised by the reported threat of force” was under discussion within the department, but no official position had yet been formalized.⁵³

While the US government dithered, van Mook signed a tough diplomatic note to the Republic on May 27. The correspondence included demands for the formation of an interim federal government, for restrictions on the Republic’s right to conduct foreign relations, and for the establishment of a joint Dutch-Indonesian police force to restore law and order in Java and Sumatra. The ultimate legal authority in Indonesian affairs, wrote van Mook, would be the Netherlands until the transfer of sovereignty to the USI. And because the creation of a modern national defense force would take “many years,” an unspecified number of Dutch land, sea, and air forces would have to “remain provisionally” in Indonesia. “Essential alterations” to the Dutch proposals, the note declared, would not be admissible, and the Republic must reply within two weeks. If the response were “negative or unsatisfactory,” there would be “no possibility” of further negotiations.⁵⁴

The next day van Mook emphasized to Walter Foote that he did not threaten the Indonesians with force but did inform them that the “Linggadjati Agreement would be carried

out with or without [the] Republic's cooperation." In his account of their conversation, Foote refuted British reports that the Dutch had threatened Republican leaders with military action if a satisfactory agreement were not reached.⁵⁵ Despite the differing interpretations of Dutch diplomacy, van Mook apparently anticipated a negative reply to the note, followed by a Dutch military response. On May 30—more than ten days before the Dutch deadline for an Indonesian reply—van Mook wrote: "It is not wishful thinking that with military action I hope to create the conditions for a sound implementation of Linggadjati."⁵⁶

State Department officials thought that the Dutch diplomatic note of May 27—despite its uncompromising tone—was a "timely and valuable" step toward achieving the objectives of the Linggadjati agreement.⁵⁷ At a department meeting on June 6, Under Secretary Acheson told van Vredenburg of the foreign ministry that the proposals in the Dutch note were "reasonable." Van Vredenburg made it clear that a negative reply from the Republic would result in "limited military action" aimed at enlarging the Dutch "foothold in Java" and seizing food stocks and areas essential for exports. Control of the food supply "was very important to the Dutch," according to historian Yong Mun Cheong. Occupying "only toeholds in Republican areas," the Dutch were vulnerable to a food blockade that would compel "them to import food from elsewhere, thus increasing costs and further draining away foreign exchange."⁵⁸

Van Vredenburg was an accomplished, aggressive advocate of Dutch interests who had studied law, worked for the embassy in Washington during the war, and served as deputy delegate for the Netherlands at the founding of the United Nations. The forty-one-year-old diplomat assured Acheson and other State Department officials that the Netherlands would not occupy the Republican capital of Jogjakarta or launch military reprisals against Sukarno and other nationalist leaders. In a memorandum to Acheson after the meeting, John Carter Vincent

observed that the American diplomats in attendance had “raised no objection” to the proposed military operation: “I am afraid that the Dutch will feel that we have given tacit approval to their use of force if they consider the Indonesian reply unsatisfactory or negative.” Vincent believed that the State Department should urge the Dutch “in the strongest terms not to resort to force even to a limited degree in an attempt to solve their problems in Indonesia.”⁵⁹

On June 7, the Republic replied to the Dutch diplomatic note, alleging that the Netherlands government had violated “the contents and the spirit” of the Linggadjati agreement. Noting “with astonishment” Dutch accusations of lawlessness in Java and Sumatra, the Republic declared that maintaining peace within its territory was a task for its own police. Indirectly impugning Dutch motives for offering military assistance to the USI, the Republican response questioned whether Indonesians and a “foreign army” would be “fighting for a common purpose.” The Republic was prepared to participate in an interim federal government if it could provide at least half of the representatives and if decisions were made by majority rule.⁶⁰

Dutch Foreign Minister C. G. W. H. van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout found the Republic’s reply “unsatisfactory in many respects.” He told Hornbeck’s successor, Ambassador Herman B. Baruch, that the response over-emphasized and exaggerated the Republic’s importance in the “total Indonesian situation.” In Batavia, Walter Foote fumed that the Republican reply contained “inaccuracies, evasions and insinuations alleging illegal actions by Dutch.” He thought that majority rule in an interim government dominated by the Republic would be “impossible.”⁶¹

Diplomats in the UK Foreign Office, however, were disturbed by the “apparently stubborn attitude of the Dutch” toward further negotiations. The tone of the Dutch note of May 27, which UK officials thought “had the character of an ultimatum,” might well have been responsible for “the somewhat stiff and uncompromising nature of the Indonesian reply.”

According to the British Consulate in Batavia, “Van Mook and the other local Dutch had lost all patience with the Indonesians and were talking definitely of using force.” At a meeting at the State Department on Sunday, June 15, embassy first secretary Frederick Everson summarized a British diplomatic message to the Netherlands: “The Dutch are to be informed in the strongest possible manner that the Indonesian reply should be considered sympathetically, that negotiations should be continued, and that Dutch withdrawal or the use of force should not be considered at this time.”⁶²

The British wanted the United States to join them in offering “good offices” to both the Netherlands and the Republic to encourage bilateral negotiations. Secretary of State George C. Marshall discussed the UK proposal with Truman at the White House on June 16. Both agreed on the need for urgent diplomatic communications to the Dutch and Indonesians, but neither favored joint action with the British.⁶³ The rejection of the UK suggestion may have reflected a desire to maintain some diplomatic distance from the British, whose criticism of the Dutch in the NEI had been poorly received in The Hague. The president may also have objected to the appearance of the United States and United Kingdom “ganging up” on an ally. Or he may have wanted to avoid any deeper American involvement in the conflict.

It is difficult to confidently characterize President Truman’s views of the Indonesian revolution because of the limited evidence that he gave much thought at all to the archipelago. His foreign policy concerns, and those of his secretary of state, emphasized the Soviet threat, communist takeovers in Greece and Turkey, postwar European recovery, and other emerging cold war battles. The White House received regular State Department and intelligence summaries on key developments in the NEI, but individual Southeast Asian countries were a low priority for the president. He delegated much decision making to Marshall, who in turn relied on

his own subordinates for day-to-day assessments of the situation and instructions to diplomats in the Batavia and The Hague.

On June 17, however, State Department cables to the US diplomatic missions in The Hague and Batavia reflected Truman's conversation with Marshall the previous day. Ambassador Baruch was instructed to "immediately" make the following representations to the Dutch foreign ministry: The US government was "increasingly concerned over indications" that the Netherlands might use force to break the negotiating deadlock. Moreover, Dutch military action "would not be regarded favorably" by the US government, would have a "serious adverse" impact on American "public opinion, and would be self-defeating in purpose."⁶⁴

Baruch emphasized to Foreign Minister van Boetzelaer US objections to forceful measures, including the "limited military operations" recently disclosed by van Vredenburg and any "military campaign aimed at larger objectives." The ambassador also conveyed the US belief that "a prompt and workable agreement" with the Republic was still possible and that "the door should not be closed to further negotiation." In response to the American *démarche*, van Boetzelaer declared that the Dutch would continue to seek "a peaceful settlement but that there always remained the unhappy possibility of the limited military operations mentioned by Vredenburg."⁶⁵

In Batavia, Walter Foote received instructions from the State Department instructions to urge Republicans to continue their talks with the Dutch. The diplomat obeyed the directive, but he did not like it. In Foote's view, attempts to identify a middle ground between the Indonesian and Dutch positions were "useless except as a matter of record." Continued negotiations, he wrote to the department, were exactly what the Indonesians wanted: Time spent talking would allow the Republic to increase its military strength while the Dutch grew weaker. Alleging that

his instructions provided moral support to Indonesian extremists, Foote urged the department to authorize stronger representations to the Republic that would provide a “forceful picture” of the consequences of its “failure to agree at once” with the Dutch.⁶⁶

Despite Washington’s opposition to forceful measures by the Netherlands, Foote reported the “cold fact” that “some military action” would be “completely necessary” to restore law and order in parts of Indonesia—even if the Republic capitulated to every Dutch demand. In a cable to Washington, dated July 4, he declared that “quick surprise steps must be taken” in Java and Sumatra to protect property from “private armies or gangs.” Foote’s message used the term for military action preferred by the Netherlands: “police action,” a euphemism that not only minimized the violence of the planned offensive but also framed it as an internal Dutch affair. In closing, Foote assured the State Department that van Mook and Lieutenant General Simon Spoor, the former chief of NEFIS and current commander of the KNIL, had “promised [to] keep me advised [of] every possible detail” about any military moves.⁶⁷

Officials in Washington were likely horrified by this latest report from a diplomat who seemed to be more of a mouthpiece for the Netherlands government than an advocate of US policy. On July 6, the State Department announced Foote’s recall from Batavia. His successor, Charles A. Livengood, did not assume leadership of the consulate until September 30, and Foote continued to report on Indonesian affairs. Upon his eventual return to the United States, Foote secretly recommended the recall of his naval attaché, Captain McCallum. Foote alleged that McCallum, a graduate of Annapolis and an experienced military intelligence officer, was “very anti-Dutch and equally pro-Indonesian and does not hesitate to express his opinion.” This attitude, Foote wrote, contributed to the Dutch perception that the US government “is not neutral and favors the Republican movement.”⁶⁸

¹ Inglis to William A. Eddy, October 26, 1946, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6439.

² Lacy, memorandum of conversation, October 31, 1946, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6439. In May 1945, the name of the State Department’s Division of Southwest Pacific Affairs was changed to the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs.

³ Gouda, *American Visions*, pp. 185–186.

⁴ Hornbeck to State Dept., October 4, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Vol. VIII*, d. 638; Lacy, memorandum of conversation, October 31, 1946.

⁵ “Netherlands Government declaration of policy towards Indonesia,” February 10, 1946, and “Summary of Proposals by Netherlands Government as issued by the Lieutenant-Governor-General at Batavia,” February 10, 1946, *B DFA, 1946, Vol. 1*, pp. 287–289.

⁶ SSU, “Intelligence Summary No. 49,” February 13, 1946, RG 226, Entry A1 110, box 21.

⁷ State Department, Office of Research and Intelligence, February 20, 1946, RG 263, Entry A1 18, box 117.

⁸ “Self-Rule for Indonesia,” February 12, 1946, and “Peace Prospects in Java,” February 17, 1946, *New York Times*; Hornbeck to State Dept., February 21, 1946, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6448.

⁹ Foote to State Dept., February 14, 1946, and February 26, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Vol. VIII*, d. 599, and RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6448.

¹⁰ Bluechel to Shepardson, January 12, 1946, RG 226, Entry UD 200, box 2.

¹¹ “Indonesian Counter-proposals to the Netherlands Government Proposals for Constitutional Reform of the Netherlands East Indies,” March 13, 1946, *B DFA, 1946, Vol. 1*, pp. 291–292.

¹² Foote to State Dept., March 21, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, VIII*, d. 605; Legge, *Sukarno*, p. 225.

¹³ CIG, *Daily Summary*, May 14, 1946, www.foia.cia.gov; Foote to State Dept., May 19, 1946, RG 59, CDF, 1945–49, box 6449.

¹⁴ G. Kahin, “In Memoriam: Mohammad Hatta,” *Indonesia*, October 1980; State Dept., Division of Biographic Information, November 10, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 21.

¹⁵ Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, p. 390.

¹⁶ Hatta, *Mohammad Hatta*, p. 263n; Colin Campbell to War Dept., January 25, 1946, RG 226, Entry 200, box 2.

¹⁷ Robert Cribb, “Getting to Know the General: Sudirman and Indonesian Military Politics, 1945–50,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, September 1993.

¹⁸ Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, pp. 405–406.

¹⁹ Foote to State Dept., June 26, 1946, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 2.

²⁰ Donald A. Dumont to “AF [Office of African Affairs] and other interested Divisions and of possible interest to Consulate at Batavia,” March 25, 1946, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 2.

²¹ Foote to State Dept., June 26, 1946.

²² State Dept. to Harriman, June 27, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Vol. VIII*, d. 620.

²³ Harriman to State Dept., July 3, 1946, RG 59, CDF, 1945–49, box 6449.

²⁴ Foote to State Dept., July 10 and July 12, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Vol. VIII*, d. 621, and RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6449.

²⁵ Foote to State Dept., August 30, 1946, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Sastroamijoyo, *Milestones on My Journey*, p. 127.

²⁹ Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation*, p. 101.

³⁰ CIG, *Daily Summary*, August 30, 1946, www.foia.cia.gov; State Dept. to The Hague, September 20, 1946, RG 59, CDF, 1945–49, box 6449.

³¹ Gallman to State Dept., October 15, 1946, RG 59, CDF, 1945–49, box 6449.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ “Netherlands-Indonesian Agreement,” November 15, 1946, *B DFA, 1947, Vol. 4*, pp. 210–212.

³⁴ Vincent and John D. Hickerson to Dean Acheson, November 27, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Vol. VIII*, d. 644; Hornbeck to State Dept., November 19, 1946, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6452.

³⁵ Foote to State Dept., December 2, 1946, *FRUS, 1946, Vol. VIII*, d. 646.

³⁶ CIG, “Basic Dutch-Indonesian Issues and the Linggadjati Agreement,” June 9, 1947, www.foia.cia.gov.”

³⁷ Foote to State Dept., January 6, 1947, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 3.

³⁸ Foote to State Dept., January 14, 1947, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6449.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Wolf, *Indonesia Story*, p. 25. Italics added.

⁴¹ According to Sir Francis Shepherd, the British consul general in Batavia from 1947 to 1949, NEFIS tended to produce biased intelligence that supported Dutch policy. Commenting on a Netherlands assessment of Indonesian communism based on NEFIS reporting, Shepard noted “the Dutch habit of producing a certain number of facts in circumstances of their own choosing in order to ‘make their point’. Even Dutch intelligence circles who should have no axes to grind and should only keep to fact, continually jump to conclusions that they would like to think were fact...I make my usual criticism as on all NEFIS material that it is too apt to jump to conclusions, the conclusions they may wish to draw.” (Shepard, quoted in Shaw, “MI5 and the Cold War in South-East Asia,” *Intelligence and National Security*, February 2017.)

⁴² McMillan, *The British Occupation of Indonesia*, p. 158.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁴⁴ Moffat to Vincent, September 20, 1946, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6439.

⁴⁵ Morgan to H. Freeman Matthews, July 8, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 774; Inverchapel to FO, May 24, 1947, quoted in Tarling, *Britain, Southeast Asia and the Onset of the Cold War*, p. 214.

⁴⁶ CIG, *Weekly Summary*, February 14, 1947, www.foia.cia.gov.

⁴⁷ Hatta, *Mohammad Hatta*, p. 265; Sjahrir, March 25, 1947, Republican Ministry of Information, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6452.

⁴⁸ State Dept. to Foote, April 3, 1947, and Foote to State Dept., April 8, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 713 and d. 713n.

⁴⁹ CIG, “Basic Dutch-Indonesian Issues and the Linggadjati Agreement,” June 9, 1947.

⁵⁰ Drumright, memorandum of conversation, May 14, 1947, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6439.

⁵¹ Bluechel to Shepardson, January 14, 1946, RG 226, Entry 200, box 2; Helfrich to Albertus S. Pinke, March 30, 1947, quoted in Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, p. 341.

⁵² Lewis W. Douglas to State Dept., May 21, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 730; State Dept. to Douglas, May 22, 1947, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6449.

⁵³ Moffat, memorandum of conversation, May 23, 1947, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 6.

⁵⁴ Van Mook, “Memorandum for the Republican Delegation,” May 27, 1947, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 6.

⁵⁵ Foote to State Dept., May 28, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 732.

⁵⁶ Van Mook to Logemann, May 30, 1947, quoted in Cheong, *H.J. van Mook*, p. 127.

⁵⁷ State Dept. to Foote, June 5, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 742.

⁵⁸ Alexander Schnee, memorandum of conversation, June 6, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 743; Cheong, *H.J. van Mook*, p. 121.

⁵⁹ Vincent to Acheson, June 6, 1947, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 3994. According to a handwritten note on the document, the memorandum was “not used.”

⁶⁰ “Translation of the Indonesian Republican Reply to the Commission General’s Note of May 27, 1947,” RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 6.

⁶¹ Baruch to State Dept., June 10, 1947, and Foote to State Dept., June 13, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 746 and d. 747.

⁶² John M. Allison, memorandum of conversation, June 15, 1947, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6450.

⁶³ Marshall, memorandum, June 16, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 748.

⁶⁴ State Dept. to Baruch, June 17, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 750.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*; Baruch to State Dept., June 18, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 752.

⁶⁶ Foote to State Dept., June 19, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 753.

⁶⁷ Foote to State Dept., July 4, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 772.

⁶⁸ Foote to W. Walton Butterworth, January 6, 1948, RG 59, Entry A1 399, box 1.

Chapter 6
Living in Different Worlds
(1947–1948)

With a military force totaling approximately 100,000 in Java and Sumatra, the Dutch began the first “police action”—Operation Product—on July 20, 1947. Mechanized troops, supported by air and sea power, advanced rapidly, occupying large towns and major seaports and seizing such economically valuable areas as the rice-growing regions of East and West Java and the oilfields and refineries in South Sumatra. The Indonesian National Army (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, or TNI) generally retreated before the mobile assault, but many of its fighters remained in areas bordering strategic areas held by the Dutch. A significant form of Republican resistance was a scorched-earth policy targeting not only railways, bridges, and other objects of military value but also private property and food supplies. A team of US Army and Navy observers subsequently described the scorched-earth tactics as a weapon “to compensate for the lack of effective military equipment.”¹

Dutch officials repeatedly described their military operation as “limited,” emphasizing the absence of any direct attack on the Republican government in Jogjakarta. The cabinet’s decision to restrict the offensive was the result of political compromise not military strategy. On the one hand, KVP ministers sought the destruction of the Republic. According to political scientist Hendrik Spruyt, “Prime Minister Beel threatened to resign if the cabinet did not support military action.” PvdA ministers reluctantly agreed to military force in the absence of any apparent alternative but argued for a more limited operation that “would prompt less criticism nationally and internationally.”²

A political aim of the Netherlands offensive was convincing “moderate” Republicans—Sjahrir, for example—that it was in their self-interest to replace Sukarno and other “extremist” leaders in Jogjakarta. This Dutch aspiration represented a fundamental misreading of the Republicans, who differed over tactics but not objectives. Sjahrir, whose cabinet had fallen in late June because of his concessions to the Netherlands, reacted to the attack by observing: “We know we are involved in an unequal combat but we are fighting for our freedom and our very existence. We shall fight to the last man—either we win or perish.”³

The immediate US response to the Dutch military action was restrained. On July 21, the State Department issued a neutral-sounding news release that emphasized US efforts to encourage a peaceful settlement of the Netherlands-Republic conflict. The only hint of rebuke to the Dutch was the concluding statement of the press release: “The United States Government profoundly regrets that negotiation has been discarded as a means of achieving the voluntary association between the Netherlands and Indonesian peoples contemplated by the Linggadjati agreement.”⁴

Three days later, Secretary of State Marshall met with Eelco van Kleffens, the most distinguished Netherlands diplomat and the new Dutch ambassador to the United States. Foreign minister during the war and in Schermerhorn’s postwar cabinet, van Kleffens was described as “definitely pro-American” in a confidential State Department biography.⁵ When asked by Marshall whether the Netherlands intended to resume negotiations with the Republic, van Kleffens “replied that he did not think the present was an appropriate moment for negotiation.” The Netherlands, he added, would resume talks once the Republic was led by a responsible “group of Indonesians truly representative of the Indonesian people.” According to notes of the conversation, van Kleffens repeated “at great length” his conviction that “the present Indonesian

Government was dominated by a minority group of extremists unrepresentative of the real sentiments of the Indonesian people.”⁶

Unlike Marshall, who appeared to accept the Dutch military action as a *fait accompli*, British officials sought a more active role in resolving the crisis. In addition to publicly expressing its “keenest disappointment” with the breakdown in negotiations, the UK Foreign Office renewed an offer of diplomatic “good offices” to both the Netherlands and the Republic.⁷ Privately, the British urged the United States to take a tougher stand with the Dutch. Before the offensive, the Foreign Office had been “disgusted with the clumsy, legalistic and heavy-handed tactics used by the Dutch in their dealings with the Republicans.” Once the operation was underway, the British wanted the Americans to join them in pressuring the Dutch to accept some form of binding arbitration to end the conflict. Richard H. S. Allen, head of the Southeast Asia Department (SEAD) in the Foreign Office, informed an American embassy official that a US threat to withdraw financial assistance to the Netherlands would prompt a “drastic change” in Dutch attitudes and solve the problem in Indonesia “within one week.”⁸

Under instructions from Foreign Minister Bevin, Sir John Balfour, the British *chargé d'affaires* in Washington, appealed to the State Department to participate in a joint US-UK effort “to induce” the Netherlands to accept an “arbitral solution” in Indonesia. Acknowledging that the Dutch would almost certainly “dislike and perhaps resent” any such initiative, the British thought that binding arbitration—after consultation with both the Indonesians and the Dutch—was the only hope of bringing an early end to the conflict. Under Secretary of State Robert Lovett demurred, however, informing Balfour of the department’s recent conversation with van Kleffens: “We must be realistic and face [the] fact that [the] Dutch would not accept arbitration at this time.”⁹

The Netherlands might have continued to press its offensive and even attacked Jogjakarta had not India and Australia referred the crisis to the United Nations. Nehru was outraged that the United States and United Kingdom had not compelled the Netherlands to end its military action. Referring to the economic and political dependence of the Dutch on their two Western allies, Nehru declared: “No one in India or anywhere in Asia will believe that if [the] Governments of [the] United Kingdom and United States of America really desired [to] bring this conflict to [an] end they could not do it immediately.” An appeal for UN intervention, Nehru reasoned, might not instantly stop Dutch military operations but it would “arouse [the] moral conscience of [the] world.”¹⁰

Australia’s decision to refer the Dutch offensive to the UN was rooted in a postwar conviction that instability in Indonesia was a threat to peace that concerned not only the Netherlands but also Australia, New Zealand, and other Pacific powers. Sympathetic to the aspirations of Indonesian nationalists, the Labor government of Prime Minister Joseph B. Chifley had sought a diplomatic role in resolving the Republic’s dispute with the Netherlands. Dutch officials, however, resented Australia’s interest in the archipelago. For their part, the Australians doubted Dutch willingness to negotiate in good faith with the Republic. After the Netherlands launched its offensive, Chifley “decided we should have a go at the Dutch in the United Nations,” according to Keith C. O. Shann, then a UN specialist in Australia’s Department of External Affairs.¹¹

On July 30, both India and Australia submitted resolutions to the Security Council, the permanent and rotating subset of UN members with the primary responsibility for maintaining

international peace and security. India supported the more drastic resolution introduced by Australia, then a non-permanent member of the Security Council. Calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities and arbitration of the dispute, Australia invoked article 39 of the UN charter. This article authorized the Security Council not only to investigate threats to international peace but also to determine appropriate “measures” to end them. According to the UN charter, these measures ranged from economic sanctions to military operations by the armed forces of the council’s member states. The Indonesian crisis, said Australian representative William R. Hodgson, was “a test case by which the reputation and status of the Security Council will stand or fall.”¹²

In appealing to the Security Council, Australia sought the cooperation of the United States. The proposed Australian resolution, however, created a dilemma for the Truman administration, complicated by cold war concerns. Earlier that summer, Secretary Marshall had announced his eponymous plan for providing economic aid to the war-ravaged nations of Europe. Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov denounced the US program as a threat to European unity and to the recipients’ “economic independence and sovereignty.”¹³ The Australian referral of the Indonesian conflict to the Security Council would provide the Soviet Union with both an opportunity to meddle in the archipelago and a platform to attack the West. Moreover, such a referral would create the unappealing likelihood of the United States alienating either the Netherlands or Asian and Muslim-majority countries. Secretary Marshall, who had not spoken with Truman about the NEI in six weeks, pointed out to the president that the United States could not support the Dutch use of force. Nor could it oppose UN efforts to investigate or settle the conflict, “which would be bitterly resented by the Dutch and which could be exploited by Communist propaganda.”¹⁴

To limit UN intervention in Indonesia, the United States persuaded Australia to accept an amendment to its proposed resolution—a change that reflected an earlier Dutch suggestion to the State Department. Although insisting their “police action” was an internal affair beyond the jurisdiction of the United Nations, the Dutch preferred that article 33 of the charter be the basis for the inevitable referral of the conflict to the Security Council. Under this article, parties to an international dispute can seek a solution through negotiations, mediation, or some “other peaceful means of their own choice.” On July 31, the United States offered its good offices to the Netherlands and the Republic. The Dutch promptly accepted the US offer to promote negotiations, and on August 1, the Security Council passed an amended resolution calling for a cessation of “hostilities forthwith,” peaceful settlement of the conflict, and reports to the council on the progress of negotiations. According to a CIG intelligence report for senior US policymakers, the revised resolution offered the Netherlands and the Republic “a final opportunity to reach a settlement prior to any UN decision to claim full jurisdiction in the controversy.”¹⁵

Dutch and Republican leaders issued ceasefire orders to their military forces in early August. US intelligence analysts, however, doubted that these orders would be obeyed or that American good offices would be successful. “The last two years of negotiation clearly reveal the irreconcilability of Dutch and Indonesian aims,” the State Department’s Office of Intelligence Research (OIR) concluded. “The artificial truce now established cannot long endure. Whether publicized or not, violence on both sides appears inevitable.” William A. Eddy, special assistant to the secretary of state for research and intelligence, predicted: “Mediation between the Dutch and Indonesians will fail and will involve the mediator in the active ill will of both parties.”¹⁶

Operation Product, interrupted by the Security Council, achieved virtually all of its territorial objectives. Dutch perimeters, however, were lightly held and vulnerable to infiltration and to sabotage, sniping, and guerrilla attacks. Perhaps an even more distressing problem for the Dutch was the continuing control of the Republic by its leaders in Jogjakarta. Van Mook and Spoor urged the Netherlands government to resume military operations to eliminate this strategic threat. A renewed Dutch offensive, wrote CIG analysts, would “have as its objective the occupation of the Republican capital of Jogjakarta in an attempt to bring about the downfall of the Republican Government.”¹⁷ Dutch faith in a decapitation strategy, wrote military historian Petra Groen, was shaped, in part, by a flawed image of the Republic: “The supposition was that a radical, political and military group of leaders was inciting and hoodwinking gullible people through terrorism and propaganda. An attack on the leaders would cause the scales to fall from their eyes.”¹⁸

On August 18, Ambassador van Kleffens made a formal appeal to Under Secretary Lovett for understanding about the untenable situation created by the Republican government’s encouragement of “wanton acts of devastation and cruelty.” In the words of a diplomatic note delivered by the ambassador, who also served as his country’s chief delegate to the United Nations, “the Netherlands Government feel that an immediate end must be put to an intolerable situation.” Almost certainly seeking American acquiescence in a resumption of the military offensive, van Kleffens said that the Dutch were “willing to consider any constructive and practical suggestions the Government of the United States may care to make at this critical juncture.” Lovett equivocated—in part, because the State Department had not yet received a reply from the Republic about the US offer of good offices. He did, however, have one specific recommendation. Lovett “strongly” advised the Dutch government to refrain from further

military action. Such a step, he warned, would likely have “serious consequences, perhaps even sanctions” by the Security Council.¹⁹

Lovett’s warning carried considerable weight. Then fifty-one, he had already established himself as an unusually capable national security administrator while serving as assistant secretary of war for air from 1941 to 1945. A graduate of Yale, a naval aviator in World War I, and an investment banker between the wars, Lovett returned to government service in 1947, when George Marshall asked him to be his under secretary of state. Lovett’s disapproval of further Dutch military action in Indonesia, not to mention the potential economic impact of UN sanctions, could not easily be dismissed by the Netherlands government. According to Joseph Luns, then a diplomat engaged in Indonesian affairs and later a Dutch foreign minister, Lovett told van Kleffens that the “US Government would be unable to oppose” any UN sanctions. “As a result of Mr. Lovett’s warning,” said Luns, “the Dutch Government had withheld its intention of resuming military operations.”²⁰

Also acting as a brake on a renewed military offensive were sharp disagreements within the Netherlands cabinet. J. J. Vorrink, chairman of the PvdA, told a US embassy official in The Hague that van Mook’s “urgent admonitions” had prompted the KVP to press the government for a resumption of “military action and [a] march on Djocjakarta.” PvdA ministers, however, made it clear that they “would resign” from the cabinet if the offensive were renewed. On August 25, Baruch reported to the State Department that the Netherlands government was “still in [the] throes of indecision concerning [the] resumption [of] military operations.”²¹

In Washington, three days later, Ambassador van Kleffens informed Lovett that “the Netherlands cabinet had now definitely decided not to take military action against Djocjakarta.” Dutch forces, the ambassador said, would restrict themselves to “mopping up” guerilla activity

behind their lines.²² In the NEI, van Mook's government announced that it would restore law and order in areas behind demarcation lines in Java and Sumatra connecting the deepest Dutch military advances. A division of territory favoring the Dutch, the so-called van Mook line was an attempt to reduce the Republic's "de facto" authority in Java and Sumatra. Republican officials rejected these boundaries. "As soon as [the] Dutch have succeeded in occupying [a] few towns and [a] few main roads," said A. K. Gani, deputy prime minister of the Republic, "they start claiming that [the] entire area covered by [the] imaginary demarcation lines they draw on [a] map becomes *Terra Nederlandica*."²³

There was "no doubt" that the establishment of the van Mook line and the Republic's refusal to accept it were principal causes of the many violations of the UN ceasefire order, according to a report by a committee of consuls in Batavia who represented governments on the Security Council (Australia, Belgium, China, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States).²⁴ Australian military observers concluded that the establishment of the van Mook line was administratively "expedient" for the Dutch but could not "be justified on legal and moral grounds." Moreover, armed patrols by Dutch troops within the van Mook line constituted a hostile action "contrary to the strict observance of the spirit of the 'Cease Hostilities' order."²⁵

US military observers who traveled widely through Java and Sumatra summarized the challenge facing the Dutch: Although their troops were a well-equipped fighting force capable of moving "anywhere without serious difficulty," additional soldiers would be needed to secure Dutch-claimed territory "if the present will of the people to resist continues." The US military team was led by Colonel Colin S. Myers, who had served in the Allied Intelligence Bureau during the war and continued to report to MacArthur's intelligence chief since Japan's surrender. Comprising nine field grade officers (major through colonel) with experience in intelligence and

the Far East, the US military group concluded: “The viewpoints of the Dutch and the present Republican leaders are at such variance at this time that it seems utterly impossible to frame an agreement which both will accept without pressure being brought to bear upon both by a third party.”²⁶

The UN mechanism “to assist in the pacific settlement of the dispute between the Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia” was the Security Council’s Good Offices Committee (GOC).²⁷ The GOC was established after the Republic’s insistence on binding arbitration to settle the conflict prompted the United States to withdraw its offer of good offices to encourage bilateral negotiations. On August 25, 1947, the Security Council adopted a resolution proposing the creation of a three-member GOC, with the Netherlands and the Republic each selecting a representative. The two states appointed to the GOC would then jointly choose a third member they deemed “impartial.” This arrangement was acceptable to both the Netherlands, which selected Belgium, and the Republic, which chose Australia. Belgium and Australia designated the United States as the committee’s third member. According to Herschel V. Johnson, deputy US delegate to the Security Council, Indonesians participating in the UN discussions hoped that the American representative on the GOC would not be from the State Department, which they considered “pro-Dutch.”²⁸

Officials from the State Department’s divisions of European, Southeast Asian, and UN affairs produced an initial list of twenty-eight possible candidates for the US representative on the GOC. Among them were former secretaries of state Edward Stettinius and James Byrnes, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, former OSS chief William Donovan, *Time* magazine publisher

Henry R. Luce, Harvard University president James B. Conant, and theologian Reinhold Niebuhr.²⁹ Dutch and British officials hoped that the United States would appoint General Eisenhower or a diplomat whose prestige was equivalent to Lord Killearn's. Instead, the man—there were no women, nor people of color, among the department's nominees—selected by President Truman was Frank Porter Graham, president of the University of North Carolina. Then sixty-one, Graham was a southern liberal who had served on a number of federal commissions during Roosevelt's presidency. His most relevant experience for the GOC was mediating management-labor disputes in the defense industry before and during the war. Truman's decision to select Graham as the American GOC representative was presumably based on a desire for a professionally competent, politically reliable delegate whose relatively low profile would not increase attention to a foreign policy problem that threatened to alienate either a European ally or nationalists across Asia—and perhaps both.

The other members of the GOC were Paul van Zeeland, former prime minister of Belgium, and Richard C. Kirby, judge of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration. In 1946, Kirby had investigated the murder of three Australian military officers in Java and briefly served as his country's de facto diplomatic representative because of Alfred Brookes's illness. At their first official meeting in Australia, the three GOC delegates agreed that none would represent the interests of either party in the dispute and that they would act collectively "in the spirit of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter."³⁰ This ideal, severely tested in the months ahead, would eventually be shattered by partisanship.

Arriving in Indonesia on October 27, the members of GOC had preliminary talks with Republican officials, who continued to seek UN arbitration of the dispute—not good offices. In a report to the State Department, Graham wrote that the Indonesians were "palpably" disappointed

by the committee's limited authority to resolve the conflict. Republican leaders urged the GOC to promote observance of the UN ceasefire order, which would contribute to an atmosphere of goodwill for negotiations. Graham and his colleagues replied that the Security Council was considering this expansion of the committee's responsibilities.³¹

Throughout October, the Security Council had been debating measures to secure compliance with its ceasefire order. Among the toughest proposals was a Soviet resolution calling for the withdrawal of Dutch and Indonesian forces to their positions on July 20, the first day of Operation Product. Australia suggested a less drastic movement of troops to five kilometers behind their positions on August 1, the date of the Security Council ceasefire order. The United States, however, sought an even weaker resolution that was more favorable to the Netherlands. Seeking to maintain European unity in the face of Soviet cold war maneuvers—for example, the pledge to resist “expansionist” Marshall Plan aid to Europe—the United States drafted a proposal that did not require any withdrawal of forces and that served as the basis for the resolution adopted by the Security Council on November 1. Recognizing the Dutch territorial gains achieved by the offensive, the resolution declared that neither combatant should engage in “hostile action to extend its control over territory not occupied by it on 4 Aug. 1947,” the day the Netherlands and the Republic issued ceasefire orders to their forces. The resolution also asked the GOC, assisted by the consuls in Batavia and their military observers, to help the Dutch and Indonesians agree on an “arrangement which will insure the observance of the cease-fire resolution.”³²

At the GOC's first meeting with representatives of the Netherlands, Graham was surprised to find that only six of the twenty-two members of the “provisional committee” were Europeans. (The Dutch said that they would not appoint an official GOC delegation until a

“possible basis” for discussions with the Republic had been established.)³³ The Netherlands committee was chaired by the ubiquitous Abdulkadir Widjoatmodjo, who had just been appointed deputy lieutenant governor general of the NEI, the highest official position ever held by an Indonesian. According to Kenneth P. Landon, assistant chief of the State Department’s Division of Southeast Asian Affairs, the Netherlands was attempting “to confuse the identity of the disputants” by portraying the conflict as a disagreement among Indonesians. A former Presbyterian missionary who had lived in Siam throughout the 1930s and who had worked on Southeast Asian affairs for various government agencies during the war, Landon wrote: “The Dutch desire to play for time because they believe that given time they can consolidate their control over the areas now enclosed by the so-called Van Mook Line.”³⁴

To convert military advantage into political gains, Dutch officials continued to promote the establishment of “autonomous” areas that would eventually become states in the proposed USI. The autonomous areas, van Mook claimed, were “spontaneous” responses by ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse peoples who did not want to be ruled by the Republic. Belittling the Republic, he said that “it was rapidly becoming a ‘party’ and losing its character of a ‘government.’”³⁵ Republican ministers denounced the autonomous movement as a deliberate effort by the Netherlands to encircle and weaken their state. Consul General Livengood found elements of truth in both Dutch and Republican claims. Economic counselor in the Rome embassy before his appointment to Batavia, Livengood reported to Washington that, on the one hand, some Indonesian groups preferred autonomy within a federation instead of “domination” by the Republic. On the other hand, Dutch denials of inspiring or influencing the autonomous areas “should be taken with a grain of salt.”³⁶

Charlton Ogburn Jr., a Southeast Asian specialist assigned to Graham's mission by the State Department, traveled to Jogjakarta in November to report on the Republic and the views of its leaders. An intelligence analyst, Ogburn had been recommended for the Indonesian mission because of his "political sagacity" and because of continuing State Department dissatisfaction with the information provided by the consulate in Batavia. "The reporting from Indonesia leaves us with no clear picture of the forces at work in that region," complained John Davies, then with the policy planning staff. "For planning purposes we feel that it is important that the Department receive far more information than it has thus far from Indonesia."³⁷

In a cable summarizing his twelve-day visit, Ogburn wrote that Indonesian officials were determined to achieve "immediate unqualified independence." Moreover, they appeared unable to comprehend why the Republic "should be expected to accept any form or shadow of control by Dutch," who were regarded as the "supreme national enemy" since their military action. Republican leaders, Ogburn wrote, conceded their "unreadiness [to] assume [the] full burden [of] running [the] country." Apparently envisioning Dutch technical assistance in economic and other non-governing fields, the Indonesians recognized the necessity of encouraging foreign investment and seemed to regard the West as a source of "guidance." If their "obsession" with "national equality" was satisfied "in form," Ogburn suggested, Republican leaders might "prove pliant [in] substantive matters." He concluded that the "best Dutch policy would seem [to] be to roll with [the] punch much more than heretofore." The Netherlands could wait for "inevitable difficulties" and then exert a "stabilizing force" through its control of major commercial enterprises "on which revenues [for the] state will largely depend."³⁸

Ogburn's estimate of the situation was well received by State Department officials, who called it "excellent" and of "great interest [and] value."³⁹ Born in Atlanta in 1911, Ogburn was a Harvard graduate who worked as a reader and reviewer for the Book of the Month Club in the 1930s. He enlisted in the Army in 1941 and served in Burma with the US Army's 5307 Composite Unit (Provisional), better known as "Merrill's Marauders." Transferred to the War Department, he was assigned to the Military Intelligence Service. His immediate postwar career included a stint with the CIG's Central Reports Staff,⁴⁰ which produced daily summaries of significant cables for the president and senior policymakers. At the State Department, Ogburn found "uncanny parallels" between the anticolonial struggles in Indochina and Indonesia. The latter, however, seemed "simpler and less dangerous," in part because of the limited communist influence on the nationalists.⁴¹

In conversations with Ogburn and other US officials, Dutch diplomats rejected the analogy between Indochina and Indonesia. Van Mook conceded that in Indochina "popular animosity to Europeans [was] very strong." In Indonesia, however, the "only significant anti-Dutch elements" were "certain politicians" and young people indoctrinated by the Japanese, "numbering perhaps 200,000." If the summer "police action" had been allowed to continue, van Mook added, Republican resistance would have been "finished."⁴²

Exhibiting little willingness to "roll with the punch," Dutch officials backpedaled from their Linggadjati commitments, particularly recognition of the Republic's "de facto authority" in Java, Madura, and Sumatra. On December 1, Henri van Vredenburg, ostensibly Abdulkadir's deputy but, in fact, the leader of the Dutch delegation, observed that the Linggadjati agreement had been a "terrible mistake." He told Ogburn and State Department official Joseph W. Scott that the accord had "misled" members of the Security Council into assuming the Republic and the

Netherlands were the adversaries in Indonesia. The “real parties” to the dispute, van Vredenburg implausibly claimed, were the Republicans and other Indonesians. Predicting that the Republic would “probably [be] confined [to] central Java,” he informed the Americans that Abdulkadir’s plans for an autonomous state of West Java were “already far advanced.”⁴³

Discussions with representatives of the Republic and the Netherlands produced gloomy US estimates of the two sides’ ability to reach a negotiated political settlement. Republican officials expected “immediate, unqualified political independence,” according to CIA, while Netherlands authorities continued to “encourage the creation of pro-Dutch states within former Republican territory.”⁴⁴ On the eve of the first plenary meeting of delegates from the GOC, the Republic, and the Netherlands, Kenneth Landon of the State Department wrote: “The inability of the GOC to be of use in solving the differences between the Indonesians and Dutch is becoming apparent to everyone concerned.” To Frank Graham, it was “obvious” that the Netherlands and the Republic were “not only poles apart but living [in] different worlds.”⁴⁵

Exemplifying the irreconcilable differences between the Republic and the Netherlands was their inability to agree on a location for the plenary sessions of the GOC conference. Republican officials wanted a neutral site outside of Indonesia. To them, Dutch-controlled Batavia was unacceptable because Republican delegates “would not feel safe” there. And Jogjakarta was unsuitable because the presence of Dutch officials “would injure the feelings of the population.”⁴⁶ (This may have been a diplomatic way of saying that the Dutch would not be safe there.) The Netherlands insisted on GOC meetings somewhere within the archipelago, which would reinforce the internal nature of the dispute. With the Republic ruling out Indonesia and the

Netherlands excluding the rest of the world, the GOC asked the United States to provide a naval vessel for the talks. State Department officials initially resisted the suggestion, observing that it would further delay the start of the conference and “over-emphasize US influence in [the] negotiations.” When Graham replied that a US ship was needed to break a “serious deadlock” jeopardizing substantive talks, the department relented and asked the Navy to provide a vessel.⁴⁷

The ship was the USS *Renville*, a 450-foot attack transport that had landed First Division Marines on Okinawa during the war. Anchored in the harbor of Tanjung Priok, the *Renville* provided delegates with a meeting place and, if necessary, living quarters. At the ceremonial first session, held on December 8, 1947, representatives of the Netherlands, the Republic, and the GOC were welcomed aboard by the ship’s company in dress whites and a US Marine honor guard. The main deck was crowded with advisers, reporters, and photographers. The “atmosphere,” Graham reported to Washington, indicated that the conference was an “important occasion.”⁴⁸

The gracious opening remarks by Dutch and Republican delegates exuded cooperation and goodwill. This mood quickly gave way to inflammatory accusations and countercharges. On December 10, Abdulkadir made a polemical speech about the history of the NEI during the reign of Queen Wilhelmina. Despite the statement’s length (fifteen single-space, legal-size pages), Abdulkadir’s message was simple: The Republic, a “totalitarian” creation of the Japanese occupation, was solely responsible for the postwar “chaos” and “suffering” in Indonesia. In contrast, he and other NEI officials had fought alongside the allies during the war and represented the democratic values expressed in the Atlantic and UN charters. Amir Sjarifuddin, Sjahrir’s successor as prime minister, replied in kind, if not length. A Dutch-educated lawyer who had been imprisoned by the Japanese for his underground resistance during the war,

Sjarifuddin was a leftist who served as minister of information in the first Sukarno cabinet and as Sjahrir's minister of defense. On the *Renville*, he summarized the growth of Indonesian nationalism, declaring that the history of the NEI was essentially the story of a colonial power's "warfare" against the Indonesians. None of the archipelago's peoples and tribes, said Sjarifuddin, had "ever accepted Dutch rule voluntarily."⁴⁹

Ten days after the opening of the conference, Graham wrote to the State Department that the negotiating goals of the Republic and the Netherlands seemed clear. On the one hand, the Republic wanted confirmation of its authority in Java, Sumatra, and Madura, an outcome that would likely require a UN guarantee. As an independent state, the Republic envisioned either "taking over" the outer islands or dominating the USI. The Netherlands, on the other hand, sought the "elimination" of the Republic as a political force by confining it to central Java and by constructing the USI through the "fragmentation [of] other areas" into small states. This process, Graham wrote, was "advancing rapidly." With the Republic isolated, the Netherlands would "proceed to neutralize" the government in Jogjakarta, the operational center of the "so-called destructive and non-cooperative elements" and the "source [of] incitements to violence." Dutch officials told Graham that "further police action might be required."⁵⁰

The Netherlands was considerably closer to achieving its objectives than the Republic, which had suffered militarily, economically, and psychologically from the previous summer's offensive and subsequent "mopping up" operations. But Dutch success, Graham noted, was based on an "overwhelming superiority" of military equipment. Longer-term estimates of Dutch prospects should recognize that the "Republican cause" was the strongest political force in the archipelago and the "main channel [of] expression" for Indonesian nationalism. In a top-secret cable to Marshall, Graham wrote: "The Republic, with all its frustrations, faults and bad spots, is

still the rallying center of the largest, ablest, and most dedicated single group of Indonesians in this struggle for independence.”⁵¹

Although members of the GOC were nominally independent of their national governments, Graham cabled the State Department on December 20 seeking guidance that would help him advocate for a settlement consistent with American foreign policy. The reply from Washington summarized major US policy “considerations” in the NEI. Prioritizing European recovery over Indonesian independence, department officials wrote that the Netherlands government was a “strong proponent” of American objectives in Europe. If the Dutch did not retain a “very considerable stake in [the] NEI,” that government might fall, which, in turn, would likely “be prejudicial to [the] US position in Western Europe.” The department, therefore, did not favor “any solution requiring [the] immediate and complete withdrawal [of the] Netherlands from [the] Indies or any important part thereof.”⁵²

Repeating the longstanding US commitment to self-government for people who were “qualified” to assume such responsibilities, the department informed Graham that it was “favorably disposed” to the idea of a USI with a limited period of Dutch sovereignty, followed by Indonesian independence. In the opinion of Washington officials, the Dutch did “not expect to remain sovereign in [the] USI for more than [a] few years.” One final, Eurocentric policy consideration was that food and other commodities from Indonesia were indispensable to the European Recovery Program (ERP), the official name of the Marshall Plan. Consequently, the department was “unfavorably disposed toward any solution” that would likely prolong the “existing disorder in [the] NEI.”⁵³

Although US policymakers had a pro-Netherlands bias, Australian officials continued to criticize the Dutch—blaming them, for example, for the delay in reaching a ceasefire agreement.

Judge Kirby told the Department of External Affairs that the Netherlands was not cooperating with the GOC and “practically sabotag[ing]” its work.⁵⁴ To the irritation of State Department officials, Australia seemed intent on placing the Netherlands in an “embarrassing position.” The US embassy in Canberra was instructed to bring this un-neutral behavior to the attention of the Australian government. Graham, however, protested that such a message might cause him “embarrassment.” Australia’s “partiality” toward the Republic, he wrote, was matched by Belgium’s favoritism toward the Netherlands: “[The] Dutch have never yet accepted [a] single GOC proposal without at least serious qualification while [the] Indonesians have accepted all proposals so far.”⁵⁵

The stalled Renville negotiations prompted the GOC to draft a consensus proposal that included a plan for implementing a truce and principles for negotiating a political settlement. Completed on December 25, in a “spirit [of] urgency,” according to Graham, the so-called Christmas program contained suggestions that both sides would find unpalatable. For example, the Republic would have to accept the van Mook line, and the Dutch would have to stop sponsoring “autonomous zones.” Thomas K. Critchley, Kirby’s deputy on the GOC, reported to Canberra that the Christmas program had “many defects of compromise and many more of hasty drafting.” But a redeeming virtue of the document, in Critchley’s view, was its potential to “undermine” Dutch policy in Indonesia: “Militarily the Dutch have presented the [Good Offices] Committee and [Security] Council with a *fait accompli*. They are now endeavouring to do the same politically and it is essential that the Committee endeavour to check this without delay.”⁵⁶

Dutch officials rejected the Christmas program. Reacting positively to aspects of the truce proposal, they urged the GOC to withdraw its political principles, insisting that “an effective truce and restoration of law and order must precede a political agreement.” The GOC representatives responded that their truce plan and political principles were indivisible parts of “an integrated approach.”⁵⁷ The Dutch, unwilling to stop the formation of new states, suggested revisions of the Christmas program that were often vague, if not meaningless. For example, the GOC had recommended that the UN observe conditions in Indonesia until the establishment of a sovereign USI. The Dutch counterproposal, which did not refer to the Republic by name, suggested that any request for UN observation by one party should receive “serious consideration” from the other.⁵⁸

The Dutch made it clear that their military and political counterproposals were a “final offer.” Unsubtly implying the possibility of a new “police action,” the Dutch seemed to Graham “completely confident and untroubled” by the international repercussions of another military offensive. A failed GOC effort to achieve a peaceful settlement, CIA predicted, would be harmful to the prestige of the United Nations and the United States: “An adverse outcome of this crisis, such as the collapse of the Republic, will seriously jeopardize future UN intervention in disputes elsewhere and will handicap other US efforts to mediate.”⁵⁹ To prevent a breakdown in negotiations, Graham drafted additional political principles that he thought would preserve the objectives of the Christmas program and be acceptable to the Netherlands, the Republic, and the State Department. If officials in Washington agreed with him, Graham urged the department “to press the Dutch Government to accept” the new proposal.⁶⁰

The State Department was “gratified” by Graham’s compromise political principles and was “prepared to assist [him] in every possible way to facilitate [a] settlement.”⁶¹ On Thursday,

January 8, officials representing the divisions of Southeast Asian and European affairs made a forceful “informal” démarche to Counselor Henri A. Helb of the Netherlands embassy. Declaring that Graham’s principles were “eminently fair, reasonable and practical,” the American diplomats linked prompt Dutch acceptance of them with ongoing talks about US “financial help to metropolitan Holland and to the NEI.” According to a memorandum of conversation prepared by Frederick Nolting of the division of European affairs, the US officials “implied” that Dutch responsibility for failed negotiations “would adversely affect” the financial discussions between the two countries about Marshall Plan aid. At the conclusion of the meeting, wrote Nolting, “Mr. Helb summarized accurately our position.”⁶²

Helb, a thirty-nine-year-old diplomat who was born in the NEI and studied law at Leiden University, informed the Netherlands government that a failure to accept the GOC truce and political principles risked the receipt of Marshall Plan assistance. On January 9, Ambassador van Kleffens reported to Foreign Minister van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout that agreeing to the GOC proposals “would have a ‘decisive influence’ on the distribution of Marshall Plan aid.”⁶³ The Netherlands cabinet met on a Sunday—an unusual procedure, according to the US embassy in The Hague. Under pressure from the United States, the cabinet authorized its representatives in Batavia to accept the GOC proposal but resented the American threat. Minister of Finance P. Liefstinck, who was responsible for the economic rehabilitation of the Netherlands, called it “intolerable blackmail.”⁶⁴

In a transparent attempt to mollify the Netherlands government, the State Department made the dubious claim that there had been a misunderstanding: A rejection of the GOC recommendations would “seriously affect” US consideration of reconstruction aid in Indonesia but not Marshall Plan assistance to the Netherlands. Counselor Helb, reversing his earlier

assessment of US intentions, reported to The Hague: “As far as the Dutch embassy has been able to check it was *never* intended to put the knife on the Dutch throat; the support to the Kingdom in Europe under the Marshall Plan has never been at stake.”⁶⁵

The United States leaned on Republican leaders, too, pressing them to accept a truce that recognized the reviled van Mook line, now formally referred to as the “status quo line.” In a GOC visit to Jogjakarta, which Graham described as “extremely tense,” he took a “strong position” with Sukarno and other Republican leaders, “lectur[ing]” them on the “opportunity” presented by an agreement allowing Indonesians to determine their own political future through plebiscites and a constitutional convention.⁶⁶ According to Kirby, who considered the truce “most unjust,” Graham “made quite an oratorical and frenzied appeal with much table thumping and said that the Republic would be foolish to reject [the agreement] and if they did [they] ‘would lose [the] heaviest.’” In a cable to John W. Burton, secretary of Australia’s Department of External Affairs, Kirby explained that he did not advise the Republic to reject the GOC plan “for fear of losing all American help and support” in the follow-up negotiations for a definitive political settlement. He did, however, tell Republican leaders that “Australia would support them in the event of rejection or acceptance.”⁶⁷

Under pressure from the United States, representatives of the Netherlands (Abdulkadir) and the Republic (Sjarifuddin) signed the so-called Renville agreement on January 17. The truce plan was relatively straightforward, calling for TNI forces on the Dutch side of the status quo line to withdraw into Republican territory, observed by GOC military advisers. The principles for a political settlement, however, once again papered over the two parties’ differing views of

sovereignty. Graham's first political principle unambiguously recognized Dutch sovereignty throughout the NEI in the interim period before the establishment of the USI. But to gain the Republic's acceptance of this principle, the GOC told Republican officials that nothing in its proposal modified the "status" of the two parties during the interim period. This statement was significant because the 1947 Linggadjati accord was the only Dutch-Indonesian agreement defining the Republic's status. The GOC's clarifying comment, therefore, supported the argument that the Republic retained de facto authority in its territory until the establishment of a sovereign USI.⁶⁸

The GOC clarification infuriated Van Vredenburg, who accused the committee of tricking the Republic to achieve an agreement. He demanded, and received, assurances that the Republic unconditionally accepted the Renville political principles. Sukarno and his ministers, however, still considered the GOC's clarifying statement as the official interpretation of the Republic's status. In an analysis of the Renville agreement, CIA presciently warned: "The tendency of both the Netherlands and the Republic to derive vastly different interpretations from the same signed commitment, and the habit of each party to regard its interpretation as the only possible, may readily lead to repeated breakdowns of negotiations and finally to a resumption of Dutch 'police action' on the grounds that dealings with the Republic are patently impossible."⁶⁹

Less than a week after the signing ceremony, Consul General Livengood wrote to the State Department about the pessimistic local reaction to the Renville accord. Van Mook, who was reportedly depressed by the political agreement, "felt that America had let [the] Dutch down." Moreover, Deputy Prime Minister Setiadjit allegedly claimed that the Republic had "been 'buffaloed' into accepting [the] truce plan." Francis M. Shepherd, the British consul

general in Batavia, informed the Foreign Office that the truce was “a bitter disappointment to the Republic, [which had] been obliged to concede to the Dutch the fruits of the ‘Police Action.’”⁷⁰

Dissatisfaction with the Renville agreement ended the fragile political unity within the Republican government. The Masjumi and PNI parties withdrew from the cabinet, forcing the socialist Sjarifuddin to resign as prime minister. Sukarno selected Hatta, his politically unaffiliated vice president, to form a new cabinet. A Sumatran who lacked Sukarno’s charisma and gift for oratory, Hatta was a better administrator and a more devout Muslim than the president. Comparing the two leaders, George Kahin wrote: “To Sukarno's charisma, keen political perceptiveness, and ability to inspire mass support, Hatta added organizational and administrative talent and an understanding of economic problems.” Hatta biographer Mavis Rose echoed this assessment: “Hatta needed Sukarno’s charm and ability to communicate with the Javanese masses. Sukarno benefitted from Hatta’s discipline, integrity, and economic sense.”⁷¹

Hatta announced that the new cabinet would be responsible to the president rather than the KNIP, a constitutionally defensible but more autocratic approach to governing that disturbed the *Sayap Kiri*, the Republic’s coalition of left-wing political parties. These parties did not participate in Hatta’s government, an omission at least partially attributable to excessive left-wing demands for cabinet representation. According to Ann Swift, a US Foreign Service officer who served in Indonesia in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the exclusion of left-wing parties from the cabinet led to their increasing radicalization and the communist uprising in Madiun in September 1948.⁷²

In Washington, US officials privately acknowledged that the Renville agreement was “largely favorable” to the Dutch. The accord did, however, provide the Republic with a key protection: The GOC and its US representative would remain involved in the negotiations for a

political settlement. At the very least, continuing UN engagement in Indonesian affairs meant that a Dutch military solution risked international sanctions. And while American diplomacy still tilted toward the Netherlands, the United States was committed to a negotiated political settlement and the survival of the Republic. The assistant secretaries of state responsible for UN, European, and Southeast Asian affairs jointly wrote to Marshall: “The United States Government considers it essential for a lasting settlement that the Republic remain as an entity in the United States of Indonesia.”⁷³

¹ Report of the US Army and Navy Advisory Group, October 25, 1947, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 4.

² Spruyt, *Ending Empire*, p. 159; Petra Groen, “Militant Response: The Dutch Use of Military Force and the Decolonization of the Dutch East Indies, 1945–1950,” in Holland, editor, *Emergencies and Disorder in the European Empires after 1945*, p. 32.

³ “Sjahrir Says Indonesians Will Fight to the Last Man,” *New York Times*, July 24, 1947.

⁴ State Dept. to Batavia, July 22, 1947, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 6.

⁵ State Dept., biographic profile, undated, c. July 1947, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6439.

⁶ Morgan, memorandum of conversation, July 24, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 789.

⁷ “Statement by Foreign Office,” quoted in *The Times*, July 21, 1947.

⁸ Drumright to Moffat, June 26, 1947; Lewis W. Douglas to State Dept., July 24, 1947, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6450.

⁹ “The British Embassy to the Department of State,” July 24, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 790; State Dept. to Douglas, July 26, 1947, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6450.

¹⁰ Henry F. Grady to State Dept., July 26, 1947, and July 29, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 792, and RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6450.

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- ¹¹ Shann, quoted in Fettling, “J.B. Chifley and the Indonesian Revolution, 1945–1949,” *Australian Journal of Politics & History*,” December 2013.
- ¹² US delegation to State Dept., August 1, 1947, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2137; UN, “Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice,” www.un.org.
- ¹³ Molotov, quoted in Associated Press, “Statements by Molotov, Bevin and Bidault on European Aid Plan,” *New York Times*, July 3, 1947.
- ¹⁴ Marshall to Truman, July 30, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 797.
- ¹⁵ CIG, *Daily Summary*, August 2, 1947, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ¹⁶ Office of Intelligence Research, “Mediation and Arbitration in the Case of Indonesia,” August 7, 1947, and Eddy to Norman Armour, August 8, 1947, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6450.
- ¹⁷ CIG, *Daily Summary*, August 21, 1947, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ¹⁸ Petra Groen, “Militant Response: The Dutch Use of Military Force and the Decolonization of the Dutch East Indies, 1945–1950,” in Holland, editor, *Emergencies and Disorder in the European Empires after 1945*, p. 37.
- ¹⁹ Dutch note, August 18, 1947, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2138; Lovett, memorandum of conversation, August 18, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 835.
- ²⁰ Drumright, memorandum of conversation, August 26, 1947, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 6.
- ²¹ Baruch to State Dept., August 20, 1947, and August 25, 1947, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 6.
- ²² Lovett, memorandum of conversation, August 28, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 844.
- ²³ Gani to UN Security Council, September 29, 1947, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 5.
- ²⁴ “Joint Report of the Security Council Consular Commission,” October 14, 1947, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 5.

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- ²⁵ Report of Australian Military Observing Officers, undated, c. October 1, 1947, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 5.
- ²⁶ Report of the US Army and Navy Advisory Group, October 25, 1947.
- ²⁷ GOC, "Interim Report of the Committee to the Security Council," December 31, 1947, National Archives of Australia (NAA), Series A4357, Committee of Good Offices–Records, Part 2, 1947–1948.
- ²⁸ Johnson to State Dept., September 2, 1947, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2138.
- ²⁹ Indonesian Working Team to Butterworth, Samuel Reber, and Dean Rusk, September 19, 1947, RG 59, Entry A1 399, box 13.
- ³⁰ GOC, "Interim Report of the Committee to the Security Council," December 31, 1947, Frank Porter Graham Papers (FPGP), folder 1981.
- ³¹ Graham to State Dept., October 31, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 861.
- ³² UN Security Council, resolution S/597, November 1, 1947, www.un.org.
- ³³ Graham to State Dept., November 1, 1947, RG 84, UD 2728, box 4.
- ³⁴ Landon to Butterworth, November 3, 1947, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 3994.
- ³⁵ Livengood to State Dept., November 3, 1947, RG 84, UD 2728, box 7.
- ³⁶ Livengood to State Dept., October 23, 1947, RG 84, UD 2728, box 6.
- ³⁷ Butterworth to Rusk and Hickerson, October 3, 1947, and Davies to James K. Penfield, September 5, 1947, RG 59, Entry A1 399, box 13.
- ³⁸ Ogburn to State Dept., November 17, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 867.
- ³⁹ State Dept. to Ogburn, November 20, 1947, RG 84, UD 2728, box 4.
- ⁴⁰ CIG personnel roster, March 14, 1946, RG 226, Entry NM–54 1, box 3.
- ⁴¹ Ogburn to State Dept., November 17, 1947.

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- ⁴² Livengood to State Dept., no. 504, December 4, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 872.
- ⁴³ Livengood to State Dept., no. 503, December 4, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 871.
- ⁴⁴ CIA, *Weekly Summary*, November 21, 1947, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ⁴⁵ Landon to Butterworth, December 5, 1947, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 3994; Graham to State Dept., December 6, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 873.
- ⁴⁶ “Memorandum from the Indonesian Delegation,” November 3, 1947, NAA, Series A4357, Committee of Good Offices–Records, Part 1, 1947.
- ⁴⁷ State Dept. to Graham, November 3, 1947, and Graham to State Dept., November 8, 1947, RG 84, UD 2728, box 4.
- ⁴⁸ Graham to State Dept., December 9, 1947, RG 84, UD 2728, box 4.
- ⁴⁹ GOC, “Summary Record of the Third Meeting,” December 10, 1947, NAA, Series A4357, Committee of Good Offices–Records, Part 2, 1947–1948.
- ⁵⁰ Graham to State Department, December 18, 1947, RG 84, UD 2728, box 4.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*; Graham to Marshall, December 31, 1947, RG 84, UD 2728, box 4.
- ⁵² State Dept. to Graham, December 31, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 889.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁴ State Dept. to Livengood, December 19, 1947, RG 84, UD 2728, box 4.
- ⁵⁵ State Dept. to Canberra, December 31, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 888; Graham to State Dept., January 5, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 40.
- ⁵⁶ Graham to State Dept., December 27, 1947, *FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI*, d. 885; Critchley to Kirby and Burton, December 27, 1947, *HD, Vol. XI: 1947*, d. 491.
- ⁵⁷ Critchley to Burton and Kirby, December 30, 1947, *HD, Vol. XI: 1947*, d. 494.
- ⁵⁸ Graham to State Dept., January 5, 1947, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 39.

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- ⁵⁹ Ibid.; CIA, *Weekly Summary*, January 9, 1948, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ⁶⁰ Graham to State Dept., January 6, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 42; CIA, *Daily Summary*, January 12, 1948, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ⁶¹ State Dept. to Graham, January 7, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 46.
- ⁶² Nolting, memorandum of conversation, January 8, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13.
- ⁶³ Marc Frey, "Decolonization and Dutch-American Relations," in Krabbendam et al, editors, *Four Centuries of Dutch-American Relations*, p. 612.
- ⁶⁴ Lieftinck, quoted in Pierre van der Eng, "Marshall Aid as a Catalyst in the Decolonization of Indonesia, 1947–49."
- ⁶⁵ Bonsal to State Dept., January 13, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 55; Helb, quoted in van der Eng, "Marshall Aid as a Catalyst."
- ⁶⁶ Graham to State Dept., January 19, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 57.
- ⁶⁷ Kirby to Burton, January 16, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII: 1948*, d. 21.
- ⁶⁸ Butterworth and Hickerson to Lovett, December 16, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2153.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid.; CIA, Office of Reports and Estimates (ORE), Far East/Pacific Branch, "Intelligence Highlights," 20 January–26 January, 1948, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ⁷⁰ Livengood to State Dept., January 22, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6451; Shepherd to Bevin, January 21, 1948, *B DFA, 1948, Vol. 6*, p. 34.
- ⁷¹ Kahin, "In Memoriam: Mohammad Hatta," *Indonesia*, October 1980; Rose, *Indonesia Free*, p. vi.
- ⁷² Swift, *Road to Madiun*, p. 18.
- ⁷³ Rusk, Butterworth, and Hickerson to Marshall, February 10, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 69.

Chapter 7

A Feeling of Desperation

(1948)

The New York bureau of the Netherlands East Indies news agency (*Algemeen Nieuws en Telegraaf Agentschap*, or ANETA), financed by the NEI and Netherlands governments,¹ published a story on February 12, 1948, that angered Dutch officials in The Hague and Batavia: At UN headquarters in Lake Success, Long Island, GOC members Frank Graham and Richard Kirby held a press conference that revealed their anti-Dutch bias and their eagerness to exceed the committee's narrowly defined responsibilities. Among the remarks ANETA attributed to the US and Australian GOC representatives: "90 percent of the population" in Republican territory backed the Sukarno-Hatta government; only plebiscites, which the committee would observe and perhaps supervise, could determine whether "puppet governments" ruled Indonesia's autonomous regions; and the GOC's work would make "long and protracted negotiations" superfluous and help the Netherlands and the Republic reach a political agreement within "two or three months."²

The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs was "greatly disturbed" by the ANETA story, according to the US embassy in The Hague. The Australian minister to the Netherlands, F. Keith Officer, reported to Canberra that the article had created "'a storm of criticism' in [the] press."³ In Batavia, Dutch officials responded immediately to the ANETA report with a communiqué stating that the alleged remarks by the GOC members were "incorrect" and showed a "lack of objectivity." Moreover, Graham and Kirby had proposed actions that were beyond the GOC's authority—for example, contacting leaders in the autonomous areas, whose interests,

according to the Dutch, were “promoted by their own representatives, the Netherlands Indies and the Netherlands Government.” The GOC, the communiqué declared, should restrict itself to “good offices and nothing else.”⁴

Willem Riphagen, a legal adviser to the Dutch GOC delegation in Batavia, informed the committee “in the strongest terms” that the press statement by Graham and Kirby was a “very serious development.” He said that Henri van Vredenburg refused to attend a GOC meeting to discuss implementation of the Renville agreement and “saw absolutely no point, under [the] circumstances, [in] proceeding with political discussions.” Thomas Critchley, the deputy Australian GOC representative in Batavia, wrote to the Department of External Affairs: “A full scale attack is being launched against the Committee.” Critchley speculated that the Dutch reaction to the ANETA story was “aimed at prejudicing [the] Committee’s case in [the] Security Council and particularly at preventing any expansion of the Committee’s functions.”⁵

In the Netherlands, government indignation soon gave way to an embarrassing realization: The ANETA story about the GOC “press conference” was an unethical, untrustworthy account of a not-for-attribution background briefing for journalists seeking a better understanding of the Renville agreement and the work of the GOC. None of the other forty or so reporters who had attended the briefing wrote a story about it, and after investigating the incident, Prime Minister Beel publicly admitted that the article was “incorrect with respect to a number of weighty and important points.” In a statement to a select group of “chief editors,” Beel expressed his conviction that the GOC representatives had said nothing at Lake Success “exceeding their authority,” adding that “nothing could shake his faith [in the] correctness” of the committee’s actions.⁶

In Batavia, official repudiation of the ANETA report was more grudging. When told by a reporter that the news agency had issued a correction of the story, the head of the NEI information service initially said that his government would neither correct nor retract its communiqué denouncing the GOC. After a reminder about President Truman's public praise of the committee's work, and perhaps after receiving private instructions from The Hague, the NEI government withdrew its communiqué. The retraction declared that the government had initially "felt obliged" to comment on the ANETA article but now admitted that the story was "incorrect on a number of important and momentous points."⁷

Although Graham and Kirby had been absolved of any impropriety, Australian and US diplomats were disturbed by the hasty reaction of the NEI government to the ANETA story. To Critchley, the incident was a telling "example of how difficult it is for the Committee to work with the Dutch." To the State Department, it seemed that van Vredenburg's "precipitous" halt to political discussions exemplified "his disposition to seize upon any event as [a] pretext for delaying implementation of [the] Renville agreement."⁸

Van Vredenburg's general attitude was a source of "considerable concern" to the State Department. Graham and Ogburn had found him to be the "most intransigent" Dutch official in Batavia and had "complained of [a] 'stream of vilification and abuse' directed at [the] GOC and [the US delegation.]"⁹ Time did not soften van Vredenburg's view of the two Americans. In his memoir, according to historian Frances Gouda, van Vredenburg characterized Graham "as either 'intransigent and unmanageable' or as a 'nervous and confused man, whose bias in favor of the Republic had blinded him.' He judged Ogburn to be an 'unbalanced young fellow' who was a 'sinister spirit' bent on seducing his superiors into joining the Indonesian camp."¹⁰ A UK history of the Netherlands-Republic conflict, drafted by the embassy in The Hague and reviewed

by British diplomats in Batavia and New York, found fault with both the US GOC representatives and the Dutch: “It is true that original United States members of the committee—the most important from the Dutch point of view—were men of no great caliber and that they committed a number of unnecessary blunders; nevertheless, the local Dutch authorities appear by their attitude to have sabotaged, to a great extent, their own interests in connexion with the activities of this committee.”¹¹

In February 1948, State Department officials informally discussed van Vredenburg’s attitude and behavior with the Dutch embassy. When asked if he should be removed from the negotiations, the American diplomats replied that this was a decision for the Dutch government. Nonetheless, according to a cable to the US embassy in The Hague, they “carefully avoided rejecting [the] idea.”¹²

On February 13, President Truman announced that Frank Graham had resigned from the GOC to resume the presidency of the University of North Carolina. Commending the members of the committee for their contribution to “the ideal of world law and order,” Truman said that Secretary of State George Marshall had appointed Graham to serve as a special adviser on Indonesian affairs. As a consultant, he was removed from day-to-day negotiations. The department did, however, send a steady stream of classified reports from Batavia and Washington to his office in Chapel Hill. Graham’s comments to Marshall generally disapproved of Dutch policy, which he described as one of “delay, continual attrition, economic strangulation and political fragmentation.”¹³

Graham's successor as the US representative on the GOC was retired diplomat Coert du Bois, whose principal qualification for the job was serving as consul general in Batavia from 1927 to 1930. In an unpublished memoir, du Bois described his initial posting in Java as pleasant but uninteresting. His most significant achievement was producing nine monographs on such topics as the history of the NEI, the Dutch social structure, and the native peoples of Indonesia. The reports, he acknowledged, were dull but necessary additions to the State Department's limited understanding of the archipelago: "I never heard a yip out of the Department about any of them."¹⁴ Du Bois's return to Indonesia, however, was anything but dull. By the end of that assignment, he had co-authored a document that attracted international attention, outraged the Netherlands government, and damaged both his health and his relationship with the State Department.

Born in Hudson, New York, in 1881, du Bois attended the Biltmore Forest School in North Carolina, an educational choice influenced by family financial reversals that prevented him from following his older brother to Yale. He worked for the US Forest Service for more than a decade, and during World War I, he served in France as a major in both of the US Army's regiments of forestry engineers. Discharged in 1918, du Bois received an appointment to the Foreign Service the following year. While serving as consul general in Naples in 1935, he endured a family tragedy that "put the light out for [his wife] Margaret and me." His two daughters, Elizabeth, twenty-three, and Jane, twenty, committed suicide by leaping together from an airplane near London, reportedly because of their anguish over the deaths of two British airmen they knew.¹⁵

As chief of the State Department's Caribbean office during World War II, du Bois helped organize the West Indies Schooner Fleet, which sailed through waters patrolled by German U-

boats to deliver food in the region. Retiring from the Foreign Service after the war, du Bois received an “urgent request” from the State Department in January 1948 to succeed Frank Graham as the leader the US GOC delegation in Indonesia. After briefings in Washington, du Bois met with Graham in New York on February 3. In his journal, du Bois wrote: “[Graham] is afraid his leaving [the] Committee and [the] new man coming out will be interpreted by Indonesians as a retreat from the liberal position he took.”¹⁶

Du Bois arrived in Batavia on February 15. Among his first meetings was a courtesy call on Lieutenant Governor General van Mook. Despite the conversation’s largely ceremonial purpose, du Bois and van Mook discussed the fundamental disagreement between the Netherlands and the Republic: sovereignty. The Republic, van Mook said, should accept its status as merely one state in the emerging USI, a concession that would force Sukarno and his ministers to surrender their autonomy in military and foreign affairs. Although du Bois did not agree with Graham’s sympathetic view of Republican claims of sovereignty, he pleaded with van Mook to place “less emphasis on the ultra-legalistic point of view” and adopt “a broad outlook at the primary objective of effecting a lasting peace.”¹⁷

Before making a courtesy call on Prime Minister Hatta, du Bois had a long talk with Lambertus Neher, the Netherlands minister of reconstruction. Dispatched to the NEI to ensure van Mook’s adherence to cabinet policy, Neher was hopeful that the American would be his and the lieutenant governor general’s “ambassador” to the Republic. He asked du Bois to tell Hatta that Republican officials would be welcomed into an interim federal government if they “wholeheartedly” accepted the Republic’s status as a state “without pretensions of sovereignty.” Du Bois discussed the Dutch request with Critchley, who had succeeded Kirby as Australia’s GOC representative and was skeptical of the Netherlands proposal. With the powers and

functions of the interim government ill defined, Critchley feared that van Mook would make all of the important decisions and his cabinet members “would in effect be glorified administrators under him.”¹⁸

Du Bois met with Prime Minister Hatta in Jogjakarta on February 22. Speaking alone with the American in a small room, Hatta agreed with the GOC and the Dutch that the formation of the USI was an “immediate and important objective.” The Republic, however, wanted “specific assurances” about the terms for entering an interim federal government and the status of the Republic within such a government. Du Bois attempted to persuade Hatta that “his ideas and Neher’s were absolutely in accord.” Making a dubious analogy, du Bois compared the Republic in the USI to “New York state in the USA—financial capital of the world, large representation in Congress, furnisher of Presidents, [and] complete autonomy.” In his record of the conversation, du Bois wrote: “I sounded off about the Republic’s opportunity and therefore responsibility for promoting the welfare of the people of all Indonesia.”¹⁹

During his first two months in the NEI, du Bois appeared to be, and often was, an advocate for the Dutch. Critchley, who criticized the American’s initial contributions to the GOC, reported to Canberra: “Dubois has already expressed his opinion that the Republic should accept participation in a provisional government and discuss its powers and functions afterwards.” Thirty-two-year-old “Tom” Critchley had formed his anticolonial beliefs as an economic adviser to the British in New Delhi during the war. Acknowledging US efforts to encourage the Netherlands to compromise with the Republic, he warned the Department of External Affairs: “The greatest difficulty will be Dubois, an old Indonesian hand and a close personal friend of [NEI official Charles van der Plas]. He is very pro-Dutch; I am tempted to say

the most pro-Dutch American since Billy Foote. Perhaps this is an exaggeration, but not much of a one.”²⁰

On Monday, April 12, a brightly painted yellow and brown train with the word “Delegate” marked on the coach cars made the first passenger run from Batavia to Jogjakarta since the Dutch military offensive of July 1947. Carrying representatives of the Republic, the Netherlands, and the GOC, who had agreed to alternate between the two capitals for negotiations, the train was greeted by large numbers of people at every town during the fourteen-hour journey. In the countryside, “farmers stopped their work to salute the train,” according to du Bois. When the train crossed the status quo line in Central Java, Dutch guards were replaced by TNI soldiers, whom du Bois described as “a ragged looking bunch of cut throats.” For the rest of the trip, Indonesians all along the line shouted the freedom cry, “Merdeka!”²¹

At the Tugu railway station near central Jogjakarta, the train was hailed by thousands of mostly young Indonesians excitedly shouting, “Merdeka!” To the Australian and US delegations, as well as their military observers, the unpoliced crowd inside the railway station appeared to be “essentially good humoured.”²² The Dutch delegates, however, saw a menacing mob and no path from the platform to the cars waiting for them outside the station. According to Abdulkadir, the Dutch delegation remained on the platform for forty-five minutes, then plunged into the jeering crowd: “Some persons, also ladies, were spat at, treated rudely, insults were uttered, in some cases fountain pens, purses were grabbed; blows and stones were aimed at cars.”²³

A reporter from ANETA, “who arrived [at the] station too drunk [to] know what was happening,” according to Charlton Ogburn, filed an exaggerated account of the crowd’s

behavior, claiming that a member of the Dutch delegation “received beatings with sticks” and that “others were bitten.” In a telegram to the State Department, Ogburn rebutted allegations of thievery and physical abuse: “No incident described” by the ANETA reporter or the Netherlands delegation was “witnessed by any member [of the] GOC.” These eyewitnesses included the committee’s military observers, who were the last Westerners to leave the station. Moreover, US reporters in Jogjakarta had been “unable [to] find any person who actually suffered [a] blow or theft.” Conceding that the Netherlands delegation experienced “painful unpleasantness,” Ogburn wrote that the only incident confirmed by a non-Dutch source was a “minor matter,” the stoning of a US delegation car by an Indonesian boy.²⁴

Mohamad Roem, leader of the Republican delegation, promptly apologized to the Dutch representatives and the GOC for the “deplorable” actions of some Indonesians at the railway station. His statement of regret did not satisfy the Dutch. On April 13, Abdulkadir informed the GOC that negotiations would be suspended until the Republic gave public assurances that it would prevent any future demonstrations. The next day, Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX of Jogjakarta, a TNI lieutenant general and the territory’s military governor, broadcast a statement condemning the discreditable events at the railway station and announcing the adoption of “necessary measures” to prevent their reoccurrence.²⁵

Despite private and public apologies by the Republic, the negotiations remained suspended. In Batavia, overstated descriptions of the incident had aroused “extreme anger” among the Dutch, according to Consul General Livengood. Van Mook, who was reportedly “furious,” threatened to cancel all talks in Jogjakarta and recall the Dutch delegation to Batavia. The GOC was “startled and annoyed by [the] play given to [the] Jogja[karta] incidents in Batavia,” according to a cable drafted by Ogburn. Moreover, the Dutch decision to break off

talks with the Republic seemed “wholly unwarranted by events.” Critchley reported to Canberra that the “Dutch exaggeration of small incidents illustrates the difficulties in the way of a speedy settlement.” He suspected that the Netherlands wanted to “change world opinion” in a way that would permit the use of such relatively insignificant events as “an excuse to settle the dispute by force.”²⁶

On April 17, the GOC issued a communiqué stating that “sections of the press had exaggerated the incident at Jogjakarta railway and that the Committee trusted that there would be no further delay in the negotiations.” In a letter to his wife, du Bois wrote that the communiqué had, in effect, called the Dutch press “a liar” and made van Mook look like “a damn fool. But it pricked the blown up bubble of the incident.” At a news conference on the eighteenth, Abdulkadir announced that he considered the railway affair “definitely closed.” Negotiations resumed the next day at Kaliurang, a hill station on the slope of a volcano some fifteen miles of north on Jogjakarta. Du Bois, however, found the mood of the Dutch delegates “very pessimistic and savage.” In his journal, he characterized them as “bitter, cynical and contentious.”²⁷

Despite the resumption of talks, political discussions about the transition of the NEI to an independent USI made no progress in the spring of 1948. Van Vredenburg, who had returned from a visit to The Hague in a less belligerent mood, was again in a “sour frame [of] mind,” according to the US GOC delegation. Reiterating his conviction that Republican signatures on agreements were “worthless,” he told the Americans that communication intercepts revealed willful Republican violations of the Renville truce plan. He was “particularly vehement” about the Republic’s insistence that plebiscites to determine the political preferences of the population

would only be held in Dutch-controlled territory. Van Vredenburg predicted that the chance of reaching a political agreement was “now less than fifty-fifty.”²⁸

US talks with Republican officials were “scarcely more encouraging,” according to a report to the State Department. The American delegation “hammered Roem” about holding plebiscites in Republican territory, which was an explicit provision of the Renville agreement. Roem, a lawyer who served in the Sjahrir and Sjarifuddin cabinets and who participated in the Linggadjati and Renville negotiations, replied that the people of the Republic would not understand the need for plebiscites and that campaigning in Republican territory would produce “political dissention.” Johannes Latuharhary, a member of the Republican delegation, said that its position on plebiscites was based on “prestige” rather than fear of their results. Analysts in the State Department’s OIR agreed: “The Republican objection is based mainly on the fact the such a plebiscite constitutes a challenge to the very existence of one of the organized parties to the dispute.”²⁹

The Republic irritated US officials in Washington at the end of April, when its representatives at the UN unexpectedly announced an appeal to the Security Council to investigate Dutch sabotage of the Renville agreement. Among the alleged Netherlands violations of the accord was its naval blockade, which denied textiles and other vital commodities to the population, and the arrest of Indonesians who demonstrated against the “establishment of puppet governments” in Dutch-controlled territory. According to the *New York Times*, Republican representative Tjoa Sik Ien said that his government had “communicated many protests to the Good Offices Committee during the past two months without either results or acknowledgement.” In a confidential conversation with the Australian UN delegation, Republican representative Lambertus N. Palar “hinted” that du Bois was a disappointment to his

government and that US diplomacy was “contributing to a feeling of desperation” among its leaders.³⁰

State Department officials, who remained eager to minimize discussion of Indonesia in the Security Council, asked du Bois to seek GOC concurrence in refuting the validity of Tjoa Sik Ien’s remarks and to find out whether Republican leaders had instructed their delegate to make such statements. If he had acted on his own authority, the department wanted the Republic to issue a public disavowal of his comments. When talking with Sukarno, Hatta, and Roem, du Bois should “point out firmly” that the UN announcement was not only a violation of the procedural agreement to submit disputes to the other party and the GOC before approaching the Security Council, but also “an altogether unwarranted reflection on [the] good faith” of the committee. Du Bois, the State Department suggested, should remind Republican leaders that the GOC was the “only effective defender [of] their just ambitions, [and] that continued misrepresentations” of its work could only “boomerang” on the Republic.³¹

Du Bois persuaded Hatta to declare publicly that Tjoa Sik Ien’s UN comments had not been authorized by the Republic. Inclined to believe that Republican leaders were not responsible for “Tjoa’s inexcusable actions,” du Bois seemed bothered by his one-sided instructions from the State Department, which showed little understanding of the diplomatic and political realities he faced. In his reply to Washington, du Bois facetiously observed that the reporting by the US delegation had been “seriously deficient” if the department believed that pro-Republican Critchley would agree to the “invalidity” of Tjoa’s allegations. Moreover, the Indonesian’s accusations “were anything but baseless.” The Dutch had denied “freedom of speech and assembly,” established “puppet regimes,” and isolated the Republic economically

with a naval blockade. This last tactic, du Bois wrote, had made Indonesians “desperate for medicines” and reduced much of the population to “wearing gunny sacking and goatskins.”³²

Convinced that the Netherlands would resort to force if it were unable to reach a satisfactory political agreement with the Republic, du Bois commented on a fundamental “fallacy” of Dutch thinking: They consistently underestimated the Republic’s strength in Java, Sumatra, and much of East Indonesia, and they held the “unshakeable” belief that the political movements in Dutch-controlled territory were equivalent to the Republic. The US GOC delegation, du Bois reported, had told Dutch officials that if they believed Abdulkadir was a political leader remotely comparable to Sukarno, they were “living in [a] dream.”³³

The transformation of Coert du Bois from a Dutch advocate to a Dutch critic was influenced by a three-day tour of Republican territory in Central Java. At the conclusion of the GOC meetings in Kaliurang, Sukarno invited du Bois and Ogburn to accompany him, Hatta, and others on a trip to the Dieng Plateau and its principal town, Wonosobo. Leaving Jogjakarta in four cars on May 3, according to Ogburn’s account of the trip, the presidential party maneuvered slowly around tank traps and barriers and traveled along roads lined with villagers and students shouting, “Merdeka!” In several towns, “the crowd went wild” in a manner similar in “spirit” to the “mob at Tugu Station.” (Such displays did not impress every US official. After the railway demonstration, Charles Livengood claimed that Sukarno’s “Merdeka show[s]” were often stage-managed to impress official visitors with the population’s “impassioned and fervent desire for liberty under Republican auspices.”)³⁴

For du Bois, who concurred with Ogburn's trip report, traveling with Sukarno "removed whatever doubt one might have entertained as to the force the Republic represents." The Americans were impressed by the welcome at one town, where the inhabitants brought the presidential convoy to a complete stop, swallowing up not only the cars but also "a band using home-made instruments" to greet the party. Sukarno, proceeding on foot ahead of the cars, was approached by two women who presented him "with a bundle of tobacco done up in banana leaves and four ears of corn tied by the shucks—considerable gifts in this poverty-stricken area. The President received them with tears in his eyes."³⁵

Described by Ogburn as "gracious, affable and outgoing," Sukarno possessed "charm and the unmistakable quality of presence. He stands out immediately in any gathering of Indonesians and, of course, commands great deference and respect. His manner is entirely simple and unaffected without deprecating his position." When his seven-passenger Packard automobile had a flat tire, Sukarno conversed easily with a group of small boys who immediately appeared, and he tested one child's proficiency in multiplication. When speaking to an assembly of TNI soldiers and Republican civilian officials evacuated from Dutch-occupied areas, he displayed his celebrated skill as an orator. His voice was "sonorous, modulated, and controlled, his gestures practiced and well-timed." To Ogburn, Sukarno "appeared to be able at will to produce cheers, laughter or applause." Thomas Critchley, who was also a member of the presidential party, observed that "it was impossible not to feel the depth of emotion he aroused."³⁶

By the end of the trip, du Bois and Ogburn were asking themselves fundamental questions about the Indonesian policy of the Netherlands: Were the Dutch "consciously dissembling" or "taken in by their own propaganda?" Did they genuinely believe that Indonesia was "somehow different from India, Burma, Indochina, and the Philippines" or that the Republic

was merely a local political movement, with unscrupulous leaders influenced by an “inexplicable amalgam of the USSR and Japan?” The two Americans were convinced that Republican Indonesia would “go naked and suffer the complete deterioration of its remaining physical equipment rather than give in on what it considers fundamental to its cause.”³⁷

Du Bois’s change of heart about the Netherlands surprised State Department officials. US policy, the department informed du Bois, had been based on the “supposition” that the Netherlands had, in general, “satisfactorily complied with [the] Renville agreements” and that the Republic was responsible for the lack of progress toward a political settlement. Washington dismissed du Bois’s concern that the Dutch would inevitably resort to force in the absence of such an agreement. On several occasions, the Netherlands ambassador had assured the department that the Dutch “would not undertake further ‘police action’ unless requested by [the] UN or [the] Repub[lican] gov[ernmen]t.” These two implausible possibilities, Du Bois replied, were “scarcely relevant.” Moreover, he wrote, the department’s belief that the Netherlands was “neither inclined nor able” to act forcefully differed from the views of Dutch military leaders, according to Colonel William Mayer, commander of the US military observer group in Indonesia.³⁸

Captain Daniel McCallum, the US naval attaché in Batavia, reported to the Office of Naval Intelligence that a “Dutch resumption of ‘police action’ in the near future is much more probable than the reaching of any political agreement.” With the UN focused on the war between the new state of Israel and Arab forces, the Dutch believed they could “now safely put a stop to this ‘nonsense’” with the Republic. The CIA concurred with McCallum’s estimate. On May 25, the agency’s top-secret daily summary of intelligence for senior policymakers observed that the Dutch had “redoubled their efforts to by-pass the Indonesian Republic” in establishing the USI

and had “consistently underestimated the economic, political, and physical risks of extended operations against the Republic.”³⁹

State Department doubts about the Republic’s good faith and intentions were intensified by an announcement from the Soviet news agency TASS on May 26: The USSR and the Republic of Indonesia had reached an agreement in Prague to establish diplomatic relations and exchange consular representatives. Department officials seemed certain that the Soviet announcement was an attempt to “minimize [its] offense to [the] Muslim world”—i.e., the USSR’s recognition of Israel some ten days earlier. Moreover, the Republic, by acting as a sovereign in establishing foreign relations with the Soviet Union, had violated the Renville agreement.⁴⁰

Like the controversial UN comments by Republican delegate Tjoa Sik Ien, the consular agreement with the Soviet Union had not been authorized by the Hatta government. In 1947, however, Prime Minister Sjarifuddin had assigned Suripno, a young communist, to serve as the Republican representative in Eastern Europe. Among Suripno’s responsibilities was discussing diplomatic relations with the USSR. A consular agreement with the Soviet Union was, in fact, initialed. But after the Renville accord and the fall of Sjarifuddin’s government, Hatta did not sign it. The TASS announcement of diplomatic relations prompted Foreign Minister Agus Salim to issue a public statement that was incomplete, at best: “No Republican representative has been authorized to conclude such an agreement,” and Suripno “had no authority to sign any agreement.”⁴¹

In du Bois’s view, the TASS announcement reflected the Republic’s “characteristic lack [of] coordination and lack [of] communications with [its] representatives overseas.” Hatta had

assured him that there would be no exchange of diplomats with the USSR. Nonetheless, du Bois observed, Hatta's government faced a "terrible" choice: Offend the West by accepting the Soviet Union's offer of recognition or alienate a significant segment of Indonesian public opinion by rejecting a "formidable power" at a time when the Dutch seemed ready to "dispose of [the] Republic by force." Du Bois recommended that, at least for the present, the United States accept the Republic's public and private assurances about Suripno's agreement with the Soviet Union. The State Department agreed with du Bois that the Republic could "make no further concessions" in repudiating the consular agreement with the Soviet Union.⁴²

The Dutch, however, were deeply disturbed by both the TASS announcement and the official Republican response to it. In comments described by du Bois as "savage," van Vredenburg declared that the statement by Agus Salim was "totally unsatisfactory" and that the Netherlands would not negotiate until the Republic unambiguously disavowed Suripno and repudiated Soviet recognition. To du Bois, it seemed that van Vredenburg's attitude and actions were "admirably calculated [to] make it impossible for [the] Republic [to] extricate itself from [a] difficult dilemma."⁴³

Van Vredenburg's response to the Suripno affair "brought matters to [a] head" for du Bois, who initially respected the Dutch delegate's diplomatic skill but eventually came to loathe his overbearing personality. In a top-secret cable to the State Department, dated June 1, 1948, du Bois declared: "Vredenburg has no interest [in] reaching [a] reasonable political agreement with [the] Republic and hopes negotiations will end in deadlock." Alleging that the Dutch diplomat had "gone off [the] deep end," du Bois referred to his "unfair demands and conditions" for negotiations, his "arrogant and truculent attitude" toward Indonesian delegate Roem, and his "critical and discourteous" behavior with GOC representatives. Hatta, according to du Bois,

would neither meet nor speak with van Vredenburg and was convinced that he sought to “sabotage” the negotiations: “Feeling against Vredenburg among all Republicans is bitter, and apparently his tactics [are] not supported by all [of] his own delegation.” Du Bois concluded that van Vredenburg “must be superseded, replaced or straightened out if any real progress [is] to be made toward [a] political agreement.”⁴⁴

Dutch officials held similarly negative views of du Bois and his newfound unwillingness to encourage a settlement satisfactory to the Netherlands. On June 5, Ambassador van Kleffens called on Under Secretary of State Lovett to complain that du Bois “had changed in his attitude” in recent weeks and that his perspective “was now somewhat ‘off the beam.’” Referring explicitly to Netherlands sovereignty in the interim period before the establishment of the USI, van Kleffens asked Lovett to re-emphasize to du Bois “the necessity of sticking closely to the Renville principles” in any GOC-supported settlement.⁴⁵

Lovett’s response to van Kleffens was a departure from the traditional State Department support for Dutch diplomacy. In the past, Lovett said, the Netherlands position in Indonesia had seemed to be “substantially correct,” and the issues in dispute appeared to be pretty much “black and white.” But the latest telegrams from du Bois had introduced “a large element of gray” into the picture. After reading aloud du Bois’s top-secret cable of June 1, Lovett bluntly said that the possibility of the United States being helpful “in Indonesia was practically nil so long as personal tension existed between Vredenburg and DuBois.”⁴⁶

Van Kleffens defended both the Dutch delegate and The Hague’s policy in Indonesia: Du Bois’s “impression” that van Vredenburg opposed a negotiated settlement was “incorrect”; the Dutch were “fully committed to achieving an agreement based squarely on the Renville Principles”; and the Republic was “deliberately circulating rumors” about Dutch hostility toward

negotiations and “pointing to the bogey of further Netherlands military action as an excuse for its own recalcitrance.” The Netherlands government, van Kleffens declared, planned “no military action.”⁴⁷

The cable to du Bois reporting Lovett’s meeting with van Kleffens was a tranquilizing message with notable omissions in its summary of the conversation. There was, for example, no mention of van Kleffens’s complaints about du Bois or of Lovett’s frank reply to them. Instead, the telegram highlighted the *Dutch* government’s distress over “friction” between du Bois and van Vredenburg and the ambassador’s “high regard” for the two diplomats. The telegram did, however, conclude by stating that the State Department would “take steps” to have van Vredenburg removed from the negotiations if his attitude and behavior did not improve.⁴⁸

¹ The Hague to State Dept., March 15, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13.

² ANETA, “U.N. Committee Asks Widening of Scope: Sees Settlement in 3 Months,” February 12, 1948, RG 59, Entry A1 1265, Box 15.

³ Baruch to State Dept., February 13, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13; Officer to External Affairs, February 14, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 69.

⁴ US GOC delegation to State Dept., February 13, 1948, no. 133.

⁵ US GOC delegation to State Dept., February 13, 1948, no. 132; Critchley to External Affairs, February 14, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 65.

⁶ The Hague to State Dept., February 14 and February 16, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13.

⁷ US GOC delegation to State Dept., February 16, 1948, and February 14, 1948, no. 135, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13.

⁸ Critchley to External Affairs, February 16, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 71; State Dept. to Baruch, February 24, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6451.

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- ⁹ State Dept. to Baruch, February 24, 1948.
- ¹⁰ Gouda, *American Visions*, pp. 31–32.
- ¹¹ Sir Philip Nichols to Bevin, “History of the Netherlands-Indonesian Dispute,” July 1, 1949, *B DFA, 1949, Vol. 9*, p. 175.
- ¹² State Dept. to Baruch, February 24, 1948.
- ¹³ “Dr. Graham Quits UN Group on Indies,” *New York Times*, February 14, 1948; Graham to Marshall, September 16, 1948, quoted in *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 278.
- ¹⁴ Du Bois, unpublished memoir, p. 335.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 409; “Parents in England in Girls’ Air Tragedy,” *New York Times*, February 24, 1935.
- ¹⁶ Du Bois, journal entry, February 3, 1948, Coert du Bois Papers (CDBP), box 5.
- ¹⁷ Du Bois, memorandum of conversation, February 17, 1948, RG 84, Entry 2732A, box 1.
- ¹⁸ US GOC delegation to State Dept., February 20, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 77; Critchley to External Affairs, February 21, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 81.
- ¹⁹ US GOC delegation to State Dept., February 24, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 78; du Bois, memorandum of conversation, February 22, 1948, RG 84, Entry 2732A, box 1.
- ²⁰ Critchley, memorandum, March 6, 1948, and Critchley to Laurence McIntyre, March 18, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 100 and d. 107.
- ²¹ Du Bois to State Dept., April 20, 1948, A-77, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13; du Bois, journal entry, April 12, 1948, CDBP, box 5.
- ²² Du Bois to State Dept., April 20, 1948; Critchley to External Affairs, April 15, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 114.
- ²³ Abdulkadir to GOC, April 13, 1948, quoted in du Bois to State Dept., April 20, 1948, A-78, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13.

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- ²⁴ US GOC delegation to State Dept., April 17, 1948, no. 309, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13.
ANETA, "Serious Incidents at Jogjakarta," April 13, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2151.
- ²⁵ Abdulkadir to GOC, April 13, 1948; statements by Roem and the sultan of Jogjakarta, April 13 and April 14, 1948, quoted in du Bois letter to State Dept., April 17, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13.
- ²⁶ Livengood to State Dept., April 21, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 15; US GOC delegation to State Dept., April 17, 1948, no. 309; Critchley to External Affairs, April 15, 1948.
- ²⁷ Critchley to External Affairs, April 20, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 117; du Bois to Margaret du Bois, April 17, 1948, CDBP, box 1; du Bois, journal entry, April 20, 1948, CDBP, box 5.
- ²⁸ US GOC delegation to State Dept., April 24, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*; OIR, "Dutch-Indonesian Negotiations: Major Issues and Timing," April 29, 1948, FPGP, folder 2096.
- ³⁰ "Indonesians Claim Dutch Break Pact," *New York Times*, April 30, 1948; Australian delegation, UN, to External Affairs, May 1, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 124.
- ³¹ State Dept. to du Bois, April 30, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 125.
- ³² Du Bois to State Dept., May 10, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 128.
- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ Ogburn, trip report, May 10, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13; Livengood to State Dept., April 21, 1948.
- ³⁵ Ogburn, trip report, May 10, 1948.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*; Critchley to Burton, May 21, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 139.
- ³⁷ Ogburn, trip report, May 10, 1948.

³⁸ State Dept. to du Bois, May 14, 1948, and du Bois to State Dept., May 21, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 132 and d. 136.

³⁹ CIA, *Daily Summary*, May 25, 1948, www.foia.cia.gov.

⁴⁰ State to Livengood, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 144.

⁴¹ Salim, quoted in Critchley to External Affairs, May 30, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 151.

⁴² Du Bois to State Dept., May 29, 1948, and State Dept. to du Bois, June 5, 1948, no. 244, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 146 and d. 158.

⁴³ Du Bois to State Dept., May 29, 1948; du Bois to State Dept., June 1, 1948, no. 461, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2151.

⁴⁴ Du Bois to State Dept., June 1, 1948, no. 461.

⁴⁵ Nolting, memorandum of conversation, June 5, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6440.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ State Dept. to du Bois, June 5, 1948, no. 245, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2151. This document is the unredacted version of the telegram reproduced in *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 159.



Burning oil tanks in Java during the Japanese invasion of the Netherlands East Indies in 1942. (Library of Congress)



Kidnapped Indonesians during an OSS “snatch” operation, 1944. (National Archives and Record Administration)



Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, supreme allied commander of the predominantly British Southeast Asia Command, with OSS analyst Cora Du Bois and Colonel John G. Coughlin, commander of OSS Detachment 404, 1945. (Tozzer Library, Harvard University)



Eelco N. van Kleffens, Netherlands minister of foreign affairs, 1939–1946, and ambassador to the United States, 1947–1950. (United Nations)



Sukarno, left, and Mohammad Hatta proclaiming the establishment of an independent Republic of Indonesia, August 17, 1945. (The Image Works)



The urban warfare in Surabaya, Java, November 1945, was the most intense sustained combat of the Indonesian revolution. (National Archives and Record Administration)



Talks in Batavia, November 1945, left to right: Amir Sjarifuddin, defense minister, Republic of Indonesia; Maberley Esler Dening, UK Foreign Office political adviser; Lieutenant General Sir Philip Christison, commanding officer of SEAC forces in the NEI; Sutan Sjahrir, prime minister of the Republic; and H. J. van Mook, NEI lieutenant governor general. (National Archives and Record Administration)



General Sudirman, commander of the Republic's armed forces, November 1946. (National Archives of the Netherlands)



George C. Marshall, US secretary of state, January 1947 to January 1949. (Harry S. Truman Library)



Prime Minister Sjahrir and US Consul General Walter A. Foote, March 1947. (National Archives and Record Administration)



English-language graffiti in Linggadjati, West Java, 1947. (National Archives of the Netherlands)



Walter Foote and Lieutenant General Simon H. Spoor, commander of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army, June 1947. (National Archives of the Netherlands)



The UN Security Council's Good Offices Committee, January 1948, left to right: Richard C. Kirby (Australia), Frank P. Graham (United States), and Paul van Zeeland (Belgium). (National Archives of the Netherlands)



President Harry S. Truman and Robert A. Lovett, under secretary of state, July 1947 to January 1949. (Harry S. Truman Library)



H. Merle Cochran, US representative on the GOC and the United Nations Commission for Indonesia, 1948–1949, and ambassador to Indonesia, 1950–1953. (National Archives of the Netherlands)



Prime Minister Hatta, left, inspecting the Mobile Brigade of the Republic's national police force, September 1948. (Library of Congress)



Sukanto Tjokrodiatmodjo, chief of Indonesia's national police. (Library of Congress)



Herman B. Baruch, US ambassador to the Netherlands, left, and Dutch Foreign Minister Dirk U. Stikker, January 1949. (National Archives of the Netherlands)



Secretary of State Dean Acheson's swearing-in ceremony, January 21, 1949. (Harry S. Truman Library)



President Sukarno, left, and Foreign Minister Agus Salim, interned by the Dutch in North Sumatra, January 1949. (National Archives of the Netherlands)



Australian diplomat Thomas K. Critchley served on the GOC and UNCI, 1947–1950. (National Archives of Australia)



J. H. van Roijen, who represented the Netherlands at the United Nations and the Batavia talks in 1949, speaking to reporters at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, April 1949. (National Archives of the Netherlands)



American journalists preparing to leave the Netherlands for a Dutch-sponsored visit to Indonesia, June 1949. (National Archives of the Netherlands)



Signing the roundtable conference agreement in The Hague, November 2, 1949, left to right: J. H. van Maarseveen (Netherlands), Sultan Hamid II (federal states), and Mohammad Hatta (Republic of Indonesia). Seated behind, left to right, UNCI representatives Merle Cochran, Raymond Herremans, and Thomas Critchley. (National Archives of the Netherlands)



President Sukarno in Jakarta, December 28, 1949, one day after the formal transfer of sovereignty from the Netherlands. (United Nations)

Chapter 8

A Squeeze Play

(1948)

Coert du Bois objected to Washington's emphasis on his bad personal relationship with van Vredenburg rather than the Dutch diplomat's proposals and his approach to negotiating with the Republic. In mid-May 1948, van Vredenburg had informally proposed the establishment of "a provisional federal government of the territories of the Future United States of Indonesia." This interim government would be virtually indistinguishable from the prewar NEI regime. Although the Republic would have minority representation in the proposed government, van Mook would select cabinet ministers, and his authority in the archipelago would be absolute. In du Bois's view, the Netherlands plan for transferring sovereignty to the USI would almost certainly "lead to catastrophe" and "irreparably damage US prestige throughout [the] Far East."¹

Van Vredenburg's proposal, which du Bois found "condescending in tone,"² listed thirty-nine specific powers—ranging from the conduct of foreign affairs to the determination of weights and measures—that the Republic must surrender to the interim government. The length of the interim period of Dutch sovereignty was not specified. The Netherlands concept, du Bois observed, "envisaged restraints upon [the] Republic such as no revolutionary movement could be expected [to] endure, particularly one which had successfully exercised full powers [of] government over tens [of] millions [of] people for nearly three years."³

The fundamental issue for du Bois was identifying the "real representatives" of Indonesia as soon as possible. On the one hand, the Republic had "never budged from [the] position [that] it alone [was] qualified [to] speak for all Indonesia." On the other hand, the Dutch had been

unwavering in their efforts to transfer sovereignty to a government dominated by Indonesians who were “amenable” to the Netherlands and “opposed” to the Republic. If this latter group were the more popular one, the Dutch plan for an interim government might work. But this was not the impression of the US and Australian GOC delegations. In du Bois’s words, the planned provisional federal government—“even if entirely within [the] framework [of the] Renville Agreement”—would be an “unnatural organization which only Dutch arms, if anything, [could] maintain.”⁴

The key to establishing a durable basis for a sovereign USI, according to du Bois, was an elected, not appointed, interim federal government. This government would also be responsible for drafting the USI’s constitution. Informal approaches to Republican officials indicated that they were receptive to the idea of prompt elections. Van Vredenburg, however, was not. Dismissing the “suggestion as out of [the] question,” he said that elections would not be possible until all groups engaged in violence, coercion, and intimidation were “eliminated,” a task that would require Dutch troops.⁵

Van Vredenburg’s take-it-or-leave-it attitude in GOC talks, the Republic’s readiness to face another military action rather than accept Dutch terms, and the absence of any progress in resolving fundamental political disagreements during the previous five months prompted an attempt by du Bois to break the negotiating deadlock by stretching the definition of “good offices.” On June 1, he informed the State Department that he was drafting a plan that would be the basis for a political agreement between the Netherlands and the Republic. In consultation with Critchley, he had worked out a detailed schedule for holding elections for a constituent assembly and transferring Dutch and Republican sovereignty to the USI. To make his proposal “complete,” he was incorporating parts of a Critchley plan that limited Dutch veto power in an

interim government and guaranteed the establishment of independent USI no later than January 1, 1950. If the department disapproved of his actions, du Bois wrote, he was “frankly at [a] loss [to] know what [to] suggest.”⁶

Two days later, du Bois reported that he was drafting principles for the Netherlands-Indonesian Union outlined in the Linggadjati and Renville agreements. His intent was to preserve the “legitimate” economic and military interests of the Netherlands, while preventing the union from becoming a Dutch “super-state.” Du Bois thought that his and Critchley’s proposals should be submitted to the Netherlands and the Republic as an “informal” working paper. If the two sides could not agree that it was the basis for a political settlement, the GOC would reserve the right to submit the paper to the Security Council along with a report on the committee’s failure in the NEI. In the event of Belgian objections to the working paper, the du Bois-Critchley proposal would be submitted as a joint US-Australian initiative—if the State Department approved. “[The] US delegation,” du Bois wrote on June 3, “would appreciate [the] Department’s views [on the] above suggestions and analysis soonest.”⁷

Du Bois told van Vredenburg that the GOC “was not prepared to sit idle while the Dutch forced a breakdown” in negotiations. The Dutch delegate was already aware that the committee had been working on a proposal for a political settlement, but du Bois was unwilling to provide “particulars at this stage.” Ever since the GOC’s Christmas program, not to mention US pressure to agree to Frank Graham’s additional political principles, the Dutch had been sensitive to any attempt by the committee to go beyond the narrow diplomatic definition of “good offices.” In a report to the State Department, du Bois wrote that van Vredenburg “vigorously opposed any GOC suggestion for [a] political agreement.” Echoing the belief that a Republican triumph in the

NEI would inevitably lead to a larger war with the communists, van Vredenburg declared that du Bois's intervention would be responsible for the resulting "massacre of millions."⁸

Van Mook, forewarned of the GOC's intention to submit a proposal for a political settlement, attempted to thwart the committee with two letters. The first, a letter to Hatta, expressed his concern over the "divergence of view" between the Netherlands and the Republic and invited the prime minister to discuss the situation with him at a mutually agreeable time and place. A second letter to the GOC urged the committee to exercise "the greatest reserve and restraint" to avoid prejudicing the proposed bilateral discussions. To du Bois, it seemed clear that the letters were "calculated" to undercut the fundamental rationale for the US-Australian proposal: Negotiations were at a standstill. "It is believed," he wrote to the State Department, "that the Dutch are determined to keep the Committee silenced."⁹

Du Bois attempted to strengthen the diplomatic impact of the US-Australian proposal by securing the endorsement of Belgian GOC delegate Raymond Herremans. Successor to Paul van Zeeland, Herremans was a diplomat of limited competence, an assessment shared by the US, Dutch, and Australian delegations. (The UK ambassador in The Hague, Sir Philips Nichols, described Herremans as "more or less a cipher."¹⁰) The text of the lengthy working paper was read aloud to Herremans at the US GOC headquarters on June 4. "He was rather overwhelmed," according to du Bois, and left the meeting with a copy of the proposal to study. Two days later, du Bois and Critchley asked Herremans to agree with the substance of the plan and with its submission to the Netherlands and the Republic as a GOC working paper. The Belgian delegate initially agreed—if there were no signatures on the document, an omission that would underscore its informal nature. Herremans, however, changed his mind on June 7, telling his GOC colleagues that he would not agree to the paper's submission until after van Mook and Hatta had

spoken. According to Critchley, who agreed with du Bois “on the necessity of urgent action by the Committee,” Herremans was “playing the Dutch game.”¹¹

The Dutch stepped up their resistance to a GOC-proposed settlement on June 8, when van Mook wrote a personal note to du Bois seeking to stop him from submitting suggestions to the Netherlands and Republic, which might “cause irreparable harm.” Seeking to allay du Bois’s fears that another Dutch offensive was imminent, van Mook declared that “no military action is intended or being planned on our side.” To bolster this assertion, he reminded the American that general elections in the Netherlands were only a month away and that the Dutch government seldom made “spectacular moves” just before them. Van Mook also warned du Bois that the presentation of a GOC proposal “at this date, might be completely unacceptable to either party or both and would then so confuse the issues that a solution might well become impossible.”¹²

In The Hague that same day, H. N. Boon, chief of political affairs for the Netherlands foreign ministry, delivered a similar message to the American embassy: The Dutch delegation in Java was “not authorized [to] consider suggestions from [the] GOC” at this time. The Republic was “becoming increasingly difficult,” said Boon, and a proposal by the committee risked “jeopardizing” unnamed negotiating achievements. Like van Mook, Boon mentioned domestic politics as an inhibiting factor on any major new initiatives in Indonesia. The Netherlands government would not likely take military action nor address the constitutional requirements required for the transfer of sovereignty before the elections and the formation of a new cabinet.¹³

On June 9, the GOC formally considered the du Bois-Critchley proposal. Herremans, “who had been worked on by van Vredenburg for two days,” according to du Bois, criticized the plan for sharply limiting Dutch sovereignty prior to the establishment of the USI and reiterated his belief that the GOC should make no suggestions until the conclusion of the Hatta-

van Mook discussions. When questioned by his GOC colleagues, Herremans disagreed “with practically every fundamental principle” in the proposal, wrote du Bois. “After protracted discussions,” Critchley reported to External Affairs, “it became evident that there was no possibility of reaching agreement, and Dubois and I announced our intention of submitting the plan to the parties in the form of a working paper of our two delegations.”¹⁴

The next day, du Bois presented the paper to van Mook, and Critchley delivered a copy to Hatta. A cover letter stressed the private, informal nature of the proposal. But if the Netherlands and the Republic failed to reach a political agreement, the paper’s authors warned, they would “feel obliged” to forward the document to the Security Council and report “the circumstances of the parties’ inability to come to an arrangement.” According to du Bois, van Mook initially responded “rather truculently” to the presentation of the plan. Du Bois said that he had considered van Mook’s personal request to refrain from submitting a proposal, but “prayerful consideration” and his “conscience had driven [him] to this step.” Van Mook’s letter to Hatta, du Bois declared, had “eliminated” the GOC from a role in the negotiations. Combined with the months of futile talks, van Mook’s intervention had convinced du Bois that the GOC “must present our final proposals for a solution or else go down the drain without a gurgle.” Van Mook asked why hadn’t du Bois discussed the proposal with him? The disingenuous reply: Van Vredenburg had been informed of the plan ten days earlier. In his follow-up questions, van Mook’s “tone was aggrieved rather than defiant,” according to an entry in du Bois’s journal.¹⁵

In a letter to Margaret du Bois, he wrote: “[Van Mook] said we had interfered in his affairs, that I had wrecked the Dutch plan of settlement. (I meant to. It was iniquitous).” One question that van Mook had not asked was whether the State Department approved the working paper. “Thank God he didn’t,” wrote du Bois, “for it hadn’t.”¹⁶

Before the delivery of the US-Australian working paper to van Mook and Hatta, the State Department's attitude toward du Bois's autonomy and his proposed plan was contradictory. On the one hand, Washington officials told du Bois to consider himself "a free agent" in making choices that would lead to an agreement consistent with the "larger interests of the United States." On the other hand, the department instructed du Bois to await its comments "before presenting [a] proposal" to the Republic and the Netherlands.¹⁷ On June 6, four days before he handed the US-Australian paper to van Mook, du Bois cabled the department that he was airmailing a copy of the twenty-page document to Washington. Because of the time and expense required to encrypt and cable long telegrams, this slower method of transmission was standard procedure for a paper of that length.

Informed of Dutch objections to the working paper, W. Walton Butterworth, director of the State Department's Office of Far Eastern Affairs, attempted to telephone du Bois. Unable to reach him, Ogburn, or Livengood, Butterworth left a message with Donald M. Davies, a vice consul in Batavia: The department had not yet received the full text of the proposal and "hoped" that du Bois "could keep the situation fluid" until Washington officials had examined the document's details. Moreover, the department assumed that the working paper was "entirely consonant with the Renville" principles and had been submitted "in an entirely personal and informal manner." Finally, Butterworth and his Washington colleagues "hoped" that the proposal was not a "squeeze play" directed at the Netherlands.¹⁸

On June 11, du Bois spoke directly with Butterworth, who asked about his reaction to a suggestion by Ambassador Baruch for a "consultation" at the State Department that would

include du Bois and a representative of the US embassy at The Hague. Baruch, who generally sympathized with the Netherlands point of view, had reminded Washington of the deep-rooted Dutch conviction that non-Republican Indonesians deserved “at least as much if not more consideration” than the Republic. Du Bois rejected the idea of returning to Washington. A visit at this time, he said, would suggest that he had been recalled because the department did “not back up my action.” Butterworth replied that he “wouldn’t do anything to give that impression.” After asking about details of the working paper’s distribution, Butterworth said that he had heard a report he “didn’t like”—the document was an Australian “squeeze play.” Du Bois denied the allegation. “If the Aussies hadn’t gone along with us,” he said, “I’d have gone it alone.”¹⁹

Butterworth’s telephone calls indicated that du Bois was in trouble with the State Department. He had submitted a proposal to the Netherlands and the Republic that had neither been unanimously endorsed by the GOC nor approved by the department. Moreover, du Bois’s sympathy for the Republic and antipathy toward the Netherlands was out of step with his colleagues in Washington. In a report on Indonesia to the department’s Policy Planning Staff, William Lacy, assistant chief of the Southeast Asian division, declared: “Both sides have been guilty of infractions of the Renville Agreement but they seem more numerous and more intentional on the Republic side.”²⁰

Du Bois, however, was unapologetic about the content of the US-Australian working paper and the timing of its presentation. In follow-up cables to the State Department, he defended his actions, declaring that the Netherlands plan for transferring sovereignty to the USI “was unworkable, based [on] fictitious premises, and fairly sure [to] have [a] disastrous aftermath for US interests [in] Southeast Asia.” The future of Indonesia “belongs necessarily to the Indonesians,” and the working paper was a “gesture” of US confidence in the “ability and

right of Indonesians [to] govern [them]selves.”²¹ Du Bois acknowledged that the negotiating proposal would, to some degree, “upset [the] Dutch applecart.” He was convinced, however, that his and Critchley’s suggestions were the “only way [to] save Dutch apples, let alone American.” Reiterating his belief that “no useful purpose” could be served by a brief visit to Washington, du Bois wrote that he would “ask to be relieved as US Delegate as soon as I feel that [the] situation warrants.”²²

The Dutch response to the US-Australian working paper was entirely negative. In The Hague, Netherlands officials were “very much irritated” by the submission of the proposal and informed Ambassador Baruch that cooperation among the GOC delegations was “now impossible.”²³ In a letter to du Bois, dated June 14, van Mook objected to the working paper on both procedural and substantive grounds. Without going into details, he wrote that certain parts of it were either in “conflict with the Renville principles” or “would be unworkable in practice and could only lead to further confusion and delay.” Acting under instructions from his government, van Mook declared: “Neither I nor the Netherlands Delegation can see our way to take your paper into consideration.”²⁴

That same day, van Vredenburg told Livengood that he would no longer have “any more official meetings with Dubois or Ogburn, and he [was] certain Van Mook would not either.” The reason, said van Vredenburg, was that the US delegation had too often said one thing then done another, culminating in the submission of the du Bois-Critchley plan. Van Vredenburg added that he would soon be traveling to The Hague and doubted that he would return to Indonesia. (He did not.) Livengood, commenting to the State Department on the “great tension” between van Vredenburg and du Bois, wrote that there appeared to be “little possibility” of the two ever reaching an agreement.²⁵

In Washington, Ambassador van Kleffens pressed the diplomatic attack on the du Bois-Critchley working paper. In a meeting with Lovett at the State Department, he protested the reference in the cover letter to forwarding the proposal to the UN, a statement the Dutch government considered “a threat.” Van Kleffens was also disturbed by a leak of the US-Australian paper to Daniel L. Schorr, a freelance correspondent in Batavia working for *Time* magazine and the *Christian Science Monitor*. An editor for ANETA in New York before the war and in the Netherlands after it, Schorr reportedly filed a 4,000-word story for *Time* about the du Bois-Critchley proposal. In The Hague, Boon told Ambassador Baruch that Schorr’s article was “presumably based [on an] interview with du Bois.”²⁶

One result of the Dutch protests was a stiff State Department telegram to du Bois. Stressing the confidential, informal nature of the working paper, department officials were “disturbed” to learn about the *Time* story and were “unalterably opposed” to submitting the US-Australian proposal to the Security Council. Indirectly criticizing du Bois’s activist approach to “good offices,” the department stated its “strong opinion” that the GOC “should not in any way constitute itself as an arbitral body.” And while du Bois might view the Hatta-van Mook talks as an “untoward” attempt to bypass the GOC, the department would “wholeheartedly welcome” an amicable settlement that did not require the committee’s intervention. Finally, officials in Washington obliquely faulted du Bois’s advocacy for the Republic, instructing him to make it clear to van Mook and Hatta that the United States was the one member of the GOC “not designated to represent either party” in the dispute.²⁷

In his reply to the State Department, du Bois attempted to justify the US-Australian working paper and to correct some of Washington’s misconceptions about the negotiations. He began by observing that there was “no chance [of] preserving [the] confidential character” of the

proposal to the Netherlands and the Republic. The local Netherlands press had information about it, “obviously from [the] Dutch,” as did two international wire services, which had “at least [the] gist” of the paper. Denying that the US delegation had provided any information to Schorr, du Bois speculated that the reporter’s source “was almost certainly Dutch.” (Decades later Schorr said that his confidential source was a member of the United Nations staff.)²⁸

Du Bois conceded that aspects of the working paper ran “counter [to the] Netherlands strategy” in Indonesia, but he denied that the plan was pro-Republic. The proposed elections, for example, “might well result [in] wiping [the] Republic off [the] map.” It was “high time,” du Bois declared, for the United States to “turn [a] deaf ear to [the] Dutch argument that [the] Republic has violated Renville Agreement and principles while [the] Netherlands has loyally supported them.” With the exception of releasing many Republican POWs, the Dutch had done nothing but pursue their “immediate interests” and had “seized every excuse for not fulfilling important provisions [of the] truce.”²⁹

Defending the reporting of the US delegation, du Bois wrote that he had tried to provide the State Department with the “full picture [of the] dangerous situation” in Indonesia. His views on the “conduct” of the Netherlands seemed to be shared by UN staff of every nationality, by all of the international press agencies, and by “impartial military observers.” Even the Belgian delegate Herremans agreed “in part” with him. Du Bois concluded the telegram by suggesting that the current US representatives on the GOC may have outlived their usefulness: “If [the] Department does not accept our analysis and if after consideration [of] our plan cannot support it, we believe [the] situation will call for a new US delegation.”³⁰

The Dutch campaign to discredit the US-Australian working paper was undermined by a clumsy public attack on the proposal. In The Hague and Batavia, the Netherlands government alerted the press to a *Time* article about the document that was based on an interview with Coert du Bois. At the United Nations, Ambassador van Kleffens denounced the story, specifically naming its author, Daniel Schorr. But as noted in the *New York Times* and *Time*, there was no such article in the magazine. What had happened was that *Time*'s editors rejected Schorr's proposal for a long, detailed discussion of the complex diplomatic document. They were, however, eager to comment on the "violation of confidential communications" by the Netherlands: "By complaining about [the working paper's] 'publication' in TIME, the Dutch not only put every other correspondent in Indonesia on the track of the story—they admitted that somebody was snooping into correspondents' outgoing cablegrams."³¹

Apparently unbeknownst to du Bois, the United Press (UP) correspondent in Batavia, Andrew C. Brackman, had received a copy of the US-Australian working paper from Ogburn. "Brackman was very sympathetic to the Indonesian cause," Ogburn later recalled. "This is the only time I ever defied authority. We were so afraid that the Dutch were going to initiate a military offensive. I felt that making the public aware of the settlement proposal would deter them."³²

The publication of the UP story about the working paper provided the Netherlands with an excuse to suspend its participation in GOC talks. On June 16, a letter from van Vredenburg informed the committee that in "view [of the] publication [of the] strictly confidential document handed by Dubois to Van Mook," the Dutch delegation was discontinuing political discussions until it received further instructions from The Hague. That same day, the Netherlands government issued a press communiqué objecting to the US-Australian proposal.

The statement emphasized procedural violations—for example, the GOC’s internal rules prohibited the committee from making formal suggestions unless asked by both the Netherlands and the Republic. And since the proposal had been drafted by only two of the committee’s three members, their paper could not properly be considered a GOC document. Observing that the proposal’s suggestions were “in many respects contrary to Renville principles,” the Netherlands government declared: “The solution of the dispute was rather hampered than furthered by this initiative.”³³

US officials in Batavia and Washington were perplexed by the public attack on the working paper. Du Bois found the Dutch publicity campaign “utterly incomprehensible”—unless they hoped for his dismissal by blaming him for the leak to *Time*. This scheme, he wrote, “apparently backfired owing to [the] Dutch jumping [the] gun on [the] 4000-word Schorr story.”³⁴ William Lacy told Henri Helb of the Netherlands embassy that the Dutch government had made “a great mistake.” The combination of suspending talks and issuing a press communiqué gave the informal US-Australian proposal “a quasi-official appearance,” attracting Security Council attention that neither the Netherlands nor the United States wanted.³⁵

In a separate conversation with Helb, Far East director Butterworth echoed Lacy’s concerns and urged the Netherlands to instruct the Dutch delegation to resume political negotiations. A Princeton graduate and Rhodes Scholar who served as counselor of the US embassy in Nanking, 1946–1947, Butterworth told Helb that he took exception to van Vredenburg’s inference that du Bois had leaked the working paper to the press. Applying mild economic pressure, Butterworth asked the Dutch diplomat to inform his government that the United States would be delaying a reconstruction loan to Indonesia sought by the Netherlands, “pending more favorable developments.” To the US GOC delegation in Java, the

report of the department's irritation with the Dutch and, particularly, its delay of the loan "bucked us up wonderfully," wrote du Bois.³⁶

Although baffling to American officials, the Netherlands public relations offensive was effective with the Dutch press in Batavia. On June 17, an editorial in the reactionary *Het Dagblad* characterized du Bois as a misplaced "figurehead" who was "too romantically emotional to work effectively in a business-like manner in the remarkable and prickly position he is in." With du Bois's influence dismissed as "negligible," the editorial identified Critchley as the intellectual force behind the working paper's "evil suggestions." By violating GOC procedures, du Bois and Critchley were making the committee "ridiculous." The editorial proposed a UN commission to investigate the conduct of du Bois and Critchley, concluding: "Another quicker and more efficient solution of the difficulty thus arisen is ultimately to replace both of these members by persons who are fully conscious of the responsible task imposed upon them."³⁷

On the same day as the *Het Dagblad* editorial, the Republic released a statement supporting the US-Australian working paper as a "basis for continuing the discussions to find a settlement of the dispute and to achieve the desired political agreement." Hatta told the US and Australian delegations that his talks with van Mook were friendly, but van Mook "flatly refused to discuss the [working] paper with him." Roem, the head of the Republican delegation, said that van Mook's only concession was a willingness to forward topics under consideration to The Hague. "Without pressure [from a] third party," said Roem, "[the] Netherlands would not deviate [from its] intention [to] eliminate [the] Republicans."³⁸

In Washington, CIA reached a similar conclusion. Commenting on the combined impact of the du Bois-Critchley working paper and the State Department's economic signal to the Netherlands, agency analysts wrote: "It would appear that the presentation of the US-

Australian plan at this time as well as the postponement of US loans to the Netherlands government has forestalled the resumption of widespread armed clashes between Dutch and Republican forces.”³⁹

Sixty-six-year-old Coert du Bois felt “terribly tired,” suffered from headaches, and saw “spots and bars” in his field of vision. By the end of the third week in June, his emotional health was also deteriorating. He had been vilified in the Dutch press, both in Batavia and The Hague; the GOC had little hope of playing a useful role in negotiations; and, most troubling of all, the State Department had not supported the US-Australian working paper. Moreover, he believed that department officials had been paying more attention to Ambassador van Kleffens than to him. In a journal entry for June 19, du Bois wrote that his morale was at “a new low.” A US Army doctor gave him a complete physical three days later. Du Bois’s blood pressure was dangerously high, and he was taken to a Dutch military hospital for further examination. The diagnosis: “spasmodic hypertension.” Both US and Dutch physicians warned du Bois that unless he rested and “quit worrying,” he risked having a stroke. The doctors, according to a letter du Bois wrote to his wife, advised him to “get the hell out of here soonest and by sea.”⁴⁰

Du Bois was relieved by the doctors’ recommendation, which was a face-saving way of leaving Indonesia without overtly quitting: “I’m delighted that I can wind up and get out of here on doctor’s emphatic orders rather than resign by telegraph because the Department of State didn’t support me in a move that I was convinced was the last chance for a fair and peaceful settlement.” Du Bois booked passage on a steamship from Singapore to New York, scheduled to sail on July 8. The other ticketed member of his party was Charlton Ogburn, whose spirits

were equally depressed. Only then did du Bois inform the State Department of his poor health, his planned departure with Ogburn, and his conclusion that he had nothing more to contribute to a political settlement. What he did not tell Washington was his intention to co-write with Ogburn “the whole story of this fiasco and maybe publish it in the U.S. Or at least have it ready for our court martials in the State Dept.”⁴¹

Officials in Washington were shocked by du Bois’s news, concerned about his health, and probably pleased by the opportunity to replace a diplomat who had disappointed the Netherlands government and at least some representatives of the State Department. The abrupt timing of du Bois’s return, however, was awkward because of the public controversy over the US-Australian working paper. Butterworth asked if du Bois could safely delay his departure by a few weeks, avoiding the appearance of returning to the United States for any other reason than health. Du Bois, however, had no interest in risking further illness to camouflage his alienation from Dutch officials in Java and US diplomats in Washington. “God damn it,” he wrote to Margaret du Bois, “the [department] hasn’t backed me up and what the hell do I care how it looks. [Butterworth] doesn’t realize that what’s the matter with me is just being here and mixed up in this mess.”⁴²

On June 28, Ogburn, who had been ordered to remain in Indonesia until du Bois’s replacement and his own successor arrived, provided a more diplomatic response to Butterworth’s inquiry. Noting du Bois’s “strong feelings and remorseless conscience,” Ogburn reported that his boss had been working under pressure that was “difficult [to] appreciate” in Washington. “No circumstances,” he declared, “could warrant exposing du Bois to [a] possible stroke.” His telegram to Butterworth included a warning from Colonel Mayer, chief of the US military observer group: “Unless du Bois immediately drops all mental activity which [would]

likely exercise him, grave consequences [are] probable.” Butterworth replied to Ogburn that same day: du Bois should “take no chances” with his health and “sail as scheduled.”⁴³

Before leaving Indonesia, du Bois convalesced in Bogor, a temperate city some thirty-five miles south of Batavia and the site of the vast Bogor Botanical Gardens. For a week, du Bois stayed in a well-furnished house with a second-story veranda overlooking a stream. He noted that the beds in the house had box springs rather than the canvass-covered teak planks in his room at the Hôtel des Indes. Waited on by servants, he received well-wishers from Batavia and played a few holes of golf daily at a modest nine-hole course near the volcano Mount Salak. After a few days in Bogor, du Bois wrote to his wife about his “splendid rest” and the fine quality of his care: “I have shed that tightness around the head that marked the last days in Batavia.”⁴⁴

Du Bois’s restorative hideaway was leased to Arthur J. “Arturo” Campbell, who ostensibly was a treasury attaché in the US consulate but was, in fact, the CIA chief of station. Then forty-six, he was by all accounts a flamboyant character. The residents of Campbell’s house, according to a US diplomat who visited Bogor a few years later, included two gimlet-drinking orangutans and a three-foot crocodile in a bathtub.⁴⁵ His large home in Batavia provided opportunities for lavish entertaining that sometimes irritated budget-constrained American embassy officials. Campbell’s outsized personality suggests that he might be characterized as what his agency colleague Lloyd George had called a “red herring”—an intelligence officer operating under official cover who might “draw attention away from true undercover operations.”⁴⁶

Before his arrival in the NEI in 1947, Campbell had not worked in the archipelago. He did, however, have intelligence experience in the Far East. Before World War II, Campbell

worked as a secret agent for the US Treasury in China and Hong Kong, investigating narcotics trafficking, export fraud, and related matters. During the war, he served in Chungking with the Sino-American Cooperative Organization (SACO), a Chinese-US Navy-OSS intelligence unit. Campbell joined the X-2 Branch of SSU in January 1946, then resigned later in the year when that agency was shutting down and “certain selected individuals” transferred to CIG.⁴⁷

Campbell led a small CIA station in Batavia. In fact, the only other CIA officer operating under official cover in 1948 was twenty-four-year-old Robert C. Pierson Jr. Described by the State Department as a vice consul, Pierson had received Dutch-language instruction from the US Army and communications training from OSS during the war.⁴⁸ Given Campbell’s background in counterintelligence and Pierson’s ability to speak Dutch but not Malay, one wonders how much of the station’s attention focused on detecting, analyzing, and countering efforts by NEFIS to spy on US officials and organizations. To be sure, NEFIS was a friendly intelligence service that shared military and political information with US officials. But as demonstrated during and after the war, European allies, and particularly their intelligence services, resented the intrusion of the United States into their territory.

A complete understanding of the activities of the CIA station in Batavia is precluded by the continued classification of records that the agency deems “operational” or that expose intelligence “sources and methods.” Yet in addition to the declassified “finished” CIA intelligence reports circulated within the national security bureaucracy, there are declassified agency “information reports” from Indonesia that provide at least a partial glimpse of the raw intelligence collected by Campbell, the station’s Indonesian and Dutch agents, and any “nonofficial” American operators posing as private citizens. During the second half of 1948, the topics of these reports ranged from communist guerrillas in West Java to competing political

factions in East Indonesia, from the Republic's Section V intelligence service to the strength and operations of Dutch military forces, from counterfeit currency printed in Singapore to the discovery of gold in northern Celebes, and from General Spoor's advocacy for "strong military measures" against the Republic to General Sudirman's intention to "eliminate" communists in the TNI.⁴⁹

The interests of the CIA station in Batavia were not, however, limited to espionage and reporting. As will be shown in pages that follow, Campbell not only served as an intermediary with Republican leaders, but also helped establish a covert program to arm and train a formidable anticommunist internal security force.

Coert du Bois, reinvigorated by a sea cruise, returned to the United States and a quiet, permanent retirement. A State Department press release praised his "significant" service in Indonesia, but unlike Frank Graham, he received neither congratulations from President Truman nor an appointment to advise the secretary of state. There was also no exposé co-authored with Ogburn, who continued to file reports from Indonesia about the impasse in political negotiations. State Department officials, however, initially showed little interest in Ogburn's analyses or advice. When he complained about the absence of any comment from Washington about the US-Australian working paper, Charles Reed, chief of the Southeast Asian division, expressed regret that Ogburn felt uninformed but implied that the US GOC delegation had only itself to blame. The paper, wrote Reed, had been "submitted on a personal basis without [the] prior authorization of [the] Dep[artmen]t."⁵⁰

Despite the furor caused by the US-Australian working paper, State Department officials found it a useful document—one they revised to produce what they considered “a practical basis for the achievement of a political settlement.” The Washington revision, finished on July 9, would “undoubtedly require of the Dutch further compromise, and a certain flexibility in negotiation which is at present lacking,” according to the collective judgment of the department’s divisions of European, Southeast Asian, and UN affairs. Firm US support for the revised plan, Washington officials believed, would likely overcome any Dutch resistance to it. The department, however, feared that the newly elected, more conservative Netherlands government would try to impose a settlement on the Republic that would end in either the partition of Indonesia or a civil war. Based on critical Dutch comments about the original working paper, US officials concluded that the Dutch were developing a new plan—the details of which were unclear—and that they wanted the GOC to be its “salesman” to the Republic.⁵¹

Briefed by his regional chiefs, Under Secretary Lovett told Ambassador van Kleffens on July 13 that he “found the present state of affairs in Indonesia very unsatisfactory.” There had been no progress in reaching a political settlement since the signing of the Renville agreement in January. Moreover, some Dutch officials advocated the establishment of a federation of Indonesian states without the Republic. Such an unstable partition, said Lovett, was “highly undesirable,” both locally and internationally. Indirectly rejecting any unilateral Dutch political plan, Lovett declared: “[Since] neither party appeared to be prepared to accept a proposal offered by the other, a compromise solution seemed called for and that such a compromise solution could be offered only by the GOC.” He added that a political settlement “would require certain concessions to the realities of the situation at the expense of an ideal solution.”⁵²

Lovett did not tell van Kleffens that the State Department had revised the du Bois-Critchley working paper or that the United States planned to submit the proposal to the GOC, the Netherlands, and the Republic after du Bois's successor, H. Merle Cochran, arrived in Java in August.⁵³ In the meantime, US officials listened to the suggestions of Dutch diplomats, who believed that the two governments were working together collaboratively. On July 22, the Netherlands embassy delivered an informal "oral note" to the State Department, outlining Dutch views of the GOC negotiations. A fundamental demand of the Netherlands was retaining sovereignty in all of Indonesia during the period of transition to an independent USI. The department made a temporizing reply to the note: Although the US government "generally agreed" with the Dutch position, the document could not be considered any form of "binding" legal agreement, particularly since Cochran would be representing the Security Council in Indonesia.⁵⁴

The department's reference to Cochran's responsibilities to the Security Council was disingenuous. A senior Foreign Service officer, with an excellent record as an international financial analyst and as an inspector of diplomatic missions, Cochran would likely be more disciplined in executing US policy than the academic and the department retiree who had preceded him as GOC delegate. More importantly, he would be traveling to Indonesia with the American plan for a political settlement. "The existence of this new United States plan is not known," wrote Harding F. Bancroft, acting chief of the Division of UN Political Affairs, on August 12, "and the Department feels that negotiations would be hampered rather than helped were its existence to become known at this time."⁵⁵

Cochran was a "genuinely tough and hard boiled" diplomat, according to a State Department colleague.⁵⁶ Then fifty-six, the new American GOC delegate was heavyset, bald, and

independently wealthy. NEFIS officials who spoke with him observed that he had “the looks and physique of a peasant.” They also found him to be an intelligent “gentleman, normal, business-like, and unpretentious.”⁵⁷ Unlike Graham and du Bois, who relied heavily on their GOC subordinates, Cochran worked alone as much as possible. Several US diplomats in Indonesia thought that he was “a very lonely man,” wrote Paul Gardner. “His wife was permanently confined to a mental institution and he had no children.” Samuel P. Hayes, an economic-aid official who locked horns with Cochran a few years later, recalled in an oral history interview: “He was a peculiar person, almost pathological in his wanting to do things secretly and keeping things to himself.”⁵⁸

Before Cochran’s arrival in Indonesia—via The Hague—Dutch diplomats thought they had reached an understanding with the United States about the resumption of GOC negotiations: In August and September, Cochran would assess the situation and work closely with the Netherlands to develop a plan for a political settlement. During this period, there would be neither legislative action in the Netherlands nor political activity in Indonesia to inflame the situation. The United States, however, had deceived the Netherlands about Cochran’s role in the negotiations. Instead of being a “salesman” for the Dutch proposal, Cochran would first decide if it was an “acceptable beginning.” If not, he would put forward the US plan.⁵⁹

¹ Du Bois to State Dept., June 1, 1948, no. 459, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 153.

² Du Bois to State Dept., May 31, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 151.

³ Du Bois to State, unnumbered letter, June 1, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13; du Bois to State Dept., June 1, 1948, no. 459.

⁴ Du Bois to State Dept., May 21, 1948.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Du Bois to State Dept., June 1, 1948, no. 459; US GOC delegation to State Dept., May 26, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13.

⁷ Du Bois to State Dept., June 3, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 161.

⁸ Critchley to External Affairs, June 4, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 162; du Bois to State, June 6, 1948, no. 467, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 162. Critchley reported that the date of this conversation was June 3; du Bois wrote that it occurred on June 2.

⁹ Du Bois to State Dept., June 6, 1948, unnumbered letter, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13.

¹⁰ Nichols to Attlee, December 1, 1949, *BDFa, 1949, Vol. 9*, p. 252.

¹¹ Du Bois, journal excerpts, June 9, 1948, RG 84, Entry 2732A, box 2; Critchley to External Affairs, June 8, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 170.

¹² Van Mook to du Bois, June 8, 1948, RG 84, Entry 2732A, box 2.

¹³ Baruch to State Dept., June 8, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 165.

¹⁴ Du Bois to Margaret du Bois, June 11, 1948, CDBP, box 1; Du Bois, journal entry, June 9, 1948, CDBP, box 5; Critchley to External Affairs, June 9, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 171.

¹⁵ Du Bois and Critchley to van Mook, June 10, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 173; du Bois, journal entry, June 10, 1948, CDBP, box 5.

¹⁶ Du Bois to Margaret du Bois, June 11, 1948.

¹⁷ State Dept. to du Bois, June 8, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 164; State Dept. to du Bois, June 5, 1948, no. 245.

¹⁸ Lacy, memorandum of telephone conversation, June 11, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6451.

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- ¹⁹ Du Bois, journal entry, June 11, 1948, CDBP, box 5; Baruch to State Dept., June 5, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 160. Also see Butterworth to Lovett, June 11, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2151.
- ²⁰ Policy Planning Staff meeting, June 22, 1948, RG 59, Entry A1 558-CA, box 7.
- ²¹ Du Bois to State Dept., June 12, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 172.
- ²² Du Bois to State Dept., June 11 and June 13, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 167, and RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2151.
- ²³ Baruch to State Dept., June 14, 1948, Entry UD 2728, box 13; CIA, *Daily Summary*, June 15, 1948, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ²⁴ Van Mook to du Bois, June 14, 1948, RG 84, Entry 2732A, box 2.
- ²⁵ Livengood to State Dept., June 14, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13.
- ²⁶ Lovett, memorandum of conversation, June 14, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 173; Baruch to State Dept., June 14, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13.
- ²⁷ State Dept. to du Bois, June 14, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 174.
- ²⁸ Du Bois to State Dept., June 16, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 177; Schorr, quoted in Gardner, *Shared Hopes, Separate Fears*, p. 65.
- ²⁹ Du Bois to State Dept., June 16, 1948.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Schorr, *Staying Tuned*, p. 28; A. M. Rosenthal, “No Blame Is Fixed in Indonesia Crisis,” *New York Times*, June 18, 1948; “United Nations: Confidentially...” *Time*, June 28, 1948.
- ³² Ogburn, telephone conversation with Paul Gardner, December 9, 1994, quoted in *Shared Hopes, Separate Fears*, p. 65. In the full version of this quote, Ogburn conflated Brackman’s UP career and his later work for the *New York Times*. He also declared that the *Times* refused

Brackman's story on the working paper, perhaps confusing this incident with *Time* magazine's lack of interest in Schorr's report on the document. According to du Bois to State Dept., June 18, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 182, UP did run a story in the United States on the working paper, which the Dutch used to justify their suspension of talks.

³³ Du Bois to State Dept., June 16, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 178; Netherlands government, "Press Communique Issued in The Hague on June 16th," RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13.

³⁴ Du Bois to State Dept., June 18, 1948.

³⁵ Lacy, memorandum of conversation, June 16, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13.

³⁶ State Dept. to du Bois, June 17, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 180; Du Bois, journal entry, June 18, 1948, CDBP, box 5.

³⁷ "Out You Go," *Het Dagblad*, June 17, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13.

³⁸ ANETA, "Republican View on Recent Proposals," June 17, 1948, CDBP, box 3; Critchley to External Affairs, June 18, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 184; Du Bois to State Dept., June 22, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 187.

³⁹ CIA, ORE, Far East/Pacific Branch, "Intelligence Highlights," 22 June–28 June, 1948, www.foia.cia.gov.

⁴⁰ Du Bois, journal entries, June 19 and June 22, 1948, CDBP, box 5; Dubois to Margaret du Bois, June 20 and June 23, 1948, CDBP, box 1.

⁴¹ Dubois to Margaret du Bois, June 23, 1948.

⁴² State Dept. to Baruch, June 24, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 194; du Bois to Margaret du Bois, June 26, 1948, CDBP, box 1.

⁴³ Ogburn to Butterworth, June 28, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 13; Butterworth to Ogburn, June 28, 1948, CDBP, box 3.

⁴⁴ Du Bois to Margaret du Bois, June 28, 1948, CDBP, box 1.

⁴⁵ Cross, *Born a Foreigner*, p. 90.

⁴⁶ George to Carter Nicholas, April 2, 1946, RG 226, Entry A1 210, box 305.

⁴⁷ Campbell to Treasury Dept., September 2, 1942, and N. F. Altman, “SI Liaison with Saco—Chungking,” October 8, 1943, RG 226, Entry UD 92, box 122; Campbell personnel file, RG 226, Entry A1 224, box 103.

⁴⁸ Pierson personnel file, RG 226, Entry A1 224, box 605.

⁴⁹ CIA, “Activities of Lieutenant General Spoor,” September 2, 1948, and “Action by General Soedirman against Communists,” October 11, 1948. As of January 2018, the CIA’s FOIA electronic reading room held more than 90 information reports that had originated in Indonesia and were distributed to US officials between August 1 and December 31, 1948. In RG 263, Entry A1 18, box 118, there are scores of additional CIA information reports from Indonesia for this same period.

⁵⁰ Reed to Ogburn, July 30, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 219.

⁵¹ Bonsal, Lacy, Lisle, Nolting, and Scott to Butterworth, July 9, 1948, RG 59, Entry A1 1265, Box 15; Nolting, Reber, Butterworth, and Rusk to Lovett, July 12, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 206.

⁵² Lovett, memorandum of conversation, July 13, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 207.

⁵³ Cochran to Reber, Butterworth, and Rusk, July 15, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2152.

⁵⁴ Butterworth, memorandum of conversation, August 2, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 220.

⁵⁵ Bancroft to Graham, August 12, 1948, FPGP, folder 2092.

⁵⁶ Briggs, *Proud Servant*, p. 291.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Gouda, *American Visions*, p. 267.

⁵⁸ Gardner, *Shared Hopes, Separate Fears*, p. 73; Hayes, interview by Richard McKinzie, July 16, 1975.

⁵⁹ Scott, memorandum of conversation, August 20, 1948, RG 84, Entry 2732A, box 2; Cochran to State Dept., August 16, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 225.

Chapter 9

Profoundly Shocked and Grievously Disappointed

(1948)

The US negotiating scheme was disrupted by what Charles Livengood called “a series of unfortunate events.” The first was a Dutch allegation that the Republic was exporting opium to Singapore and the Philippines to generate foreign exchange. Among the traffickers were members of the Republic’s GOC delegation, who used the committee’s planes and trains to transport the drug. In a letter to the GOC, the Dutch charged the Republic with violating an international convention on opium exports and abusing its diplomatic privileges. Ominously, the letter threatened to “prosecute certain members of the Republican negotiating delegation.”¹

The Dutch opium accusation—which Republican officials privately admitted was “for the most part correct”—was soon followed by a shooting incident in Batavia at 56 Pegangsaan East, the former home of President Sukarno and the current office of the Republic’s GOC delegation. On August 16, 1948, the eve of the Republic’s third anniversary, some 500 people, mostly youths between the ages of fifteen and twenty, arrived at the house for an open-air movie in the backyard. Because of a Dutch prohibition against celebrating this anniversary and the absence of any meeting permit, the police ordered the crowd to disperse. Shots were fired, killing one police officer and wounding two boys and a girl. The Dutch seized the house, an act “calculated to touch Republican pride to the quick and to serve no good purpose,” according to Livengood.²

An economist who had thus far been more sympathetic to the Dutch than any of the US GOC delegates, Livengood believed that NEI authorities could have prevented the meeting or disbanded the crowd “without undue difficulty.” Instead of defending the police response, he

implied that the Dutch were responsible for the incident: “NEI intelligence is very active and surely NEFIS and the NEI police must have been aware that a meeting of some proportion was contemplated, certainly it was known by others. A notification to responsible Republican officials beforehand that the NEI government was aware that a meeting was planned and that it was unauthorized might easily have resulted in its cancellation.”³

On August 18, the Republican delegation announced that it could not participate in GOC negotiations without access to its office and files. The Dutch, however, would not return the house. They also took over a Republican hospital and issued a communiqué ordering all Republican officials and their families to leave Netherlands-controlled territory. Although the order was not enforced, Livengood reported that the communiqué “created considerable furor both in Republican and Dutch-controlled territories and was considered by many as just another example of Dutch ‘needling.’”⁴

Perhaps more disturbing to US officials was a draft Netherlands law establishing a provisional federal government without the Republic. Presented at a meeting of Indonesian delegates from Dutch-controlled areas, the detailed act compounded the political problems of the Hatta government, which faced growing pressure from Republican leftists to abandon the Renville agreement and withdraw from negotiations. Suripno, the diplomat who signed the consular agreement with the Soviet Union, had returned to Indonesia with Musso, a prewar PKI leader who helped plan the failed communist rebellions in 1926 and 1927. “Suripno,” reported Philip H. Trezise, a former OSS officer who served on the GOC delegation, “is busily propagating the thesis that the Republic’s policy of looking to the West, especially to the United States, for support is a proven failure, [and] that Russia offers the only real hope among the outside powers.”⁵

The stiffening Dutch attitude toward the Republic and the leftist threat to the Hatta government prompted the United States to accelerate its timetable for presenting a plan for a political settlement. With Washington's approval, Cochran began drafting a proposal based on the State Department's revision of the du Bois-Critchley working paper and on his own views about a "potentially acceptable agreement." He discussed the plan only with members of the US GOC delegation and with department officials.⁶ Among those unaware of the American proposal was Ambassador Baruch in The Hague, who complained to Washington that he had not received "reports on GOC activities since" Cochran's arrival in Batavia. Then seventy-six, Baruch—like his better-known older brother, Bernard—was an active supporter of the Democratic Party. President Truman privately described Herman as a "flatterer" and "conniver" but appointed him ambassador to Portugal in 1945 and ambassador to the Netherlands in 1947.⁷ Baruch faithfully reported and often supported Dutch positions on Indonesian affairs. Apparently, neither Cochran nor the department thought his insights would contribute much to the development of a compromise agreement.

On August 31, while still preparing his proposal, Cochran received a confidential draft agreement from the Dutch delegation that had been approved by The Hague but was still "susceptible of modification." Calling for the reestablishment of Dutch authority over all of Indonesia for an indefinite period of time, the agreement would delay elections in the archipelago until the restoration of "peace, order and security"—a phrase the Republic associated with its own destruction. Cochran dismissed the Dutch proposal as unacceptable, "even as [a] basis for opening discussions." Convinced that it would provoke the Australian and Indonesian delegations and prejudice their views of Dutch concepts incorporated into the American plan,

Cochran asked the State Department to persuade The Hague “not to present [the] Netherlands draft at all.”⁸

Cochran’s own draft plan, submitted to the department on September 7, required difficult compromises by the Netherlands and the Republic. For example, explicit dates for electing representatives to a legislative assembly (January 1949), establishing a provisional federal government (February 1949), and transferring sovereignty to the USI (July 1949) had been anathema to Dutch negotiators. No less disturbing to the Republic would be the proposal for Dutch control of the federal government’s army and foreign relations during the interim period. Cochran wrote that if department officials found his draft agreement acceptable, he wanted their backing in the face of inevitable Dutch resistance. To defend the proposal, he suggested emphasizing that there was “no chance” the Republic or Australia would accept “any plan more favorable to [the] Netherlands.” Moreover, “further delay in reaching [a] settlement or leaving [the] Republic out of federation plans would lead to [a] more dangerous situation, [the] spread of communism, costly chaos and fighting.”⁹

The State Department approved the Cochran plan, congratulating him for his work and suggesting only minor changes to the draft. The only glitch in the submission of the secret US plan was a news story in Batavia reporting that Cochran had “completed the formulation of a proposal to settle the Dutch-Indo[nesian] dispute.” On September 8, the GOC issued a communiqué declaring that “these rumors are absolutely without foundation. On the contrary, the Committee of Good Offices is hopeful that one or both of the parties themselves will within the very near future propose a plan or plans which will form a basis for the resumption of political negotiations.”¹⁰

Two days later, members of the US GOC delegation submitted the Cochran proposal to Dutch and Republican representatives as “an informal and strictly confidential oral note.” According to the cover letter, the intent of the US delegation was to determine whether the Netherlands and the Republic thought that the plan was a basis for resuming political negotiations. If so, the US delegation would formally submit the proposal to the GOC. The cover letter also stated that the plan was being presented to the Australian and Belgian delegations on a strictly informal, confidential basis.¹¹

Netherlands officials in Batavia were shocked and infuriated by the American proposal. For two hours, according to Cochran, members of the Dutch delegation complained about the “surprising departure” from the procedure that had been agreed to in Washington the previous July. The Dutch could not understand why Cochran had not discussed his objections to their plan before submitting his own. Netherlands legal adviser Willem Riphagen declared that ninety percent of the Cochran plan repeated the du Bois-Critchley working paper. The rest, he said, was five percent “better” and five percent “worse” than the earlier proposal. “If [the] Netherlands delegation’s views are any indication,” Cochran warned Washington, “we believe [the] Department will encounter severe opposition in persuading [The] Hague to accept [the] US delegation draft as [a] basis [for] negotiations.”¹²

Cochran’s prediction was correct. In The Hague, Boon told Ambassador Baruch that the previous government “might have found [the] Cochran draft acceptable but not [the] present Cabinet.” The parliamentary elections held on July 7, 1948, had resulted in a more conservative coalition cabinet, with the KVP gaining the upper hand in foreign policy. In the negotiations to form a new government, Willem Drees (PvdA) was named prime minister, but E. M. J. A. Sassen (KVP) was appointed minister of overseas territories, and former prime minister Louis

Beel (KVP) was slated to replace Lieutenant Governor General van Mook in Batavia. Beel, however, would have the less colonial sounding title of high representative of the crown (HRC). According to Labor Party chairman Vorrink, the leaders of the Catholic Party felt that van Mook was “an obstacle to their objective of [a] strong essentially Dutch-controlled union.”¹³

The new foreign minister, Dirk U. Stikker, was a pragmatic business executive who was relatively new to diplomacy. A member of the center-right People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (*Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie*, or VVD), he had made postwar visits to the NEI as the managing director of Heineken breweries and as a member of a parliamentary commission. Embodying the cabinet’s contradictory impulses of conciliation and conflict, Stikker accepted the idea of Indonesian independence but wanted the Netherlands to determine the terms and timing for the transfer of sovereignty. He would bitterly resent what he described as the pressure from the United States “to make this transfer too soon and without sufficient guarantees that law and order would prevail.”¹⁴

Seeking US support for what he considered a sensible policy, Stikker wanted to make his case directly to Secretary Marshall in Washington. The State Department, however, attempted to discourage the visit, which might appear to be evidence of US-Dutch “complicity.”¹⁵ Undeterred by such concerns, Stikker met with Marshall on September 17. “Emphasizing the menace of Communism and the growth of this malignancy in the Netherlands East Indies and other parts of Southeast Asia,” Stikker said that his government had been surprised by the submission of the Cochran proposals and indirectly accused the United States of deceiving the Netherlands about the procedure for drafting and presenting the plan. When addressing details of the US proposal, Stikker observed that some were “acceptable,” while others were either “doubtful” or “unacceptable.” The “premature” elections suggested by Cochran were particularly

objectionable. He added that the Netherlands government did not believe it would be possible to secure the two-thirds parliamentary majority necessary to approve the Cochran plan as the basis for a political settlement.¹⁶

Marshall's reaction to these representations was "very reserved, and when he spoke, very critical," according to Stikker. Marshall, acknowledging Lovett's greater familiarity with the negotiations, said that he had been following events in Indonesia with "attentive interest" for several years. What impressed him now was that, "for the first time," all US officials responsible for Indonesian affairs were united in their views: The Cochran plan was "fair," and it "was of the utmost importance to act promptly." Marshall, apparently annoyed by longstanding Dutch efforts to frame their conflict with the Republic as an anticommunist struggle, observed to Stikker that US officials "were no less alive and combative in our attitude to Communism than he and his colleagues were."¹⁷

Turning to domestic politics, Marshall reminded the foreign minister that the Truman administration had overcome partisan congressional resistance to passing the legislation for the European Recovery Program: "Things which have to be done can be done." Marshall's reference to the ERP might have been more than a mere legislative pep talk. The brief discussion of the program might also have included a veiled economic threat. According to the meeting notes, Marshall mentioned future "problems" facing the ERP. Although unspecified, such problems could include resistance to providing Marshall Plan aid to the Netherlands because of its Indonesian policy. Philip Trezise, a member of the US GOC delegation, had already recommended to Cochran that, if necessary, the United States should reduce "Marshall Plan aid to Holland by an amount equal to the estimated cost of maintaining the Netherlands army in Indonesia."¹⁸

Stikker, who met with Marshall for less than an hour, concluded that the Netherlands would receive “no support whatsoever” from the United States. In his memoir, he claimed that “the refusal of Marshall in 1948 to pay any attention to reasonable suggestions from the Dutch Government” was a historic blunder equivalent to General Christison’s “premature recognition” of the Republic in 1945. Conjuring a dubious counterfactual that blamed Marshall for the Dutch military offensive in late 1948, Stikker wrote: “With a little sensible support from the United States, the second Dutch police action, which was to follow in December, and as a consequence of which thousands and thousands were killed, would never have taken place.”¹⁹

The implication that US, rather than Dutch, officials had blood on their hands from the second Netherlands military offensive was an evasion of responsibility. Moreover, what Stikker considered “sensible support from the United States”—that is, pressure on Sukarno and Hatta to agree to Dutch proposals that were unacceptable to the Republic—would have likely led to prolonged guerrilla warfare. And despite Dutch superiority in weapons and military training, such a war would probably have ended as badly for the Netherlands as the First Indochina War did for France.

Republican officials initially received the Cochran proposals “with caution and in some cases with suspicion,” Thomas Critchley reported to Canberra. “Their similarity to the Australian-U.S. proposals has of course been strongly commented on but they are ‘not as good.’” (For his part, Critchley was gratified that the US plan closely resembled the earlier working paper he had co-authored.) On September 17, the day Marshall spoke with Stikker, members of the US GOC delegation met with Sukarno and Hatta to discuss the Cochran plan. Both Republican leaders

avored acceptance of the US proposals, according to Cochran, who wrote to the State Department: “Sukarno seeks [an] early over-all agreement without emphasizing details. His principal concern is that [the] Netherlands may either refuse [to] negotiate or prolong negotiations through hard bargaining.”²⁰

Dutch resistance to the Cochran plan was a significant threat to the Republic, but a more immediate danger was a communist rebellion in East Java. On September 18, pro-PKI forces seized government offices, a TNI army headquarters, and other key installations in Madiun, one of the larger cities in the region. Musso, who had assumed leadership of the PKI after his return to Indonesia and rapidly merged disaffected left-wing organizations into the party, was apparently surprised by the uprising. According to Mavis Rose, “Musso’s immediate response was one of dismay,” realizing that, as in the 1920s, “a PKI revolt was being staged before the circumstances were right.”²¹

Sukarno’s response to the Madiun rebellion included a radio broadcast on September 19. Reaffirming the Republic’s respect for “every ideology,” he vowed to oppose “subversive activities from whichever side and all law-breakers who endanger the country and disturb the general well-being.” Charging Musso with organizing “a coup” to overthrow the government, Sukarno referred to the PKI leader’s many years of exile in the Soviet Union. Indonesians faced a choice, said Sukarno: Musso and the PKI, or Sukarno and Hatta, “who, by the will of God, will lead the State to an independent Indonesia, free from any foreign domination.” Sukarno concluded his broadcast with an urgent appeal: “Let us destroy the rebels together. Do not doubt, be convinced of victory. Once independent, always independent.”²²

Musso publicly replied to Sukarno’s broadcast, transforming the local mutiny into a national revolution. Referring to Sukarno and Hatta as “slaves of the Japanese and America”

who must die, Musso declared: “It was neither Soekarno nor Hatta who have opposed the Dutch, the British, and now the Americans; but rather the Indonesian people themselves. Therefore the happenings in Madiun and elsewhere are a signal to the whole people to wrest the powers of the state into their own hands.”²³

On September 20, Livengood reported to the State Department that Sukarno’s “strong” statement had clarified the Republic’s position and calmed the population. The Republic hoped to suppress the revolt within a week, with the TNI closing in on Madiun from three directions. Livengood, echoing an earlier CIA report, wrote that a “large majority” of the army would likely remain loyal to Sukarno and Hatta. If the Republic could “quell this uprising,” he wrote, it would be in a “much stronger position internally and for negotiations.” If it failed, the Republic would “either disintegrate or require immediate assistance from [the] outside.”²⁴

There was an aspect of the unfolding situation that bothered Livengood. Cochran, who was in Jogjakarta with the other GOC delegates, was scheduled to arrive in Batavia in a few days. His return meant that there would be no American observer in Republican territory, which Livengood considered “regrettable at this crucial time.” The State Department agreed, suggesting that the consulate send a representative to Jogjakarta whose presence would “not be misinterpreted or excite speculation.”²⁵ The official selected for this assignment was neither a member of the GOC delegation nor a political officer from the consulate. The choice was CIA Chief of Station Arthur Campbell.

On September 25, Campbell traveled to Jogjakarta to serve as an “interim contact with [the] Republic and to perform observer activities for [a] few days.” He spoke with Prime Minister Hatta, who also served as defense minister and who thought that the military situation in Madiun was “favorable.” Upon his return to Batavia three days later, Campbell reported that

senior government officials believed that the Republic would emerge from the Madiun coup “stronger internally and internationally.” Although recognizing the dangers posed by communism, Republican leaders thought that the best policy was to allow the PKI to remain in existence as a minority party representing no more than five percent of the “politically conscious population.” Further revolutionary activity, however, “might result in [the] PKI being outlawed.”²⁶

In addition to observing and reporting in Jogjakarta, Campbell had a covert paramilitary mission: laying the groundwork for the United States to provide the Republican national police with “ammunition and weapons for use against Communists,” a topic Hatta had previously discussed with both Campbell and Cochran.²⁷ George Kahin, then a young scholar conducting his groundbreaking research on the Indonesian revolution, shared a Republican guest house with Campbell during the latter’s visit to Jogjakarta. On Campbell’s second day in the city, Kahin returned to his room “to find a queue of junior officers of the Police Mobile Brigade stretching from the door of his room through the living/dining room out the front door and past the little porch.” According to Kahin, one of the officers told him that Campbell was trying “to determine their suitability to participate in a special training program for police officers in the United States.”²⁸

Kahin neither trusted nor liked Campbell, describing him as a “squat, rotund 200-pounder” and “a churlish, self-important man who said he represented the US Treasury.” Campbell asked the obviously knowledgeable researcher “to assist him,” a request Kahin rejected on the grounds that the already suspicious Indonesians would view him as an agent of the State Department. (In fact, both the Republicans and the Dutch mistakenly thought that he might be a US intelligence agent.)²⁹ In *Southeast Asia: A Testament*, Kahin alleged that

Campbell was caught “rummaging through my belongings.” He also wrote that a young Indonesian diplomat had “witnessed Campbell offering Hatta funds in support of the Republic, which Hatta had promptly declined.”³⁰

The prime minister might have rejected US funds from Campbell, but he accepted the CIA’s offer of American weapons and training for the Republican national police force, led by Sukanto Tjokrodiatmodjo. In August, Campbell had written a letter of introduction to William Lacy of the State Department, discreetly asking him to provide unnamed “assistance” to Sukanto, who had been chief of the Republic’s police since September 1945. Lacy, a red-haired, mustachioed descendant of an old Virginia family, was an economist who became Sukanto’s principal contact at the State Department. The relationship among Sukanto, CIA, and the State Department, was the beginning of covert US support for the national police force and its paramilitary Mobile Brigade. As discussed later, the program got off to a slow, bumpy start. But by 1953, Sukanto’s national police had become a powerful internal security force that CIA described as “the backbone of anti-Communist security activity” in Indonesia.³¹

On September 20, 1948, the Republic accepted the Cochran plan as a basis for negotiations, while reserving its position on any specific US proposal. Cochran and State Department officials, hoping for a similarly reasonable response from the Netherlands, were disappointed by the Dutch, who, in effect, if not explicit language, rejected the US plan as a basis for GOC talks. The Netherlands letter of “acceptance,” dated October 4, included preconditions for negotiations—for example, written and broadcast declarations by the Republic terminating hostile actions and propaganda, evacuating military units in Dutch-controlled territory, and dissolving “civil shadow

administrations” in these areas. Moreover, the Netherlands submitted detailed counterproposals to Cochran’s plan and declared that some his suggestions were so objectionable that they could not “be incorporated in the political agreement.”³²

This last statement, Cochran wrote to the State Department, was “tantamount to rejection of [the] substance of [the US] plan and, in our opinion, would be so regarded by [the] Republic.” Raymond E. Lisle, a legal adviser to the US GOC delegation, thought that the Dutch counterproposals were “confused and completely lacking in clarity and precision.” For example, the dates for elections to the constitutional assembly and for the transfer of sovereignty were unspecified. In a ten-page analysis of the Dutch counterproposals, Lisle concluded: “If these papers had been designed to permit the agreement once signed to be given almost any interpretation decided by the dominating party, it would be very much in this form.”³³

For the second time since his arrival in Java, Cochran spiked a Dutch political proposal that he believed would “lead to [a] prompt refusal by [the] Republic to reenter negotiations.” US officials in Batavia, Washington, and The Hague appealed to the Netherlands government for a less inflammatory response to the Cochran plan. In a conversation with T. Elink Schuurman, van Vredenburg’s successor and the acting chair of the Netherlands delegation, Cochran explained that the Hatta government would not survive if it made the specific public statements about truce violations required by the Dutch. “The fall of [the] present Republican Government at this time would be catastrophic,” he declared. Impatient State Department officials, who acknowledged “major substantive differences” between the Netherlands and the Republic, could not understand why the Dutch were delaying negotiations with the “ridiculous” procedure of attaching counterproposals to a mere “letter of acceptance.” To the Dutch, however, it was essential that

their plan have the “status of [a] formal GOC working paper entitled to full consideration in conjunction with [the] Cochran proposals.”³⁴

On October 14, Elink Schuurman handed Cochran a revised, less confrontational letter accepting the US plan as a basis for negotiations with the Republic. The new response, said Cochran, was “obviously more easily handled than [the] original communication.” The next day, he traveled to Jogjakarta to discuss the Dutch reply and counterproposals with the Hatta government. Republican officials were “seriously disappointed and discouraged” by the Netherlands response, particularly the counterproposals, which differed substantially from the US plan. Moreover, Sukarno and Republican ministers “bitterly resented” Dutch allegations of subversive activities, claiming that these charges were based on “fraudulent documents.” Cochran, attempting to make the Netherlands reply more palatable, argued that the Republic could now plan its “countermoves” and submit its own amendments to the US proposal. In a report to the State Department, however, Cochran provided a more candid assessment of the Dutch response to his plan: Neither “vigorous intervention” by the department nor his own negotiating efforts had “resulted in any modification of [the] Netherlands delegation’s demands” for a political settlement.³⁵

Republican officials agreed to resume negotiations with the Netherlands but had little hope for a satisfactory outcome. The Dutch, Hatta wrote to Cochran, only wanted a political agreement that was “in line with their preconceived design” of a Netherlands-dominated commonwealth encompassing Indonesia, Surinam, and Curaçao. The proposed Netherlands-Indonesian Union, he declared, would be a crown-controlled “super-state.” Hatta acknowledged that communist insurgents, largely suppressed since the Madiun rebellion, had caused problems in both the Republic and the Dutch-occupied territory. He also admitted that units from the TNI’s

Siliwangi Division had deserted and returned to their home in occupied West Java, a fact reported to international military observers. There were irregular forces, too, which the Republic neither controlled nor recognized. What Hatta emphatically denied, however, were Dutch accusations of Republican-controlled infiltration and subversion in the occupied territory. Such actions, he argued, would not serve the interests of the Republic: “The Dutch constantly contend that it is not possible to conduct a plebiscite because there is no peace and no order yet. Could it be conceivable then that we, who are desirous to hold a plebiscite at the earliest possible date, would give substance to Dutch contentions by continuing to stage subversive activities?”³⁶

Hatta thought that exaggerated Netherlands reports of Republican infiltration and subversion were aimed at justifying “another military action.” Australian and US officials shared this belief. Leading the Dutch public relations offensive was a new source of propaganda: the Netherlands Army Information Service. One of its first press releases, dated October 6, was “a clever mixture of truth and fiction creating an impression that there is chaos in the Republic and apparently designed to prepare the way for Dutch military action,” Critchley informed the Department of External Affairs. In a subsequent message to Canberra, he described a “fierce publicity campaign” to show the Republic’s unwillingness or inability to stop truce violations: “Our Military Observers report that infiltrations in recent weeks have practically stopped, while I am convinced the Republic is doing everything possible to maintain the Truce so that negotiations can be resumed in a satisfactory atmosphere.”³⁷

A novel feature of the Netherlands army’s information campaign was the overt use of top-secret intercepts of Republican communications. “The sudden release of highly classified information,” reported Commander Frederick G. Dierman, a US naval intelligence officer in Batavia, was intended to prepare public opinion for possible “large scale action to clean up the

Dutch controlled territory.” Dierman thought that the intercepts were “authentic” and that military information based on them “should be given a high evaluation.” Consul General Livengood, however, was skeptical, noting that press releases from the Dutch army “dwell almost exclusively on communist successes or breakthroughs from Republic encirclements.” The army information, Livengood reported to the State Department, “probably is not accurate and, even if it is, is extremely one sided and calculated” to disrupt negotiations.³⁸

The Dutch were not the only ones interested in hardball public-information tactics. On October 19, Cochran recommended that the State Department develop a “campaign” aimed at making the Netherlands more “reasonable” in negotiations. He proposed that the department express its admiration for the courageous Republican fight against the communist rebels and portray the Dutch as “heartless” if they continued their blockade. He also declared that the “American press could do its part” to promote the Republic and discredit the Netherlands. His long list of story ideas included the “idealistic struggle of Republican leaders for freedom,” the Dutch “refusal” to even discuss the du Bois-Critchley proposal, and the Netherlands threat of military action while the “Republic exhausts its meager resources fighting Communists.” A “sympathetic writer,” wrote Cochran, could tell the story of Indonesians trying to educate their children “after 300 years of illiteracy under [the] Netherlands.”³⁹

Ambassador Baruch disagreed with the idea of the State Department directly or indirectly criticizing the Netherlands or “encouraging the American press to do so.” Secretary of State Marshall, however, expressed interest in Cochran’s suggestions. Because of their sensitivity, the classification of the telegram conveying his proposals was upgraded from secret to top secret.⁴⁰

Indonesia’s tenuous stability in October 1948 was further undermined by van Mook’s forced resignation, which had been delayed by the Madiun uprising. The CIA station in Batavia

reported that the removal of the long-serving Dutch leader had “created confusion” in Indonesia. Republicans, despite their many differences with him, paid “tribute” to van Mook, and they feared that the appointment of his successor, Louis Beel, the prime minister during the first Netherlands military offensive, meant “hard times ahead.”⁴¹

On October 21, an “influential” Republican official whose identity CIA did not reveal to the rest of US national security bureaucracy, told the station in Batavia that van Mook’s resignation was one of several factors “point[ing] to a new police action.” Other indicators included the rejection of the Cochran plan by the Netherlands and the Dutch propaganda exaggerating the strength of the Indonesian communists. Commenting on the TNI’s ruthless response to the Madiun revolt, the Republican official said: “Practically all the [PKI] leaders have now been either arrested or executed.” He added that the army’s view of internal security was expressed by the motto “better to arrest ten extra than one too few.”⁴² According to a later CIA report on Indonesian communism, “Most top- and middle-echelon party leaders were either killed in military operations or summarily executed. About 35,000 persons—mostly troops who had fought with the Communists—were imprisoned.”⁴³

Most of these prisoners would be released to fight against the Dutch after the second Netherlands military offensive. Nonetheless, the Madiun uprising had a profound impact on many TNI officers, intensifying their anticommunism. A. H. Nasution, then commander of TNI forces in Java and the army’s principal planner, characterized Madiun as a communist attempt to “stab the Republic in the back.” And ten years after the revolt, Gatot Subroto, the TNI regional commander responsible for suppressing it, foreshadowed the mass killing of Indonesian communists and their sympathizers during the 1965–1966 purge. “If they [the communists] ever become a serious threat,” Subroto told a US Air Force intelligence officer, “he and other fighting

men like him would kill them all just as he had done at Madiun in 1948.”⁴⁴

By the end of October 1948, State Department officials were in “general agreement” that the United States “should take a firm line with the Dutch” to gain their acceptance of the Cochran plan as a basis for a political settlement in Indonesia. A draft aide-mémoire, which would be presented simultaneously to Dutch officials in The Hague and Washington, warned that rejection of the American plan risked the loss of US support for the Netherlands in the Security Council. And should there be another “police action,” the United States might not only suspend Marshall Plan aid to Indonesia, but also “question” the current scale of such assistance to the Netherlands.⁴⁵

The possibility of imposing economic sanctions on a staunch Western ally had been lingering in the background, and sometimes the foreground, of US-Netherlands relations since the first Dutch military offensive. A key question for the US government was when to deliver such a tough message to the Dutch. In a telegram seeking Cochran’s “urgent advice” on the draft aide-mémoire, the State Department stated a preference for employing the “full weight of its resources of persuasion at [the] decisive moment.”⁴⁶

Cochran’s views on economic sanctions were unequivocal: If reports of another military action or the establishment of an interim government excluding the Republic were true, the United States should inform the Netherlands that “no more financial aid of any sort would be forthcoming.”⁴⁷ Cochran, however, did not want to disrupt the talks between Hatta and Stikker, which later included Sassen, the hardline KVP minister of overseas territories, and a parliamentary delegation. In early December, those negotiations broke down over the Republic’s

refusal to give up control of its army and the unwillingness of the Netherlands to enter into a “gentlemen’s agreement” requiring the consent of the interim government before the use of Dutch troops in Republican territory. Cochran, blaming the failure of the talks on the obdurate attitude of the Netherlands, urged Washington to make the most forceful representations possible to the Dutch “before [the] Cabinet acts on [the] report of [the] returning Ministers and further commits itself.”⁴⁸

The State Department agreed with Cochran on the timing of the *démarche*. On December 7, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague and Ambassador van Kleffens in Washington each received an identical aide-mémoire from the US government. After praising the resolute statesmanship of the Netherlands, the document expressed US disappointment with the abrupt termination of talks in Java by the Dutch ministers. The diplomatic note discussed the danger of further postponement of “bona fide negotiations” and indirectly criticized the Netherlands for submitting an alternative proposal “of wholly different design” from the Cochran plan. Acknowledging Dutch military superiority, the aide-mémoire observed that guerrilla warfare and the destruction of property could “nullify” the impact of Marshall Plan aid to the Netherlands and Indonesia “or jeopardize continuation” of that assistance.⁴⁹

In addition to referring to possible economic sanctions, the diplomatic note declared that the United States would likely resign from the GOC if the Netherlands did not recognize the fairness and practicality of the Cochran plan. Unburdened by the impartiality implied by membership on the GOC, the United States “would consider itself free [to] take such measures as changed circumstance might require.” In other words, the US government might not only cease supporting the Dutch in the Security Council, but also extend *de facto* recognition to the Republic and allow American firms to trade with it. Alluding to the ongoing US-European

negotiations that would culminate in the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the aide-mémoire concluded by urging the Netherlands to refrain from any action that might weaken the “emerging Western European structure.”⁵⁰

Loyd V. Steere, chargé d'affaires at the US embassy in The Hague, reported that the Dutch reaction to the diplomatic note “was one of pained and angry surprise.” A. H. J. Lovink, secretary general of the foreign ministry, had difficulty “controlling himself,” according to Steere. The document was “very plain speaking,” said Lovink, declaring that he could not comment further. Despite this assertion, Lovink went on to say that the aide-mémoire “would not be at all well received” by the ministers responsible for Indonesia. In a telegram to the State Department, Steere reported parliamentary and press criticism of “US pressure” and feared “more serious accusations regarding US interference and pressure on [the] Netherlands Government. The government might fall due to Parliamentary and public outcry.”⁵¹

In his memoir, Stikker wrote that the cabinet’s reaction to the aide-mémoire was “unanimously bitter.” He instructed van Kleffens to inform Lovett that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would not accept the diplomatic note because of its “tone and contents.”⁵² On December 8, van Kleffens telephoned Lovett to suggest revisions of the document that would make it less offensive to his government. The ambassador proposed the deletion of statements blaming the Dutch for the impasse in negotiations. He also recommended removing the reference to guerrilla warfare jeopardizing Marshall Plan aid. Lovett agreed to the suggested changes, which State Department officials claimed “did not alter the fundamental nature of the aide memoire.” That same day, the department asked Steere to give Lovink a revised version of the diplomatic note and request the return of the original.⁵³

Lovink, a forty-six-year-old diplomat who had grown up in the NEI and had served as the

head of its Department of East Asiatic Affairs before the war, was not appeased by the revised aide-mémoire. Displaying an attitude his foreign ministry colleague Boon called “bullying,” Lovink indicated to Steere that the cabinet’s reaction to the original document was “exactly as he had anticipated.” The clear implication, Steere reported, was that the US note had been “badly received” and had “failed in its purpose.” Speaking in tones the American chargé found ominous, Lovink suggested that any hope of resuming negotiations in Indonesia would require US pressure on Hatta to agree with Dutch proposals “within two days.” As Steere was leaving, the Dutch diplomat “repeated pointedly and coldly” his deadline of two days.⁵⁴

Lovett, who had received assurances from van Kleffens of his government’s deep appreciation for the State Department’s “spirit of cooperation” in revising the original aide-mémoire, was disturbed by Lovink’s behavior. He instructed Far East director Butterworth to call in embassy counsellor Henri Helb—van Kleffens’s intermediary for discussions about the US diplomatic note—both to request clarification of the Netherlands position and to censure Lovink. “It might be easy and no doubt temporarily self-satisfying to indulge in ultimatum,” Butterworth told Helb. This did not, however, “seem to be a procedure offering constructive results.” In a separate meeting, William Lacy, assistant chief of the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs, told Helb that he was “profoundly shocked and grievously disappointed” by Lovink’s comments.⁵⁵

Van Kleffens apologized to the State Department, and a contrite Lovink admitted to Steere that he might have made a mistake. Nonetheless, the official Dutch reply to the revised US aide-mémoire was simply a more diplomatically phrased expression of Lovink’s outburst: The United States had an “insufficient understanding of the circumstances” in Indonesia, and the American assumption that further talks would resolve the differences between the Netherlands

and the Republic was “unjustified.” To avoid a “disastrous development”—that is, another Dutch military offensive—the Republic must “confirm its willingness to recognise Netherlands sovereignty during the interim period in principle and in practice.” Moreover, all Indonesian armed forces would have to be under the command of HRC Beel. In an indirect reference to the United States, the Dutch reply declared that the Republic’s assurances, perhaps encouraged by “other quarters,” must be “received forthwith.” Stikker was somewhat more specific about the deadline, telling Steere that the Republic must comply “within a very few days.”⁵⁶

Like the Cochran plan, the US aide-mémoire failed to achieve the anticipated result of persuading the Netherlands to take a more compromising approach to negotiations. Moreover, the unyielding reply to the American diplomatic note had the State Department and Cochran responding to Dutch demands for the Republic’s immediate agreement to their terms. Authorized by the department to take any feasible “beneficial action,”⁵⁷ Cochran traveled to Jogjakarta on December 13. After meeting with Sukarno and other Republican officials, he returned to Batavia with a letter signed by Hatta. The conciliatory tone of the message prompted Thomas Critchley to conclude that it was “obviously drafted by the U.S. Delegation.”⁵⁸

Addressing the fundamental concern of the Netherlands, Hatta wrote that the Republic would recognize Netherlands sovereignty during the interim period. Conceding that the HRC would have veto power over the interim federal government, the Republic sought “a precise formulation of acts in which the High Representative may exercise his veto.”⁵⁹ State Department officials thought that Hatta’s letter was “extremely important,” providing “adequate and practical grounds” for resuming negotiations. In The Hague, Steere told Lovink that the letter may not have been received within two days, but it had arrived as quickly as communications allowed.⁶⁰

M. van der Goes van Naters, a PvdA leader who had been a parliamentary delegate in the

recent talks in Indonesia, spoke to a US embassy official about the Dutch cabinet's divided reaction to the Hatta letter. Criticizing the United States for the "most unfriendly" first version of the previous week's aide-mémoire, van der Goes van Naters said that Labor ministers wanted an unequivocal assurance from Hatta about his authority. If he had responded as prime minister, they would consider him bound to the provisions of the Renville agreement. If he had spoken as an individual, "then the worthlessness of further attempts at negotiations would be obvious to the world." The cabinet's other ministers, including Stikker, believed Hatta's letter "was valueless and should be ignored."⁶¹

The Netherlands government sent a reply to Hatta, a copy of which the State Department and the US embassy in The Hague received on December 16. Addressed to Cochran, the Dutch response faulted the prime minister for providing his personal views rather than a binding Republican commitment to join the interim federal government on the same basis as other states. Particularly troubling to the Dutch was the absence of any declaration to take measures "the Netherlands Government considers necessary" to end TNI truce violations and to evacuate infiltrators from Dutch-controlled territory. Rejecting Hatta's letter as a basis for negotiations, the Netherlands would not reconsider its decision unless the Republic provided binding declarations to the Dutch delegation in Batavia by 10:00 a.m., December 19. In its daily summary of significant overseas developments for the White House, the State Department described the Netherlands reply as "a rigid restatement of the previous Dutch position which leaves little perceptible leeway for negotiations."⁶²

Cochran, who was in Kaliurang with the other GOC delegates, received the Netherlands message at 3:15 p.m., on December 17. There was, however, one significant change from the original text: The deadline for a Republican response was reduced by twenty-four hours to 10:00

a.m., December 18. Beel, who had advised against any response to the Hatta letter, was responsible for the change, claiming that deteriorating conditions and Republican infiltration made it necessary. Cochran protested the unreasonable deadline to Elink Schuurman, observing that the Dutch had taken more than four days to reply to Hatta's letter. Characterizing the Netherlands note as "a surrender to [the] position of your government on every material point," Cochran declared that he would not "press" the prime minister to provide "a non-negotiated blanket assent" to the ultimatum.⁶³

With the talks ending and a Netherlands military offensive obviously approaching, Butterworth tried to telephone Steere at 1:00 a.m. (EST) on December 18. Finally getting through four hours later, Butterworth instructed the chargé "to make strong representations" to Stikker restating the US position, including the consequences of resorting to force that were discussed in the department's aide-mémoire. Stikker, however, refused Steere's request for an immediate meeting. The foreign minister said that he would be available at 1:00 p.m., when he would make a statement to Western diplomats in The Hague. Steere asked whether the cabinet had made a decision and whether it was too late for US representations. The answer to both questions was yes.⁶⁴

Like the first "police action," the second offensive was favored by the KVP and reluctantly accepted by the PvdA. According to Hendrik Spruyt, coalition politics and domestic policy influenced Labor's decision to back military action: "In short, the PvdA gave in on the Indonesian issue in order to obtain some of its preferences on domestic economic matters, and to affect Indonesian policy on the margins. It compromised on an issue on which it had less intense preferences in order to maintain its position in the coalition and direct welfare-state policies. The KVP in turn directed overseas policy."⁶⁵

At 1:20 p.m., Stikker informed diplomats from Belgium, Canada, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States (but not Australia) that there had been no reply from Hatta and none was expected. The Netherlands government, he said, had authorized Beel “to take without any further delay such measures as he considers necessary to re-establish conditions of peace and security in [the] whole of Indonesia.” Speaking alone with Steere after the announcement, Stikker said that the “march on Joga”—the second Dutch military offensive against the Republic—would begin within hours. “It simply had to be done,” he said.⁶⁶

In Washington, Henri Helb delivered official notification of the “police action” to the State Department. A more informal announcement occurred at a diplomatic dinner on the eighteenth, when embassy counselor Otto Reuchlin told a department official that the Dutch were hopeful of “capturing Jogjakarta before UN Security Council action was possible.” Commenting on the timing of the attack, Reuchlin noted that the offensive coincided with the start of the holiday recess of the Security Council, which had been meeting in Paris. With council representatives “on boats, planes or trains on their way home,” he apparently relished “the confusion which would be caused by having to drag them off and bring them back.”⁶⁷

¹ Livengood to State Dept., October 12, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6440; CIA, ORE Far East/Pacific Branch, “Intelligence Highlights,” 10 August–16 August, 1948, www.foia.cia.gov.

² Philip H. Trezise to Cochran, August 24, 1948, RG 84, Entry 2732A, box 2; Livengood to State Dept., October 12, 1948.

³ Livengood to State Dept., October 12, 1948.

⁴ Livengood to State Dept., August 27, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6453; Livengood to State Dept., October 12, 1948.

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- ⁵ Trezise to Cochran, August 14, 1948, RG 84, Entry 2732A, box 2.
- ⁶ Cochran to State Dept., August 26, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 229.
- ⁷ Baruch to State Dept., September 3, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 237; Truman, September 5, 1945, Ferrell, editor, *Off the Record*, p. 64.
- ⁸ Cochran to State Dept., September 1, 1948, and September 7, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2152, and *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 240.
- ⁹ Cochran to State Dept., September 7, 1948.
- ¹⁰ Cochran to State Dept., September 8, 1948, no. 768 and no. 769, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2152.
- ¹¹ Cochran to State Dept., September 11, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 250.
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ Baruch to State Dept., September 18, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6451.
- ¹⁴ Stikker, *Men of Responsibility*, p. 113.
- ¹⁵ State Dept. to Baruch, September 14, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 255.
- ¹⁶ Marshall, memorandum of conversation, September 17, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 260. In his memoir, Stikker wrote that one reason for the face-to-face meeting with Marshall was a lack of confidence in Baruch, “who, as I saw it, had no influence in Washington and little understanding of the political situation in Holland.” (Stikker, *Men of Responsibility*, p. 115.)
- ¹⁷ Stikker, *Men of Responsibility*, p. 116; Marshall, memorandum of conversation, September 17, 1948.
- ¹⁸ Marshall, memorandum of conversation, September 17, 1948; Trezise to Cochran, August 24, 1948.
- ¹⁹ Stikker, *Men of Responsibility*, pp. 117–118.

²⁰ Critchley to External Affairs, September 15, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 241; Cochran to State Dept., September 17, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 259.

²¹ Rose, *Indonesia Free*, p. 149. For a survey of the diverse scholarly interpretations of the Madiun rebellion, see Katharine McGregor, “A Reassessment of the Significance of the 1948 Madiun Uprising to the Cold War in Indonesia,” *Kajian Malaysia*, 2009.

²² Sukarno, quoted in Livengood to State Dept., “Transmission of Text of Speech Broadcast by President Soekarno, on September 19,” September 23, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6443.

²³ Musso, quoted in G. Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, p. 294.

²⁴ Livengood to State Dept., September 20, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 271; CIA, “Strength of the Armed Forces in the Indonesian Republic,” September 17, 1948, www.foia.cia.gov.

²⁵ *Ibid.*; State Dept. to Livengood, September 22, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6451.

²⁶ Livengood to State Dept., September 26, 1948, and September 29, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 286, and RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 15.

²⁷ Cochran to State Dept., September 20, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 272.

²⁸ Cochran to State Dept., September 20, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 272; G. Kahin, *Southeast Asia*, p. 65.

²⁹ Livengood to State Dept., February 7, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6441.

³⁰ G. Kahin, *Southeast Asia*, pp. 63–65.

³¹ Campbell to Lacy, August 22, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 5106; CIA, *Current Intelligence Weekly*, August 14, 1953, www.foia.cia.gov.

³² Cochran to State Dept., no. 874, October 5, 1948, RG 226, Entry A1 18, box 118.

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- ³³ Cochran to State Dept., no. 884, October 5, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 300; Lisle, memorandum, October 13, 1948, RG 84, Entry 2732A, box 3.
- ³⁴ Cochran to State Dept., October 10, 1948, and Baruch to State Dept., October 9, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 316 and d. 312.
- ³⁵ Cochran to State Dept., October 14, 1948, and October 19, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 329 and d. 334.
- ³⁶ Cochran to State Dept., October 23, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 337.
- ³⁷ Critchley to External Affairs, October 7, 1948, and Critchley to Burton, October 30, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 268 and d. 293.
- ³⁸ Dierman, intelligence report, October 22, 1948, RG 38, Entry A1 1001B, box 2; Livengood to State Dept., December 1, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 15.
- ³⁹ Cochran to State Dept., October 19, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2152. This document is the unredacted version of the telegram reproduced in *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 334.
- ⁴⁰ Baruch to State Dept., October 25, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 338; James W. Barco to Dean Rusk and Harding F. Bancroft, October 21, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2152.
- ⁴¹ CIA, “van Mook’s Resignation,” October 21, 1948, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ⁴² CIA, “A Statement of the Situation in Indonesia by an Influential Official of the Indonesian Republic,” undated, c. October 21, 1948 (the date the statement was made), RG 59, Entry A1 399, box 12. This document is a less redacted version of the CIA information report, December 3, 1948, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ⁴³ CIA, “Indonesian Communist Party,” April 29, 1966, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ⁴⁴ Nasution, quoted in Penders and Sundhaussen, *Abdul Haris Nasution*, p. 41; James E. Mahon to Thomas S. Moorman Jr., June 13, 1958, www.foia.cia.gov.

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- ⁴⁵ Hickerson to Lovett, October 27, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2152.
- ⁴⁶ State Dept. to Cochran, November 3, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2153.
- ⁴⁷ Cochran to State Dept., November 6, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 355.
- ⁴⁸ State Dept., “Summary of Telegrams,” December 6, 1948, HSTL, Naval Aide to the President Files (NAPF) www.trumanlibrary.org; Cochran to State Dept., December 5, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 394.
- ⁴⁹ State Dept. to The Hague, December 6, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6440.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid.
- ⁵¹ Steere to State Dept., December 7, 1948, and December 8, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 398 and d. 402.
- ⁵² Stikker, *Men of Responsibility*, p. 139.
- ⁵³ State Dept. to Steere, December 8, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2153.
- ⁵⁴ Steere to State Dept., December 9, 1948, and December 11, 1948, RG 84, UD 2728, box 14, and RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6440.
- ⁵⁵ Butterworth, memorandum of conversation, December 9, 1948, and Lacy to Butterworth, December 9, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6440.
- ⁵⁶ Netherlands embassy to State Dept., December 10, 1948, and Steere to State Dept., December 10, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 407 and d. 405.
- ⁵⁷ State Department to Cochran, December 10, 1948, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 14.
- ⁵⁸ Cochran to State Dept., December 13, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 412; Critchley to McIntyre, December 13, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 368.
- ⁵⁹ Reed to Butterworth, December 15, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6440.

⁶⁰ State. Dept. to Cochran, December 14, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 415; Steere to State Dept., December 14, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6440.

⁶¹ Robert C. Bone Jr., memorandum of conversation, December 15, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6440.

⁶² Elink Schuurman to Cochran, December 17, 1948, FPGP, folder 5065; State Dept., “Summary of Telegrams,” December 17, 1948, HSTL, NAPF, www.trumanlibrary.org.

⁶³ Cochran to State Dept., December 18, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2153.

⁶⁴ Butterworth, memorandum of conversation, December 18, 1948, and Steere to State Dept., December 18, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 428 and d. 430.

⁶⁵ Spruyt, *Ending Empire*, p. 161.

⁶⁶ Steere to State Dept., December 18, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 431.

⁶⁷ Philander P. Claxton Jr, memorandum of conversation, December 21, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6440.

Chapter 10
Pious Hopes
(1948–1949)

The concussive force of a distant bomb shook George Kahin awake at 5:30 a.m., December 19, 1948. Like many of his neighbors in Jogjakarta, the graduate student rushed outside, peering into a dark, cloudy sky, where aircraft could be heard but not seen. Additional explosions seemed to be coming from Maguwo airfield some five miles away. Because a TNI training maneuver was scheduled for that day, Kahin and others were initially unconcerned: “We thought we were merely witnessing a well-staged simulated air-attack designed to familiarize the civilian population with their duties during an air-raid.”¹

What Kahin actually witnessed was the start of the second Netherlands military offensive, codenamed Operation Crow. At dawn, dummy parachutists dropped from Dutch planes drew fire from the small force protecting Maguwo. Their positions exposed, the defenders were attacked by B-25 Mitchell medium bombers and P-51 Mustang fighter-bombers. Real Dutch paratroopers quickly seized the airfield, and airborne infantry soon began arriving in C-47 Dakota transports. The air assault on Jogjakarta was just one of many simultaneous Dutch attacks throughout Java and Sumatra aimed at occupying population centers, securing main lines of communication, and destroying the TNI. The overall objective of the offensive, according to CIA, was the “complete liquidation of the Republic as a political entity.”²

With the fall of Jogjakarta fast approaching, senior Republican officials gathered at the presidential palace for a hastily arranged cabinet meeting at 10:00 a.m. Sukarno and Hatta authorized the establishment of an emergency Republican government in West Sumatra, led by

economic affairs minister Sjafruddin Prawiranegara. More controversial was the decision by Sukarno and Hatta to surrender to the invaders, rather than join TNI forces withdrawing to the mountainous jungles southeast of Jogjakarta. Sukarno had previously pledged to lead a guerrilla war against another Dutch military offensive. His change of heart, justified by the large number of soldiers required to protect the duumvirate and by the advantage of continuing contact with the GOC, was considered cowardly by many TNI officers and contributed to “the subsequent widespread military distrust of civilian politicians.”³

Sukarno, Hatta, and other Republican leaders were captured by Dutch forces later that day. In Batavia, HRC Louis Beel announced that the prisoners would be “treated with the courtesy due to their rank.”⁴ Sukarno, initially interned in the presidential palace, was flown to North Sumatra, eventually arriving at a well-guarded bungalow in the town of Prapat on Lake Toba. He was accompanied by Foreign Minister Agus Salim and Sutan Sjahrir, then an adviser to the government. Hatta, Roem, and four other Republican officials were imprisoned some 600 miles to the southeast on Bangka, an island off the coast of Sumatra. They were held in two rooms, with chicken wire covering the windows and door. Dutch officials in Indonesia planned to keep the locations of their captives “as secret as possible.”⁵

Despite initial military success, the Netherlands would soon discover that its decapitation-dependent strategy was deeply flawed. In the words of Andrew C. Stewart, then UK deputy consul general in Batavia, Dutch officials “were wrong in supposing the liberty of the Republican leaders and the formal existence of a Republican Government to be the only obstacles in their path.”⁶

Compared to its initial, weak response to the first Dutch offensive, the US government's immediate reaction to the second was prompt and firm. On December 18, the day the Netherlands announced the start of military operations, the State Department instructed Philip C. Jessup, the acting US representative to the United Nations, to request an emergency session of the Security Council to discuss the violation of the Renville ceasefire. The main objective of the Paris meeting would be an "instant warning to the parties that hostilities must cease." Jessup was authorized to inform other council members that the United States was reviewing its UN charter commitments, including the use of economic sanctions to end the Dutch threat to international peace. Reluctant to act unilaterally, the United States wanted the other two GOC members, Belgium and Australia, to join the appeal for an immediate meeting of the Security Council. Fernand van Langenhove, the Belgian representative on the council, however, was "unwilling to associate his government" with the US request.⁷

Australian UN representative William Hodgson, who believed that Langenhove was working with the Netherlands, agreed with alacrity. But Hodgson, Jessup reported, was "set to throw the book at the United States" for not stopping the second military action before it started. He was hardly the only Australian official to feel this way. When the embassy in Washington first learned about the Dutch offensive, First Secretary R. L. Harry warned the State Department that the United States should "be prepared for a certain amount of recrimination from his Government."⁸ And on December 20, Australian Secretary of External Affairs John W. Burton, described by a colleague as an anticolonial "crusader," made an accusatory *démarche* to the American embassy's first secretary, Andrew B. Foster. The United States and the United Kingdom, Burton declared, could have prevented the Dutch offensive "if they had used enough pressure." Expressing disappointment at American unwillingness to heed Australian warnings

about a second military action, Burton said that he “could not understand [the] US failure to use” Marshall Plan aid as a “lever” with the Netherlands.⁹

Burton’s comments offended Under Secretary Lovett, who told Australian Ambassador Norman J. Makin that the United States “could not accept” them. According to his summary of the conversation with Makin, Lovett said: “Mr. Burton must be badly informed of what the United States Government had already done to deter the Netherlands action in Indonesia, making mention of our aide-mémoire to the Netherlands Government, and that Mr. Burton’s attempt to place blame upon this Government was entirely unfounded in fact and unwarranted under the circumstances.” Lovett then claimed, not entirely persuasively, that “the United States Government had done everything possible to avert a breaking off of negotiations in Indonesia and to prevent the outbreak of the present hostilities.”¹⁰

Unlike Australia, the United Kingdom was “most reluctant” to have the Security Council impose economic sanctions on the Netherlands. To be sure, the government of Clement Attlee was angered by the second offensive, with one official observing: “[The] Dutch seem determined to drive Republicans underground from where they will re-emerge with fully trained Communist leaders.” The United Kingdom agreed with the United States that the Security Council should order an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of Dutch forces from Republican territory. Economic sanctions, however, were viewed by the British as a threat to “relations within the western European union.”¹¹

The French ambassador to the United States, Henri Bonnet, was even more worried that a strong UN response to the Dutch offensive might impair “European and Western solidarity.” Briefly mentioning the French position in Indochina, Bonnet made it clear to the State Department that “France could not be counted on to support any meaningful action against the

Netherlands in the Security Council.” CIA analysts bluntly observed: “A French veto constitutes the major threat to a vote for sanctions. A staunch colonial power, France could never approve such economic pressure.”¹²

Lovett met with Truman for thirty minutes on Monday, December 20. According to his summary of the conversation, Lovett “reviewed the Indonesian situation with the President in as great detail as time would permit.” Truman was prepared to condemn the Dutch offensive in the United Nations but wary of proposing any actions in the Security Council that the United States and its allies would be “unable to maintain.”¹³ The presidential caution prompted the State Department to soften its position toward the Netherlands. On December 21, the American delegation at the UN received instructions from Washington: “The Department did not want the United States Representative on the Council to get way in front of the other Council members or to make statements which we could not follow through on.”¹⁴

Representative Jessup, a professor of international law and an experienced US delegate at multilateral conferences, was confused by the sudden shift in policy. He had agreed with his original instructions, which showed that the United States “had decided to take a vigorous line” against the Netherlands. This impression was confirmed by follow-up conversations with department officials and by the decision to suspend a small amount of Marshall Plan aid earmarked for Indonesia. “In the mood of an avenging angel,” according to UK diplomat Sir Oliver Harvey, Jessup was perplexed by his more recent communications with the department indicating that “no attempt to secure effective SC action [was] contemplated.” Observing that the United States “has irrevocably taken [the] position that Netherlands is at fault,” he wrote: “If I knew what [the department] wishes to avoid I could act more effectively.”¹⁵

Dean Rusk, director of the Office of United Nations Affairs, replied to Jessup with an “authoritative background” statement of US policy: The interests of the United States included both European stability and solidarity and the rapid development of self-governing states in dependent territories. The US government had “no desire to condone or wink at [the] Dutch action Indonesia,” but it could not play the role of “world policeman” if other permanent members of the Security Council—that is, France and the United Kingdom—refused to act: “We must avoid putting ourselves in such a position that any wrong committed anywhere in world and left unpunished constitutes [a] diplomatic defeat and humiliation for [the] US. For this reason we must make every possible effort to obtain concerted action in such situations, particularly among all permanent members [of the] SC.”¹⁶

The specific US objective for Indonesia, Rusk wrote, was Security Council action calling for a ceasefire, a withdrawal of Netherlands forces from Republican territory, and “a bona fide effort by [the] Dutch and Indonesians to settle [the] political future [of] Indonesia by peaceful means.” He acknowledged that such action was unlikely because of Dutch unwillingness to obey such an order and the inability of the Security Council to agree on sanctions. The United States should, therefore, pursue secondary objectives in the council that included assigning sole responsibility for the current hostilities to the Netherlands, creating public pressure on the Dutch to modify “their attitude,” and persuading the United Kingdom and France to exert “maximum influence” on the Netherlands for a peaceful political settlement. Rusk made it clear that jawboning European allies was the current limit for US action in the Security Council. Although willing “in principle” to support economic sanctions targeting Dutch interests in Indonesia, the United States did “not intend to propose or support sanctions against the Netherlands in Europe.”¹⁷

On December 24—six days after the Netherlands announced its second “police action”—the Security Council adopted a resolution that called for the cessation of “hostilities forthwith,” the immediate release of Sukarno and other Republican political prisoners, and the preparation of reports by the GOC on compliance with these measures and on recent events in Indonesia. Sumitro Djojohadikusumo, an economist and the acting representative of the Indonesian observer mission at the United Nations, immediately denounced the resolution: “The cease-fire order passed by the Security Council is meaningless unless accompanied by an order forcing Dutch troops back to lines they held before their treacherous attack against the Republic of Indonesia.” Referring to the weak international reaction to Nazi Germany’s annexation of Czechoslovakia’s Sudetenland in 1938, Sumitro declared: “The parallel between today’s Security Council resolution and the League of Nations action when Hitler invaded the Sudetenland is much too clear.”¹⁸

Australian officials were only slightly less disturbed by the Security Council’s toothless response to the Netherlands offensive. To Foreign Minister Herbert V. Evatt, the council’s resolution appeared to recognize and confirm the “success of the Dutch aggression.” Particularly unsatisfactory to Australia was the vague Netherlands reply to the resolution, which anticipated an imminent end to military operations and the formation of an interim federal government. No mention was made of the Republican prisoners. On December 27, Australian Security Council representative William Hodgson said that the Dutch had neither “obeyed nor observed” the council’s order. A decorated veteran of World War I who often dispensed with diplomatic euphemisms, Hodgson had earlier suggested suspending the Netherlands from the world body.

He urged the Security Council to order an immediate withdrawal of military forces to the status quo line established by the Renville agreement.¹⁹

Such a motion had already been defeated, but several council members shared Jessup's belief that Dutch unresponsiveness called "for some follow-up resolution."²⁰ On December 28, the Republic of China introduced one that noted the Netherlands government's failure to comply with the Security Council order to release the Republican leaders. The resolution called upon the Netherlands "to set free these political prisoners forthwith and report to the Security Council within twenty-four hours of the adoption of the present resolution." Dutch representative van Roijen, who said officials in the Netherlands and Indonesia were still discussing this matter, objected to the "note of censure" in the proposed resolution and unsuccessfully requested a delay in voting. The resolution passed with eight council members in favor, none against, and three abstaining (Belgium, France, and the United Kingdom).²¹

A second resolution asked the consuls in Batavia who represented governments on the Security Council to provide "a complete report on the situation in the Republic of Indonesia." After the meeting, Hodgson reported to Canberra: "Strong support for both resolutions this afternoon is indicative of increasing Council irritation with [the] delaying tactics of the Dutch whose repeated statements about the prestige of their Government and the undesirability of resolutions which might be construed as censuring them are not helping their case." He added that if the Netherlands continued "to regard the Security Council directions as no more than pious hopes to be ignored some basis of agreement for firm action may be reached."²²

At the Security Council meeting of December 29, van Roijen announced that Dutch military operations would end in Java by midnight on the thirty-first and in Sumatra a few days later. Indicating that attacks against Republican guerrillas would continue, he said that it would

“remain necessary to act against disturbing elements who, either individually or collectively, endanger public security.” The Netherlands government, he declared, would “lift the restrictions” on the Republican prisoners after the termination of hostilities, with the understanding they “refrain from activities endangering public security.”²³ Rarely, van Roijen added, had any UN member made such “formal and binding statements.” Jessup, who called the Dutch response to the Security Council’s orders “unsatisfactory,” commented that van Roijen had been unable to confirm Netherlands compliance with the UN “requirements” to stop the offensive and release the Republican leaders.²⁴

Jessup privately indicated to Hodgson that the US government was prepared to take a firmer line with the Netherlands in bilateral talks. Unless the Dutch changed their attitude, said Jessup, “the complete cessation” of Marshall Plan aid to the Netherlands was “becoming more than a possibility.” According to a yearend telegram from Lovett to US diplomatic posts around the world, Dutch military action, “may have destroyed [the] last bridge between [the] West and Indo[nesian] nationalists and have given Communists everywhere [a] weapon of unanswerable mass appeal.” The United States, the message warned, “may be required [to] take measures unpleasant to [the Netherlands].”²⁵

After conferring with the State Department and GOC representative Merle Cochran, who had been recalled to Washington for a review of policy in Indonesia, Jessup censured the Netherlands in an address to the Security Council on January 11, 1949. Charging the Dutch with violations of the UN Charter, Jessup rebuked the Netherlands for continued defiance of the Security Council’s demands: “Probably the most striking and clearest disregard of the orders of the Security Council

is to be found in the refusal of the Dutch authorities to release President Sukarno and Prime Minister Hatta and the other leading officials of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia.”²⁶

Acknowledging the “quick military successes” of Dutch forces, Jessup declared that the Republic was not only “the largest single political” entity in the planned USI but also “the heart of Indonesian nationalism. This latter attribute cannot be eliminated by any amount of military force.” At a “minimum,” he said, Sukarno and “other interned officers of the Republic should be allowed to return to their capital and to exercise their appropriate functions there free from the constraint of any occupying army. They should be free to establish and maintain contact with other officials of their Government. They should also be free to provide their own forces for maintenance of law and order in Jogjakarta.”²⁷

Once “restored to their rightful position,” said Jessup, the Republic’s leaders could “negotiate freely with the Netherlands concerning the future of Indonesia.” Reviewing the Dutch “history of non-cooperation” with the GOC, he endorsed the Cochran plan as the basis for a political settlement. The “first and fundamental step” toward resolving the Indonesian crisis was setting a date to elect a provisional legislature that would draft a constitution. The second would be fixing a firm date for the transfer of sovereignty from the Netherlands to the USI. The elapsed time for taking these steps, said Jessup, “should be calculated in terms of months and not in terms of years.”²⁸

The Dutch reaction to Jessup’s remarks was continued resistance. On January 14, van Roijen told the Security Council that the Netherlands would continue holding the Republican leaders, “whose release might at this moment still endanger public security.” Disturbed by criticism of the Netherlands, he urged the council to “refrain from interference [in] the internal affairs of a member state.” The “unalterable aim” of his government, said van Roijen, was the

immediate establishment of an interim federal government. The Netherlands would try to have elections “take place in the third quarter of this year” and transfer sovereignty to the USI sometime in 1950.²⁹

Van Roijen’s response was unsatisfactory to the United States and much of the rest of the world. While Jessup worked with other members of the Security Council to translate his remarks of January 11 into a new resolution likely to be adopted, the State Department officials responsible for UN, Far Eastern, and European affairs unanimously concluded that President Truman should promptly “call in Ambassador van Kleffens and express clearly to him the position of the United States in this matter.” The recommended draft statement for the president, submitted to Under Secretary Lovett on January 14, chastised the Netherlands for a precipitate military offensive that “unleashed forces beyond its control.” The Dutch were widening the gulf between the West and Asia, endangering the prospects for European recovery and security, and weakening the United Nations by their defiance of the Security Council. The United States, the proposed presidential statement declared, would neither “assist the Netherlands, however indirectly,” in the forceful pacification of Indonesia nor in the establishment of “a government by Indonesians who are not representative of the peoples of the area.” Moreover, a Dutch failure to take immediate steps to fulfill its UN obligations would “jeopardize” Marshall Plan aid to the Netherlands.³⁰

Delivering the proposed State Department message to van Kleffens would have provided Truman with an opportunity to demonstrate his celebrated propensity for blunt talk. Yet for reasons that are unclear, the president made no such *démarche* to the Netherlands ambassador. Perhaps Lovett disagreed with his subordinates. Or he may have thought or known that the president would not want to threaten the Dutch and refused to forward the recommendation to

the White House.³¹ Whatever the reason, the absence of presidential intervention with Dutch officials was consistent with Truman's hands-off approach to Indonesia. Two more months would pass before there was a direct, high-level American threat of cutting off Marshall Plan aid to the Netherlands.

A diplomatic note delivered to the State Department on January 17 explained why the Netherlands "could not accept" the Cochran plan for a political settlement. Complaining about "increasing interference" from the GOC, which was "not free from bias," the document declared that the Netherlands had demonstrated "exemplary patience in the face of great and constant provocation" in Indonesia. "The sole unsurmountable obstacle" to the orderly transfer of sovereignty, according to the note, "was the unwillingness and impotence of successive governments of the Indonesian Republic to carry out agreements they entered into." Moreover, the Cochran plan would reward "the Republicans' attitude of non-cooperation." The note included a vaguely threatening statement about the Netherlands commitment to the unity and defense of Europe: An "inevitable consequence" of the Security Council's adoption of the Cochran plan, and certain Dutch rejection of it, was that the Netherlands would "be fatally weakened as a vital element in the community of western nations."³²

In a private conversation with Jessup at the United Nations that same day, van Roijen stressed that "both Dubois and Cochran were prejudiced in their point of view." The principal Netherlands objection to the Cochran plan, however, appeared to be the "complete denial of the possibility of Dutch good faith." Van Roijen himself had inadvertently undermined confidence in Dutch sincerity with a statement to the Security Council that the "interned" Republican leaders

on Bangka had freedom of movement on the island. Yet when the Dutch finally allowed the GOC to visit them, the committee's representatives saw that Hatta and the other prisoners were confined to two rooms under close guard. Van Roijen, who had been unaware of the Republican leaders' precise circumstances, apologized to the Security Council for their confinement and said that "steps would be taken against Dutch local authorities responsible." He "half admitted" to Jessup that some Netherlands officials in Indonesia "had been very extreme in their attitude and actions and had caused additional difficulties."³³

Van Roijen also conceded that the Security Council could not accept the Dutch contention that the Republic had been "wiped out." This dubious argument had been weakened further by a GOC report that the TNI's destruction of road, bridges, and property was "taking place on [a] much greater scale than anticipated by Netherlands military authorities." The committee's military observers also declared that there were insufficient Dutch troops "to prevent roving guerilla bands" from engaging in sabotage and "to maintain law and order in towns" in the newly occupied territory. In Batavia, a Netherlands army communiqué denounced the GOC report as one-sided and biased. An editorial in *Het Dagblad* asked: "How long must this GOC farce still continue?" The committee's military observers, however, subsequently confirmed the details of their report, commenting that the "adverse press criticism and official statements issued by Netherlands authorities" were unwarranted.³⁴

According to the summary of his meeting with van Roijen on January 17, Jessup asked if there were any possible way the Netherlands government might agree to recognizing the Republic and to restoring the position of its leaders in Jogjakarta. Van Roijen replied "that he saw none." In The Hague, the foreign ministry informed Ambassador Baruch that the

“Netherlands Government could not accept any arrangement that meant or would be generally interpreted in Indonesia to signify the return of the ‘old Republican gang’ to power.”³⁵

International pressure on the Netherlands was increased by a resolution adopted by nineteen nations at the Asian Conference in New Delhi, January 20–23. The conference was convened by Indian Prime Minister Nehru, who had been disgusted by the Netherlands “refusal to compromise” and who considered the UN’s response to Dutch aggression “very weak and inadequate.”³⁶ Among the conference’s recommendations to the Security Council were the immediate restoration of the Republican government in Jogjakarta, the gradual withdrawal of Netherlands troops from Republican territory, and the complete transfer of sovereignty to the USI by January 1, 1950. Loy W. Henderson, the American ambassador to India, warned the State Department that failure to act on these recommendations would strengthen “Asian opponents of moderation and cooperation with the west.” UK High Commissioner Archibald Edward Nye reported to London that the demonstration of “incipient Asian Unity” was “undoubtedly one of the most important events in the history of the post-war years.”³⁷

The United States, despite Dutch objections, co-sponsored a Security Council resolution that ordered the Netherlands to release the Republican leaders and “to facilitate the[ir] immediate return” to Jogjakarta. Moreover, the Netherlands should provide the Republic with “such facilities as may reasonably be required” to reestablish the government and enable it to communicate nationwide. The resolution, adopted on January 28, changed the name and the mission of the GOC, henceforth known as the United Nations Commission for Indonesia (UNCI). Authorized to take an expanded, more active role, the three UNCI representatives were instructed to help achieve “the earliest possible restoration of the civil administration of the

Republic,” to supervise the gradual transfer of occupied territory back to the Republic, and to observe “the elections to be held throughout Indonesia.”³⁸

The resolution of January 28 recommended that the Netherlands and the Republic take advantage of the proposals in the Cochran Plan to achieve their stated aims of establishing an independent USI. The resolution also established deadlines for forming an interim federal government (March 15, 1949), electing representatives for a constituent assembly (October 1, 1949), and transferring sovereignty to the USI (July 1, 1950). If any of these deadlines were not met, the UNCI should “immediately report to the Security Council with its recommendations for a solution of the difficulties.” Procedurally, the UNCI would differ from the GOC by basing its recommendations and reports on a majority vote rather than a unanimous one. This change provided the United States with tie-breaking power in resolving disagreements between the more partisan Australian and Belgian delegates.³⁹

The Dutch reaction to the resolution was aggrieved defiance. Van Roijen, reading from a twenty-two-page prepared statement, declared that it constituted unprecedented interference in his country’s domestic affairs. “The Government and the people of the Netherlands,” he said, “have not merited this treatment.” Attacking the resolution, van Roijen said that the majority voting procedure of the UNCI would, in effect, “hand over” Dutch sovereignty in Indonesia to the United States. The Hague, he warned, would comply only with those parts of the resolution that were “compatible with the responsibility of the Netherlands for the maintenance of real freedom and order in Indonesia, a responsibility which at this moment no one else can take over from us.”⁴⁰

At 2:30 p.m., Monday, January 31, Henri Helb telephoned Joseph Scott at the State Department to discuss “a very delicate problem”: Officials in The Hague intended to ask the US government to replace Merle Cochran with a “top diplomat.” Helb said that ambassadors van Kleffens and van Roijen had authorized this “informal” approach to Scott, a former member of the GOC delegation who was working in the Office of European Affairs. When Scott asked if he should “take this matter up” with the department’s decision makers, Helb replied that this “was the purpose of his call.”⁴¹

The timing of the Dutch request was particularly inopportune. State Department officials, pleased with Cochran’s performance in Indonesia, wanted to reward him with a promotion. Earlier that same day, President Truman had approved Cochran’s appointment as ambassador to Pakistan, with the understanding that he would not assume those duties until the situation in Indonesia stabilized. Department officials resented the Netherlands request to recall a Foreign Service officer who was doing “excellent work” and contributing to a “long-term solution in Indonesia.” From the department’s perspective, the influence of Dutch officials in Indonesia—“chiefly” Beel and General Spoor—was the principal barrier to Netherlands compliance with the Security Council resolution of January 28.⁴²

The State Department instructed Ambassador Baruch to immediately inform Foreign Minister Stikker that the US government did “not desire to receive any” request for Cochran’s recall. Stikker “listened courteously” to Baruch’s statement, according to the ambassador’s report of the meeting. The foreign minister, who apparently viewed the formal US response to Helb’s informal comments as a diplomatic faux pas, appeared surprised by Baruch’s message. “Netherlands national pride was hurt by such an unexpected demarche,” said Stikker. At no time had he “officially contemplated asking” for Cochran’s recall. Moreover, this topic had not been

discussed by the cabinet. Stikker added that he was “amazed” that the US government would base such a protest “on rumor alone.”⁴³

State Department officials, unfazed by Stikker’s ritualistic denial, appreciated Baruch’s “prompt and vigorous action” with the foreign minister. The matter seemed to have been resolved, and the ambassador’s representations had apparently prevented an incident “extremely harmful” to US-Netherlands relations.⁴⁴ With Cochran’s position on the UNCI no longer an issue, the diplomat returned to Indonesia via the Netherlands. Arriving in The Hague on February 6, Cochran delivered a key message to Dutch officials: The United States was eager to help extricate the Netherlands from its difficulties in Indonesia and internationally. To be successful, however, this assistance required Dutch compliance with the Security Council resolution of January 28. In a report to the State Department, Cochran wrote: “I spared no details in picturing how bad their predicament was and how much worse it might become unless [the] Netherlands Government implemented [the] SC Resolution.”⁴⁵

According to a report from Ambassador Baruch, Cochran’s visit to The Hague had brought to a head the division within the cabinet between ministers who wanted to ignore the Security Council resolution and those who sought to quell the mounting international condemnation of the Netherlands. Cochran, who believed his talks with Dutch officials would produce results, wanted to give the Netherlands government time to comply with the resolution. This meant delaying a harsh UNCI report on Dutch inaction that was due on February 15. The Australian government, although unimpressed by Cochran’s argument that a critical report might cause the fall of the Netherlands government and complicate the work of the commission, reluctantly agreed to postponing the report until March 1.⁴⁶

Australian UNCI delegate Thomas Critchley found Cochran's attitude "disappointing." The second military action, Critchley reported to Canberra, had deflated the American's "super-optimism, patience and supreme confidence" in his ability to bring together the Netherlands and the Republic. Cochran's visit to The Hague, however, had apparently "restored these qualities." In a confidential comment to Critchley, Cochran had made the dubious claim that he was responsible for the recent resignation of overseas minister Sassen, who opposed the cabinet's increasing inclination for compromise with the Security Council. Critchley, who disagreed with Cochran's patient approach to the Dutch, believed that "only the continuation of strong pressures on the Netherlands" would likely lead to a satisfactory transfer of sovereignty.⁴⁷

On February 17, the UNCI delegates traveled to Bangka to meet with Hatta and with Sukarno, who had been transferred to the island from Prapat. Cochran told the Republican leaders that he had stressed two points with Dutch officials during his visit to The Hague: "freedom for political prisoners and [the] utilization [of the] UNCI" in negotiations between the Republic and the Netherlands. The Republican leaders, acknowledging the importance of these points, emphasized that they would not have "genuine freedom" until the restoration of their administration in Jogjakarta. "Hatta and Sukarno," Cochran reported to Washington, "explained [that] any appeal by them to their followers to lay down arms would be futile and disregarded unless they speak freely and with authority from their own capital."⁴⁸

Dutch officials, however, continued to insist that the restoration of the Republic in Jogjakarta was "impossible." In The Hague, J. H. van Maarseveen, the acting minister of overseas territories, publicly declared that the aims of the Netherlands and the Security Council were "broadly" the same: "the maintenance of law and order," a phrase from the ceasefire

paragraph of the January 28 resolution. Claiming that Dutch military action was currently limited to “active” defense against guerrillas, van Maarseveen criticized Republican leaders for failing to make “perfectly clear” their intention to obey the ceasefire order and cooperate with the Netherlands. To restore Republican authority in Jogjakarta, he said, would deal “an irreparable blow” to freedom and order. Quoting van Roijen’s remarks at the UN, van Maarseveen said that maintaining such order was a “responsibility” belonging solely to the Dutch.⁴⁹

On February 26, the Netherlands government publicly released a proposal that Sir Philip Nichols, the UK ambassador in The Hague, characterized as “a desperate attempt to buy off the United Nations with a spectacular acceleration of the transfer of sovereignty.”⁵⁰ Initially conceived by Beel, the plan called for a “roundtable conference” in The Hague, preferably on March 12, three days before the Security Council’s deadline for establishing an interim government. Representatives from the Republic, the Dutch-sponsored federal states, the UNCI, and the Netherlands would discuss economic and military matters and the structure of the Netherlands-Indonesian Union. Dutch officials hoped that an agreement on “an unconditional transfer of sovereignty” could be reached by May 1, 1949, followed by prompt ratification of the accord in parliament. To “facilitate” negotiations, the Netherlands announced its decision “to lift the existing restrictions of the liberty of movement of the Republic leaders.”⁵¹

In Washington, Ambassador van Kleffens described the Beel plan as a genuine effort by the Netherlands to comply with the “essentials” of the Security Council resolution of January 28. State Department officials, however, were skeptical. Although talks in The Hague might be

helpful, the vaguely worded Dutch plan lacked two fundamental elements of the UN resolution: a restored Republican administration in Jogjakarta and a definite date for the transfer of sovereignty. In the words of Charlton Ogburn, the Republic was being “asked to buy a pig in a poke.”⁵²

On March 1—the same day TNI forces led by Lieutenant Colonel Suharto demonstrated their military cohesion with a daring daylight attack against the Dutch in Jogjakarta—Cochran received a letter from Bangka with Republican objections to the Beel plan. The Netherlands, wrote Roem, was “evading implementation” of the Security Council resolution and unilaterally submitting its own plan. The UNCI agreed with this assessment. Interpreting its mission as helping implement the January 28 resolution, the UNCI reported to the Security Council that the Netherlands had not complied with this order. And the failure to establish an interim federal government had been caused by Dutch rejection of the resolution’s procedures, rather than any substantive disagreements over government structure and functions. Characterizing the Beel plan as a “counterproposal or substitute” for the Security Council’s resolution, the UNCI requested instructions on how to respond to it.⁵³

The Beel plan and the UNCI response to it triggered diplomatic lobbying and Security Council debate over the acceptability of the Dutch counterproposal. In The Hague, Dutch officials persuaded Ambassador Baruch that the Beel plan was both a “thorough-going and honest attempt” to solve the “Indonesian problem” and “a victory” for moderate ministers in the Netherlands government. Describing the restoration of Jogjakarta as “fundamentally of lesser importance in [the] overall effort to achieve [an] Indonesian settlement,” Baruch urged the State Department to have Cochran “pressure” the Republic to accept the Dutch proposal. Department

officials, however, replied that the “burden of convincing” the Republic of the soundness of the Beel plan rested with the Netherlands, not Cochran.⁵⁴

By the end of the first week in March, cracks were appearing in Dutch resolve to resist the Republic’s return to Jogjakarta. According to UK diplomats, the Netherlands government was “evidently shaken” by a statement W. Averell Harriman made to Stikker. Then ambassador-at-large for the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) in Europe, Harriman said that the United States might not be able to provide military assistance to the Netherlands unless there was a political settlement in Indonesia. In response, Stikker “expressed doubt” that his country would be able to participate in a planned conference on military aid to Western Europe. Dutch officials wondered whether Harriman’s apparent threat was a “big stick” aimed at influencing the Netherlands decision on Jogjakarta. The State Department, however, insisted that his comment was merely a statement of fact aimed at avoiding any “misunderstanding at a future date.”⁵⁵

Whatever the motive for Harriman’s statement, UK Foreign Minister Bevin received a new proposal from Stikker to restore the Republican government in Jogjakarta—but only under certain conditions to which the United Kingdom and United States must agree. These safeguards included Dutch responsibility for maintaining law and order in the city, which would eliminate the need for a TNI presence there; an immediate ceasefire order from Republican leaders upon their return; and the swift appointment of a Republican delegation that would promptly leave for the roundtable conference in The Hague. On March 8, Hubert A. Graves, counselor of the British embassy in Washington, informed the State Department that the Netherlands wanted the UK to persuade the United States to accept the Dutch conditions. With the exception of an unacceptable demand for no more requests for concessions from the Netherlands, Graves said that Bevin was prepared to act on the appeal. The UK government, said Graves, “was extremely desirous that

the Indonesian dispute not be the subject of further debate in the Security Council, which might have unfortunate results such as sanctions.”⁵⁶

The State Department, still seeking Dutch compliance with the Security Council resolution of January 28, indirectly refused to accept the proposed conditions for the Republic’s return to Jogjakarta. A diplomatic note to the Netherlands embassy observed that the Dutch proposal seemed “a reasonable basis” for overcoming obstacles to a conference in The Hague and to achieving the objectives of the Security Council resolution. The department, however, declared that it would be “difficult, if not impossible, at this time and at this distance from the scene” to comment on the specifics of the Dutch scheme. Instead, the United States endorsed the idea of a preliminary conference in Batavia to resolve the Jogjakarta question and pave the way for talks in The Hague.⁵⁷

At the United Nations, the US delegation circulated a draft Security Council message directing the UNCI to assist the Netherlands and the Republic “in reaching agreement as to the time and conditions for holding the proposed Conference at The Hague, including the manner in which the restoration of Djokjakarta to the administration of the Government of the Republic may be accomplished.” To the disappointment of Dutch officials, the US draft declared that the resolution of January 28 remained in “full force and effect.”⁵⁸ On March 17, van Roijen told the US delegation that Stikker found the proposed Security Council instructions “unacceptable.” Warren R. Austin, the US representative on the Security Council, reported to the State Department: “[Van Roijen] also conveyed Stikker’s irritation that [the] US was taking [the] initiative in circulating [a] paper which made [the] Dutch situation more difficult.” In Washington, Ambassador van Kleffens wrote to Dean Acheson, Marshall’s successor as

secretary of state, that he could “not see what can be gained by an attempt to exact from the Netherlands a too literal application of the resolution of January 28.”⁵⁹

The UNCI directive to which the Dutch objected was actually a compromise. The president of the Security Council, Alberto I. Álvarez of Cuba, and other delegates were still incensed that the Netherlands had attempted to forcibly eliminate the Republic as a party to a dispute before the United Nations. They believed that UN-sponsored negotiations between the Netherlands and the Republic should only take place *after* the restoration of the government in Jogjakarta. Álvarez, according to Canadian delegate Andrew G. L. McNaughton, “was most reluctant to accept even the compromise formula and did so only, as he said, because the other six delegations which had supported the resolution of 28th January were willing to accept it.”⁶⁰

On March 23, the Security Council approved a Canadian proposal instructing the UNCI to help the two parties implement the ceasefire, restore the Republic in Jogjakarta, and prepare for a conference at The Hague to transfer Dutch sovereignty as “contemplated by the resolution of 28 January.”⁶¹ The next day, Henri Helb informed the State Department that the Security Council directive might be an “acceptable” basis for preliminary talks. He said that van Roijen would lead the Netherlands delegation in Batavia. Van Roijen, however, would not be able to begin negotiations until Stikker had met with Secretary Acheson and returned to the Netherlands to brief the cabinet. Frederick Nolting of the Division of Northern European Affairs replied that he was gravely concerned by the delay, “stressing not only the predictable adverse reaction in the Security Council, but the equally predictable adverse reaction in U.S. public and Congressional opinion.”⁶²

US public opinion—to the degree it could be accurately measured only months after the Gallup poll’s infamous prediction that Republican presidential candidate Thomas E. Dewey would defeat Truman—appeared to disapprove of the Dutch military action in Indonesia. An unpublished public opinion survey, conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago in February 1949, indicated that fifty-two percent of a cross-section of American adults had heard or read about the conflict. Of that group, forty-five percent sympathized with the Indonesians and eleven percent with the Dutch. The remaining forty-four percent either had no opinion or sympathized with neither side.⁶³

Contributing to anti-Dutch sentiment among Americans was the beating administered to the Netherlands in the opinion pages of major US newspapers. An editorial in the *New York Times*, published just after the launch of the second offensive, jabbed at the Dutch, calling their “aggression” immoral, foolish, and “a rich source of propaganda” for communists. That same day, an editorial in the *Chicago Tribune* threw wild rhetorical haymakers at Netherlands officials, suggesting that Queen Juliana (Wilhelmina’s successor) “and her cutthroat crew” were “war criminals” who deserved to be hung. Dutch officials were particularly offended by the *Tribune* editorial, although they apparently failed to notice that the newspaper’s other candidates for execution included President Truman, Secretary Marshall, and ECA Administrator Paul G. Hoffman. These three officials, in the *Tribune*’s view, were guilty of indirectly subsidizing the Dutch military through the Marshall Plan, a program despised by the newspaper’s reactionary owner and publisher, Robert R. McCormick.⁶⁴

The congressional response to the second military action included an anti-Dutch resolution introduced by Senator Owen Brewster (R-ME) on February 7, 1949. Joined by nine Republican colleagues, Brewster urged President Truman to immediately cease all US financial

aid to the Netherlands until it not only complied with provisions of the Security Council resolution of January 28 but also withdrew Dutch forces from Republican territory. The Republicans' motives for introducing the resolution went beyond changing the behavior of the Netherlands. For example, Senator George W. Malone of Nevada, one of the resolution's co-sponsors, had been a steadfast opponent of the Marshall Plan, declaring that it promoted "socialism and communism in Europe" and that the United States and congress were "punch drunk" for seriously considering the program.⁶⁵

Brewster, a Marshall Plan skeptic and a critic of the State Department, proposed an amendment to the ERP reauthorization bill on February 17. A generalized version of his earlier resolution, the amendment would prohibit financial aid to any country that did not comply with a Security Council directive. In a radio broadcast, Brewster questioned the "double-talk" from State Department officials who argued that cutting off economic aid to the Netherlands would stop it from joining the alliance that would become NATO. "If we must buy Dutch cooperation in the Atlantic Pact at the price of crucifying the people whom we allege are our friends," said Brewster, "I am sure the Atlantic Pact and United Nations will come to a very sorry end."⁶⁶

On February 25, the State Department informed the chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Senator Tom Connally (D-TX), that any legislative action similar to the Brewster resolution "would be untimely and inappropriate." Although opposed by the department, Brewster's legislative efforts provided US diplomats with a useful tool for pressuring the Netherlands to reach a political settlement with the Republic. Cochran had referred to the senate hearings on the Marshall Plan during his February visit to The Hague, observing that Dutch resistance to Security Council orders provoked press and congressional

calls for “cutting off all funds” to the Netherlands. Cochran insisted to his hosts that he was “speaking entirely personally” and not conveying a threat from the State Department.⁶⁷

In a meeting with Stikker on March 31, Secretary Acheson was more direct. He said that the Brewster amendment was an expression of the American people’s “deep-rooted conviction” that “the Dutch were wrong” and “guilty of aggression.” This attitude, he said, “gravely” jeopardized pending legislation for Marshall Plan aid and military assistance to the Netherlands. According to Acheson’s notes of the conversation, “I made it plain that in my opinion, in the absence of a settlement in Indonesia, there was no chance whatever of the Congress authorizing funds for military supplies to The Netherlands.”⁶⁸

The record of this conversation indicates that Acheson paid little attention to Stikker’s concerns about Dutch public opinion and politics or to his conditions for restoring Republican administration in Jogjakarta. Instead, Acheson’s pronouncements reflected the advice of his State Department subordinates, who “believe[d] that the Netherlands must be persuaded to change its attitude and promptly carry out the recommendations of the Security Council.”⁶⁹ With typical bluntness, Acheson told Stikker that “the root problem” was the Dutch failure “to reach an equitable settlement” with the Republic. The removal of this problem, he said, “is just as important to the [Truman] Administration as it is to Congress.” Acheson declared that curing the longstanding “malady” in Indonesia required “prompt tangible evidence on the part of the Netherlands of its willingness to negotiate a settlement.” At the conclusion of the meeting, he emphasized that there was “not much time to be lost in getting on with this matter.”⁷⁰

Acheson, a graduate of Groton, Yale, and Harvard Law School, was not pressuring Stikker out of concern for Indonesian nationalists. “Eurocentric by background and experience,” according to Robert McMahon, Acheson often approached the developing world with a

“combination of disdain, condescension, and racial stereotyping.” In his memoir, Dean Rusk called Acheson “a superb secretary of state” but was unsparing in assessing his attitude toward people of color: “He really didn’t give a damn about the brown, yellow, black, and red people of the world.”⁷¹

Preoccupied with the Soviet threat to the West and with the collective security pact establishing NATO, Acheson apparently convinced Stikker that the struggle in Indonesia “was adversely affecting almost every important problem in Europe.” Stikker, unwilling to make commitments on behalf of his government, agreed in early April that the conflict “must be settled.” Rusk, the newly appointed assistant secretary of state for UN affairs, wrote to Cochran: “It was clear that Stikker was trying to find a way out.”⁷²

¹ G. Kahin, “Attack on Jogjakarta,” December 22, 1948, RG 84, Entry 2732A, box 3.

² CIA, “Intelligence Memorandum No. 113,” January 4, 1949, www.foia.cia.gov.

³ Monfries, *A Prince in the Republic*, p. 174.

⁴ Trevett W. Cutts to External Affairs, December 19, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 392.

⁵ Cable, Batavia to Medan, December 23, 1948, quoted in Mrázek, *Sjahrir*, p. 384.

⁶ Stewart to Bevin, “Indonesia: Annual Review for 1949,” January 26, 1950, *BDFa, 1950, Vol. II*, p. 145.

⁷ State Dept. to Jessup, December 18, 1948, and Jefferson Caffery to State Dept., December 19, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 433 and d. 442.

⁸ McClintock, memorandum of telephone conversation, December 20, 1948, RG 59, Entry A1 1265, box 15; Lacy, memorandum of telephone conversation, December 19, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2153.

⁹ Foster to State Dept., December 20, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6440; Stuart, *Towards Coming of Age*, p. 123.

¹⁰ Lovett, memorandum of conversation, December 20, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 446.

¹¹ CIA, *Daily Summary*, December 21, 1948, www.foia.cia.gov; John A. Beasley to External Affairs, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 406.

¹² Butterworth, memorandum of conversation, December 20, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2153; CIA, International Organizations Group, “Weekly Summary No. 32,” December 23, 1948, www.foia.cia.gov.

¹³ Lovett, memorandum of conversation, December 20, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 446.

¹⁴ Bancroft, memorandum of conversation, December 21, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2153.

¹⁵ Jessup to State Dept., December 22, 1948, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2153; Harvey, quoted in Tarling, *Britain, Southeast Asia and the Onset of the Cold War*, p. 358.

¹⁶ Rusk to Jessup, December 23, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 452.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ UN Security Council, resolution S/1150, www.un.org; “Dr. Soemitro Calls Resolution ‘Meaningless’—Withdrawal to Pre-Attack Lines Urged,” *New York Times*, December 25, 1948.

¹⁹ Evatt to Peter R. Heydon, December 24, 1948, and Hodgson to External Affairs, December 27, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 457 and d. 481.

²⁰ Jessup to State Dept., December 28, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 465.

²¹ Hodgson to External Affairs, December 28, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 489; UN Security Council, resolution S/1164, December 28, 1948, www.un.org.

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- ²² UN Security Council, resolution S/1165, December 28, 1948, www.un.org; Hodgson to External Affairs, December 28, 1948, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 490.
- ²³ Hodgson to External Affairs, December 29, 1948, no. 299, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 494.
- ²⁴ Taylor, *Indonesian Independence and the United Nations*, pp. 175–176; Thomas J. Hamilton, “Dutch Rebuff U.N. Cease-Fire Now, Will Comply Soon,” *New York Times*, December 30, 1948.
- ²⁵ Hodgson to External Affairs, December 29, 1948, no. 300, *HD, Vol. XIII, 1948*, d. 496; Lovett, circular telegram, December 31, 1948, *FRUS, 1948, Vol. VI*, d. 469.
- ²⁶ Jessup, Security Council statement, January 11, 1949, FPGP, folder 2156b.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*
- ²⁹ Australian UN delegation to External Affairs, January 15, 1949, *HD, Vol. XV, 1949*, d. 92.
- ³⁰ Rusk, Butterworth, and Hickerson to Lovett, January 14, 1949, RG 59, Entry A1 1265, box 15.
- ³¹ No documentary evidence has been found at NARA or HSTL indicating that Lovett ever discussed with Truman a presidential *démarche* to van Kleffens.
- ³² Netherlands embassy to State Dept., undated, c. January 17, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part I*, d. 121.
- ³³ Jessup to State Dept., January 17, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part I*, d. 122; Australian UN delegation to External Affairs, January 18, 1949, *HD, Vol. XV, 1949*, d. 109.
- ³⁴ Lisle to State Dept., January 14, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part I*, d. 116; *Het Dagblad*, January 17, 1949, and Lisle to State Dept., January 25, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2154.

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- ³⁵ Jessup to State Dept., January 17, 1949; Baruch to State Dept., January 20, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 135.
- ³⁶ Nehru, “Resistance to Imperialism in Asia,” January 1, 1949, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Series 2, Vol. 9*, p. 154.
- ³⁷ CIA, *Daily Summary*, January 25, 1949, www.foia.cia.gov; Nye to Commonwealth Relations Office, January 31, 1949, University of Luxembourg, www.cvce.eu.
- ³⁸ UN Security Council, resolution S/1234, January 28, 1949, www.un.org.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ Andrew G. L. McNaughton to External Affairs, *DCER, Vol. 15, 1949*, d. 135.
- ⁴¹ Scott, memorandum of telephone conversation, February 1, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2154.
- ⁴² State Dept. to Baruch, January 31, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 147.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*; Baruch to State Dept., February 1, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2154.
- ⁴⁴ State Dept. to Baruch, February 2, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2154.
- ⁴⁵ Cochran to State Dept., February 9, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 162.
- ⁴⁶ Baruch to State Dept., February 10, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2154; External Affairs to Critchley, February 15, 1949, no. 29 and no. 31, *HD, Vol. XV, 1949*, d. 218 and d. 216.
- ⁴⁷ Critchley to McIntyre, February 22, 1949, *HD, Vol. XV, 1949*, d. 236.
- ⁴⁸ Cochran to State Dept., February 18, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 175.
- ⁴⁹ Baruch to State Dept., February 17, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 173.
- ⁵⁰ Nichols to Attlee, December 1, 1949, *B DFA, 1949, Vol. 9*, p. 250.
- ⁵¹ Baruch to State Dept., February 23, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 180.

⁵² Rusk, memorandum of conversation, February 23, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 182; Ogburn to Reed, February 23, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2154.

⁵³ Cochran to State Dept., March 1, 1949, no. 211 and no. 213, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 197 and d. 201.

⁵⁴ Baruch to State Dept., March 1, 1949, and State Dept. to Baruch, March 3, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 199 and d. 205.

⁵⁵ Reed, memorandum of conversation, and Nolting, memorandum of conversation, March 7, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 213 and d. 212; State Dept., “Summary of Telegrams,” March 8, 1949, NAPF, HSTL, www.trumanlibrary.org.

⁵⁶ State Dept., “Summary of Telegrams,” March 11, 1949, HSTL, NAPF, www.trumanlibrary.org; Reed, memorandum of conversation, March 8, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2155.

⁵⁷ State Dept., memorandum for the Netherlands embassy, March 12, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 225.

⁵⁸ Van Kleffens to Acheson, March 18, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 231.

⁵⁹ Austin to State Dept., March 17, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2155; van Kleffens to Acheson, March 18, 1949.

⁶⁰ McNaughton to External Affairs, March 23, 1949, *DCER, Vol. 15*, d. 148.

⁶¹ Austin to State Dept., March 22, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 238.

⁶² Nolting, memorandum of conversation, March 24, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 240.

⁶³ State Dept. to Cochran, February 21, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2154. This cable does not indicate the sponsor of the “unpublished” survey. The most likely client was the State Department or another government agency.

⁶⁴ “Indonesia and the U.N.,” *New York Times*, December 26, 1948; “Thoughts on an Execution,” December 26, 1948, *Chicago Sunday Tribune*.

⁶⁵ Felix Belair Jr., “ERP Critics Force Senate Vote Delay Beyond Next Week,” *New York Times*, March 6, 1948.

⁶⁶ C. P. Trussell, “Obedience to U.N. Asked as ECA Rule,” and Jay Walz, “Capehart to Ask 3 Billion ECA Cut,” *New York Times*, February 18 and February 21, 1949.

⁶⁷ State Dept. to Connally, February 25, 1949, quoted in *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 162n; Cochran to State Dept., February 9, 1949.

⁶⁸ Acheson, memorandum of conversation, March 31, 1949, HSTL, Dean Acheson Papers (DAP), www.trumanlibrary.org.

⁶⁹ Rusk to Acheson, March 30, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6441.

⁷⁰ Acheson, memorandum of conversation, March 31, 1949.

⁷¹ McMahon, *Dean Acheson and the Creation of an American World Order*, p. 95; Rusk, *As I Saw It*, p. 422.

⁷² Rusk to Cochran, April 7, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 255.

Chapter 11

Highly Slanted Propaganda

(1949)

The talks about the restoration of Republican authority in Jogjakarta and the roundtable conference (RTC) in The Hague began in Batavia on April 14, 1949. The initial positions of the Republic and the Netherlands were diametrically opposed. The former insisted that no decisions could be made until its government was reestablished in the occupied capital. The latter, however, wanted two binding public commitments from the Republic before allowing its return to Jogjakarta: (1) an order to cease guerrilla warfare and (2) an agreement to participate in the RTC. T. W. Cutts, the deputy Australian representative on the UNCI, reported to Canberra: “Unless the Republican delegation makes unexpected concessions a breakdown in the discussions seems inevitable.”¹

The Australian government was impatient with the lack of progress in implementing the Security Council’s resolution of January 28. Thomas Critchley, after conferring with Prime Minister Chifley and Secretary of External Affairs Burton over the weekend of April 16–17, informed Cochran that Australia held the United States responsible for the second Dutch military action. Australia, said Critchley, demanded Dutch compliance with the UN resolution “within ten days or two weeks.” He added that he “might be forced [to] move separately irrespective [of the] attitude [of his] UNCI colleagues.” Cochran, who denied US responsibility for the Netherlands offensive, “counseled Critchley on [the] advantages [of a] negotiated settlement, no matter how long it may take.” To the State Department, Cochran worried that Critchley’s attitude—“more Republican than [the] Republicans”—might jeopardize the negotiations.²

After a fruitless week of talks in Batavia, US officials in Washington were concerned that the negotiations seemed to be falling into a familiar pattern of stalemate. With Indonesia a looming agenda item in the UN General Assembly, where “prolonged and acrimonious” debate would be detrimental to Western interests, the State Department reminded Cochran that the UNCI, unlike the GOC, could submit recommendations that the Netherlands and the Republic would be obliged to accept. Cochran, however, advised “patience.” An “amicable agreement” voluntarily reached by the two parties would likely be more durable than one imposed by the UNCI with “undue haste.”³

Despite a lack of immediate, tangible progress, Cochran thought that the atmosphere in Batavia was favorable for negotiations. Van Roijen, the leader of the Dutch delegation, had exhibited a sincere desire to reach a settlement and made a good impression on the Republican delegation. The son of a Dutch diplomat and an American mother, van Roijen had been serving as ambassador to Canada and alternating with van Kleffens as the Netherlands representative to the United Nations. According to his biographers, Rimko van der Maar and Hans Meijer, van Roijen was well aware of the weak international position of the Netherlands and the urgency of reaching an agreement with the Republic: “Van Roijen regarded it a historical necessity and a moral duty to reach an agreement.”⁴

Although formal talks were stalled, Cochran facilitated informal conversations between van Roijen and Republican delegation chief Roem, Prime Minister Hatta, and the sultan of Jogjakarta, the Republic’s coordinator of security. Both the Republican and Dutch delegations asked Cochran to draft language that might bridge their differences. Cochran kept his UNCI colleagues informed of his outsized role in the negotiations, but Critchley was unhappy with the American’s “unilateral” diplomacy. In a cable to the Department of External Affairs, he wrote:

“Although Cochran has exerted an undue influence to keep the discussions informal and to press the Republicans to [make] concessions, the acceptance of his role by the Republicans is making criticism from here extremely difficult.”⁵

Criticism from Canberra, however, was apparently easier. On May 5, Burton told the American chargé, Andrew B. Foster, that he had a formal message from the prime minister to the “highest levels [in] Washington.” Speaking with what Foster characterized as “unusual earnestness and none of his customary sardonic flippancy,” Burton summarized Chifley’s recent remarks in London to other commonwealth prime ministers and the UK government: “The Indonesian problem has been handled very badly from every point of view.” Based on Critchley’s reports, Australia was “satisfied” that the Netherlands had been making “no general effort” to reach a settlement and would make no such effort until compelled by the United Kingdom and the United States. Yet Cochran, according to the Australians, had been pressuring the Republic to make concessions and “permitting further Dutch stalling.”⁶

State Department officials, who had received reports of “very substantial progress” from Batavia, were surprised by the Australian government’s pessimism and its criticism of Cochran. The department’s reply to Foster’s message included comments by unnamed former advisers to the US GOC delegation, who praised Critchley’s “ability, zeal and pertinacity” but noted his self-appointed role “as [a] special adviser, advocate and partisan” for the Republic. From the beginning of UN involvement in negotiations, State Department officials declared, Critchley had left the “difficult and onerous task [of] moderation and conciliation [of the] parties exclusively to others.”⁷

Australian officials modified their gloomy view of the Batavia negotiations on May 7, when the UNCI reported to the Security Council that the Netherlands and the Republic had

reached an agreement on a ceasefire, the restoration of Jogjakarta, and the RTC. According to Foster, the reports of the van Roijen-Roem agreement seemed to have taken “considerable wind out of Burton’s sails.” The Australian diplomat said that his government was sending a “message of appreciation to Cochran for services rendered” and would “keep fingers crossed,” as the Netherlands had been known “to disregard such agreements.”⁸

The key to finalizing the van Roijen-Roem agreement was defining how much of the area around the city of Jogjakarta would initially be restored to Republican authority. The Dutch, and particularly their military leaders, did not want to cede control of nearby Maguwo airfield, fearing that it would be used for smuggling arms and ammunition to the TNI. Prime Minister Hatta said that the Republic had no such plans for the airfield, but he was unwilling to provide these assurances in a written agreement. Hatta emphasized to Cochran that he could not be strong and effective in ordering a ceasefire and going to The Hague if he were “called upon to sign away prerogatives or make embarrassing pledges.”⁹

The problem was resolved with an exchange of identical secret letters between the Netherlands and the Republic. Suggested and drafted by Cochran, the documents confirmed that Maguwo would operate as a civilian airfield; that only military aircraft in “distress” would be allowed to land there; and that trafficking in weapons or ammunition would be prohibited. The letters further declared that Maguwo’s operations would be monitored by UNCI military observers. After the formal UNCI meeting to confirm the public agreement, the exchange of letters between van Roijen and Roem “took place privately.”¹⁰

The van Roijen-Roem agreement was generally well received by Republican officials. There were, however, exceptions. Critchley reported to External Affairs that there was “a nest of Republicans” who thought that Roem and his delegation had been “too weak” in the

negotiations. For example, the minister of information—and future prime minister—Mohammad Natsir had resigned from the Republican delegation during the talks in Batavia. According to his biographer, Audrey R. Kahin, Natsir “became estranged from the stance of the moderate Republican leadership, especially of Mohammad Hatta, who was largely framing the government’s policies.”¹¹

The accord “was also generally disliked in army circles, with army leaders disappointed that they had not been consulted,” wrote Mavis Rose.¹² The displeasure of TNI officers was rooted in the belief that army sacrifices had forced the Netherlands to negotiate with the Republic, entitling the military to a say in the agreement. There was also a “feeling” among some TNI officers that Sukarno and Hatta “bought” their release from Bangka with unnecessary concessions to the Dutch.¹³

The Netherlands military, too, was unhappy with the van Roijen-Roem agreement. According to Lieutenant Colonel John T. Malloy, the US military attaché in Batavia, the “Dutch Army, including Spoor, feels that [the] agreement wipes out all that they fought for and won.” A particular concern was the restoration of Republican authority in Jogjakarta, which according to a report from the CIA station in Batavia, caused Spoor “great mental anxiety.” Despite his disapproval of the accord, Spoor pledged to van Roijen that he would cooperate with its implementation and would “impress upon his officers [the] necessity [of] complying entirely with government policy.”¹⁴

In The Hague, the Netherlands cabinet endorsed the van Roijen-Roem agreement. Speaking before parliament, acting overseas minister van Maarseveen, hopefully observed that the accord might “put an end to the tragic history of the past four years and usher in a period in which mutual understanding, mutual goodwill and common honesty of purpose, help and

support, will prove the value of these virtues to a humanity that yearns for delivery from the powers of evil.” Van Maarseveen’s statement was “generally criticized by [the] conservative press and approved by socialist papers,” according to the American embassy in The Hague.¹⁵

During the parliamentary debate, the van Roijen-Roem agreement received “enthusiastic support [from] labor and acquiescence from other political groups,” with the exception of the communist and extreme right-wing parties, which opposed it.¹⁶ According to UK Ambassador Nichols, KVP leader C. P. M. Romme wanted to bind the government to certain interpretations of the accord, but members of his own party dissuaded him. Such legislation, Nichols commented to the Foreign Office, had “wrecked the Linggadjati Agreement, and would almost certainly have wrecked the new agreement, as well as undermining Holland’s new-found favor with the outside world.”¹⁷

Perhaps the most notable Dutch critic of the van Roijen-Roem agreement was the high representative of the crown in Indonesia, Louis Beel. Within a few days of the agreement’s signing, he submitted his resignation to Queen Juliana. Objecting to “the form and extent of the restoration of the Republic,” Beel was generally criticized by the Dutch press. The progressive Catholic daily *De Tijd* faulted Beel for antagonizing the UNCI, interning Republican leaders, and developing the ill-fated plan to circumvent the Security Council’s resolution of January 28. The newspaper called for new leadership in Indonesia “not burdened with [the] error of the political past which deserves little praise.”¹⁸

Beel’s successor as HRC was A. H. J. Lovink, secretary general of the foreign ministry. Ambassador Baruch described him as “active, energetic and forceful. We are inclined to believe he is a man happier in giving orders than receiving them.” Often reasonable in Indonesian affairs, Baruch declared, Lovink was a “pugnacious person who will do everything to protect his

country's interests." John P. Quinn, the Australian chargé in The Hague, characterized the Dutch diplomat as "bluff," "genial," and potentially a "considerable improvement" over Beel. Whether Lovink could "adjust his conceptions" of Indonesians and "dissipate any impression of residual paternalism" remained to be seen.¹⁹

Dutch leadership in Indonesia was further changed by the sudden death of General Spoor on May 25. Despite lurid rumors suggesting suicide or poisoning by the Republic, Spoor's cause of death was almost certainly a heart attack, complicated by bronchitis. "He had been under great pressure and working hard," Colonel Malloy reported to Army intelligence. Spoor's death was mourned by few Republican, Australian, and US officials, who had viewed his hardline convictions as a major barrier to a peaceful political settlement. Cochran later commented to the State Department that van Roijen's efforts to convince the general to look realistically at the situation in Indonesia "had killed Spoor."²⁰

Unlike the Linggadjadi and Renville agreements, the van Roijen-Roem accord was successfully implemented. To be sure, mutual distrust remained. Moreover, diplomatic haggling and technical details delayed the return of Republican government to Jogjakarta and the start of the RTC. Yet on June 24, the Netherlands began a phased evacuation of some 5,000 troops in Jogjakarta. This was a delicate operation, with Dutch and TNI forces in close proximity. Over six days, a handful of incidents resulted in eleven casualties. (Ten Indonesians were killed, and one Dutch soldier was wounded.) UNCI military observers described these incidents as "exceptions" to an otherwise "smoothly carried out" operation: "Both sides executed their portion of the change over efficiently and generally on schedule."²¹

The accuracy of such UNCI reports was challenged by William H. Newton, a correspondent for the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain who was then in Jogjakarta. In an article dated July 5, he wrote that the findings of US military observers were “distorted” to favor the Republic: “The purpose seems to be to force the facts to conform to whatever happens to be the policy of the U.S. State Department or the United Nations Security Council.” In a report from Batavia six days later, Nathaniel A. Barrows of the *Chicago Daily News* concluded: “The true picture has not been given to the western world, especially to the United States, as a result of high-level policy decisions in Washington and highly slanted propaganda from skillful Republicans and inept Dutch.”²²

Newton and Barrows were two of fifteen American journalists who had traveled “to Indonesia as guests of the Dutch government.” The Netherlands had sponsored the trip “to counteract the bad publicity” that its Indonesian policy had received in the United States, according to Willard A. Hanna, chief of the US Information Service in Batavia. Colonel Malloy reported that Netherlands army officers were “enthusiastic” about the arrival of the American reporters. The Dutch military believed that the visit would provide an “opportunity for favorable publicity.”²³

Leaving New York on June 13, the journalists spent two days in the Netherlands for briefings by Stikker, Boon, and other Dutch officials. Before leaving for Indonesia, the reporters received copies of a “Sinister Page in U.S. History,” a polemical pamphlet written by three of the most outspoken right-wing diehards in the Netherlands: P. S. Gerbrandy, the prime minister during World War II; J. I. M. Welter, a prewar minister of colonies; and the previously cited J. W. Meijer Ranneft. Their paper acknowledged “America’s good faith” but declared that US actions in Indonesia had been “wrong” and “downright bad.”²⁴

Upon their arrival in Batavia, the US journalists were granted access to Dutch and Republican sources and were free to travel anywhere and to speak with anyone. The Netherlands Information Service provided transportation and accommodations for the reporters. Hanna observed that the American journalists were “deeply impressed with the sincerity, the competence, the objectivity of the local Dutch authorities.”²⁵ But Thomas Critchley, whom Dutch officials regarded “as little better than a Republican stooge,” was decidedly unimpressed by the Netherlands-sponsored press junket. In a letter to Burton, he referred to the journalists as “trained seals” and refuted allegations that the information from UNCI military observers was distorted to benefit the Republic. The commission’s Military Executive Board, which consolidated the observers’ field reports, included senior Belgian, British, and French officers. Their “influence,” wrote Critchley, frequently made “it difficult to avoid bias” favoring the Netherlands.²⁶

During the American journalists’ visit, Sukarno conducted his first Western-style press conference. Suspicious of the reporters’ relationship with the Dutch, he intended to deliver prepared remarks and take no questions. Persuaded that such an approach would be compared unfavorably with Dutch accessibility for interviews, Sukarno answered questions for two hours. “We subjected him to one of the toughest grillings I have ever seen given to any public man,” wrote William R. Mathews, editor and publisher of the *Arizona Daily Star*. Many reporters were impressed by Sukarno’s replies to questions about his collaboration with Japanese, about the strength of communism in Indonesia, and about the competence of Republican officials. The press conference, several journalists commented to Hanna, “was as well handled as any that occurred in the White House.”²⁷

Some reporters, however, were less captivated by Sukarno’s performance. His harshest

critic was Hubert R. Knickerbocker, a Pulitzer Prize-winning radio broadcaster who was one of the first American reporters expelled from Nazi Germany. A Dutch-American born in Texas, Knickerbocker told his listeners on WOR in New York that Sukarno's "power over his people" and his "neurotic personality" reminded him of Hitler. The journalist warned his audience that Soviet leaders viewed the Republican president as "an asset." On July 9, Knickerbocker led his broadcast with the declaration: "United Nations interference in the Dutch East Indies has gravely increased the danger of Communism here and has promoted the interests of the Soviet Union."²⁸

Influenced by the intensifying cold war and the impending "loss" of China to Mao Zedong's revolution, Knickerbocker and his colleagues were particularly susceptible to a talking point emphasized by their Dutch hosts: "The United States has underestimated the danger of communism in Indonesia."²⁹ Yet the American reporters who had dropped into Indonesia were unaware of a fundamental change in the political landscape since the Madiun rebellion: The Republic had reduced the PKI to a "barely tolerated sect." Virtually all of the journalists, according to Mathews, were convinced that "the undue speed of independence would prove fatal to the aspirations of Indonesians and that the ultimate victors would be the Communists."³⁰

There were exceptions to the journalists' pack reporting. Fred Colvig, editorial page editor of the *Denver Post*, talked to Dutch officials who denied that the Republican leadership was "infected with communism." To Colvig, it seemed that communism in Indonesia was "controllable" and "a long-range danger but not a pressing one." He also alleged that three of his traveling companions, determined to find communist influence in the Republic, had arrived in Indonesia with "prefabricated" stories: "They had their policies all laid out, with the result that even the Dutch are embarrassed."³¹ Another exception to the Dutch-influenced consensus was Bertram D. Hulén, whom Mathews later characterized as "a typical New York Times reporter,

out to report the facts, whether they pleased him or not, and to report them without embellishment.” Perhaps less complimentary was the observation that Hulen’s stories emphasized “official communiques” and reflected what Mathews considered the unwarranted “optimism” of the United States and the UNCI.³²

On July 9, the day before their departure from Indonesia, the American journalists met with Merle Cochran for an off-the-record conversation to “check some conclusions.” Cochran, who thought that the Dutch-sponsored junket was ill-conceived and potentially harmful to his and van Roijen’s diplomacy, stressed the spirit of cooperation between the Republic and the Netherlands, as well as the UNCI’s desire to help with a successful transfer of sovereignty. Cochran wrote to the State Department that van Roijen shared his relief that the reporters were returning to the United States.³³

After spending three weeks in Indonesia and filing scores of published stories, thirteen of the fifteen journalists took off from Batavia but never arrived home. The Dutch KLM Constellation carrying them crashed into a hill near Bombay’s airport during a heavy rainstorm, killing all of the passengers and crew. An investigation committee, appointed by the Netherlands government, determined that pilot error was the “probable direct cause” of the accident.³⁴

Immediately after the disaster, Mathews, who along with Dorothy Brandon of the *New York Herald Tribune* had made independent plans for returning to the United States, wrote an article for the Associated Press that declared: “The loss of these newspaper, radio and magazine men will prevent the American people from knowing how disastrous American diplomatic policy has been in Indonesia.” In the foreword to a collection of the journalists’ reporting he reproduced later in 1949, Mathews was less accusatory and more reflective, acknowledging that “most of us became sympathetic to the Dutch point of view.”³⁵

Such sympathy was what Netherlands officials had long sought but rarely elicited from American reporters. Stikker told Cochran that the stories by the “ill-fated journalists” had “greatly improved” US public opinion of the Netherlands. This claim was questionable. According to a State Department survey of American news stories, the tragedy had focused public attention on the reporting of the journalists, but editorial comment continued to “applaud US-UN efforts” in Indonesia.³⁶ For his part, Cochran remained perplexed by what he perceived as a Dutch attempt to discredit the Republic and his peacemaking efforts. In the fall of 1949, he wrote to Washington that he had never been able to reconcile the stated desire of the Netherlands to promptly and unconditionally transfer sovereignty to the USI with the Dutch use of “publicity agents” to convince Americans that the Indonesians were “incapable [of] self-government.”³⁷

Claire Holt, an OSS veteran and an Indonesian expert in State’s OIR, had similar concerns about “propaganda” blaming the United States for an inevitable collapse in Indonesia. Citing intelligence reports from Batavia and The Hague, she observed: “The theme pursued by a Netherlands high-power public relations agent is that the US has imposed the terms of the settlement upon a helpless Netherlands and that the US is henceforth responsible for all the consequences. Among the consequences anticipated by this publicity source—and by certain high Dutch officials—is a dangerous disintegration of political and economic life in Indonesia.”³⁸

On August 23, 1949, the largely ceremonial first day of the roundtable conference in The Hague, the chief of the Republic’s national police force sought thirty minutes of Prime Minister Hatta’s time. Sukanto, an honorary general who served as a military adviser to the Republican

delegation, wanted to discuss his failure to secure the arms and training first offered by CIA station chief Arthur Campbell and Merle Cochran in the late summer of 1948. Hatta acknowledged to Sukanto that the United States had been “morally” assisting the Republic by urging the Netherlands to seek a speedy solution in Indonesia. The prime minister, however, said that he had long known the Americans would not support the Republic “legally” until the establishment of a sovereign USI. “Hatta,” Sukanto wrote, “is disappointed about the lack of direct support which we badly need. But he understands and has to submit.”³⁹

Sukanto was distressed by the idea of returning to Indonesia “with bare hands.”⁴⁰ For nearly a year, he had traveled widely in the United States and Europe, not only seeking equipment and training for an elite mobile brigade but also learning more about internal security methods and techniques. On October 19, 1948, one month after the communist uprising in Madiun, Sukanto arrived at the State Department for his first meeting with William Lacy, then assistant chief of the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs. Handing Lacy a letter of introduction from Campbell, Sukanto explained his intention of studying police methods in the United States and his hope of returning “to Indonesia with one or two American police advisers.” He also gave Lacy a request for “lethal” and “non-lethal” materiel sufficient to equip a force of 5,000 with “carbines, sten and bren guns, and pistols (also ammo), tear gas bombs, jeeps, weapons carriers and motorcycles.”⁴¹

According to his top-secret summary of the conversation, Lacy did not reveal his “pre-knowledge” of Sukanto’s mission, presumably informed of it by Cochran, another CIA official, or perhaps both. Lacy “expressed great interest” in Sukanto’s proposal and assured him of the US “government’s interest.” The problem, he said, was that the “transfer of arms in such considerable quantities” would “abridge” US neutrality in the Netherlands-Republic conflict.

Sukanto agreed with Lacy's analysis but pleaded that the struggle with communists was "justification for the United States making an exception in favor of the Republic." Lacy, offering "very little encouragement" that the US would supply the requested materiel, said he would discuss the matter with his superiors.⁴²

In the meantime, "appropriate" US agencies arranged a six-month tour of the United States for Sukanto, allowing him to study internal security measures. Accompanying him for part of the tour was Robert W. MacDonald, a Baltimore-based broker for arms manufacturers who had attended Sukanto's meeting with Lacy. On March 10, 1949, when Hatta was still interned on the island of Bangka, Cochran hand-delivered a letter from Sukanto requesting further instructions. Hatta's reply authorized Sukanto "to buy police equipment on credit."⁴³ The willingness to purchase weapons, rather than accept them as gifts from the United States, reflected the Republic's desire to be independent in foreign affairs and neutral in the cold war. In a speech to the KNIP the previous year, Hatta had asked: "Have the Indonesian people fighting for their freedom no other course of action open to them than to choose between being pro-Russian or pro-American?"⁴⁴

In May and June 1949, Sukanto renewed his appeal to the State Department for weapons, with the size of the force to be armed rising to no less than 10,000 and perhaps increasing to as many as 50,000. Department officials, who were impressed by "Sukanto's ability, reliability and determination [to] crush Commies [in] Indonesia," again demurred. They explained that the recent van Roijen-Roem agreement obligated the Dutch to equip the Republican police until the conclusion of negotiations at The Hague. In a message to Cochran, the department discussed a domestic legislative barrier to equipping Sukanto's national police force: The omnibus bill authorizing foreign military assistance globally had not yet been submitted to Congress. And

once that law was passed, the competition for weapons and other equipment from limited US stocks would be great.⁴⁵

To continue his internal-security education, the State Department arranged for Sukanto to study the anticommunist operations of the Carabinieri, Italy's militarized national police force. The department informed Edward Page Jr., counsellor of the Rome embassy, that Sukanto would be requesting his "informal and unofficial assistance" in contacting the proper Italian officials. The State Department and "another agency of the Government"—that is, CIA—"would appreciate" Page's assistance in facilitating these contacts and helping Sukanto "orient himself in a country which is foreign to him." The Foreign Service officer, who was well aware of CIA's effort to influence the Italian general elections of 1948, was told that the US government had been "circumspect" in its dealings with the police chief to limit "speculation by other persons as to any special relationship between this Government and Mr. Soekanto."⁴⁶

Accompanying Sukanto on his trip to Italy was Page's sister, Louise Page Morris. A freelance American spy, whose clients in and out government included former OSS director Donovan and CIA's James J. Angleton, Morris had studied Russian at Columbia University before the war and worked for OSS in London in the USSR section of R&A. After the war, Donovan introduced her to Raymond E. Murphy, a State Department official who specialized in international communism and ran small-scale intelligence operations before the establishment of CIA. During Sukanto's internal-security tour of the United States, the Indonesian developed confidence in both Murphy and Morris. In a letter to Lacy, Morris wrote that Sukanto wanted to "work under the direction of Mr. Raymond Murphy." For reasons that are not entirely clear, Sukanto had grown disillusioned with CIA and did "not wish to be connected in any way with the CIA operative groups."⁴⁷

During Sukanto's visit to Italy and on the connecting trips to and from the United Kingdom, US allies attempted to cultivate him as an intelligence asset. Commander Wilfred "Biffy" Dunderdale, a senior SIS official who first met Morris during the war, offered to introduce Sukanto to the head of counterespionage at Scotland Yard and to "various sections of British Intelligence." Dunderdale, upon whom Ian Fleming's fictional spy James Bond was at least partially based, told Sukanto that the British could help with covert communications during the RTC. In Italy, Count Guerino Roberti of the foreign ministry "made repeated efforts to involve General Soekanto in committing himself to somewhat closer cooperation with the Italians." And Robert Sulzer, first secretary of the Swiss embassy in Rome, offered to introduce Sukanto to "his people," suggesting that "Swiss weapons were unparalleled and ways and means could be found of making them available to the Republic of Indonesia." In all of these meetings, according to Morris, Sukanto emphasized his gratitude to the United States and Hatta's commitment to obtain police help "from no other country."⁴⁸

Because of these intrigues, Edward Page suggested that his sister and Sukanto leave Italy immediately after the completion of his work with the Carabinieri, then stay in the United Kingdom until the start of the conference in The Hague. Leaping from Rome's conspiratorial pan back into London's clandestine fire, Morris dined with Dunderdale, who tried to persuade her of the wisdom of turning over the covert US police program to the British. Morris responded: "You can get any of the other Indonesians you wish but Soekanto is our man and Hatta has stated that this is his wish."

Dunderdale, unimpressed with her declaration, replied:

Well, you know your people are going to muff it; they may have the best intentions in the world but on Monday they decide one

thing and on Tuesday they change their minds. We *know* that we cannot run any risks in Southeast Asia. We have got to support this group around Hatta. We have equipment in Malaya that can be sent down to assist Soekanto. We have technical men whom we can put at his disposal immediately. While the United States is making up its mind the Communists are getting stronger and civil war becomes imminent. I can't see how you can run the risk of losing the whole stake in Southeast Asia just because you want to hang on to this operation.⁴⁹

Sukanto—who was simultaneously sharing a meal with Subandrio, the Republic's representative in London; Selwyn Lloyd, a member of parliament and a future foreign secretary; and Maberley Dening of the Foreign Office—reported to Morris on their conversation. She wrote to Lacy that Dening “never ceased to make critical remarks about the United States, our juvenile approach to political matters, and he said to both Soekanto and Soebandrio that they would do better to throw in their lot with the British. He said that equipment could be made available and suggested that among other things Soekanto see the British jeeps and motorcycles.”⁵⁰

Sukanto's reply, according to Morris, was that “he would be interested in seeing whatever was possible but limited his commitments to the United States,” under “orders from Dr. Hatta.”⁵¹

Despite a generally positive atmosphere, the negotiations at the RTC started off slowly. According to Foreign Minister Stikker, the Indonesians were “hyper-sensitive in matters of

sovereignty and inclined to sacrifice workable solutions to an excessive care of prestige.” He alleged that the “general method” of Indonesian delegates was to object to disagreeable proposals by referring to their “undesirable psychological effect” on the home front. “Reasonable debate,” Stikker wrote to Acheson, “becomes difficult in these circumstances.”⁵²

Hatta, who led the Republican delegation at the conference, had reason to be concerned about the domestic response to his negotiations. Members of the Masjumi and PNI “openly expressed disapproval of Hatta’s ‘conciliatory’ policy in negotiating with the Dutch,” according to CIA.⁵³ On September 30, the US embassy in The Hague received a report from Marcus van Blankenstein, a venerable Dutch journalist then working for the liberal daily *Het Parool*, that Republican UN representative Palar was “openly attacking Hatta” for being “too soft” in the talks. Palar, who had recently arrived in The Hague, told Cochran of his fear that the statute for establishing a Netherlands-Indonesian Union would be “too severe” and possibly trigger civil war.⁵⁴

One threat to the negotiations was a possible breakdown of the ceasefire in Java, where TNI forces were allegedly violating the truce by infiltrating into Dutch-controlled territory and establishing local Republican administration. According to a Netherlands diplomatic note, there was “an inability or unwillingness on the part of the Indonesian delegation at The Hague Conference to enter into binding commitments with the Dutch, because of fear that they will not have the political power to make these commitments stick.” The Netherlands government wanted the United States to persuade Sukarno and Hatta “to take a stand” against the TNI and its truce violations. When Ambassador van Kleffens delivered the note to the State Department, he stressed the Dutch “fear that the control of the Republican Army was shifting to radicals who might turn out to be communists.”⁵⁵

Asked to comment on the Dutch note, Cochran replied that he would delegate his assessment of the current situation in Indonesia to his UNCI adviser in Batavia, American diplomat Edward A. Dow Jr. An economist who had worked in Brussels, Cairo, and Paris before his appointment to the UNCI delegation in May 1949, Dow declared that the Dutch note represented an “exaggerated view of [the] political situation which has always existed in some measure within Republic.” Observing that Sukarno and Hatta had thus far been able to handle “extremist” elements, Dow thought that the request for American intervention not only would be futile and but also associate the United States with Dutch propaganda: “It appears that we are being asked to make [a] strong high level approach to [the] Republican Government on [the] basis of vague allegations which would almost certainly be instantly denied by Republicans and identified by them with Netherlands military intelligence of which we would then be thought to be the spokesmen.”⁵⁶

The Dutch fear of growing TNI radicalism was most powerfully expressed by HRC Lovink, who had served as the Netherlands ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1947. In a conversation with Jacob D. Beam, the newly arrived US consul general in Batavia, Lovink declared that the Republic had “lost control to Communists in West Java.” Referring repeatedly to communist orders for military actions to “sabotage” the RTC, the Dutch diplomat appeared “somewhat annoyed” by questions from Beam, an eighteen-year veteran of the State Department who had most recently served as chief of the Central European Division. Lovink provided Beam with “voluminous” documentation of communist activities, which the new American envoy was not prepared to challenge. “If what he said is true,” Beam wrote to Washington, “[the] situation is alarming; if not or if half true [the] Dutch state of mind is somewhat disturbing.”⁵⁷

Beam gave the Dutch documents on Indonesian communism to an unnamed “qualified US authority,” presumably Arthur Campbell or one of his station subordinates. The evaluation: Individual documents were “valuable.” The collection as a whole, however, contained a “sufficient distortion of facts favoring [the] Dutch point of view,” which might easily create “the wrong impression of [the] over-all situation.” For example, a report produced by Central Military Intelligence (CMI), the successor agency to NEFIS, alleged that the communist Tan Malaka was the leader of the Indonesian “resistance movement” and that Sukarno and Hatta were merely “pawns.” Cited by Beam’s evaluator as an example of the “questionable” quality of CMI intelligence, the Dutch information was not only inaccurate but also outdated, having been forward to Washington by the CIA station and the naval attaché in Batavia several months earlier.⁵⁸

In The Hague, van Roijen told Cochran that the “entire” Netherlands government considered the military and political situation in Indonesia “critical.” Cochran, who acknowledged “some deterioration” in the archipelago, said that Indonesia’s leaders would be able to handle matters there once they returned with a “successful agreement.” In a report to the State Department, Cochran wrote that he had “cautioned Van Royen against taking Lovink too seriously, reminding him of Lovink’s tendency to see Communists in every shadow. Van Royen assured me he was mindful thereof.”⁵⁹

On November 2, representatives of the Netherlands, the Republic, and the Indonesian federal states signed a comprehensive political, economic, and military agreement that would unconditionally and irrevocably transfer sovereignty to the Republic of the United States of

Indonesia (*Republik Indonesia Serikat*, or RIS) no later than December 30, 1949. “In the end all parties had to concede much more than they had originally intended,” according to British diplomat A. C. Stewart. “Fortunately,” he wrote to the Foreign Office, “all parties realized that, however much they disliked some of its provisions, they had to ratify the agreement if complete chaos was to be avoided in Indonesia.”⁶⁰

The statute defining the relationship between the Netherlands and RIS established a loose union that would be based on “voluntariness” and would “not prejudice the status of each of the two partners as an independent and sovereign state.”⁶¹ Nominally led by Queen Juliana and her successors, the Netherlands-Indonesian Union would encourage cooperation in defense, foreign affairs, and economic and cultural matters. Alastair Taylor, a UN representative who worked at the RTC, later characterized the statute as “the final defeat” for the Dutch who sought “a tightly knit constitutional and political relationship with Indonesia.” J. Schouten, a leader of the Netherlands Anti-Revolutionary Party, complained that the union was “as light as a bit of fluff.”⁶²

Particularly difficult had been the negotiations over the portion of 6.1 billion guilders in public debt that the RIS would assume after the transfer of sovereignty. The initial position of the Netherlands was that “the successor state must assume liabilities [as] well as assets. Consequently [the] USI should be responsible for all debts.”⁶³ And since the Netherlands held much of that debt, the Dutch argued that they should participate in Indonesia’s fiscal and monetary policymaking. The Indonesian delegates, rejecting the latter idea as an infringement of sovereignty, were prepared to assume the NEI’s prewar debts, “as well as those subsequently contracted and used entirely in the interests of the Indonesian people.”⁶⁴ They were not,

however, willing to repay the Netherlands for direct and indirect costs associated with the military effort to suppress the revolution.

The Dutch delegation offered to forgive debts totaling 700 million guilders, a figure they claimed was the approximate cost of military operations in Indonesia. In a cable to the State Department, Cochran wrote that his Washington colleagues knew this estimate was “ridiculously low.” To break the deadlock in negotiations, he proposed an informal compromise that would cancel 2 billion guilders of Indonesian debt to the Netherlands. The proposal drew sharp protests from the Dutch government. According to Cochran, Prime Minister Drees and Foreign Minister Stikker “took turns telling how difficult their situation was politically and financially and how my suggestion now made their going on in government and [the] RTC impossible.” Stikker bitterly observed to US chargé Steere that the Dutch government and people felt that the “real conflict is between [the] US and [the] Netherlands and not Indonesia and [the] Netherlands.”⁶⁵

An analysis by financial experts representing each delegation at The Hague produced a consensus agreement on the RIS public debt: At the transfer of sovereignty, the Indonesian government would be responsible for foreign debts totaling 1.3 billion guilders. The Netherlands reluctantly agreed to forgive two billion guilders in debt to prevent “the RTC from breaking down.”⁶⁶ Indonesia, however, would still be burdened by 3 billion guilders of internal debt—for example, NEI government bonds and other domestic obligations. Moreover, the Netherlands opposed a recommended moratorium for RIS payments of interest and principal to external lenders. Van Roijen told Cochran that it had been “hard enough” gaining government approval for the final debt-reduction figure. Many years later, Critchley admitted his unhappiness with the amount of debt apportioned to the RIS but said that “it would have been hard to justify a breakdown of the Conference on this alone.”⁶⁷

An issue that the conference could not resolve was the status of West New Guinea. Indonesian delegates, particularly Anak Agung Gde Agung, a Balinese prince who was prime minister of the federal state of East Indonesia, argued that West New Guinea was part of the NEI and should therefore be included in the transfer of sovereignty. The Netherlands, however, asserted that New Guinea was a “backward area” incapable of self-government and that its population was “ethnographically and biologically” distinct from Indonesians. “It was rather absurd,” Anak Agung commented later, “that the Dutch government should suddenly switch to ethnological and anthropological considerations in refusing to include West Irian in the transfer of sovereignty, a purely political matter.”⁶⁸

Australia, which administered the eastern half of New Guinea, quietly supported a Dutch scheme to seek a trusteeship over West New Guinea under the system for dependent territories established by the United Nations. A “Dutch trusteeship,” according to Australia’s Department of External Affairs “has always, in our view, been [the] best solution.”⁶⁹ US diplomats in Canberra, however, had difficulty reconciling the “violent pro-republican feelings of Evatt and Burton” with Australian support for the Dutch in West New Guinea. Staff from External Affairs explained to embassy counsellor Andrew Foster that the area was “too backward for inclusion in [the RIS].” A report of this conversation to the State Department observed: “No mention was made of the apprehension, if any,” about an Indonesian presence in an area “uncomfortably close [to] Australian territory.”⁷⁰

Such anxiety, however, influenced Australia’s policy calculations. Throughout the summer and fall of 1949, Australian officials discussed the implications of Indonesian

sovereignty in West New Guinea. All agreed that the area was strategically, economically, and politically significant to their country. At a time when the restrictive White Australia immigration policy was still in effect, Neil Truscott of External Affairs wrote that Indonesian control of the West New Guinea “would bring Asia right onto Australia’s doorstep.” Diplomat Trevor Pyman warned that “Non-European administration” of the territory “could result in the rapid influx of large numbers of Asiatic peoples,” with “serious implications” for New Guinea and Australia.⁷¹

On July 28, 1949, External Affairs informed Critchley that it preferred settling other Dutch-Indonesian issues at The Hague before discussing “the future control of Netherlands New Guinea, the status of which should be treated from the outset as presenting problems not essentially connected with the transfer of sovereignty to the Republic. If this line is followed, the question of Netherlands New Guinea may be settled without our being called upon to express any policy publicly in this connection.”⁷² Critchley, well aware that open opposition to Indonesian authority over West New Guinea would damage Australia’s privileged relations with the Republic, wrote to Canberra: “I shall do my best to keep New Guinea out of the discussions but as you will realise this is a lost cause and, as you point out, it is most important that I act discreetly.”⁷³

In a message to Canberra, dated September 3, Critchley reported that he had informally suggested to “selected Dutch and Indonesian representatives” that the dispute over “New Guinea should not prejudice an early successful conclusion of the conference.” Therefore, it might be “desirable to postpone the issue for later negotiations.”⁷⁴ In the weeks that followed, the conference made progress on the union statute, financial matters, and other issues, but the deadlock over West New Guinea remained. On October 20, Critchley told Cochran that he

avored the exclusion of the territory from the transfer of sovereignty, combined with an announcement of time-limited negotiations to determine the status of West New Guinea. Cochran agreed with this approach. So, too, did Prime Minister Hatta—if the matter was “reopened within [a] certain fixed period.”⁷⁵

Other Indonesian delegates, however, continued to insist on West New Guinea’s inclusion in the new state, a demand the Dutch continued to reject. On October 29, federalist leader Sultan Hamid II of Pontianak, West Borneo, long considered a Dutch puppet but committed to RIS control of New Guinea, “urged the UNCI to do something.”⁷⁶ The result was a compromise UNCI proposal: The political status of New Guinea would be determined through Netherlands-RIS negotiations that would be completed by the end of Indonesia’s first year of independence. Until then, the territory would be governed by the Dutch. “None of the Delegations is happy with the proposal, but there is a good prospect that it will be accepted,” Critchley wrote to External Affairs. “[A] Netherlands Trusteeship would have been a preferable arrangement but this seems politically impossible for the Indonesians.” The Australian diplomat concluded that postponing a decision on West New Guinea would likely lead to a “Netherlands Trustee as a final solution.”⁷⁷ Critchley and others, however, had underestimated Indonesians resistance to such an idea and could not foresee that control of West New Guinea would remain a source of bitter diplomatic disputes until the territory finally became an Indonesian province in the 1960s.

The Indonesian and Dutch delegations accepted the West New Guinea compromise on November 1, the last day of conference negotiations. “Excellent spirit pervaded [the] close of [the] session with congratulations exchanged,” Cochran reported to the State Department. “Stikker and Van Royen [were] especially cordial in their thanks to me as were [the]

Indonesians.” Critchley informed External Affairs that “apart from some Indonesian heartburning over New Guinea all delegates appear to be well satisfied with themselves.”⁷⁸ Somewhat less contented was Hatta, who had visibly lost weight and looked “terribly tired,” according to John Coast, a British subject working for the Republic and helping with its press relations at The Hague. It was Hatta’s belief that the RTC agreement was “the best that could be achieved at this time.”⁷⁹

The State Department issued a press release commending the parties on the agreement. Ambassador van Kleffens, however, told department officials that the Dutch “government and people were not in a mood to be congratulated.” Acknowledging that the United States and the Netherlands had “not always seen eye to eye on the Indonesian problem,” van Kleffens said that the two countries shared a common goal: “a stable, orderly, and independent Indonesia.” According to the notes of the discussion, “He then remarked that he thought that order and stability would have been better assured had the Dutch been allowed to ‘complete’ their last police action without interference from the Security Council.” In other words, van Kleffens still felt that the destruction of the Republic would have been the preferred way to transfer sovereignty to Indonesia. When a copy of the memorandum of conversation reached the US consulate in Batavia, an unidentified official found this comment by van Kleffens sufficiently noteworthy to add a handwritten exclamation mark next to it.⁸⁰

The traditionally good relationship between the United States and the Netherlands had been “severely shaken” by US policy in Indonesia, according to Ambassador Selden Chapin, Baruch’s successor in The Hague. The “average Dutch man,” Chapin wrote, believed that the RTC agreement and the loss of the colony were “largely due [to] US rather than UN ‘intervention.’”⁸¹ This view was shared by members of a parliamentary committee reviewing the

foreign office budget who asked whether the United States had threatened to withdraw Marshall Plan aid, and if so, why hadn't the government informed parliament of the "foreign intervention" in Dutch affairs? Stikker, denying that the cabinet's Indonesia policy was "the result of American pressure," told parliament: "Undoubtedly, numerous subordinate factors exerted their influence, but the Netherlands Government pursued its own cause in those problems, independently and often in opposition to the opinions of other governments. I am of the opinion that, for reasons of national interest, I cannot enter further into all the considerations which applied."⁸²

Hatta, too, faced domestic concerns about the RTC agreement, which many Republicans perceived as providing less than complete independence. When he returned to Java, Hatta received a "restrained" and "undemonstrative" welcome in Jogjakarta, according to USIS chief Willard Hanna. Speaking with Republican leaders in Jogjakarta in mid-November, Hanna reported that the RTC agreement was, "on the whole, quite acceptable, to major elements of the Republic except, of course, the leftists." There was, however, "no enthusiasm for the settlement." Objections to the agreement included the status of New Guinea and the indefinite duration of the union statute. Republican officials, Hanna wrote, tended "to regard official U.S. professions of friendship and desire to help Indonesia as being at variance with the overall U.S. record in the past."⁸³

President Sukarno told Hanna that the TNI had been prepared to "take matters into its own hands" if the RTC did not produce satisfactory results. This danger was "now past," said Sukarno, adding that the army was "quite willing to accept the Round Table settlement and to

cooperate in [the] establishment of the new USI.” The president’s conclusion was echoed by the sultan of Jogjakarta, who expressed to Hannah his “total confidence in the loyalty and cooperativeness of the TNI.” Appointed minister of defense the previous July, Hamengku Buwono IX was a Dutch-educated aristocrat who “moved easily between a traditional Javanese world and a modern Western milieu,” according to his biographer, John Monfries. Part of the sultan’s value to the revolution was that “a scion of the traditional Javanese nobility had become a dedicated Republican.”⁸⁴

An anticommunist, the sultan dismissed the importance of “red infiltration into the TNI” and was confident about maintaining law and order in Central and East Java. “He expressed the utmost concern, however, regarding the situation on West Java,” Hanna reported. The region’s Sundanese, an ethnic group more devoutly Muslim than the Javanese, had been struggling to preserve their language and customs and to avoid domination by the Republic. In a relationship similar to Sukarno’s collaboration with the Japanese during the war, Sundanese leaders worked with the Dutch to establish the federal state of Pasundan in West Java in 1947. During the RTC, the state backed the Republicans, who found “it hard to look beyond Pasundan as a polity led by ‘Dutch puppets.’”⁸⁵

The sultan told Hanna that another “major problem” in West Java was Darul Islam, a militant movement that posed a challenge to the Republic and Pasundan. Established in 1948, Darul Islam sought a Muslim theocracy, not participation in a secular republic. During the final months of the Indonesian revolution, “a sort of triangular warfare raged between the Republic, the Darul Islam, and the Dutch” in parts of West Java, according to T. B. Simatupang, then deputy chief of staff of the Republic’s armed forces. Two weeks before the start of the RTC, Darul Islam proclaimed the establishment of the Islamic State of Indonesia (*Negara Islam*

Indonesia, or NII), which “would include the entire territory of the archipelago” and “would implement Islamic law, abolish slavery, and ensure that all enemies of Allah, religion and the state had left. Until these goals were met, the NII would be in a state of war.”⁸⁶

A third problem in West Java mentioned by the sultan was former Dutch army officer Raymond Westerling, who was creating a private army, allegedly “with the full knowledge and consent of high Batavia military authorities.” The charismatic leader of a murderous pacification campaign in South Celebes, December 1946–February 1947, Westerling was discharged from the KNIL before the second Netherlands military offensive. While running a shipping company in West Java, he organized former KNIL commandoes, TNI deserters, and other fighters into the Armed Forces of the Righteous Ruler (*Angkatan Perang Ratu Adil*, or APRA). This military force was named after a prophesized prince whom Westerling associated with his delusional self-image as “a just avenger.” H. M. Hirschfeld, the first Dutch high commissioner in independent Indonesia, criticized the “late General Spoor for not only permitting Westerling [to] remain in Indonesia after being discharged from [the] Army but also for using him subsequently in intelligence work.”⁸⁷

Two weeks before Hanna’s visit to Jogjakarta, Cochran’s adviser, Edward Dow, had received a CIA report evaluated as A-1—that is, the source was rated completely reliable and the information was confirmed by other sources—that Westerling planned to “feign attacks on Netherlands outposts and create [an] occasion for retaliatory action, at [the] same time as discrediting [the] Republic in [the] eyes [of] foreign powers.” The unnamed source, who considered Westerling the “worst type [of] soldier of fortune,” found “it inconceivable [that] Netherlands authorities were unaware [of] of his activities.”⁸⁸

After consulting Consul General Beam, Dow informed Dutch diplomat J. G. de Beus of the apparently reliable report about Westerling's intentions. "It was in the common interest," Dow said, that any such activities "should be promptly investigated and suppressed." De Beus, who was born in Batavia, served as a special assistant to Prime Minister Gerbrandy during the war, and worked in the embassy in Washington after it, appeared to recognize the seriousness of the "allegations and promised [an] immediate investigation." In his report of the conversation to the State Department, Dow wrote that the CIA station in Batavia had "submitted periodic reports on Westerling which should be available to [the] Department."⁸⁹

On November 26, Hatta told four visiting US senators who were investigating past ECA aid to Indonesia: "Top Dutch officials were trying [to] carry out [the] RTC agreements in good faith but lower officers like Captain Westerling were interested in stirring up trouble so Dutch troops could remain." Hatta also informed Foreign Minister Stikker, who was visiting Indonesia, and HRC Lovink of his concerns about Westerling. In a cable to Washington, dated December 6, Beam reported de Beus's claim that a "full investigation" was now under way to determine the degree to which Westerling constituted a "threat to security."⁹⁰

One month later, de Beus showed Beam the just-completed "official report" of the Westerling investigation, which cleared him of "any complicity with dissident Indonesian groups, with Darul Islam or disaffected KNIL." According to Beam's summary of the report, Westerling "was minding his own business." But on the same day this information was cabled to Washington, the Pasundan and RIS governments received an ultimatum from Westerling demanding recognition of APRA as the legal force for maintaining law and order in West Java. Declaring himself a defender of federalism, Westerling was particularly disturbed by the Republic's "underground pressure" and "unitarianistic activities" in Pasundan. If he did not

receive a reply within a week, Westerling wrote, he would “reject any responsibility” for the resulting unnamed “consequences.”⁹¹

¹ Cutts to External Affairs, April 21, 1949, *HD, Vol. XV, 1949*, d. 369.

² Cochran to State Dept., April 18, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2155.

³ State Dept. to Cochran, April 20, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 263; Cochran to State Dept., April 22, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2158.

⁴ Van der Mar and Meijer, “The Dutch Mountbatten,” an unpublished English-language paper based on their biography, *Herman van Roijen*.

⁵ Critchley to External Affairs, May 4 and May 2, 1949, *HD, Vol. XV, 1949*, d. 375 and 372.

⁶ Foster to State Dept., May 5, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 280.

⁷ State Dept. to Foster, May 6, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2158. This document is the unredacted version of the telegram reproduced in *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 281.

⁸ Foster to State Dept., May 9, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2158.

⁹ Cochran to State Dept., April 28, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 271.

¹⁰ Cochran to State Dept., May 7, 1949, no. 415 and no. 416, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 284 and d. 285.

¹¹ Critchley to External Affairs, May 7, 1949, *HD, Vol. XV, 1949*, d. 381; A. Kahin, *Islam, Nationalism and Democracy*, p. 60.

¹² Rose, *Indonesia Free*, p. 158.

¹³ Unsigned airgram, Batavia to State Dept., November 21, 1949, RG 84, UD 2728, box 20.

¹⁴ Malloy to Dept. of Army, May 12, 1949, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 21; CIA, “General Spoor’s Death,” May 31, 1949, www.foia.cia.gov; Cochran to State Dept., May 12, 1949, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2158.

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- ¹⁵ Robert Coe to State Dept., May 18, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2158; Baruch to State Dept., May 18, 1949, no. 430, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6441.
- ¹⁶ Baruch to State Dept., May 18, 1949, no. 433, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6441.
- ¹⁷ Nichols to Bevin, May 19, 1949, *BDFFA, 1949, Vol. 9*, p. 170.
- ¹⁸ Baruch to State Dept., May 12, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2158.
- ¹⁹ Baruch to State Dept., May 19, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2158; Quinn to Burton, May 24, 1949, *HD, Vol. XV, 1949*, d. 418.
- ²⁰ Malloy to Dept. of Army, May 27, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6443; Cochran to State Dept., January 24, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 612.
- ²¹ N. McLeod and C. E. Parsons, “Report on the Dutch Evacuation of the Jogjakarta Residency,” July 1, 1949, RG 84, Entry UD 2732A, box 4.
- ²² Newton, “Reports on Indonesia Distorted,” July 5, 1949, Scripps-Howard Newspaper Alliance, and Barrows, “Propaganda Cloaks Indonesians’ Fate,” *Chicago Daily News*, reproduced in Mathews, *Indonesia Report*.
- ²³ Livengood to State Dept., June 27, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6441; Malloy to Dept. of Army, June 16, 1949, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 21.
- ²⁴ Steere to State Dept., October 12, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6442.
- ²⁵ Livengood to State Dept., June 27, 1949.
- ²⁶ Nichols to Attlee, December 1, 1949, *BDFFA, 1949, Vol. 9*, p. 252; Critchley to Burton, July 8, 1949, *HD, Vol. XV, 1949*, d. 454.
- ²⁷ Mathews, *Indonesia Report*, foreword; Livengood to State Dept., June 27, 1949.
- ²⁸ Knickerbocker, July 2 and July 9, 1949, WOR, New York, reproduced in Mathews, *Indonesia Report*.

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- ²⁹ Livengood to State Dept., June 27, 1949.
- ³⁰ McVey, "Teaching Modernity," *Indonesia*, October 1990; Mathews, *Indonesia Report*, foreword.
- ³¹ Colvig, "Fred Colvig's Last Letter Home," July 2, 1949, *Denver Post*, reproduced in Mathews, *Indonesia Report*.
- ³² Mathews, *Indonesia Report*, foreword.
- ³³ Cochran to State Dept., July 10 and July 11, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2158.
- ³⁴ "Air Crash in India Held Pilot's Error," *New York Times*, December 31, 1949.
- ³⁵ Mathews, Associated Press, "Mathews Flays American Policy," July 14, 1949; Mathews, *Indonesia Report*, foreword.
- ³⁶ Cochran to Rusk, October 9, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part I*, d. 356; State Dept. to USIS, Batavia, July 19, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2158.
- ³⁷ Cochran to Rusk, October 9, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part I*, d. 356; State Dept. to USIS, Batavia, July 19, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2158.
- ³⁸ Holt to Cyrus Peake, October 31, 1949, RG 59, Entry A1 1265, box 15.
- ³⁹ Sukanto to Louise Page Morris, August 24, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 5106.
- ⁴⁰ Sukanto to Louise Page Morris, August 28, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 5106.
- ⁴¹ Lacy, memorandum of conversation, October 19, 1948, RG 263, Entry A1 18, box 118; State Dept. to Cochran, May 19, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part I*, d. 289.
- ⁴² Lacy, memorandum of conversation, October 19, 1948.
- ⁴³ State Dept. to Cochran, June 8, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part I*, d. 293; Hatta to Sukanto, March 23, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6441.
- ⁴⁴ Hatta, September 2, 1948, quoted in Anak Agung, *Twenty Years*, p. 26.

⁴⁵ State Dept. to Cochran, May 19, 1949, and June 8, 1949. President Truman signed the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949 on October 6.

⁴⁶ John M. Allison to Page, July 1, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 5106.

⁴⁷ Morris to Lacy, September 22, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 5106.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Stikker to Acheson, September 16, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 340.

⁵³ CIA, ORE Far East Pacific Division, “Weekly Intelligence Highlights,” October 4, 1949, www.foia.cia.gov.

⁵⁴ Steere to State Dept., September 30, 1949, and Cochran to State Dept., October 6, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6442 and box 2158.

⁵⁵ George W. Perkins to Acheson, October 10, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 359.

⁵⁶ Dow to State Dept., October 14, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 365.

⁵⁷ Beam to State Dept., October 17, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6442.

⁵⁸ Beam to State Dept., October 21, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6442. Tan Malaka was executed by the TNI, with “the presumed date of his death, February 19, 1949.” (Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, p. ix.) Despite his celebrity, his death and its timing were matters of considerable uncertainty. A publicly released English-language Republican history of Indonesian nationalism, dated July 1, 1949, reported that he had been executed the previous April. (Republic of Indonesia Office, New York, “History of Indonesia’s National Movement,” July 1, 1949, Jay

Lovestone Papers, box 264.) It was, however, well into 1950 before the US, UK, and Dutch governments confidently accepted the fact of his death.

⁵⁹ Cochran to State Dept., October 18, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 370.

⁶⁰ Stewart to Bevin, "Indonesia: Annual Review for 1949," January 26, 1950, *B DFA, 1950, Vol. 11*, p. 147.

⁶¹ "Text of the Hague Statute of Union," *New York Times*, November 3, 1949.

⁶² Taylor, *Indonesian Independence and the United Nations*, p. 232; Chapin to State Dept., December 7, 1949, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 20.

⁶³ Cochran to State Dept., October 3, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2158.

⁶⁴ UNCI, "Special Report to the Security Council on the Round Table Conference," www.un.org.

⁶⁵ Cochran to State Dept., October 8, 1949, and Steere to State Dept., October 10, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 353 and d. 358.

⁶⁶ Coe to State Dept., December 7, 1949, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 20.

⁶⁷ Cochran to State Dept., October 25, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2158; Critchley, quoted in Rose, *Indonesia Free*, p. 160.

⁶⁸ Stikker to Acheson, September 16, 1949; Anak Agung, *Twenty Years*, p. 68.

⁶⁹ External Affairs to High Commission in London, October 21, 1949, *HD, Vol. XV, 1949*, d. 514.

⁷⁰ Peterson B. Jarman to State Dept., October 22, 1949, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 20.

⁷¹ Truscott to McIntyre, July 11, 1949, and Pyman to McIntyre, July 28, 1949, *HD, Vol. XV, 1949*, d. 455 and d. 460.

⁷² External Affairs to Critchley, July 28, 1949, *HD, Vol. XV, 1949*, d. 461.

⁷³ Critchley to McIntyre, August 18, 1949, *HD, Vol. XV, 1949*, d. 473.

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- ⁷⁴ Critchley to External Affairs, September 3, 1949, *HD, Vol. XV, 1949*, d. 480.
- ⁷⁵ Cochran to State Dept., October 20 and October 28, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2158.
- ⁷⁶ Cochran to State Dept., October 30, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 382.
- ⁷⁷ Critchley to External Affairs, October 30, 1949, *HD, Vol. XV, 1949*, d. 521.
- ⁷⁸ Cochran to State Dept., November 2, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 385; Critchley to External Affairs, November 1, 1949, *HD, Vol. XV, 1949*, d. 524.
- ⁷⁹ Coast, *Recruit to Revolution*, p. 277; Rose, *Indonesia Free*, p. 264.
- ⁸⁰ Nolting, memorandum of conversation, November 4, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 20. (This memorandum, without the annotation, is reproduced in *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 1*, d. 390.)
- ⁸¹ Chapin to State Dept., November 10, 1949, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 20.
- ⁸² Chapin to State Dept., November 16, 1949, and Charles P. Clock to State Dept., November 30, 1949, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 20.
- ⁸³ Hanna, “Observations on Trip to Jogjakarta, November 17–19, 1949,” RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6442.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*; Monfries, *A Prince in a Republic*, Kindle locations 470 and 3233.
- ⁸⁵ Hanna, “Observations on Trip to Jogjakarta, November 17–19, 1949”; Frakking, “Gathered on the Point of a Bayonet,” *The International History Review*, September 2016.
- ⁸⁶ Hanna, “Observations on Trip to Jogjakarta, November 17–19, 1949”; Simatupang, *Report from Banaran*, p. 142; Formichi, *Islam and the Making of the Nation*, p. 136.
- ⁸⁷ Hanna, “Observations on Trip to Jogjakarta, November 17–19, 1949”; Westerling, *Challenge to Terror*, Kindle locations 1232–1233; Cochran to State Dept., January 14, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3748. After a lawsuit in 2012, the Netherlands government acknowledged a “special responsibility” for Westerling’s summary executions in South Celebes, apologized for

them at a ceremony in Jakarta, and paid compensation to families of his victims. (“Dutch Apologize for Massacre,” *The Jakarta Post*, September 13, 2013.)

⁸⁸ Dow to State Dept., November 2, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2158.

⁸⁹ Dow to State Dept., November 3, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 2158.

⁹⁰ Beam to State Dept., November 29, 1949, and December 6, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6442.

⁹¹ Cochran to State Dept., January 6, 1950, and Westerling to Pasundan and RIS governments, January 5, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3748.

Chapter 12

Strenuous Opposition

(1950)

On December 30, 1949, three days after formal ceremonies in The Hague and Batavia transferred sovereignty to the RIS, President Truman approved the recommendations of NSC 48/2, “The Position of the United States with Respect to Asia.” In addition to defining policy for individual countries, NSC 48/2 provided general instructions to the national security bureaucracy for achieving US objectives on the continent. Calling for action “to develop and strengthen the security of the area from Communist external aggression or internal subversion,” the policy directive noted the successful conclusion of the RTC in The Hague and urged that “immediate consideration” be given to ways of helping Indonesia maintain “its freedom in the face of internal and external communist aggression.”¹

The last paragraph of NSC 48/2 encouraged US government agencies, “as a matter of urgency,” to develop programs funded by Section 303 of the Mutual Defense Act of 1949. Section 303, which reflected congressional dissatisfaction with both Mao Zedong’s successful revolution and the Truman administration’s inability to prevent it, established a presidential “emergency fund” totaling \$75 million for anticommunist activities in the “general area” of China. The president would not be required to “specify the nature of such expenditures,” making Section 303 a useful vehicle for financing covert operations.²

Despite Indonesia’s distance from China and its limited exposure to internal communist threats, State Department leaders decided to seek presidential approval for \$12 million of Section 303 funds to equip Indonesia’s national police force. Some government officials, however,

doubted the appropriateness of the request. One of them was Senator William F. Knowland (R-CA), who sought maximum US support for Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and his anticommunist forces on Formosa. “Aid to Indonesia,” said Knowland, “was never contemplated when Section 303 was enacted.” John H. Ohly, deputy director of the State Department’s Mutual Defense Assistance Program (MDAP), suspected that the senator’s view was “held by a considerable number of other Congressmen.”³

Despite such concerns, Secretary of State Acheson presented the department’s Section 303 proposal for Indonesia to Truman on January 9. The amount of the request had been reduced to \$5 million, but the evaluation of the communist threat had been inflated beyond other official assessments. Acknowledging that the nationalist “movement” in Indonesia was currently “non-Communist in character,” the memorandum supporting the Section 303 proposal described a country that faced a “serious” menace from internal and international communism. Traditionally skeptical of exaggerated Dutch claims of communist encroachment, the department hyperbolically claimed that Sukarno and Hatta, now the president and prime minister of the RIS, were “regarded as a dangerous enemy by world Communism which will spare no effort to destroy this leadership and to replace it by leadership which will respond to Communist direction.” In Acheson’s presence, Truman read the memorandum and approved the Section 303 request, remarking that “he was quite familiar with the situation.”⁴

The Indonesian program approved by the president would be administered by the State Department “in consultation” with the Department of Defense and other “appropriate agencies.” Raymond Murphy, who was responsible for the “training and indoctrination” of Indonesian police officials traveling to the United States, admitted that directing a covert program to arm and train a foreign police force was “unorthodox and unprecedented for the Department.”

Managing such a project, rather than the more traditional role of providing policy guidance for it, perplexed William C. Hall, the State Department's chief budget officer: "Either the Federal Bureau of Investigation or the Central Intelligence Agency might be considered as more appropriate agencies to direct it."⁵

The State Department's incongruous administration of the Indonesian police program was at least partially explained by Sukanto's lack of confidence in CIA. In a letter to Louise Morris, he wrote: "I have made it clear to Mr. Cochran that I want only to deal with you, Ray [Murphy] + Bill [Lacy] + under no reason, with C.I.A. I [have] had enough." Morris, in turn, informed James L. O'Sullivan, the department's acting officer in charge of Indonesian and Pacific Island Affairs: "The whole subject of C.I.A. is most touchy." Referring to widespread "gossip" about the agency among Indonesian leaders, she wrote: "Regardless of [CIA station chief Arthur] Campbell's unquestioned ability, as long as he is connected with that outfit, we will come up against a stone wall as far as Hatta, the Sultan [of Jogjakarta] + Soekanto are concerned."⁶

In addition to accompanying Sukanto on his visits to the New York City Police Department and to the United Kingdom and Italy, Morris had attended a meeting at the State Department on November 21, 1949, when the police chief was finally encouraged by William Lacy to develop "a definite and final list" of materiel for his paramilitary Mobile Brigade. Based on her nearly yearlong association with Sukanto, she submitted a proposal to the State Department for training the Indonesian police in early December. On the fourteenth of that month, Morris wrote to Lacy that she had told Sukanto to communicate with him through Consul General Beam and "not through Arthur C. [Campbell] until things are clarified."⁷

Eager for a significant role in the training program, Morris wanted to be in charge of developing an intelligence capability within the police force that would include branches for R&A, X-2, and psychological warfare. “If any other plan has been presented for the Intelligence Section,” she wrote to Lacy, “I have not seen it, and since I understand that I am to be included in the team to work with R. S. Soekanto, I have taken the liberty of proposing that in this initial stage, I assume the responsibility for the section dealing with intelligence.” In a follow-up note to Lacy, Morris wrote that Murphy did “not understand” intelligence services and that he wanted to “eliminate” this part of the Indonesian program.⁸

It was, however, Louise Morris who was eliminated from the police training program. She had apparently overleveraged her close relationship with Sukanto, overestimated Lacy’s discretion with his colleagues, and underestimated the bureaucratic influence of CIA. Cochran, who had resigned from the UNCI to become the US ambassador to Indonesia, objected to Morris’s advice to Sukanto about the US mission officials with whom he should communicate. Lacy informed the ambassador that he had taken unnamed “measures to discourage [Morris] from continuing direct correspondence with Sukanto.” A subsequent message to Cochran declared that Morris would “not be involved in [the police training] project or have any responsibility in it except perhaps as [an] occasional lecturer. [The department] recognizes [the] difficulty [of] persuading Sukanto to accept this and plans, when informing her, to induce her [to] do whatever [is] possible [to] obtain Sukanto[’s] acceptance.”⁹

Raymond Westerling, having extended by one month his January 12 deadline for recognition of APRA as the official security force in West Java, launched the first phase of a coup d’état on

January 23, 1950. At approximately 8:30 a.m., a few hundred APRA troops, joined by deserters from a KNIL commando regiment and by forces from an RIS recruiting depot, attacked Bandung, the capital of Pasundan. Seizing key installations, Westerling's troops killed some seventy TNI¹⁰ soldiers and a smaller number of civilians. After negotiations with Major General E. Engles, commander of Netherlands forces in West Java, the day-long occupation of Bandung ended with the unimpeded withdrawal of Westerling's troops from the city. According to a report on the attack by the Netherlands Army Command, General Engles's "prudence" prevented "further bloodshed, chaos and misery."¹¹

Engles's actions were viewed more skeptically by others, including Indonesians and Australians who were suspicious of a Netherlands general negotiating with a rebel movement led by a former Dutch officer. On January 24, Hatta told Cochran that the APRA withdrawal "would not solve [the] situation. On [the] contrary, [it] left [a] dangerous threat to Bandung and [a] situation which might spread to other areas." Hatta, who blamed the Netherlands for not heeding earlier Indonesian warnings about Westerling, was unsympathetic to Dutch assertions that the rebel was now the responsibility of the RIS and that Netherlands and KNIL troops would be reluctant to fight former comrades. There was "strong" evidence, Cochran reported to the State Department, that Dutch military officers were either unwilling "or incapable of commanding and directing their forces" in ways that would "contribute to law and order [in] Indonesia."¹²

That same day, Cochran met with Netherlands High Commissioner Hirschfeld, warning him that the "intransigence" of the Netherlands military was "spoiling" the results of the RTC. Hirschfeld responded that virtually all of the deserters participating in the Bandung attack had surrendered to the Dutch military and that they were being flown to an offshore island pending court martial. Hirschfeld, perhaps the most respected civil servant in the Netherlands for his

administration of Marshall Plan aid and his role in resolving the debt dispute at the RTC, had developed good relations with the Indonesian delegates at the conference. According to CIA analysts, his selection as high commissioner—in effect, the Dutch ambassador to their union partner—was “a strong indication” of the Netherlands commitment to cooperating with Indonesia. Yet in this conversation with Cochran, Hirschfeld “still insisted” that the Westerling rebellion was an RIS “affair no matter how much he regretted [that the] Netherlands had not cleared up this situation before [the] transfer [of] sovereignty.”¹³

The brief occupation of Bandung was followed by other, less spectacular APRA operations. On January 25, Westerling’s troops temporarily seized the town of Padalarang some ten miles northwest of Bandung, cutting telephone connections and disrupting train service to Jakarta, formerly known as Batavia and the capital of the RIS. But in the absence of new, hoped-for KNIL deserters, Westerling’s military force dwindled to perhaps dozens of fighters. An abortive attack against Jakarta ended ignominiously, with APRA troops hiding in the city after failing to achieve their objective of assassinating the RIS defense minister Sultan Hamengku Buwono of Jogjakarta and other members of the cabinet. On January 28, Hatta told Cochran that the TNI was “increasingly alert” to Westerling’s plans and was able to thwart them, particularly in Jakarta.¹⁴

Four days later, Hirschfeld assured Cochran that he “now had [the] cooperation [of] Netherlands military leaders and [that the] Westerling threat [was] declining.” According to historian Hans Meijer, the Dutch military had helped reduce this threat by providing “logistic” support, rather than combat forces, to the TNI.¹⁵ Hirschfeld told Cochran that he was “constantly counselling his people [to] be patient and not expect [a] month-old government [to] function smoothly.” The US ambassador replied by expressing regret over Westerling’s impact on RIS

progress, by reassuring Hirschfeld of Indonesian confidence in him, and by noting the difficulties posed by “some Netherlands military” and the “old colonial group.” A subsequent CIA analysis concluded: “Westerling was supported, not by the Netherlands government, but by private Dutch citizens.”¹⁶

On February 4, Hatta and Hirschfeld issued a joint statement confirming their coordinated policy to halt activities “impeding [the] rapid and constructive development” of the RIS. Included in the statement was an expression of regret from the high commissioner about desertions from Netherlands forces during the “recent disturbances.” Despite the cooperation between Indonesian and Dutch leaders, Westerling still remained at large. He threatened further attacks against Bandung and Jakarta, but this was a bluff. He was on the run, reaching out to “KNIL officers who refused to help him.”¹⁷

The attempted Westerling coup took an embarrassing turn for the United States on the night of February 9, when the Dutch rebel appeared at the home of Major John P. McMahon, a Marine Corps aviator and the embassy’s naval attaché. McMahon, who compared the RIS to a “banana republic,”¹⁸ showed Cochran an account of his clandestine meeting with Westerling the next morning. The ambassador pointed out the impropriety of an embassy official receiving a “known enemy of [the] state being sought by [a] government which we [were] trying to support.” McMahon replied that his obligations as an intelligence officer required him to meet with Westerling and prevented him from turning the rebel over to Indonesian authorities. Characterizing the visit as a “surprise,” McMahon said that he had never met Westerling before and told him not to come back. When reporting the incident to the State Department, Cochran

requested the replacement of McMahon with a military intelligence officer who was more “open-minded” and “objective.”¹⁹

Later on February 10, UK diplomat A. C. Stewart told Consul General Beam, “with considerable agitation,” that Westerling had arrived at the home of a British subject in the US naval attaché’s car the previous evening. From another source, Beam learned that Westerling and a woman had been spotted in McMahon’s officially marked automobile. When summoned by Beam, McMahon acknowledged that he had sent Westerling and his wife away in the attaché’s official car. McMahon reported that the rebel was “discouraged and thinking [of] leaving [the] country.” When Cochran learned about these additional details, he instructed Beam to demand the attaché’s “immediate recall and departure” from Indonesia.²⁰

On February 12, Beam reported that McMahon had amended his story further. He now admitted that he had personally driven Westerling and his wife to the house of the British subject. The rebel, McMahon added, said that he had APRA troops in Jakarta “but was now short of money.” The attaché stated that he had advised Westerling to “disband [his] forces and close out” the rebellion.²¹ With US officials in Jakarta and Washington fearing exposure of the Westerling-McMahon connection, Beam informed Hatta of the incident, conveying his regret and announcing McMahon’s imminent departure for the United States. The prime minister expressed appreciation for this information, saying he had reports of Westerling’s contact with an officer of the American embassy.²²

The removal of McMahon did not end the diplomatic risk posed by dubious relationships between Westerling and US military intelligence officers. Lieutenant Colonel John Malloy, an army attaché who had recently been reassigned to the United States because his liaison work with Netherlands intelligence made it “inadvisable” for him to remain in Indonesia,²³ was a

known acquaintance of Westerling and shared the views of Dutch hardliners. During the RTC, he had reported to the Department of the Army that there was “no doubt” that the policy in Indonesia “forced” by the UNCI was “driving this area directly into the hands of the Communists.” In another intelligence report, he agreed with Admiral “Helfrich that if the regime of Sukarno-Hatta is to head the Indonesian Government, it will be but a short time before Communism will take over.” Cochran, after learning about McMahon’s meeting with Westerling, wrote to Washington that Malloy’s “overt involvement” with the rebel should disqualify him from working on Indonesian affairs in the United States.²⁴

Malloy became a more pressing problem for Cochran after the arrest of Westerling associate John Thiessen Jr. in the Netherlands in February 1950. A search of his belongings revealed many incriminating documents and a letter of introduction on US Foreign Service stationary signed by Malloy. In Jakarta, Hirschfeld showed Cochran a photostat of the letter, dated August 18, 1949, and addressed to Colonel Joseph A. Holly, then the army attaché in the American embassy in The Hague. Malloy’s letter read, in part, “[Thiessen’s] visit to you is one suggested by me with a view to showing you how critical the situation is here in spite of the reports circulating which indicate all runs smooth in Indonesia. Anything which you can do to assist Mr. Thiessen will be appreciated. I am sure that he has a story which will be of great interest to you.”²⁵

Livingston T. Merchant, deputy assistant secretary of state for far eastern affairs, found Malloy’s letter disturbing and wanted to know “what Colonel Holly did, if anything,” to assist Thiessen. When questioned by a State Department official, Holly said that he did not recall receiving a letter of introduction from him. The army officer admitted that he met Thiessen

around the time of the RTC. The conversation, however, was short, and Holly said that he neither encountered Thiessen again nor did anything for him.²⁶

Compounding the diplomatic awkwardness of Malloy's letter of introduction was the timing of its revelation to Cochran—February 21, the day the news broke that Westerling had escaped from Indonesia to Singapore. He had obviously received help but from whom? The answer arrived in a letter to Hatta from Vice Admiral F. J. Kist, commander of the Royal Netherlands Navy in Indonesia, who admitted that Westerling had flown out of Jakarta Bay on a Dutch seaplane bound for Malaya. Admiral Kist urged the prime minister not to blame the pilot, who was acting under orders from his “military commander.” Hirschfeld subsequently announced that the Netherlands military personnel who had helped Westerling escape would face “strong measures.”²⁷

In a conversation with Cochran and Beam on March 3, W. H. Fockema Andreae, the Netherlands secretary of state for war, “expressed utmost bitterness” about the Dutch military's support for Westerling. Fockema Andreae asked Beam if he knew why Dutch authorities had not heeded his earlier warnings about Westerling. The Dutch diplomats, Beam replied, had presumably “been deceived by [the] Netherlands military.” According to Cochran's account of the conversation, Fockema Andreae said that General Engles—the West Java commander praised by the Netherlands army for his “prudence” in Bandung—was the “villain” in the Westerling affair. A member of the center-right VVD, Fockema Andreae said that Engles and others who helped Westerling were “worse than traitors” and that the general “ought to be hanged.”²⁸

Fockema Andreae was likely overstating his outrage to the Americans. He had arrived in Indonesia in early February with instructions from the Netherlands cabinet “to get Westerling out

of the country, one way or another,”²⁹ presumably to prevent a trial that could only damage Dutch relations with Indonesia even more grievously. According to Hirschfeld, Fockema Andreae “knew in advance of plans [by] Netherlands army officers” to use a navy seaplane to aid Westerling’s escape. When Hirschfeld learned of this foreknowledge, he had Fockema Andreae reveal the “entire story” to Hatta and the sultan of Jogjakarta. The high commissioner told Cochran that the Indonesian leaders had “kept the story quiet and continued to cooperate with Fockema in spite [of] their great unhappiness over Westerling’s escape.”³⁰

On March 15, Fockema Andreae informed Cochran that he had taken personal responsibility for the role of “his boys” in Westerling’s flight, a gesture that he claimed Indonesia’s leaders seemed to appreciate. When Fockema Andreae praised the “statesmanlike manner” of Sukarno, Hatta, and the sultan of Jogjakarta, Cochran said that he had confidence in their ability “to run their government successfully if given half [a] chance.” In reply, Fockema Andreae asked Cochran, “ironically,” whether his “military people felt [the] same.”³¹

In Singapore, where Westerling was jailed for illegally entering the British colony and assaulting an Indonesian cellmate, the rebel’s extradition raised legal questions and created diplomatic problems. For example, did the Anglo-Netherlands extradition treaty still apply to the new RIS government? And even if it did, the treaty did not appear to allow extradition for political crimes. According to the UK Foreign Office, the Netherlands government claimed to be “uninterested” in the Westerling extradition case and would be “agreeable” to any decision made by the British. The US embassy in London reported to Washington that “Foreign Office officials have expressed considerable annoyance [at] this effort [by the] Dutch [to] avoid responsibility.”³²

In mid-March, Duncan C. Campbell, a regional labor attaché working out of the US embassy in Jakarta, visited Singapore, where he spoke with A. R. McEwan, the Special Branch officer who arrested Westerling. During his interrogation, Westerling allegedly had said that “Duncan Campbell was a good friend” who entertained him at his “residence in Bogor.” According to Campbell, McEwan “wasted two bottles of perfectly good whisky in an obvious attempt to get me to admit that I had known Westerling.” McEwan was apparently unaware that two unrelated Campbells—one of whom was the CIA chief of station—served in the US mission in Jakarta. Duncan Campbell, perhaps as a security precaution, said nothing to enlighten McEwan on this topic.³³

In a memorandum to Ambassador Cochran with the subject line, “Westerling Gossip in Singapore,” Campbell revealed that this was not his first instance of mistaken identity associated with the Westerling coup. During the week preceding his trip to Singapore, he had received three “urgent” phone calls from the wife of a Dutch civilian official implicated in the rebellion and arrested by the Indonesians: “It turned out that I was the wrong Campbell.” Duncan Campbell further reported Westerling’s alleged lack of concern about fleeing Indonesia because of assurances from Major McMahon that he “would be flown out at any convenient time in the United States Naval Liaison aircraft.” Campbell, declaring that he had never met the rebel, acknowledged to Cochran: “Obviously there are a lot of matters having to do with this business that have no particular meaning to me and this statement is being made at the suggestion of Mr. Beam.”³⁴

Westerling's failed rebellion accelerated the dissolution of Indonesia's generally unpopular federal system of government. Pasundan Prime Minister Anwar Tjokroaminoto was arrested for allegedly conspiring to overthrow the RIS government. The Pasundan head of state, Wiranatakusuma, resigned and was replaced by an RIS representative to lead the state's government.³⁵ Westerling's efforts to seek support for his coup included approaching Sultan Hamid II of Pontianak, which presented the RIS with an opportunity to arrest and imprison a leading federalist. CIA analysts estimated that only East Indonesia, the state with the strongest Dutch influence, was "likely to offer strenuous opposition to this process of reorganization into a centralized Republic."³⁶

The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs found political, military, and economic developments in Indonesia "disturbing." H. N. Boon, now secretary general of the ministry, told Ambassador Chapin about "alarming reports" of "internal instability" in the archipelago. There had been looting, property destruction, TNI "foraging," and the "absorption" of states into the Republic, said Boon. And it was "very possible that a Communist inclined local government" would be established near Medan, Sumatra. Making a dubious analogy, Boon said that the RIS government now faced the same difficulties the Netherlands did after the second police action: the "preservation [of] order and disruptive political maneuvers."³⁷

In Washington, Ambassador van Kleffens discussed Indonesia with Dean Acheson on March 21. Reading from notes he left with the secretary, van Kleffens described a widespread "process of disintegration" that was causing "growing concern" in The Hague. "Fundamental principles" of the RTC agreement had "been undermined to a dangerous extent." Moreover, the move toward a unitary Republic of Indonesia disregarded the "internationally recognized interests of wide areas and millions of people."³⁸

Commenting on internal security, van Kleffens mentioned the successes of Darul Islam and leftist military forces: “[The] TNI has lost influence over large areas in Java and Sumatra.” In the economic sphere, the Netherlands government alleged that unstable civil administration and TNI weakness reduced production, threatened living standards, and permitted terrorism targeting European plantation workers. Indirectly criticizing Sukarno and Hatta, the Dutch note stated that the RIS did “not sufficiently try to control its military and civil apparatus” and was “merely trying to maintain a precarious balance.” The Netherlands appealed to the United States to “give thought to the need of strengthening the influence” of the RIS government.³⁹

When informed of the Dutch appraisal, Cochran replied to the State Department that nothing yet had caused him to “worry greatly or lose confidence.” It seemed to him that Netherlands officials were repeating the same tactic they had employed during the GOC and UNCI negotiations: arguing that Indonesians were unable to “create and operate [an] independent state.” Cochran wrote that he had “unhesitatingly” informed the department of RIS “difficulties and disappointments” and would continue to do so. He feared, however, that any confirmation of the Dutch “thesis” would “be used against [the] UN and US” rather than utilized as a constructive contribution to strengthening the RIS government.⁴⁰

To Cochran’s irritation, Foreign Minister Stikker not only continued to press his pessimistic view of Indonesian affairs, but also asked the State Department to have the US ambassador provide the Netherlands with “an unbiased account [of the] actual situation.” The insultingly phrased request triggered an emotionally charged response from Cochran, who suggested that the large number of senior Dutch officials visiting Indonesia were “amply able” to write such a report for Stikker. Moreover, Hirschfeld communicated daily with The Hague. And if the Netherlands—or the Republic, for that matter—wanted a factual report on a matter that

was still before the Security Council, the UNCI should be asked to provide it, not an ex-member of the commission who was “responsible solely to his own government.” Cochran charged that it was characteristic of Stikker to “cry wolf,” which he had done “repeatedly [over the] past two years and always in [a] manner to embarrass [the] US.”⁴¹

Cochran admitted to the State Department that Dutch officials’ bleak assessments had some basis in fact: “Most [of] their information, however, [was] either out of date or so distorted or exaggerated as to give [an] untrue picture.” He acknowledged that the “rapid, ruthless” movement toward a unitary state was being pushed by nationalists in Jogjakarta who succeeded Sukarno, Hatta, and other leaders of the Republican state. Although the transition was more aggressive than RIS officials had planned, Cochran believed that a strong central government was the only way to establish law and order. The TNI, he wrote, had done a “good job” of keeping the peace during the RTC and the transfer of sovereignty. Moreover, the army had exercised restraint after the “massacre” of Indonesian troops in Bandung during the Westerling rebellion. Cochran conceded that some TNI units had “lived off the land” and levied taxes on plantations. Such expropriation, which was a consequence of weak TNI supply and pay systems, would be “remedied [as] quickly as possible.”⁴²

Cochran recommended that the United States advise the Netherlands to “exercise patience and be honestly helpful with [the RIS] in difficulties yet to come.” Instead of repeatedly condemning Hatta as a “weakling,” the Dutch should withdraw and punish “their officials whose treachery to [the RIS] has been demonstrated.” And if the Netherlands sincerely wanted a successful union with Indonesia, the Dutch “should aid and encourage Hatta rather than cast aspersions on his ability and permit old colonials [to] undermine and defy him.” Cochran

concluded that it was “nonsense” for Stikker to imply that the Netherlands lacked influence in Indonesia and that the United State should “push Hatta into acting forcefully.”⁴³

The impassioned tone of Cochran’s cable may have been influenced by another Dutch attempt to have him recalled from Indonesia. In a meeting with Netherlands Defense Minister W. F. Schokking, US Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson, and Ambassador Chapin on March 29, Fockema Andreae reported on his visit to Indonesia. Raising “an extremely delicate matter,” he said that Cochran seemed “extremely tired” and “disillusioned.” According to Chapin, Fockema Andreae “implied doubt whether our Embassy now had the necessary sources of information as to [the] real conditions throughout Indonesia.” In his report to the State Department, Chapin wrote: “The inference was inescapable that Minister Schokking and Dr. Fockema Andreae felt that it might be desirable to replace Mr. Cochran with someone whose health and frame of mind would permit him to be more vigorous.”⁴⁴

To State Department officials with long experience in Indonesian affairs, the indirect request for Cochran’s recall reflected what George W. Perkins, assistant secretary of state for European affairs, called “an unfortunate tendency of the Dutch to embark upon ‘character assassination’ of various United States officials when the going is particularly tough for the Dutch in Indonesia.” In a memorandum to Acheson, Perkins recalled that Netherlands representatives had denounced “the inaccuracy and the irresponsibility” of Philip Jessup’s statements in the Security Council after the second Dutch military offensive. And although no US diplomat had been declared *persona non grata* by the Netherlands, “none of our top representatives in Indonesia has escaped personal vituperation by various high Dutch officials.”⁴⁵

Ambassador Chapin and embassy counsellor Robert D. Coe were “surprised” by Fockema Andreae’s comments about Cochran. Neither diplomat had ever “heard any

Netherlands official make any such remarks” about him.⁴⁶ In a cable to the State Department, Chapin defended Stikker and the sincerity of Dutch concerns about Indonesia. “Since my arrival here,” the ambassador wrote, “I have seen no evidence that Stikker at any time has sought deliberately to ‘embarrass [the] US.’” Chapin, a graduate of the US Naval Academy, joined the State Department in 1925 and was the first director-general of the Foreign Service, 1946–1947. Immediately preceding his appointment to The Hague, he was the US minister in Hungary, where the communist government declared him *persona non grata* for allegedly conspiring to restore the monarchy. Acknowledging his lack of first-hand knowledge about conditions in Indonesia, Chapin reported that he had found Stikker “universally appreciative of US aims and assistance and sincerely desirous to cooperate.”⁴⁷

On April 5, 1950, Captain Andi Abdul Aziz led a KNIL rebellion in Macassar, a city in South Celebes and the capital of East Indonesia. Opposed to the planned landing of an APRIS battalion, Aziz and his force of approximately 300 KNIL soldiers and East Indonesian police arrested the local APRIS commander and his subordinates and seized key installations in the city. A recent transfer to APRIS from the KNIL, Aziz was a twenty-five-year-old company commander who had been educated in the Netherlands, joined NICA, and seen “some active service against the TNI” during the revolution.⁴⁸ Backed by East Indonesia minister of justice C. R. S. Soumokil and other state officials, Aziz vowed to stop the APRIS battalion from landing in Macassar.

The RIS defense ministry ordered Aziz to confine his troops to their barracks, release the APRIS prisoners, and report immediately to Jakarta. According to acting APRIS chief of staff

Simatupang, his government asked Netherlands officials to withdraw KNIL forces from Macassar, which would permit the restoration of order “without serious trouble or bloodshed.” The Dutch, however, indicated that removing the KNIL from the city was “not feasible since Netherlands officers could not control [their] troops.”⁴⁹ KNIL soldiers, most of whom resented the Dutch “loss” of Indonesia and the choice of either integration into APRIS or demobilization, had already committed many acts of insubordination and disobedience.

Prime Minister Hatta urged a negotiated settlement of the emergency in Macassar. Such an outcome seemed likely after representatives from the RIS, the Jogjakarta government, and the state of East Indonesia agreed to defer a decision about merging East Indonesia into a unitary state. “With all official statements deploring the revolt against USI authority, a peaceful political settlement of the [Macassar] uprising is possible,” the CIA concluded. “If such a settlement is not forthcoming, however, the USI is prepared to undertake large-scale punitive action to settle the affair.”⁵⁰

With Aziz refusing to obey RIS orders, President Sukarno made a speech on Radio Jakarta on April 13, declaring the captain “an insurgent.” Urging the East Indonesian government to “treat him as someone holding illegitimate authority,” Sukarno appealed to his “Indonesian brothers in the KNIL” to “remain quiet and calm” and to “refrain from all action which could harm the future of yourselves and your families.” According to historian Richard Chauvel, “Soumokil described Soekarno’s speech as a ‘declaration of war.’”⁵¹

The president’s remarks seemed “effective” to Ambassador Cochran and High Commissioner Hirschfeld.⁵² Aziz, believing he had been granted safe conduct, was persuaded to travel to Jakarta, where he was promptly arrested. On April 19, APRIS troops landed south of Macassar, and the remaining rebels surrendered without a fight. Two days later, the president of

East Indonesia, Tjokorda Gde Raka Soekawati, announced that the state was prepared to join a unitary republic.

Soekawati's political capitulation triggered Indonesia's third uprising of 1950. On April 25, Ambonese secessionists severed all political ties with the RIS and the state of East Indonesia and proclaimed an independent Republic of the South Moluccas (*Republik Maluku Selatan*, or RMS), an island group some 500 miles east of Macassar. As in South Celebes, a civilian leader of the rebellion was Soumokil, who was born in Java to an Ambonese family and received a doctorate in law at Leiden University. When Aziz's revolt was crumbling, a Netherlands military aircraft flew Soumokil to Ambon. According to Dutch officials, Soumokil told them that he wanted "to confer with his police" and prevent a mutiny.⁵³

Hatta sought a peaceful settlement of this rebellion, too, dispatching a negotiating team to Ambon led by RIS Minister of Health Dr. Johannes Leimena. A Republican Ambonese, Leimena arrived at the island on an Indonesian navy corvette on May 1. He invited RMS leaders to come aboard the ship for talks, but the rebels rejected any discussions before being recognized as a sovereign state, among other demands. "Sending the Leimena mission in a warship doomed the negotiations to failure," wrote Chauvel. "The fate of Aziz when he went to Jakarta was too fresh in the minds of the RMS leaders for them to contemplate going on board."⁵⁴

The RMS army was a battalion of approximately 1,200 KNIL troops. On May 8, Colonel L. Schotborgh, former commander of the mutinous battalion, and other Netherlands officials arrived in Ambon to "work out a solution." About 200 soldiers complied with his order to abandon the mutiny and withdraw from the island. Schotborgh, who had been greeted with a parade, accepted the return of the Dutch and KNIL flags from the 1,000 resigning troops. "This

demonstration of comraderie [*sic*],” Cochran reported to the State Department, “is not regarded by the Indonesians as a very great effort at a solution.”⁵⁵

The RIS government ordered a naval blockade around Ambon. It also threatened to invade the island, which CIA analysts initially considered “no more than a gesture.” Although APRIS could easily assemble a numerically superior force, the Indonesian army had no experience with amphibious assaults against well-trained defenders. Moreover, APRIS lacked the large, seagoing landing craft necessary for such an operation. (At Macassar, life boats from passenger ships had been used for the unopposed landing.) The military realities of an Ambon invasion, according to Edward Dow, the acting US representative on the UNCI since Cochran’s appointment as ambassador, were responsible for the RIS government’s “extremely cautious” approach to an “open rebellion.”⁵⁶

Despite the unresolved crisis in Ambon, East Indonesia and East Sumatra authorized the RIS to act on their behalf in negotiations with the Jogjakarta government to establish a unitary state. An agreement in principle was reached on May 19, with constitutional and parliamentary arrangements to be finalized by August 17, the fifth anniversary of the proclamation establishing the Republic of Indonesia. Sir Derwent Kermode, the British ambassador to Indonesia, observed to the Foreign Office that the new, unitary state, whatever its ultimate form, would likely blend “socialistic principles and nationalistic spirit, with particular emphasis on emancipation from the West.”⁵⁷

This inclination, Kermode declared, was not the work of communists but “the heritage of long years of colonial exploitation.” He warned that the West was “on probation. Indonesians are asking themselves whether our concern for their welfare is genuine or whether it is just another attempt to exploit them, this time politically, for Western benefit.” Commenting on the

unwillingness of Indonesian officials to take sides in the cold war, Kermode wrote: “We may marvel at the naïveté of people who believe that they can maintain neutrality in the present conflict, but that is their ardent desire, and if they suspect us of trying to manoeuvre them on to our side the most likely result will be a recoil in the other direction.”⁵⁸

For Merle Cochran, armed dissidence in Indonesia and the planned withdrawal of Dutch troops confirmed the “wisdom” of the covert US plan to equip and train Sukanto’s Mobile Brigade. Although Indonesia did “not appear vulnerable in any important degree to armed Communist activity,” according to CIA analysts, Cochran thought that a national police force possessing the “latest equipment in arms, transportation and communication” would help check the “trend” toward communism in the archipelago. He argued that American investments in economic assistance and the police program “would be much smaller than those required if [the] situation was allowed [to] deteriorate to [the] point where [a] Communist invasion or uprising might take place.”⁵⁹

The development of the police project was delayed by bureaucratic, management, and logistic problems. Although President Truman was not accountable to congress for Section 303 expenditures, he and the Bureau of the Budget viewed those funds “as peculiarly their own,” according to William G. Hall, director of the Office of Management and Budget. Hall warned the State Department that the presidential authorization of \$5 million for police equipment was approved “in principle only.” Any allocation of funds would require a detailed “analysis of the purpose and scope of the program, as well as a schedule of the equipment to be purchased.”

Moreover, information supporting an allocation request would have to be “thoroughly coordinated” with Department of Defense, which would provide the materiel.⁶⁰

To make informed judgments about equipping Sukanto’s police, the Defense Department needed answers to practical questions about the size, nature, and organization of his force and the specific materiel required. What kind of action will the police engage in and what are the arms of its adversary? What are Indonesia’s resources for maintaining and repairing the US equipment? Who would arrange for the transportation of the materiel? The State Department’s inability to provide prompt answers to such questions led MDAP Director James Bruce to conclude: “The Indonesian case is a good illustration of the difficulties which must inevitably be encountered when a program is supported and pushed through without adequate initial formulation and without a real understanding of the facts which are essential to its proper evaluation and development.”⁶¹

The State Department informed Cochran of the “continuing and growing pressure” for a more precise justification of the police program and a detailed list of required equipment. After conferring with Hatta and Sukanto, Cochran provided answers to Defense Department questions but declared that a proposed preliminary military survey was “unnecessary.” He added that there would be “no objection, of course,” to discussions with a military representative associated with the visiting economic survey mission led by R. Allen Griffin of the ECA.⁶² Conversations with Indonesian officials, however, would be subject to the wishes of Hatta, who had been reluctant to reveal the police program to members of his own cabinet, much less the public. In addition to its political sensitivity, Cochran warned, the police project had the potential to create a problem with APRIS, which was experiencing delays in the planned transfer of weapons from the KNIL and might appropriate the “new equipment being sought for the constabulary.”⁶³

Revisions to Sukanto's list of requested materiel delayed its delivery to Indonesia. On April 16, one day after providing Cochran with a detailed accounting of arms, vehicles, and radios approved by the Department of Defense, the State Department received a heavily modified list of equipment requested by the police chief. For example, instead of 1,000 Thompson submachine guns, he wanted 2,500 Harrington and Richardson submachine guns. In place of 10,000 Colt .38 caliber revolvers, he asked for the same number of the equivalent Smith and Wesson model. Sukanto also wanted the United States to supplement the fifty Harley-Davidson motorcycles recommended by the Defense Department with 100 Indian motorcycles.⁶⁴

US officials in Washington and Jakarta suspected that arms broker Robert MacDonald was behind at least some of the revised requests. MacDonald, who had told the State Department that Sukanto intended to use him as a "purchasing agent," complained to Cochran about the police chief's failure to carry out his contract with him. The ambassador wrote to the department that he was sure the idea for additional Indian motorcycles originated with MacDonald, who had mentioned his desire for the US government to procure them. Cochran observed that he was "not sufficiently familiar" with MacDonald's manufacturing clients to know if he had influenced the selection of other items on Sukanto's revised list.⁶⁵

Neither the State nor Defense Department was prepared to accept this arbitrary, if not corrupt, approach to military assistance. (Cochran subsequently learned, "confidentially," that MacDonald "appointed a friend of Sukanto's as [the] local agent for Indian motorcycles.")⁶⁶ On April 17, the State Department advised Cochran that a military survey team should visit Indonesia to discuss the technical aspects of various kinds of equipment and suggest "efficient substitutes." This team would also provide advice about shipping, maintaining, and securing the materiel. Reversing his earlier judgment about the value of a military survey mission, Cochran

replied that he appreciated the “advantages” of such a team and that Hatta had approved its visit.⁶⁷

Providing military equipment was only one part of the US program to strengthen Sukanto’s police force. Another was training its leaders in the United States. The State Department, which withdrew from this particular responsibility, informed Cochran that CIA was “financing and fully responsible” for the project, with the department providing “cover.” Because Sukanto was wary of the agency, Washington officials admitted that they would “prefer not [to] disclose” CIA’s responsibility for the program. But since the police chief would inevitably find out, Cochran should tell Sukanto and respond to any objection by noting the department’s “firm decision” about CIA and its “confidence” in the project. Washington emphasized to the ambassador that the secrecy of agency responsibility for the training should “be impressed upon Sukanto.”⁶⁸

The CIA training program was a customized eight-week course for six officers at a time. The curriculum included traditional law enforcement topics—for example, arrests, reports, and marksmanship and firearms. There was also instruction in intelligence and paramilitary subjects—espionage, counterespionage, explosives, and sabotage.⁶⁹ The training base in the United States was a former country estate in Clinton, Maryland, some twelve miles southeast of Washington, DC. The approximately 100-acre site, used by OSS as an SI school during the war, was nicknamed “the Farm”—not to be confused with the much larger CIA training facility with the same nickname at Camp Peary near Williamsburg, Virginia.

The first class of six Indonesian officers arrived in the United States on July 9. Each could read and write English, but none had much experience speaking the language. According to the State Department, the Indonesians seemed “favorably impressed” with their training and “personal treatment.”⁷⁰ Department officials, however, were unhappy about a Jakarta news broadcast that had announced the group’s departure to the United States for a program of police instruction at the State Department. In a letter to Cochran, James O’Sullivan suggested that either the ambassador or Arthur Campbell should inform Sukanto of the US government’s “rather dim view of publicity” for the project and ask “him to exercise greater discretion in the future.”⁷¹

The third part of the US police training program was an Indonesian-based adviser. CIA suggested to the State Department that the Indonesian government hire Louis E. Kubler, a fifty-year-old veteran of both world wars. He had worked for the New Jersey State Police in the 1920s and 1930s, most prominently on the investigation of the kidnapping of Charles and Anne Morrow Lindbergh’s son. An OSS security officer in Italy and China during World War II, Kubler stayed on with SSU and its successor agencies, serving as the executive officer in the mission in Germany. His work there included supervising the relocation of agents who had completed their clandestine work and the alteration and forgery of birth certificates, identity cards, and other documents for defectors.⁷²

In a limited-distribution, top-secret cable to Cochran drafted by the State Department’s intelligence office, Kubler was described as an “exceptionally well-qualified candidate” to advise the Indonesian police. The ambassador was encouraged to indicate to RIS officials the department’s high regard for Kubler but without revealing his “connection” to CIA. Kubler, the telegram declared, should be considered a “private” US citizen “available for hire.” Although the department thought it “desirable” for the RIS to pay his salary and expenses, CIA was prepared

to “supplement” any Indonesian offer. After Kubler was eventually hired by the Indonesian government, Arthur Campbell informed Cochran that the American adviser had established “an office in Sukanto’s house.”⁷³

The police chief was something of a puzzle to US officials. In November 1950, Jacob Beam observed to Lacy that no one in the US mission had seen any member of the first group of police trainees since their return from the United States in early September. “Sukanto may be keeping them away from us,” Beam wrote. “Personally, I like the general and I think he is basically our friend but he has given us damned little countervalue in the way of intelligence.” Ambassador Cochran subsequently echoed this thought, commenting: “The General himself is very shy these days about giving information or taking a very definite stand on any question.”⁷⁴

Like many leaders of Indonesia’s armed forces and security services, Sukanto was both an anticommunist and a nationalist who was suspicious of Western intentions. In 1957–1958, when the Eisenhower administration covertly sought support from leading Indonesian anticommunists to overthrow Sukarno for his neutralism, Sukanto, Hatta, and the sultan of Jogjakarta all refused to participate in such drastic US intervention in their country’s internal affairs. The failure of the CIA-backed coup, which was fueled more by regional grievances than conflicting political ideologies, prompted a reappraisal of US policy. Francis T. Underhill, who had served in the Jakarta embassy and on the State Department’s Indonesia desk, wrote: “We overestimated the strength of anti-communism as a primary motivating and unifying factor among the various groups in armed opposition to the central government.”⁷⁵

¹ NSC 48/2, December 30, 1949, *FRUS, 1949, Vol. VII, Part 2*, d. 387.

² “United States: Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949,” October 6, 1949, *The American Journal of International Law*, January 1950.

³ Ohly to Rusk, January 5, 1950, RG 59, Entry A1 1473, box 84.

⁴ Acheson to Truman, January 9, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 608; Acheson, memorandum of conversation, January 9, 1950, HSTL, DAP, www.trumanlibrary.org.

⁵ Acheson to Truman, January 9, 1950; Murphy to John E. Peurifoy, January 26, 1950, and Hall to Merchant, February 6, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 5106.

⁶ Sukanto to Morris, January 25, 1950, and Morris to O’Sullivan, February 10, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 5106.

⁷ Lacy, memorandum of conversation, November 21, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1945–1949, box 6443; Morris to Lacy, December 14, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 5106.

⁸ Morris to Lacy, January 18, 1950, and January 24, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 5106.

⁹ Lacy to Cochran, March 17, 1950, and State Dept. to Cochran, April 19, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3758 and box 5106.

¹⁰ After the transfer of sovereignty, the TNI officially became the ground force of the Armed Forces of the Republic of the United States of Indonesia (*Angkatan Perang Republik Indonesia Serikat*, or APRIS.) Because the Republic’s army initially constituted the vast majority of Indonesia’s new military, the abbreviation TNI continued to be used by US, Dutch, and Indonesian officials.

¹¹ Netherlands Army General Staff, report, January 25, 1950, NAA, Series A1838, Republik Indonesia Serikat–Internal Security, Part 1, 1950.

¹² Cochran to State Dept., January 24, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. d. 611.

¹³ Cochran to State Dept., January 24, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. d. 612; CIA, ORE Western Europe Division, “Weekly Summary,” January 10, 1950, www.foia.cia.gov.

¹⁴ Cochran to State Dept., January 28, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3748.

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- ¹⁵ Cochran to State Dept., February 1, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3748; Meijer, email to author, June 18, 2018.
- ¹⁶ Cochran to State Dept., February 1, 1950; CIA, *Daily Digest*, January 25, 1952, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ¹⁷ Cochran to State Dept., February 6, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3748; Meijer, email to author, June 18, 2018.
- ¹⁸ Cochran to State Dept., February 11, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 521.
- ¹⁹ Cochran to State Dept., February 10, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 521.
- ²⁰ Beam to State Dept., February 11, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 521.
- ²¹ Beam to State Dept., February 12, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 521.
- ²² Beam to State Dept., February 13, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 521.
- ²³ Beam to State Dept., November 2, 1949, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 21.
- ²⁴ Malloy to Dept. of the Army, October 17 and October 18, 1949, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 6442; Cochran to State Dept., February 10, 1949.
- ²⁵ Cochran to State Dept., February 21, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3748.
- ²⁶ Merchant to Lacy, February 24, 1950, and Lacy to Merchant, March 1, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3748.
- ²⁷ Cochran to State Dept., February 21, 1950, and March 2, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3748.
- ²⁸ Cochran to State Dept., March 4, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3748.
- ²⁹ Meijer, email to author, June 18, 2018.
- ³⁰ Cochran to State Dept., March 15, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3748.
- ³¹ Cochran to State Dept., March 16, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3748.

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- ³² Julius C. Holmes to State Dept., March 1, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3748.
- ³³ D. Campbell to Cochran, April 6, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3748.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy*, p. 63.
- ³⁶ CIA, *Weekly Summary*, March 10, 1950, www.foia.cia.gov. At his treason trial in 1953, Hamid made a partial confession but denied any complicity in the Westerling attack on Bandung. He was convicted and sentenced to ten years in prison.
- ³⁷ Chapin to State Dept., March 16, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3748.
- ³⁸ Scott, memorandum of conversation, March 21, 1950, HSTL, DAP, www.trumanlibrary.org.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Cochran to State Dept., March 23, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 622.
- ⁴¹ Cochran to State Dept., April 3, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 629.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ Chapin to State Dept., March 30, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 624.
- ⁴⁵ Perkins to Acheson, April 8, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3748.
- ⁴⁶ Coe to State Dept., April 10, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 631.
- ⁴⁷ Chapin to State Dept., April 18, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3748.
- ⁴⁸ Chauvel, *Nationalists, Soldiers and Separatists*, p. 338n.
- ⁴⁹ Cochran to State Dept., April 10, 1950, RG 59, Entry A1 1473, box 84.
- ⁵⁰ CIA, *Weekly Summary*, April 14, 1950, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ⁵¹ Chauvel, *Nationalists, Soldiers and Separatists*, p. 343.
- ⁵² Cochran to State Dept., April 16, 1950, no. 523, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 632.

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- ⁵³ Cochran to State Dept., May 17, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3749.
- ⁵⁴ Chauvel, *Nationalists, Soldiers and Separatists*, p. 381.
- ⁵⁵ Cochran to State Dept., May 17, 1950.
- ⁵⁶ CIA, ORE Far East/Pacific Division, “Weekly Intelligence Highlights,” May 9, 1950, www.foia.cia.gov; Dow to State Dept., June 9, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 1369.
- ⁵⁷ Kermode to Bevin, May 30, 1950, *BDFFA, 1950, Vol. 11*, p. 182.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁹ Cochran to State Dept., May 5, 1950, RG 59, Entry A1 1473, box 84; CIA, *Weekly Summary*, April 14, 1950, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ⁶⁰ Hall to William D. Wright, February 16, 1950, RG 59, Entry A1 1473, box 84.
- ⁶¹ Bruce to James E. Webb, February 13, 1950, RG 59, Entry A1 1473, box 84.
- ⁶² The so-called Griffin mission to Southeast Asia, an American economic response to Mao’s revolution, sought to identify public health projects, agricultural programs, and other forms of economic assistance that could quickly strengthen noncommunist governments and demonstrate US interest in the region. Hampered by a shortage of qualified personnel, the economic aid program in Indonesia did not begin operating until 1951.
- ⁶³ State Dept. to Cochran, February 28, 1950, and Cochran to State Dept., March 2, 1950, RG 59, Entry A1 1473, box 84.
- ⁶⁴ State Dept. to Cochran, April 15, 1950, and Cochran to State Dept., April 16, 1950, no. 524, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 5106.
- ⁶⁵ Willard Galbraith, memorandum, February 28, 1950, and Cochran to State Dept., April 16, 1950, no. 524, RG 59, Entry A1 1393, box 3, and CDF, 1950–1954, box 5106.
- ⁶⁶ Cochran to State Dept., August 8, 1950, RG 59, Entry A1 1473, box 84.

⁶⁷ State Dept. to Cochran, April 17, 1950, and Cochran to State Dept., April 20, 1958, RG 59, Entry A1 1473, box 84.

⁶⁸ State Dept. to Cochran, April 19, 1950.

⁶⁹ Unsigned memorandum, undated, c. April 1, 1950, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 28.

⁷⁰ State Dept. to Cochran, July 21, 1950, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 28.

⁷¹ O'Sullivan to Cochran, July 31, 1950, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 28.

⁷² State Dept. to Cochran, June 12, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 5106; Ruffner, *Eagle and Swastika*, chapter 12, p. 10.

⁷³ State Dept. to Cochran, June 12, 1950; Cochran to O'Sullivan, April 25, 1951, RG 84, Entry UD 2728, box 28.

⁷⁴ Beam to Lacy, November 13, 1950, RG 84, Entry A1 2728, box 28; Cochran to O'Sullivan, April 25, 1951.

⁷⁵ Underhill, "Indonesian Foreign Policy Reappraisal," June 11, 1959, *FRUS, 1958–1960, Vol. XVII*, d. 207.

Chapter 13

Neutrality with a Bias

(1950)

An internal State Department policy statement, dated July 27, 1950, exuded self-satisfaction when looking back on the recent past in Indonesia: The transfer of sovereignty from the Netherlands to the RIS in December 1949 was “a notable success” for US diplomacy and the United Nations. The RTC agreement negotiated at The Hague had largely satisfied Indonesia’s “national aspirations,” while allowing the Netherlands “to preserve friendly relations with her former dependency.” And the United States, retaining “the respect of both parties,” enhanced its “prestige” in Asia by supporting nationalism and “won the confidence of Indonesia’s foremost nationalist leaders who now head the new Government.”¹

The State Department paper stated that it was too soon to evaluate the “success” of US policy in Indonesia since the transfer of sovereignty. This qualification allowed the document’s authors to avoid discussing Indonesia’s aggressive move from a federal to unitary state or the continuing armed dissidence resisting the central government. The department insisted, however, that “none of the basic United States policy objectives has been voided or seriously threatened by events in Indonesia. The Government is non-Communist and its leaders have in the past demonstrated their willingness to suppress forcibly any Communist attempt to seize power.”²

The policy statement was more circumspect when reviewing factors that might adversely affect future US efforts to strengthen Indonesia economically and militarily. First on the list of concerns was Indonesian “hypersensitivity” to any action that could be characterized as “foreign intervention.” The second was the “Indonesian view” that the United States had an inconsistent

record in the struggle against colonialism—for example, American recognition of Bao Dai’s government in Vietnam was equated with support for “the French against Vietnamese nationalists.” Noting Indonesia’s desire to remain neutral in the cold war, the paper warned that “American aid may become an internal political issue.”³

In Jakarta, Cochran dealt with the political implications of US aid daily. Earlier in July, he wrote to the department that he was “seriously disturbed” by the size of a proposed visit to Indonesia by a ten-man US Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG). The team intended to meet with Indonesian military leaders to discuss and evaluate the country’s overall internal and external defense needs. The ambassador was “absolutely sure” that the arrival of such a group would be interpreted as an “effort to press Indonesia for [a] US military commitment.” Such an interpretation would, in turn, provoke a “strong left-wing local reaction.” When Cochran discussed the matter with Hatta, the prime minister was concerned that such a “conspicuous group [would] arouse criticism of [his] government.” In a cable to Washington, Cochran recommended a delay of the MAAG visit.⁴

A related political problem for Hatta was satisfying a US requirement for an accord that would establish a legal basis for supplying Sukanto’s police force with equipment. The prime minister did not want a formal “agreement” between Indonesia and the United States. Such a pact, he told Cochran, would require ratification by parliament and end “badly.” Instead, Hatta preferred an exchange of diplomatic notes that would constitute an “understanding” between the two governments. Included in the notes finally exchanged was a statement that the RIS would reimburse the United States in Indonesian rupiahs for the administration and operation of the equipment-supply program within the country, depending on the government’s ability to pay.

Because of Indonesia's weak financial condition, no mention was made of reimbursing the United States for the equipment itself or its transportation to the archipelago.⁵

Hatta objected to a "secret minute" proposed by the State Department, which called for consultations between the two governments, "consistent with mutual security," about the export of potential war materials to other countries. Such language would appear to Indonesians as evidence of an undesirable military alliance and an infringement of sovereignty. Hatta, assuring Cochran of his country's strong sympathy for the United States, admitted that "Indonesia fears Russia."⁶ In a follow-up conversation with Cochran, Hatta explained that his government, although officially "neutral" in the cold war, was on the side of the United States and "against Russia and its satellites." Declaring his unwillingness to contribute to Soviet strength, Hatta eventually agreed to a more limited "oral understanding" confirming that his government would not export potential war materials, either directly or indirectly, to any enemy of the United States.⁷

Hatta, who discussed the "strictly secret" oral understanding only with "his most intimate Cabinet colleagues," was reluctant to face the political backlash from publicly releasing the text of the diplomatic notes. He told Cochran of his hope that their publication would be unnecessary, "at least in the near future." Cochran replied that releasing the documents could be postponed, but their eventual publication was required by US law.⁸

Cochran and Hatta exchanged their diplomatic notes on August 15, the same day the prime minister returned his mandate as leader of the expiring federal government. After a few days of discussion with representatives of Indonesia's political parties, President Sukarno selected Masjumi leader Mohammad Natsir to form a cabinet for the new unitary Republic of Indonesia (*Republik Indonesia*, or RI). An anticommunist, Natsir was a Sumatran educator and

religious leader who, according to Audrey Kahin, had “a general tendency toward rigidity” and “an apparent willingness to break rather than bend in any negotiations.”⁹ Hatta would remain as vice president of the Republic but have no role in day-to-day governing. An unskilled politician, he had not played the patronage game well, and the new constitution prevented his concurrent service as prime minister. According to British Ambassador Kermode, there had also “clearly been some friction” with Sukarno, who had “been chafing under the firm restraint imposed on him by M. Hatta.”¹⁰

In a message to the Foreign Office, Kermode wrote that “Hatta was never a darling of the mob, but no name was so widely respected throughout the country as his, and many heads are shaking at the loss of his sane and sober guidance.” The ambassador, who disliked Sukarno’s demagogic tendencies, compared Hatta’s political demise to Sjahrir’s: “The President is known to desire a monopoly of popularity, and anyone else for whom a pedestal is created becomes a candidate for early removal. So the country’s two most able statesmen are now in the wilderness just at a time when their country needs all the talent it has. This is, no doubt, a feature of revolutionary upheavals, but every friend of Indonesia wishes that this useless waste of talent could be avoided.”¹¹

The RIS was officially dissolved on August 17, 1950, the fifth anniversary of the Republic’s proclamation of independence. The new RI had an appointed parliament and a provisional constitution that gave greater executive authority to the cabinet than to the president. On the steps of the presidential palace in Jakarta, Sukarno delivered an impassioned speech, celebrating the achievements of the revolution and accusing the Netherlands of moral responsibility for the

rebellions in Indonesia since the transfer of sovereignty: The Westerling revolt was the result of a Dutch refusal to take preventive steps sought by the Indonesian government; the Netherlands military helped Westerling escape to Singapore and Soumokil flee from Macassar to Ambon; and the KNIL, the colonial military “machine,” had provided soldiers for all of the uprisings of 1950.¹²

Claiming no intention of aggravating Indonesia’s relations with the Netherlands, Sukarno issued a warning about *Irian Jaya*, the Indonesian name for West New Guinea. If a settlement was not reached by the end of the year, as called for by the RTC agreement, “a major conflict will arise on the issue of who will be in power in that island from then onwards. For once again I declare we will not stop fighting, we will continue fighting, we will keep on fighting whatever may come, until West Irian has been returned to our fold.”¹³

The speech by Sukarno condemned Western colonialism but did not mention the threat posed by communism. In a subsequent meeting with Cochran, however, the president sought advice on Indonesia’s relations with the People’s Republic of China (PRC), which had recently opened an embassy in Jakarta. Cochran, stressing the danger posed by that embassy and its agents, told Sukarno that “he and his people were inclined to become too self-satisfied and complacent over their newly-acquired sovereignty.” Indonesians, he said, might quickly “lose everything” unless they recognized the danger posed by communists infiltrating their schools, labor organizations, and army. Referring to President’s Truman pledge to defend Formosa from invasion, Cochran said that “US force alone [could] save Indonesia from Communism,” a fact Sukarno should keep “in mind in his international relations.”¹⁴

Despite Indonesia’s pro-Western foreign policy, which British Ambassador Kermode called “neutrality with a bias,”¹⁵ the US government began pushing the country’s leaders to take

a stronger public stance against communism. Initially, Cochran communicated this message with a relatively light touch. On August 26, he indicated to Sukarno US disappointment with Indonesia's neutrality in the Korean War, particularly since the archipelago "was indebted to [the] UN for its freedom." Cochran also said that he "had come to feel rather badly [over the] past few weeks since it had begun to appear [that] Indonesians did not desire [to] have [the] world think they were even friends of [the] US." The ambassador added that he felt obliged to "play down" American assistance to Indonesia.¹⁶

Sukarno reassured the ambassador of Indonesia's continuing friendship with the United States but sympathized with his government's low-key approach to American aid. Acknowledging this assistance, he said, might suggest that the United States was attempting to "influence Indonesian policy" and drag the country into the Korean War. He told Cochran that Sukanto had learned much about internal security in the United States and that "much more" anticommunist instruction was necessary. Sukarno hoped that America would continue to assist Indonesia but observed: "Such help could be much more effective if extended quietly rather than with much publicity." Cochran concluded the conversation by commenting skeptically on India's cold war neutrality and predicting that all countries must eventually choose the side they "feel is right."¹⁷

During his talk with Sukarno, Cochran mentioned a Mutual Defense Assistance Program survey mission, which would soon be visiting Indonesia. Led by Foreign Service officer John F. Melby, the MDAP mission would have "searching questions" for the ambassador, said Cochran, about Indonesia's use of the equipment provided by the US police program.¹⁸ Melby, a relatively junior diplomat, was the nominal leader of a predominantly military group, commanded by Marine Major General Graves B. Erskine. In the summer and fall of 1950, the Melby-Erskine

mission visited virtually every country in Southeast Asia but focused most intensely on Vietnam. The American military team responsible for Sukanto's police equipment, led by Army Lieutenant Colonel Gordon L. Beach, had arrived in Indonesia more than three weeks before Cochran's conversation with Sukarno.¹⁹ Any "searching questions" from the Melby-Erskine mission about the use of that equipment would more likely be directed to Beach and his colleagues in anticipation of establishing an overt MAAG.

On September 25, Cochran gave Mohamad Roem, the new foreign minister, a memorandum listing information needed by the Melby-Erskine mission. (Roem also received copies of the secret diplomatic notes about US police equipment, exchanged by Cochran and Hatta in August.) The required information included the specific types and amounts of requested military equipment, the priority of different categories of materiel, and data about the size, plans, and future organization and strength of Indonesia's armed forces, known as APRI since the establishment of the unitary state. The Melby-Erskine mission would also want to learn about the country's capability to store and maintain the desired equipment, as well as the "hostile elements" opposing the government. Cochran told Roem that he wanted to "avoid embarrassment and complication" by frankly presenting these questions in advance. Roem, who appreciated this approach, said that the visit by the US military should have the "least possible publicity."²⁰

After consulting with Natsir and other cabinet ministers, Roem informed Cochran that the Indonesian government was prepared to begin discussions about buying US arms and equipment. The Melby-Erskine visit should be "informal"—that is, the Americans should wear civilian clothes while in Indonesia. And the talks would not include the US materiel provided to the police, which was "a separate matter." Cochran pointedly asked Roem whether his government

genuinely desired the visit by the MDAP survey mission. Despite the foreign minister's affirmative reply, the ambassador wrote to the State Department that he could "give no assurance" of the Indonesians' attitude toward providing the information required by US military officials.²¹

On October 3, the Melby-Erskine mission arrived in Jakarta, where its members were formally greeted by Roem and Defense Minister Abdul Halim, a physician who had served as prime minister of the Jogjakarta government during the RIS period. The next morning, Cochran assured the survey mission that the United States enjoyed "good relations with the Indonesians" but warned: "We have to be careful not to transgress upon their feelings. They desire our help but they want to be sure that we respect their sovereignty and are not tying them to impossible [mutual defense] commitments."²²

Cochran mentioned to the mission members that Sukanto had tried to buy machine guns in the United States by using Robert MacDonald as a broker. Commenting on the police chief's lack of success in such transactions, Cochran said that any equipment purchases should be channeled through the US government, which would "save [the Indonesians] money and expedite delivery."²³ Among the ambassador's concluding comments was an observation about Indonesian civilian and military officials: "These people do not want us to stress how we are helping them to fight Communism. They have fought Communism before and they feel they can handle it again. They do not want us to insist that we are saving them—they want to save themselves."²⁴

Over the next few days, the Melby-Erskine mission discovered firsthand that the Indonesian government wanted US military assistance but without any connections to the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949, the legal basis for providing such aid through the MDAP. When

Erskine and Melby described the act and explained the procedures for providing military equipment to Indonesia on either a grant or reimbursable basis, APRI chief of staff Simatupang declared that the decision to “take advantage of this Act” was one for the prime minister to make. Simatupang said that he and his colleagues could only discuss the possibility of obtaining American weapons “outside the Act.” Melby, undoubtedly taken aback by this statement, observed that the US mission was only authorized to discuss MDAP procurement. “You could go to a firm in the United States,” he said, “but it is a long process and you might not get what you want for a while.” Because of the Korean War, he explained, the US government had “first priority” on all American-made military equipment.²⁵

The survey mission received scarcely more satisfactory responses from Sukarno, whose executive authority had been limited by the 1950 constitution but whose prestige remained a formidable source of political influence. At a meeting with the president that included Erskine and Melby, Cochran sought an explanation for the “shy” behavior of Indonesian officials in making equipment requests. According to the ambassador’s account of the conversation, Sukarno indicated that the visiting Americans already knew about the private pro-Western feelings of the government. Indonesian officials, however, were following the “public attitude” of cold war neutrality. Cochran argued that regardless of Sukarno’s sentiments and those of his “moderate associates,” American officials required data and direct observations to make informed recommendations about military aid. Sukarno, acknowledging Indonesia’s need for US materiel, asked “whether equipment could be obtained on [a] grant [basis] but with the appearance [of the] RI paying” for it. Explaining that such an idea would be difficult, Cochran stressed the need for strengthening resistance to the “growing Communist movement.”²⁶

On October 9, Roem informed Cochran of Indonesia's decision to reject MDAP assistance. "He saw no purpose in further technical bilateral discussions," Cochran informed the State Department. Roem, who hoped this decision would not seem unfriendly to the United States, agreed with the American ambassador that military assistance negotiations might be resumed "informally in more propitious or more urgent circumstances."²⁷ In a report to the State Department summarizing the MDAP mission, Cochran regretted the visit's lack of concrete results but thought it was "definitely worthwhile." Indonesian leaders, who provided a cordial and appreciative reception for the Americans, had established direct contact with senior US military officers. Moreover, Indonesian officials with whom the embassy dealt were disappointed that the Natsir government's assessment of global and national politics precluded a military aid agreement at the present time. Cochran assured the department that the "basis for future cooperation [was] still strongly desired by leading authorities [of] this country."²⁸

At the end of September 1950, Indonesian armed forces began an amphibious invasion of Ambon aimed at crushing the RMS rebellion. Eventually, as many as seventeen APRI battalions, supported by Indonesia's limited naval and air power, participated in the attack against some 1,500 defenders. Foreign Minister Roem rejected a renewed UNCI offer of good offices on September 30, arguing that such diplomacy would internationalize the conflict, encourage the rebels, and perhaps cause "unpredictable harm." Hooker A. Doolittle, the new US representative on the UNCI, reported to the State Department that Roem's response was a "hands off warning."²⁹

On October 3, Netherlands Prime Minister Willem Drees sent a telegram directly—rather than through diplomatic channels—to Prime Minister Natsir appealing for an end to the fighting on Ambon. With his country’s public opinion roused by the RI attack against steadfast Netherlands loyalists, Drees wrote: “[The] Dutch people cannot be indifferent to this battle.”³⁰ The Dutch government released the text of the cable “to the press and the world before it had time to reach the Indonesian prime minister,” according to Ambassador Kermode. Referring to the telegram as a “bolt from the blue,” he wrote to the Foreign Office: “At such a time, when Indonesia was exercising her sovereign right of taking measures to restore law and order in her own territory, it is doubtful whether any action could have achieved such sweeping success as the Drees telegram has achieved in fomenting nationwide resentment against the Dutch and presenting the friends of Moscow with effective ammunition.”³¹

Natsir’s reply to Drees’s cable summarized the background of the RMS rebellion and described the revolt as an internal Indonesian problem that regrettably required a forceful solution. On October 6, the RI Ministry of Information issued a communiqué about the Drees-Natsir exchange, alleging that the Netherlands was apparently siding with the rebels against the Indonesian government. As long as this attitude continued, the communiqué declared, the Indonesian people would find it impossible to believe “the many friendly statements previously made by [the] Dutch Government.”³²

That same day, Netherlands High Commissioner A. T. Lamping made a formal request to the UNCI to “use all means at its disposal” to end the fighting in Ambon. In a report to the State Department, Doolittle wrote that the Drees telegram and Lamping’s request prompted the UNCI to conclude that the RMS dispute was now “one between the Netherlands and Indonesia,” rather than the internal affair claimed by Roem and his government. Irritated with the RI and

pessimistic about its future, Doolittle charged that Indonesian officials had “been playing hide and seek” with the UNCI and had provided insufficient information to allow an “intelligent” conversation about events in Ambon. Positive RMS accounts of the island’s defense, combined with an RI news blackout, indicated to Doolittle that the “Indonesians may be getting [a] bloody nose.”³³

The younger brother of Air Force General James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle, Hooker Doolittle was an independent-minded diplomat who had spent much of his three-decade career as a specialist on Arab affairs. As consul general in Tunis during World War II, his friendship with Arab nationalists aggravated both French and American officials. Before leaving for Jakarta as the American UNCI representative, Doolittle discussed the diplomatic challenges with Assistant Secretary of State Dean Rusk, whose general advice was to encourage bilateral Dutch-Indonesian solutions to any difficulties that arose. Based on that conversation, Doolittle concluded that the department, “rather than expecting or desiring brilliant negotiations” from him, “would prefer to hear nothing.” This silence, he wrote, “would indicate that the problems were being solved without outside intervention.”³⁴

Yet Doolittle’s frustration with the Ambon problem led him to precipitous intervention in the RMS rebellion. On October 11, while serving as the rotating chairman of the UNCI, Doolittle and his Australian and Belgian colleagues sent a report to the United Nations providing a chronology of their efforts to help resolve the Ambon dispute, declaring them a failure, and referring the entire matter “to the Security Council for consideration.”³⁵ This action, which had not been approved by the State Department, posed risks for US diplomacy that Doolittle either ignored or did not fully appreciate. The UN referral and a subsequent Security Council debate might not only alienate Indonesians for interfering in their internal affairs, but also threaten the

Netherlands-Indonesian Union, complicate negotiations over the future of West Irian, and allow the Soviet Union to brand the UNCI as a tool of Western imperialism and to posture as the true champion of anticolonialism.

The State Department's initial comment to Doolittle about the UNCI report was relatively mild, expressing surprise at its submission and doubts about its "constructive effect" on the Ambon crisis.³⁶ Cochran, however, was much less restrained, complaining to the department that Doolittle's "rash, irresponsible leadership on [the] UNCI has resulted in what may prove [to be the] most ill-advised step in Indonesian history since [the] second police action." Foreign Minister Roem, an advocate for cooperation with the Dutch, told Cochran that he was "much disturbed" by the referral of the RMS rebellion to the Security Council and that any UN debate would include a discussion of Dutch "misdeeds" in West Java, Macassar, and Ambon. Cochran further reported to Washington that a perplexed assistant to Simatupang asked a CIA officer why "Indonesia's great friends, the Americans, [would] strike such a blow against them." There was also a tendency among Indonesian officials to connect the UNCI report with alleged American "unhappiness" over the fruitless Melby-Erskine mission.³⁷

On October 15, Cochran made two urgent requests to the State Department: (1) "exert every effort" to prevent a Security Council discussion of Ambon, and (2) "get Doolittle out of Indonesia soonest." That same day, William Lacy replied that the department appreciated the ambassador's analysis of the situation and was "giving most careful consideration" to his recommendations.³⁸ Undoubtedly undermining Doolittle's chances for keeping his job was a letter he wrote to the department two days later deploring "Indonesia's admission to the United Nations" in September, predicting both a military coup and the end of the Netherlands-Indonesian Union in January 1951, and declaring that US aid merely added "oil to the flames" in

the archipelago. In Doolittle's view, the Indonesians needed "a sharp lesson to bring them to their senses and cut them down to size."³⁹

On October 17, the State Department transmitted two telegrams to Cochran that summarized Ambon-related diplomatic activity. The first, and undoubtedly more welcome cable, was a copy of message from Warren R. Austin, the US representative on the Security Council: Denis Laskey and Keith Shann, leaders of the UK and Australian UN delegations, respectively, "strongly favored finding some way of keeping the Ambon case off the SC agenda because this item would give the Russians a great opportunity to make trouble."⁴⁰

The second, less encouraging telegram was an account of a meeting at the State Department with the new Dutch ambassador to the United States, J. H. van Roijen, who listened to an American recitation of the many disadvantages of a Security Council debate over Ambon. The ambassador said that he would communicate the US views to his government but doubted they would deter The Hague from pressing the Ambon case in the Security Council. Van Roijen emphasized that the Netherlands "felt morally bound to protect Ambon," as well as the approximately 20,000 former KNIL troops in Netherlands-controlled camps on Java awaiting demobilization and repatriation to their home island. If the Dutch overlooked the Ambon invasion, van Roijen warned, the Indonesians "would take similar measures in New Guinea and elsewhere."⁴¹

From the Hague, Ambassador Chapin reported that the primary interests of the Netherlands were ending the bloodshed on Ambon and preserving the influence of the UNCI. A high-ranking Dutch diplomat, whom Chapin did not identify, acknowledged that the RMS

declaration of independence had been a “mistake” but questioned the sincerity of RI efforts to negotiate with the Ambonese. The “proper action,” according to the Dutch official, would have been third-party mediation. For this reason, the Netherlands government was “heartened” by the UNCI’s interest in the matter but “disheartened” by reports that Warren Austin was trying to “keep [the] Ambon case from [the] UN agenda.”⁴²

In a subsequent cable to Washington, Chapin simultaneously explained the Dutch perspective on Ambon and advocated a tougher US line with Indonesia. He acknowledged that a Security Council debate about the RMS rebellion “would probably contribute little if anything” to a resolution of the crisis. Echoing van Roijen’s appeasement theory, Chapin warned that shelving the Security Council debate about Ambon to salvage a “shaky Natsir Government” appeared to be a “concession”—one likely to be repeated in West New Guinea or applied to such issues as the nationalization of Dutch and other foreign interests: “[The] Embassy wonders where do we stop?”⁴³

Implying hypocrisy on the part of the State Department, Chapin noted that a lack of Security Council support for the UNCI in Ambon would be in “direct contrast” to the council’s backing for UN committees during the Indonesian revolution. The ambassador also observed that the essence of the RI’s objection to UN involvement in Ambon—the rebellion was an “internal” matter—duplicated the Dutch defense during their “police actions.” Claiming that the UNCI referral of Ambon to the Security Council only sought an end to the fighting, Chapin characterized the “immediate problem” as preventing the situation from “degenerat[ing] into Asiatic terrorism.”⁴⁴

In Jakarta, Ambassador Kermode offered a nearly simultaneous, more perceptive analysis of the Ambon rebellion, its antecedents, and the role of the Netherlands after the APRI invasion of the island. In a report to the Foreign Office, he wrote:

For the Dutch to interfere at this stage, having failed to take effective action when they were responsible for the troops who were the instrument of revolt, has struck the Indonesians as insufferably hypocritical and even as adding insult to injury. When the Dutch washed their hands of their responsibility because it required unpleasant duties of them, they deprived themselves, at least in Indonesian opinion, of the moral right to interfere later in the settlement which this action of theirs has finally made unavoidable. The emotional reaction of the Dutch to military operations against their formal faithful servants is understandable but the form of its expression has been ill conceived.⁴⁵

On October 24, van Roijen, acting under instructions from his government, asked the State Department to use its influence to expedite the Security Council's consideration of the Ambon question. Some days earlier, the ambassador said, the Netherlands UN delegation believed that the United States "was not disposed to have the matter raised" in the Security Council. He had since been assured by William Lacy and Deputy Under Secretary Freeman Matthews that the US government "would not block consideration" of Ambon. Van Roijen, acknowledging the certainty of a Soviet veto of any "resolution calling for a truce and a peaceful settlement" in Ambon, recommended a "directive" from the president of the Security Council—

then Austin, whose term was expiring in seven days—summarizing the opinion of the majority and instructing the RI to follow the UNCI’s recommendations.⁴⁶

Within the State Department, opinion was divided over honoring the Dutch request for prompt Security Council attention to the UNCI’s initial Ambon report and to a second one about the demobilization and repatriation of former KNIL soldiers in Java. Joseph Scott of the Bureau of European Affairs urged an affirmative response to the Netherlands plea and instructions to Austin to include Ambon on the council’s agenda. Scott did not see how the United States could refuse an urgent request from a friendly UN member on a topic of interest to the international community. The department’s Bureau of United Nations Affairs, however, did not concur with Scott’s recommendation, arguing that the council was committed to discussing the Kashmir and Palestine during the remainder of Austin’s tenure as council president. The Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs also disagreed with Scott, repeating the political and diplomatic risks of a Security Council debate.⁴⁷

The State Department decided that it could not ignore the Dutch appeal while Austin was serving as council president. To do so would leave the United States vulnerable to the charge of suppressing the two UNCI reports. On October 26, the department instructed Austin to seek the views of council members about the timing of an Ambon discussion and to provide them with a public opportunity to comment on the matter. Four days later, Austin told the council that he had privately surveyed its members and received the “impression” that a majority did not want to talk about Ambon in the final two days of his presidency. With no draft resolution to debate, Austin publicly asked if any members of the council wished to express their views. Disingenuously and solely for the record, he said that the United States thought that “this subject should be discussed by the Council at an early date.”⁴⁸

The response from other council members was muted. The UK representative suggested that perhaps more time was needed for “reflection” before discussing this “delicate problem.” The French and Egyptian delegates generally concurred with the United Kingdom. In a message to Austin, the State Department noted with satisfaction that only three council members had responded to his statement and that none of them “appeared particularly eager to embark on a full scale discussion of the matter at this time.” Having accomplished their “immediate objectives”—raising the topic of Ambon without provoking a destructive debate—department officials wrote that unless there were further public requests by council member or changes in the situation in Indonesia, they did “not contemplate taking further action in the Council.”⁴⁹

The Security Council’s reluctance to discuss the UNCI reports displeased the Dutch. On November 15, Netherlands embassy minister de Beus sought a meeting with State Department officials to convey a message from his government. Substituting for the temporarily absent van Roijen, de Beus said that the Dutch public opinion was “somewhat aroused” by the absence of a Security Council debate about Ambon. When Livingston Merchant, deputy assistant secretary of state for far eastern affairs, pointed out that US delegate Austin had raised the Ambon matter in the Security Council and that its members had expressed their views, de Beus replied: “While this was true, it was not understood in the Dutch press nor by Dutch public opinion.”⁵⁰

De Beus thought that the Security Council would have to take some action on the UNCI’s reports. His government, however, was currently more concerned with the “liquidation” of the crisis now that “the hardest of the fighting on Ambon seemed to be over.” The diplomat’s phraseology euphemized the recent defeat of the heavily outnumbered RMS rebels and the destruction of the town of Ambon by the APRI. What de Beus and other senior Dutch officials would not know for some two years was that the tenacious defense of Ambon was assisted by Captain J. E. Harders, a Netherlands military intelligence officer who had independently

established an unauthorized radio link between an island off of West Irian and the RMS soldiers on Ambon. “The information provided by military intelligence, based principally on intercepts of Indonesian military communications, must have been of considerable value to the RMS,” Richard Chauvel concluded.⁵¹

Merle Cochran traveled to Washington in mid-November for a review of US policy in Indonesia. The return of Hooker Doolittle was also requested by the State Department, which had emphasized the “maximum importance [of the] least possible publicity” for his journey.⁵² The chastened diplomat participated in the department’s policy review, then resigned from the Foreign Service. Despite their many differing opinions, Cochran and Doolittle shared a belief that the UNCI was outliving its usefulness. Doolittle had written from Jakarta that the continuation of the UNCI might become “embarrassing,” as it would only be used by the Dutch to identify “encroachments” of the RTC agreement and to “embroil” the commission “in other futile discussions such as [the] Ambon affair.”⁵³

In the view of State Department officials, the utility of the UNCI had also been compromised by Australia’s aggressive policy on the future of West Irian. Once a stalwart defender of the Republic, Australia had threatened to take forceful measures to stop Indonesia from controlling the territory. The United States communicated its “grave” concern over possible Australian “intervention” in West Irian to the government of Prime Minister Robert Menzies in April 1950. Echoing its warnings to the Netherlands during the Indonesian revolution, the US government informed Foreign Minister Percy C. Spender that it “would not be able to support the Australian action” in the United Nations. Spender, largely unmoved by the American

démarche, subsequently declared to Ambassador Chapin: “I can say categorically that Australian public opinion will never permit Indonesian control over NNG [Netherlands New Guinea].”⁵⁴

An early dissolution of the UNCI was “strongly opposed” by the Netherlands, formerly a fierce critic of UN intervention of Indonesia. On November 20, de Beus delivered a diplomatic note to the State Department arguing that the UNCI still had a role to play in the demobilization of the KNIL, the negotiations over West Irian, and the self-determination provisions of the RTC agreement. The department’s response to the Netherlands was that a decision about the UNCI had not yet been reached. Yet the next day, at an internal meeting in which Cochran and Doolittle participated, department officials concluded: “Steps should be taken for the dissolution of UNCI to take effect on or after December 27th,” the first anniversary of the transfer of sovereignty.⁵⁵

While Cochran was in Washington, Foreign Minister Roem visited with him and Dean Acheson at the State Department. Roem raised the topic of procuring additional military equipment for Indonesia’s internal security and external defense, mentioning his government’s plan to send military officers to the Netherlands and the United States to explore this matter further. Cochran, commenting on the unsuccessful Melby-Erskine mission, explained to Acheson that Indonesia was willing to pay for equipment “but found difficulty in working through MDAP.” During the conversation, Cochran observed: “The Indonesian Government would pay high prices and receive perhaps only a varied assortment of equipment if obliged to pursue its own purchasing through commercial channels.” Roem agreed with the ambassador, acknowledging that “the Indonesian police had been exposed to profiteering when purchasing independently.” Acheson asked his department subordinates to “see what could be done” to

provide military assistance to Indonesia and to identify the language in the “normal MDAP agreement” that was unacceptable to the RI.⁵⁶

Upon his return to Jakarta, Cochran met with Sukarno, who expressed pleasure with Roem’s friendly visit to United States, which included a brief, ceremonial meeting with President Truman. Turning to substantive matters, Sukarno and Cochran discussed two issues that would unsettle US-Indonesian relations in the years ahead. The first was West Irian. Sukarno wanted the United States to take an “active part” in supporting Indonesia’s claim to the territory. Cochran demurred, maintaining that the United States continued to believe that the dispute should be resolved through bilateral negotiations between Indonesia and the Netherlands. Left unsaid was US unwillingness to oppose the Netherlands and Australia on this issue—even though the State Department believed that Indonesia, if “permanently denied sovereignty” over West Irian, would become “anti-Dutch and eventually anti-Western.”⁵⁷

The second issue, the single most troublesome one in US-Indonesian relations in the 1950s, was Sukarno’s insistence on an independent foreign policy and neutrality in the cold war. In this meeting, Cochran’s specific complaint was once again Indonesia’s neutrality in Korea. At a time when American troops were under attack by PRC forces, the ambassador told Sukarno that he was “worried” by Indonesia’s abstention on a recent UN vote supporting the withdrawal of Chinese troops from Korea. When Sukarno assured Cochran that his government’s foreign policy was aimed at helping “prevent [a] Third World War,” Cochran replied that other delegations might misunderstand such “noble” motives from a new member of the United Nations, particularly one “owing its sovereignty so importantly to UN action.”⁵⁸

Cochran, who would have increasing difficulty with the transition from troubleshooting peacemaker in a colonial conflict to diplomatic combatant in the cold war, emphasized to

Sukarno that Chinese intervention in Korea was part of an “overall Soviet plan to control Asia.” The ambassador commended the anticommunist government of Thailand, which sent troops to the US-led force in Korea, for its commitment to mutual defense in the region. “Indonesia,” Cochran declared, “must be awake to and admit [the] danger of [the] Communist movement southward and formulate its policies accordingly.”⁵⁹

¹ State Dept., “Policy Statement on Indonesia,” July 27, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 647.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Cochran to State Dept., July 3, 1950, and July 15, 1950, RG 59, Entry A1 1473, box 84, and *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 641.

⁵ Cochran to State Dept., July 26, 1945, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 645; State Dept., diplomatic notes, August 15, 1945, RG 59, Entry A1 1393, box 3.

⁶ Cochran to State Dept., July 26, 1945.

⁷ Cochran to State Dept., August 9, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 650.

⁸ Cochran to State Dept., August 16, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 651.

⁹ A. Kahin, *Islam, Nationalism, and Democracy*, p. 88.

¹⁰ Kermode to Bevin, July 10, 1950, *BDFa, 1950, Vol. 11*, p. 203.

¹¹ Kermode to Bevin, September 12, 1950, *BDFa, 1950, Vol. 11*, p. 220.

¹² Cochran to State Dept., August 18, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3749, and Kermode to Bevin, August 21, 1950, *BDFa, 1950, Vol. 11*, pp. 209–210.

¹³ Sukarno, quoted in Kermode to Bevin, August 21, 1950, p. 211.

¹⁴ Cochran to State Dept., August 26, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 653.

¹⁵ Kermode to Kenneth Younger, July 16, 1950, *BDFa, 1950, Vol. 11*, p. 204.

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- ¹⁶ Cochran to State Dept., August 26, 1950.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Cochran to State Dept., August 3, 1950, Entry A1 1473, box 84.
- ²⁰ Cochran to State Dept., September 30 and September 25, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 661 and RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3749.
- ²¹ Cochran to State Dept., September 30, 1950.
- ²² Melby-Erskine mission, “Summary Stenographic Notes of Impromptu Statement by Ambassador Cochran,” undated, c. October 4, 1950, RG 59, Entry A1 1393, box 3.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Melby-Erskine mission, meeting notes, October [6], 1950, RG 59, Entry A1 1393, box 3.
- ²⁶ Cochran to State Dept., October 12, 1950, RG 59, Entry A1 1473, box 84.
- ²⁷ Cochran to State Dept., October 10, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 667.
- ²⁸ Cochran to State Dept., October 12, 1950.
- ²⁹ Doolittle to State Dept., October 2, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 1369. This document is the unexpurgated version of the telegram reproduced in *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 663.
- ³⁰ Drees, quoted in Chapin to State Dept., October 4, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3749.
- ³¹ Kermode to Bevin, October 18, 1950, *BDF A, 1950, Vol. II*, pp. 235–236.
- ³² Cochran to State Dept., October 6, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3749.
- ³³ Doolittle to State Dept., October 6, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 1369.
- ³⁴ Doolittle, memorandum of conversation, July 12, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 1369.
- ³⁵ UNCI to UN Security Council, October 11, 1950, *BDF A, 1950, Vol. II*, pp. 226–228.

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- ³⁶ State Dept. to Doolittle, October 13, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 1370.
- ³⁷ Cochran to State Dept., October 15, 1950, and October 14, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 670 and RG 84, UD 2728, box 27.
- ³⁸ Cochran to State Dept., October 15, 1950; Lacy to Cochran, October 15, 1950, RG 84, UD 2728, box 27.
- ³⁹ Doolittle, October 17, 1950, quoted in Eric Stein, “Mr. Doolittle’s Letters,” November 7, 1950, RG 59, Entry A1 1265, box 15.
- ⁴⁰ State Dept. to Cochran, October 17, 1950, no. 423, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3749.
- ⁴¹ State Dept. to Cochran, October 17, 1950, no. 421, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 1370.
- ⁴² Chapin to State Dept., October 17, 1950, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3749.
- ⁴³ Chapin to State Dept., October 20, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 764.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ Kermode to Bevin, October 18, 1950.
- ⁴⁶ Matthews, memorandum of conversation, October 24, 1950, RG 84, UD 2728, box 27.
- ⁴⁷ Scott to Matthews, October 24, 1950, and Bancroft to Nolting, October 26, 1950, RG 59, Entry A1 1265, box 15.
- ⁴⁸ State Dept. to Cochran, November 3, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 1370.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*; State Dept. to Austin, November 2, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 677.
- ⁵⁰ O’Sullivan, memorandum of conversation, November 15, 1950, RG 84, UD 2728, box 27.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*; Chauvel, *Nationalists, Soldiers and Separatists*, p. 379.
- ⁵² State Dept. to Doolittle, November 9, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 1370.
- ⁵³ Doolittle to State Dept., November 6, 1950, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 1370.

⁵⁴ State Department, "Summary of Telegrams," April 27, 1950, HSTL, NAPF, www.trumanlibrary.org; Chapin to State Dept., August 30, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 655.

⁵⁵ State Dept. to Austin, November 22, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 680; Stein to Hickerson, November 24, 1950, RG 59, Entry A1 1265, box 15.

⁵⁶ Acheson, memorandum of conversation, November 16, 1950, HSTL, DAP, www.trumanlibrary.org.

⁵⁷ Cochran to State Dept., December 8, 1950, and Rusk to Acheson, December 29, 1950, *FRUS, 1950, Vol. VI*, d. 681 and d. 683.

⁵⁸ Cochran to State Dept., December 8, 1950.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Appendix

Chronology of US-Indonesian Relations, 1951–1953

- January 8, 1951 Ambassador Merle Cochran informed the State Department that the Indonesian government was uninterested in the Point IV foreign aid program “if U.S. technicians are an essential ingredient.”¹
- February 5, 1951 CIA’s *Daily Summary* for senior policymakers reported: “Cochran feels that now is the propitious time to bring the Indonesians to face the realities of the world situation; he believes that if the US continues a ‘too gentle’ policy with Indonesia, the country itself will not only become a problem but will contribute to the strengthening of the Asiatic-Arab bloc, thereby creating a much bigger problem.”²
- February 15, 1951 In a conversation with ECA’s Robert Griffin, William Lacy expressed the State Department’s belief that “the time had come to press the Indonesians to face the realities of the war between communism and the free world.”³
- March 14, 1951 After a meeting with Sukarno, Cochran reported the president’s comments about “his ‘stupid political leaders’” and his prediction of a “political crisis shortly after Parliament convenes March 15.” Indonesia, Sukarno said, still wanted the friendship and support of the United States, “provided no great publicity or US flag-waving [is] involved and provided sympathetic Americans in modest numbers participate in aid programs.”⁴
- March 16, 1951 Following the advice of Lacy and “CIA people running the [police training] program,” Rusk wrote a letter to the US Army’s provost marshal

general commending the training received by Indonesian officers at the military police school at Fort Gordon, Georgia.⁵

March 21, 1951 Mohammad Natsir resigned as prime minister. His resignation, CIA analysts wrote, brought “to a close the recent impossible relationship between the Government” and PNI members of parliament who sought an end to the Netherlands-Indonesian Union, revision of the RTC agreement, and representation in the cabinet. According to Mavis Rose, “Natsir’s insistence that the President remain a figurehead irritated Sukarno.”⁶

April 3, 1951 Jacob Beam, the acting US representative on the UNCI, signed a report to the Security Council declaring that the commission was suspending its activities indefinitely.⁷

April 26, 1951 After protracted negotiations between the Masjumi and PNI, the formation of a coalition cabinet led by Masjumi chairman Sukiman Wirjosandjojo was announced.⁸

May 9, 1951 A summary of a Cochran conversation with Sukarno included the ambassador’s observation that enthusiastic May Day celebrations were “evidence of Communist growth in Indonesia. Sukarno quickly admitted the situation and said measures must be taken to oppose Communism.”⁹

May 17, 1951 NSC memorandum 48/5: “At present the Indonesian Government is pursuing a policy of political neutrality. The United States must endeavor to influence Indonesia toward greater participation in measures which promote the security of the area and toward solidarity with the free world.”¹⁰

- May 21, 1951 State's James O'Sullivan sought Cochran's views on the future of the police training program. With six groups completing training by yearend, Lacy and O'Sullivan tentatively concluded that the program should continue "in full knowledge of the fact that the trainees, after their return to Indonesia, do not seem particularly available to us."¹¹
- June 8, 1951 In a cable to Lacy, Cochran reported a conversation with Sukanto, who said some members of the Natsir cabinet had criticized him for looking to the United States for police training, but he now felt "properly supported" by Prime Minister Sukiman. Cochran told Sukanto that the United States "considered him one of our oldest friends and thought [his] constabulary [was the] best channel for really constructive aid to Indo[nesian] security."¹²
- June 29, 1951 A summary of a Cochran meeting with Sukarno reported the president's "anxiety" over PRC activity in Indonesia and the "spread of harmful propaganda." Sukarno "spoke of the success Communists have had with youths in various countries and asked whether the US could help Indonesia in combatting Communist influence among Indonesian youth."¹³
- July 17, 1951 Cochran advised the State Department to adhere to a "definitely firm and consistent" Indonesian policy that expected compliance "with UN precepts" and "respect" for the US "position in world affairs." Observing that the current government had strong parliamentary support, Cochran

was not “optimistic” about any immediate change in Indonesia’s independent foreign policy.¹⁴

- July 24, 1951 Prompted by the State Department, Cochran spoke with Vice President Hatta about publishing their secret agreement of August 15, 1950. Hatta and the foreign ministry approved publication and registration of the police-equipment agreement with the United Nations but feared leftist criticism within Indonesia. Cochran urged the State Department to avoid “more publicity than is strictly necessary.”¹⁵
- July 26, 1951 Cochran reported Indonesia’s desire to end the Netherlands-Indonesian Union and to substitute a bilateral treaty for the RTC agreement. Supomo, the Republic’s first minister of justice and a member of its delegation at The Hague conference, attributed the proposed changes to Indonesia’s “psychological distaste” for the union, particularly after the Westerling, Macassar, and Ambon uprisings.¹⁶
- August 1951 Incidents across Indonesia, including an attack on the port for Jakarta by 200–300 men wearing hammer-and-sickle insignias, prompted the Sukiman government to undertake “security sweeps” in Java and Sumatra. Among the people arrested were “high officials of the Ministry of Labor, Communist Party chieftains, and leaders of several Communist unions. The police also searched the offices of the Communist Party and the Communist labor unions and the homes of several Parliament members.”¹⁷
- August 17, 1951 In his Independence Day speech, Sukarno called for dissolution of the Netherlands-Indonesian Union—“the sooner the better.” The continuing

Dutch administration of West Irian, he said, meant that the Netherlands was “occupying part of Indonesia’s national territory.”¹⁸

September 25, 1951 Cochran recommended to the State Department that CIA continue training Sukanto’s national police: “I have been gratified at the vigorous measures that have been taken recently by the Indonesian Government, and particularly its security forces, to apprehend dissident elements, most specially communist groups and leaders.”¹⁹

October 10, 1951 President Truman signed the Mutual Security Act (MSA) “authorizing foreign military, economic, and technical assistance to friendly countries to strengthen the mutual security and individual and collective defenses of the free world.”²⁰

October 12, 1951 Foreign Minister Ahmad Subardjo handed Cochran a formal request for additional US aid, including arms for the Indonesian army, on a reimbursable basis. In a subsequent conversation with Cochran, Ambassador Ali Sastroamijoyo discussed an arrangement similar to the secret Hatta-Cochran agreement on equipment for the national police force.²¹

October 16, 1951 Lieutenant Colonel Gordon Beach reported to embassy chargé H. Merrell Benninghoff on the progress toward equipping the Indonesian police: “An encouraging number of [Mobile] Brigade units equipped with MSP (MDAP) equipment have completed their re-training and are being given important security missions.”²²

- November 23, 1951 A joint State-Defense-ECA message informed the US mission in Jakarta that the Indonesian government must provide assurances consistent with the MSA by January 8, 1952, to receive undelivered police force equipment. Such assurances would also be required for US action on Subardjo's request for weapons for the Indonesian army.²³
- December 5, 1951 Cochran, who was hostile to the US economic mission in Indonesia and its autonomy, evaluated the foreign aid program: The Indonesian government was embarrassed by ECA publicity emphasizing the "under-developed character of country and [the] need for aid from [a] great friend." With Indonesia benefiting from a global increase in prices for its export commodities, he recommended that the "ECA grant aid be stopped as of June 1952."²⁴
- December 6, 1951 Cochran reported to Washington on a meeting with "Sukarno, who urged a rapid and satisfactory settlement of the Union Statute and Netherlands New Guinea issues." To prevent the loss of "an essential link" in the Pacific security chain, the ambassador wrote: "The United States should be prepared to change its position on Netherlands New Guinea in order to accommodate Indonesia at the expense of America's other friends, the Netherlands and Australia."²⁵
- December 11, 1951 In a meeting with Subardjo, Cochran reviewed the agreement governing the supply of US equipment to the national police force and explained the requirement for a new exchange of notes based on the MSA. The foreign minister replied that he would have to discuss the notes with the prime

minister “and perhaps [the] entire Cabinet” but did not think it would be necessary to seek ratification by parliament.²⁶

December 14, 1951 Cochran, citing “certain disappointments and difficulties,” informed Sukanto that the US government could not continue to send “groups of police officers to the United States for formal police indoctrination and training.” But because of US gratification with Indonesian operations against dissident elements, and with “the very real progress” made by the police, the United States thought that some extension of training assistance “would be mutually beneficial.”²⁷

December 17, 1951 ECA defended its work in Indonesia to the State Department, arguing “that it would be defeatist to abolish or cripple the program just at a time when many of the initial difficulties are being overcome... In receiving ECA aid, Indonesia has accepted another tie with the free West, a tie which in the long run will help pull the country away from the Red orbit.”²⁸

December 28, 1951 Cochran met with Subardjo, who said that he remained strongly opposed to the unilateral abrogation of the union statute. He promised that Cochran’s draft note with the required MSA assurances would soon be considered by the cabinet.²⁹

January 4, 1952 Cochran gave Subardjo the final text of a diplomatic note with the assurances required by Section 511 (a) of the MSA, including a reference to the aid’s contribution to “the defensive strength of the free world.” The foreign minister promised to deliver a note of acceptance the next day.³⁰

- January 8, 1952 The State Department commended Cochran for Indonesian acceptance of the MSA agreement: “By your action you have been responsible for persuading [the Indonesian government] to take [an] additional step toward alignment with [the] West.”³¹
- January 21, 1952 In a meeting with Dean Acheson to discuss West Irian and the Netherlands-Indonesian Union, Prime Minister Drees said: “The Indonesians never kept political agreements, and he hoped I was aware of all the facts in this situation. He thought I ought to know it seemed to the Dutch that Ambassador Cochran always appeared to side with the Indonesians.”³²
- January 25, 1952 In an “eyes only” message to Cochran about the West Irian dispute, Acheson wrote: “I do not see how it will be possible for us now or in the future to support the present position of either side on this issue... Therefore, the fundamental U.S. interest is to keep the disagreement from becoming blown up, to prevent a breach, to help reach such agreements on the union as can be reached, leaving the door open for future talks.”³³
- February 6, 1952 CIA analysts reported that the Indonesian “government is increasingly disturbed” by press criticism of the MSA agreement: “The Indonesian government had made no effort to publicize its acceptance of MSA aid.”³⁴
- February 12, 1952 Cochran met with Sukarno, who said that the Sukiman government was “in trouble.” One reason was that Subardjo had not consulted with other cabinet members about the MSA agreement. Commenting on Indonesia’s

great suspicion of US intentions, Sukarno insisted that something should “be done to improve relations”—that is, the US should support Indonesia’s West Irian claim. Cochran complained that since his appointment as ambassador, he had “never heard one friendly reference” to the United States by any official of the Indonesian government.³⁵

February 18, 1952 Cochran explained to the State Department that he knew Subardjo had obtained Sukiman’s approval of the MSA agreement but was unaware of the foreign minister’s lack of consultation with the rest of the cabinet. Acknowledging that Sukiman might hesitate to approve an agreement that referred to the defense of the “free world,” Cochran thought the risk of including the phrase had been “very much worthwhile” because it might draw Indonesia “one step nearer [the] free world.” He “strongly” recommended against any substitute agreement.³⁶

February 22, 1952 Cochran, commenting on Subardjo’s “ousting” and the threat to the cabinet posed by the MSA, reported the widespread “vilification” of the United States. The ambassador recommended that if the Indonesian government did not honor an agreement negotiated by its foreign minister, the United States should, regrettably, terminate its “existing aid program.”³⁷

February 23, 1952 Fall of the Sukiman cabinet.

February 27, 1952 Sukanto told Cochran that internal security authorities were “hopeful” that the next government would take a stronger stance against insurrection and subversion: “Sukanto expressed deep gratitude for police equipment US

has already provided his mobile constabulary. Said he did not know how his organization could have operated without it.”³⁸

- April 3, 1952 Installation of a new Indonesian cabinet led by PNI Prime Minister Wilopo.
- April 9, 1952 Frustrated with Indonesian officials, Cochran recommended to the State Department that “our attitude henceforth must be absolutely firm. Indo[nesian]s must be brought to understand that it now devolves upon them to show their good intentions toward us...[The] most immed[iate] and convincing gesture which can be made [at] this juncture is to adhere without further ado to [the] MSA agreement as negotiated.”³⁹
- April 14, 1952 William J. McWilliams, director of the executive secretariat of the State Department, commented to Under Secretary David K. Bruce on “the latest in a long series of fights” between Cochran and the Mutual Security Agency, ECA’s successor organization. The two “basic difficulties” appeared to be: (1) “Cochran’s insistence on complete control of all American activities in Djakarta” and (2) disagreements over the scale of US economic aid to Indonesia, with the ambassador advocating for “very small sums” and the agency recommending “a much more substantial program.”⁴⁰
- May 1952 The PKI declared its “loyal opposition” to the Wilopo government, a policy switch from its “outright opposition to the Hatta, Natsir, and Sukiman cabinets.” Seeking to expand its membership, the party adopted united-front tactics and ceased its attacks on Sukarno. “By contrast,”

according to Herbert Feith, “there was no change in the attitude of the party toward Vice-President Hatta.”⁴¹

May 6, 1952 In a meeting with Assistant Secretary of State John Allison, Ambassador Ali Sastroamijoyo said that his government could not accept a military aid agreement based on Section 511 (a) of the MSA. It could, however, accept an economic aid agreement based on Section 511 (b), which did not refer to mutual defense.⁴²

May 21, 1952 JCS memorandum: “The loss of the Indonesian island chain to communism, would, in light of United States commitments and security requirements, be unacceptable.”⁴³

June 15, 1952 Cochran urged the State Department to “force” the issue of US foreign aid with the Indonesian government to determine whether a “legal and psychological basis” existed for an economic assistance program: “I feel it is absolutely imperative we get this business on legal and moral basis before proceeding with [a] new aid program under State Dep[artmen]t responsibility.”⁴⁴

June 25, 1952 CIA analysts noted that Darul Islam guerrilla operations “have seriously increased in West Java in the last six weeks.”⁴⁵

July 14, 1952 Cochran summarized the “dilemma” facing the Indonesian government: On the one hand, continuing US aid under the terms of the MSA would likely provoke an attack from parliament. On the other hand, the government would likely face criticism for rejecting “urgently needed”

police equipment for internal security and for ending economic aid at a time when the Indonesian economy was declining.⁴⁶

July 17, 1952 The State Department, suggesting a solution to the aid dispute, provided Cochran with a draft Indonesian note to the United States that merely referred to its obligations as a member of the United Nations and made no reference to the MSA.⁴⁷

July 21, 1952 Insisting to the State Department that the embassy was working “seriously and conscientiously to preserve [the] aid program,” Cochran voiced a “strong objection” to presenting Indonesian officials with a draft reply: “I recommend that we wait quietly and patiently for them to make their own decisions.”⁴⁸

August 8, 1952 The US embassy in Jakarta reported to Washington that during the past week there were more than thirty Darul Islam “incidents” in West Java, “seven of which involved armed gangs numbering 100 to 600 men.”⁴⁹

September 3, 1952 Cochran, responding to Allison’s request for frank comments on the foreign assistance negotiations, concluded: “I strongly feel that we are leaving ourselves open to trouble if we give any future military aid, either grant or reimbursable, in [the] absence of any ratified agreement that can be and is made public in both countries.”⁵⁰

September 10, 1952 In a conversation with Dean Acheson, the new Dutch foreign minister, Joseph Luns, said that the issue of Netherlands New Guinea “has become more difficult than ever. No one in the Netherlands, either in the Government or in parliament, Dr. Luns explained, at present believed that

any concessions could be made with respect to Netherlands sovereignty.”⁵¹

September 24, 1952 Assignment orders issued for the first Indonesian police officers to attend the US Army’s Infantry School at Fort Benning.⁵²

October 6, 1952 Cochran reported to Washington on an emerging cabinet crisis, as members of parliament tried to purge defense ministry and army officials seeking to rationalize and professionalize Indonesia’s armed forces.⁵³

October 17, 1952 Provoked by parliamentary criticism and interference in military affairs, army leaders stage an ineffective show of force to intimidate Sukarno into dissolving parliament, assuming responsibility for the government, and holding immediate national elections. Parliament was recessed but not dissolved. The unsuccessful semi-coup led to a purge of military officers and defense ministry officials, including army chief of staff A. H. Nasution, APRI chief of staff Simatupang, and the Sultan of Jogjakarta.

October 31, 1952 In a meeting with Acheson, Foreign Minister Mukarto Notowidigdo said that “substantial agreement had already been reached” in the negotiations for US economic aid to Indonesia. Unresolved, however, were “certain legal questions, having largely to do with the phraseology to be used.”⁵⁴

January 12, 1953 In Jakarta, Cochran delivered diplomatic notes to Mukarto constituting agreements on economic aid and the small amount of undelivered equipment for the national police program. Mukarto assured the ambassador that the text of the agreements had been cleared with the cabinet and key politicians.⁵⁵

- January 13, 1953 In a despatch to the State Department, Cochran declared that US foreign aid to Indonesia had been “a series of tragic mistakes” undermining American diplomacy and policy objectives. Criticizing the political judgment of the economic assistance mission, he wrote that the military aid program was “less discouraging.” Cochran described US support for Sukanto’s national police as “instrumental in creating the single most effective security force now operating in Indonesia.”⁵⁶
- January 20, 1953 Inauguration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower.
- February 10, 1953 Cochran, disillusioned with US foreign aid and the State Department, resigned as ambassador to Indonesia to become deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund, a position he held for the next nine years.

¹ Samuel T. Parelman to Merchant, February 8, 1951, RG 59, Entry A1 399, box 1.

² CIA, *Daily Summary*, February 5, 1951, www.foia.cia.gov.

³ Lacy, memorandum of conversation, February 15, 1951, *FRUS, 1951, Vol. VI, Part 1*, d. 334.

⁴ Cochran to State Dept., March 14, 1951, *FRUS, 1951, Vol. VI, Part 1*, d. 344.

⁵ Lacy to Rusk, March 14, 1951, and E. P. Parker to Rusk, March 22, 1951, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 5106.

⁶ CIA, *Daily Digest*, March 21, 1951, www.foia.cia.gov; Rose, *Indonesia Free*, p. 184n.

⁷ H. Merrell Benninghoff to State Dept., April 4, 1951, *FRUS, 1951, Vol. VI, Part 1*, d. 360.

⁸ CIA, *Daily Digest*, April 27, 1951, www.foia.cia.gov.

⁹ CIA, *Daily Digest*, May 9, 1951, www.foia.cia.gov.

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- ¹⁰ NSC 48/5, “United States Objectives, Policies and Courses of Action in Asia,” May 17, 1951, *FRUS, 1951, Vol. VI, Part 1*, d. 12.
- ¹¹ O’Sullivan to Cochran, May 21, 1951, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 5106.
- ¹² Cochran to Lacy, June 8, 1951, RG 59, CDF, 1950–1954, box 3758.
- ¹³ CIA, *Daily Digest*, June 29, 1951, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ¹⁴ Cochran to State Dept., July 17, 1951, *FRUS, 1951, Vol. VI, Part 1*, d. 403.
- ¹⁵ Cochran to State Dept., July 25, 1951, *FRUS, 1951, Vol. VI, Part 1*, d. 404.
- ¹⁶ Cochran to State Dept., July 26, 1951, *FRUS, 1951, Vol. VI, Part 1*, d. 405.
- ¹⁷ CIA, *Current Intelligence Bulletin*, August 17, 1951, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ¹⁸ CIA, *Daily Digest*, August 20, 1951, www.foia.cia.gov.
- ¹⁹ Cochran to Lacy, September 25, 1951, *FRUS, 1951, Vol. VI, Part 1*, d. 414.
- ²⁰ Public Law 165, “Mutual Security Act of 1951,” October 10, 1951, www.gpo.gov.
- ²¹ Cochran, memorandum of conversation, October 24, 1951, *FRUS, 1951, Vol. VI, Part 1*, d. 428.
- ²² Beach to Benninghoff, October 16, 1951, *FRUS, 1951, Vol. VI, Part 1*, d. 427.
- ²³ State Dept. to Benninghoff, November 23, 1951, *FRUS, 1951, Vol. VI, Part 1*, d. 433.
- ²⁴ Cochran to Rusk, December 5, 1951, *FRUS, 1951, Vol. VI, Part 1*, d. 440.
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About the Author



Born in Washington, D.C., Bill Rust is an independent researcher who specializes in the history of US relations with Southeast Asian countries in the mid-twentieth century. He began his editorial career at *U.S. News and World Report*, joining the Book Division as a researcher and subsequently contributing retrospective articles on the Vietnam War to the magazine. In 1985, Scribner's published his first book, *Kennedy in Vietnam*.

For the next two decades or so, he earned a living as a writer, editor, and communications consultant for foundations and corporations. In 2008, he left this line of work to resume full-time research on the Second Indochina War. The University Press of Kentucky published three of his highly acclaimed books: *Before the Quagmire: American Intervention in Laos, 1954–1961* (2012); *So Much to Lose: John F. Kennedy and American Policy in Laos* (2014); and *Eisenhower and Cambodia: Diplomacy, Covert Action, and the Origins of the Second Indochina War* (2016).

The December 2019 issue of *Studies in Intelligence*, the professional journal published by the Central Intelligence Agency's Center for the Study of Intelligence, published Rust's "[No Boy Scout: CIA Operations Officer Lucien Conein](#)," an in-depth profile of the agency's principal contact with the South Vietnamese generals who overthrew and assassinated President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963.

Learn more about his work at www.beforethequagmire.com.