

Netherlands to Republic of Indonesia, 15-07-1947

Immediately after Japan's surrender, Indonesian nationalists proclaimed the independence of the Indonesian Republic. The government of the Netherlands opposed this and attempted to restore Dutch rule over its former colony the Dutch East Indies. Representatives of both sides entered into negotiations which led to the Linggadjati agreement in November 1946 in which the Netherlands acknowledged the authority of the Indonesian Republic over Java, Madura and Sumatra. Both parties pledged to transfer power to the United States of Indonesia (USI), which would enter into a union with the Netherlands under the Dutch crown. The details were to be worked out later but the transfer was to take place by 1 January 1949.¹ International arbitration would be deferred to in case of disagreement. It was not before long, however, that mutual enmity escalated into confrontation. A series of amendments and annexes were added to the agreement, which was signed in March 1947, under the explicit understanding that each party was only bound by its own interpretation.² Dutch infringement on frontier territory of the Indonesian Republic antagonised the Indonesian government, and so did Dutch alleged attempts to promote separatist movements. The Dutch government on its part accused the Indonesian Republic of conducting its own foreign policy, contrary to the terms of the agreement.³ Meanwhile, skirmishes between the forces of both parties were a regular occurrence.⁴ The Dutch government announced that it would deploy 107,000 Dutch forces in Indonesia by June 1947.⁵ Dutch representatives led by Governor-General van Mook presented a series of demands on 27 May requesting

that answer to these proposals be given by the Republican delegation within fourteen days. In case this answer is in the negative or is unsatisfactory, it sees, to its regret, no possibility of continuing the discussions and will have to submit the question as to what will further happen to the Netherlands government.⁶

The demands included firstly, the formation of an interim federal government led by a Dutch representative; secondly, a shared foreign policy body chaired by a Dutch representative; thirdly, a joint internal security department including security services to safeguard security; fourthly, a joint economic unit responsible for trade policies and foreign exchange; and fifthly, recognition of East Indonesia and West Borneo as states within the USI.⁷ Within the two-week limit, the Republican government responded, offering various amendments to the Dutch proposals. Most notably these included an autonomous status for the Indonesian Republic during the transition; Dutch support for the admission of the Indonesian Republic as a member of the United Nations; the right to appoint personnel to governmental posts; the right to police its own territories; the reduction of men under arms; and the demilitarisation of certain geographic areas.⁸ The Dutch government did not take kindly to these demands and talk of military action was rife. While the Republican chief military

¹ 'Linggadjati Agreement | Netherlands-Indonesia [1946]', Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed 2 February 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/342368/Linggadjati-Agreement>. Peter Calvocoressi, '4. Indonesia', in *Survey of International Affairs 1947-1948* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), 388–89, http://go.galegroup.com/choa/i.do?&id=GALE%7CZZYBZT461028290&v=2.1&u=tlemea_ch&it=r&p=CHOA&sw=w&viewtype=Manuscript.

² Calvocoressi, '4. Indonesia', 390.

³ Calvocoressi, 391–92.

⁴ C. Smit, *De Indonesische quaestie [The Indonesian question]* (Leiden: Brill Archive, 1952), 125–26. See also S. L. van der Wal, P. J. Drooglever, and M. J. B. Schouten, eds., *Officiële Bescheiden Betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische Betrekkingen 1945-1950: Official Documents Dutch-Indonesian Relations: 1945-1950*, vol. 9, Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1981), 648.

⁵ Smit, *De Indonesische quaestie*, 137.

⁶ Calvocoressi, '4. Indonesia', 393.

⁷ Calvocoressi, 393. Smit, *De Indonesische quaestie*, 129–30.

⁸ Calvocoressi, '4. Indonesia', 393–94.

commander publicly called on his fellow nationals to defend themselves at all costs, the leader of the Republican government Mr Sjahrir called for peace. He also wrote to the Dutch offering compliance with the key terms on 20 June. This immediately led to his downfall and rendered his offer invalid.⁹ But on 8 July, following American pressure,¹⁰ a new Republican government offered to comply with all Dutch demands except for the establishment of joint internal security services.

On 15 July, following plenty of consultations between the government in the Netherlands and Governor-General van Mook, it was decided to issue an ultimatum to the Republican government which was presented as the final warning before large scale military action would commence. The ultimatum demanded – on top of the earlier demands – that both the civil and military authorities of the Republic ordered ‘openly and explicitly’ the halting of all hostilities by mid-night 16 July; that hostile propaganda would cease by 17 July and that all Republican military forces withdraw 10 km from the demarcation line and transfer power to local police forces by 19 July 18:00, to be completed by 21 July.¹¹ Foreign representatives of Australia, China, France and Great Britain called upon the Republican government to comply with the demands. The Dutch government meanwhile was under considerable financial pressure because of the mounting costs of forces deployment far away from its shores.¹² When the Republican government countered with a proposal for a conference or for third party arbitration, the Dutch government in The Hague wired instructions to its Dutch Representative van Mook in Java to proceed with military action.¹³ Van Mook sent a written message to the Republic stating that

The Netherlands Government...recovers its freedom of action and will take such measure that will make an end to this untenable situation and which will create conditions of order and safety which will render possible the execution of the above-named programme, as it is expressed in the Linggadjati Agreement.¹⁴

That same day Dutch Prime Minister Beel publicly announced that his government had ‘authorised the Lieutenant Governor-General [...] to use the forces at his disposal to undertake police action in order to achieve what the Republic itself appears incapable of doing.’¹⁵ Dutch forces deployed at midnight of 20-21 July and took hold of key strategic regions of Java. The Republican government called for foreign intervention. After several countries (including Australia, Great Britain, India and the United States) had unsuccessfully tried to mediate, Australia and India brought the matter to the Security Council which adopted a resolution calling on the parties ‘to cease hostilities forthwith and to settle their dispute by arbitration or by other peaceful means.’¹⁶ The Dutch government ordered a cease fire on the night of 4-5 August. Fatalities estimates were in the upper tens for the Dutch and in the thousands for the Indonesians. Despite the cease fire, low level hostilities continued throughout 1947, until negotiations under international auspices (Belgium, Australia and the US) produced the

⁹ Calvocoressi, 394.

¹⁰ Smit, *De Indonesische quaestie*, 133.

¹¹ Wal, Drooglever, and Schouten, *Officiële Bescheiden Betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische Betrekkingen 1945-1950: Official Documents Dutch-Indonesian Relations: 1945-1950*, 9:673, fn.5, 674, 675, 677, 684.

¹² C. Smit, *De dekolonisatie van Indonesië: feiten en beschouwingen [The dekolonisation of Indonesia]: facts and reflections* (H.D. Tjeenk Willink, 1976), 19–20.

¹³ Wal, Drooglever, and Schouten, *Officiële Bescheiden Betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische Betrekkingen 1945-1950: Official Documents Dutch-Indonesian Relations: 1945-1950*, 9:703–7, 721.

¹⁴ As cited in Calvocoressi, ‘4. Indonesia’, 396. For the original text, see Wal, Drooglever, and Schouten, *Officiële Bescheiden Betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische Betrekkingen 1945-1950: Official Documents Dutch-Indonesian Relations: 1945-1950*, 9:738–39.

¹⁵ As cited in Calvocoressi, ‘4. Indonesia’, 396.

¹⁶ As cited in Calvocoressi, 397. See also Smit, *De Indonesische quaestie*, 140–45.

Renville agreement in January 1948 – the terms of which were broadly similar to terms earlier agreed upon.¹⁷ Again, working out the details of the agreement peacefully proved problematic and led to renewed Dutch military action towards the end of 1948. This time, however, despite the Dutch military actions being initially successful, international support for the Dutch government crumbled swiftly. A renewed round of negotiations in 1949 led to the Dutch withdrawal and the transfer of power to the Republican Government in November 1949. (see case Netherlands to Republic of Indonesia, 17-12-1948)

¹⁷ Cheong Yong Mun, *H.J. Van Mook and Indonesian Independence: A Study of His Role in Dutch-Indonesian Relations, 1945-48*, 1982 edition (The Hague: Springer, 1982), 206–7.