

Netherlands to Republic of Indonesia, 17-12-1948

In January 1948 the government of the Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia signed the Renville Agreement which stipulated the conditions under which the two countries would merge in the United States of Indonesia (USI).¹ Implementing the terms of the general agreement proved problematic and negotiations under international auspices in the Committee of Good Offices repeatedly stalled following violent incidents. In July 1948 the government of the Republic broke off negotiations. Two months later the sitting regime of the Republic managed to defeat an internal domestic communist uprising,² earning it a lot of good will and trust from the leaders of western liberal democracies that the Republic of Indonesia would not be drawn into the communist bloc. In November, the American member of the Committee of Good Offices, Cochran, circulated the 'Cochran plan' to kick start negotiations.³ The Dutch government, however, insisted on direct negotiations with the Republic. These bilateral negotiations did not yield the results desired by the Dutch government. It then informed the Committee on 11 December that it had decided to go ahead and form a federation without the Republic. The government of the Republic requested Cochran's assistance in getting the Dutch back to the negotiation table on 13 December. The Republic offered veto powers to the high commissioner of the Dutch government over the federal government of the Union as well as emergency powers in a state of war. Cochran communicated the request to the Dutch representative. The Dutch representative, on 17 December, declined these offers. He insisted that the Netherlands' government was to enjoy unlimited authorities while Dutch forces must be given the right to deploy everywhere. He then issued an ultimatum stating that negotiations would not be reopened until the Republic without further ado complied with the Dutch terms. A positive response was due before 10 p.m. on 18 December.⁴ Cochran communicated his displeasure calling the demand a 'non-negotiated blanket assent which would preclude the possibility of *bona fide* negotiations rather than effect their resumption.'⁵ The demands were never forwarded to the Republican government because all lines of communication had been destroyed. On 18 December at 11:45 p.m. the Dutch government told the Republic's representative that it would resume freedom of action by midnight, fifteen minutes after it had informed Cochran of this intention. The following day Yogyakarta was invaded and the Republican leaders were arrested. The next few days the 120,000 Dutch forces stationed in Indonesia had taken over control of key cities and roads.⁶ On 24 December the United Nations Security Council called on both parties to cease hostilities and for the release of the political leadership of the Republic. The Dutch government answered on 29 December announcing that military action would cease within the next few days.⁷ Strong (verbal) support for the Republic of Indonesia was given by Australia and India. France, on the other hand, supported the Dutch position, while initially at least, Great Britain and the US tried to steer a middle course.⁸ In the months thereafter Republican forces launched a guerilla war. International support for the Dutch waned and multiple UN resolutions followed calling on the Dutch government to release the prisoners and resume negotiations under international supervision.⁹ Facing pressure from all sides, including from Great Britain and the US, the Dutch government finally yielded and a truce was signed on 1 August.¹⁰ In the following months the transfer of power to the Republic of the United

¹ Mun, 206–7.

² Jayanta Kumar Ray, *Transfer of Power in Indonesia, 1942-1949: By J.K. Ray* (P.C. Manaktalas, 1967), 154–55.

³ Calvocoressi, '4. Indonesia', 406–9.

⁴ Ray, *Transfer of Power in Indonesia, 1942-1949*, 157.

⁵ Calvocoressi, '4. Indonesia', 411.

⁶ Ray, *Transfer of Power in Indonesia, 1942-1949*, 157–58. Smit, *De Indonesische quaestie*, 217.

⁷ Calvocoressi, '4. Indonesia', 412. Ray, *Transfer of Power in Indonesia, 1942-1949*, 159–60.

⁸ Calvocoressi, '4. Indonesia', 413–14.

⁹ Ray, *Transfer of Power in Indonesia, 1942-1949*, 167–77. Smit, *De Indonesische quaestie*, 188–206.

¹⁰ Smit, *De Indonesische quaestie*, 217–18.

States of Indonesia was negotiated and signed on 2 November in The Hague and executed on 27 December 1949.¹¹

¹¹ Ray, *Transfer of Power in Indonesia, 1942-1949*, 178–82.