Paradise in Peril. Western colonial power and Japanese expansion in Sout-East Asia, 1905-1941

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Preface.

This dissertation is the result of a lifetime's interest in the war history of S.E. Asia, which originated from personal experience both of the war and of Japanese occupation in the Netherlands East Indies. As a young boy, the author witnessed the Japanese bombing of the Singosari military airfield near Malang in Eastern Java on his seventh birthday, 3 February 1942 and he has never forgotten the columns of smoke and fire and the panic of that day.

After my degree course in Chemical Engineering I was enlisted into the Royal Netherlands Army, where I attended the Reserve Officers' course of the Ordnance Department for Munitions at the Kromhout Barracks in Utrecht. In the evenings I visited the Library at Utrecht University where I became acquainted with the Official Histories of the Second World War. After serving in the Dutch field army as a Second Lieutenant commanding a Munitions Platoon, I pursued a career in chemical engineering, changing to information technology in the sixties. In 1978, I was honourably discharged from the Reserve Army as Captain. During my career however, I authored a number of Dutch language articles on the subject. (see the Bibliography). As my retirement from IBM Netherlands drew near, I approached Professor Blom in 1992 about the possibility of writing a dissertation on the subject of military planning by the Western colonial powers facing the growing Japanese threat. Professor Blom agreed under the condition that Professor Teitler, military and naval historian, would be co-promotor. It turned out, however, that the western archives did not contain enough original material on this subject alone. The subject study was therefore broadened to its current status, incorporating both the military and diplomatic history of the relations between western colonial power in S.E. Asia, and the threat of continual Japanese expansion in the interbellum. Now, after seven years of ongoing research, the reader has the result of all this study before him.

The result, however, is not all mine, as many people have helped me along the way. I owe them many, many thanks. In the first and foremost place I have to thank my promotors, Professors J.C.H. Blom and G. Teitler, who have spent many hours reviewing my writings, correcting and commenting on the texts and directing me towards areas for further research. Both have taught me the importance of separating historical facts from emotional interpretations and moral judgments. Without that guidance, the book might not have been finished.

In the second place I wish to thank many, many librarians at archives both in The Netherlands and in other countries. Without their invaluable help the project would have been impossible. At the ARA (Algemeen Rijks-Archief, the Dutch National Archives) in The Hague Mrs F. Van Anrooij and S.F.M. Plantinga have been very helpful indeed by finding me the correct files. At the Foreign Ministry Library in The Hague Messrs. A.L.M. Van Zeeland and J. Den Hollander, Mrs H.J. De Muij-Fleurke and Mrs H.E.Ch.M. Korsten have also been most helpful. Many hours spent at the Central Military Archives at the Laakhaven in The Hague have been unforgettable owing to the help of a number of librarians, of whom Mr. R. Smit was the one who took care of my appetite by serving excellent fried eggs and bacon at lunchtime. I would also like to express my thanks to Messrs. S. Martijn and P.G. Meershoek of the Central Military Archives. At the Military History Section of the Army Staff, the director at that time, Dr P.M.H. Groen and librarian mrs C.E.M. Strik-Zijlstra fulfilled my sometimes poorly expressed wishes about a number of interesting files. In the
same vein, I received very helpful assistance from Dr E. Touwen-Bouwsma, at that time chief of the Netherlands East Indies section of the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation in Amsterdam.

Much valuable assistance was rendered at the Naval Library (Marinebibliotheek) at the Dutch Admiralty Headquarters in the Van der Burchlaan in the Hague. There too, the canteen provided excellent services for the hungry visitor. At the Institute for Naval History (Instituut voor Maritieme Historie) Dr. P.C. van Royen and Dr. A.M.C. van Dissel helped me along in my research in Admiral Helfrich's private papers and also in other interesting reports and documents. Due to his own personal interest, Mr. B. Overree from Duivendrecht assisted me with Dutch Parliamentary documents. I still fondly remember the discussions we had on the state of Dutch naval defence in the interwar years.

I also interviewed a number of officers in the former Royal Dutch Colonial Army, the KNIL (Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger) in order to get an impression of the atmosphere, the culture and living conditions within their ranks. The interviews with Major General C. Giebel, Major P.J.F. Schelland and Captain S.W. Velds, who also shared their wartime experiences with me, were very helpful in this respect.

Very helpful in identifying relevant information about Dutch - American military contacts has been Mr. Terrence J. Gough of the Center of Military History, U.S. Army in Washington DC. Kenneth D. Schlessinger gave valuable assistance with respect to files in the Modern Military Records Branch, U.S. National Archives in Washington and in Suitland, Maryland and College Park, Maryland. Mrs Jo Ann Williamson helped me to identify Naval Intelligence Reports at that Branch. Wilton Madison of the Center for Air Force History at Bolling Air Force Base, Washington DC, helped me out on data about the U.S. Army Air Force.

Mickey Russell, Archivist at the Air Force Historical Research Agency at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama filled in some gaps in my knowledge. Lieutenant Colonel John W. Whitman provided me with information regarding early reports on the performance of the Japanese Zero fighter. Professor Ronald H. Spector of the George Washington University introduced me to Mr. Bernard F. Cavalcante of the Naval Historical Center at the Washington Navy Yard, who gave me invaluable assistance. Mrs Mary Beth Straight, Librarian of the U.S. Naval Institute in Annapolis, Maryland was also a great help. Mr. Edward S. Miller of Stamford, Conn. went out of his way to allow me access to his files on War Plan ORANGE and was so kind to answer a number of questions about that War Plan. Mr. Robert Cowley, Editor of The Journal of Military History was very helpful in suggesting useful source material in the United States and other people I could contact for my research.

Being able to have access to files and documents at organisations within the United Kingdom has been greatly due to Lieutenant Colonel J.C. Young, Royal Signals, Military & Air Attaché at the British Embassy in The Hague. Mr Correlli Barnett, Keeper of the Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge was also very helpful. Dr Ruth Paley and Mr. Duncan Chalmers at the Public Record Office assisted me in finding my way in that treasure-trove of documentary information. Stephen Walton of the Imperial War Museum was very helpful in providing reports written by British attachés in Tokyo. Clive Powell of the National Maritime Museum and Dr S.G. Roberts of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts filled in some gaps in my knowledge with respect to the Indian Army.

Notwithstanding the enormous distance separating us, I found the assistance offered by Australian archivists outstanding. Brendan O'Keefe of the Australian War Memorial was instrumental in identifying relevant files not only at the Memorial but also at the Australian Archives in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne. Ian Smith of the Australian War Memorial
provided me with facsimiles of a number of AWM-files. Mrs Rosalie King assisted me in finding the relevant documents at the Canberra Australian Archives, as did Mrs Wendy Burkwood for the Australian Archives in Melbourne. Mr P.R. Boele van Hensbroek of Brookfield, Queensland introduced me to Dr. J.M. Ford at Queensland University at St. Lucia, who at that time was working on his doctoral thesis on the KNIL in Australia during the war. We engaged in fruitful correspondence, resulting in Jack Ford's reading of my draft on the chapter about Australia. His comments and suggestions were very helpful indeed. Two other correspondents also provided invaluable insight and help: Professor Nicholas Tarling of Auckland University, and Professor Malcolm Murfett of the University of Singapore. I owe all of them much gratitude.

After being introduced at the Service Historique des Armées at Vincennes, France by the French military attaché in The Hague, le Capitaine de Frégate J.P. Desbrest, I was able to get interesting information from Colonel Paul Gaujac, chief of the Service de l'Historique de l'Armée de Terre. The Lieutenant Colonels Duchon and Hincky were most helpful in providing me with biographical data of a number of French officers who served in Indo-China. Mrs Agnès Masson, Director of the Naval Archives at the Service Historique de la Marine Nationale at Vincennes assisted me in finding biographical data on French Naval officers serving in Indo-China.

Finally I would like to express my gratitude to a number of people without whom this dissertation would not have been complete. Several English native speakers, particularly Mrs Hilary Selles-Bastard from Heemstede and Mrs Jayn De Waard from Velsebroek helped me by proof-reading, editing and correcting my English. The French summary was written by Mrs Jo Anne Boissaye Graham of Bougival, France, the summary in Bahasa Indonesia by Mr. Jan van der Horst and the summary in Japanese by Mr. Yukio Kikuchi, both living in Heemstede. They all deserve much praise for their gracious assistance.

Lastly and by no means least, I would like to thank my wife, Willy, for putting up with me and my thesis for so long a time. Without her encouragement and moral support, this thesis may never have been completed. Spouses are indeed the unsung heroes of academia, as they have to make the largest sacrifices. My wife and, to a lesser extent, my daughters had to live with a husband and a father, who was holed up in his study much of the time, depriving them of social activities and family outings. Thanks above all, and always, to my wife, Wil. Words have never been enough.