Paradise in Peril. Western colonial power and Japanese expansion in Sout-East Asia, 1905-1941
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Chapter 3.

THE NETHERLANDS.

3.1. Introduction.

Before the Second World War, the small European nation of The Netherlands possessed one of the richest colonies in the world, i.e. the Netherlands East Indies. This was not by design, but by coincidence, and in no small measure due to British 19th Century policy, which considered it preferable, after the Tractate of London of 1824, to have the Netherlands East Indies in the possession of a small European power rather than in the hands of a more powerful European competitor.

Because of the rise of Imperial Germany, the Royal Navy withdrew its battleships from East Asia after concluding the Anglo-Japanese Naval Treaty of 1902 with Japan. (page 134). In order to protect British interests over there, the void was filled by an Asiatic power, which for the first time in modern history gained a share in the stability of a large region. The Washington Treaties of 1922 eliminated the British-Japanese alliance, but substituted nothing in its place. (pages 23 - 26). When parliamentary control and democracy disappeared from Japan in the thirties, Holland feared for its colony, as it had done after the Russo-Japanese War. It is therefore rather amazing that the strength of the Dutch Navy defending the NEI diminished after 1905, and in effect continued its decline during the interbellum until it was too late to redress the situation.

In the early thirties the defence of the NEI was at its nadir, and was almost embarrassingly weak, even in Dutch eyes. The reason was not the size of the mother country, nor its lack of financial resources. The two Imperial powers of that day, England and France, had a population five times that of the Netherlands; nevertheless their Navies were respectively 26 and 11 times as large as the Dutch Navy. Italy and Japan had a far lower gross national income per head of population, but with populations 5 and 10 times as large they maintained fleets which were respectively 8 and 18 times as large as the Dutch fleet. Looking at the money spent in 1933 on the respective fleets in terms of costs per head of population, every Englishman paid four times as much, each Frenchman three times, and every Italian twice as much as each Dutchman. In terms of guilders, the expenses for the army in 1929 - 1930 per head of population were f 19.04 in France, f 13.40 in Switzerland, Belgium f 11.47 and Holland f 6.22. The rather unique position of the Netherlands inunderspending on defense is also clear on comparison during the entire period of the interbellum with other European countries large and small. Even taking into account

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122 For the sake of brevity the expression "Netherlands East Indies" will be abbreviated to "NEI" in this dissertation.

the difficulty of comparing international defence outlays\textsuperscript{1264}, the conclusion therefore must be that, according to international standards, the Dutch simply did not spend enough to ensure an adequate defence of their empire between the wars. It has to be remarked, that before the First World War Dutch per capita spending on defence was generally on a par with countries like Austria-Hungary, the United States, Italy and Switzerland, and considerably higher than countries like Japan, Russia and Belgium.\textsuperscript{1265}

This argument is reinforced by the quick increase in Dutch defence outlays in periods of rearmament. Between 1910 and 1915 the defence expenditures increased with a factor 5.6, between 1935 and 1939 with a factor 3.3. Moreover, during the Cold War period, the Dutch defence expenditures corrected for inflation were three to four times higher per head of population than during the interbellum\textsuperscript{1266}. Money therefore was not a problem. The Netherlands have traditionally always been a rich nation within Western Europe.

This chapter will attempt to explain this remarkable situation, which is the more remarkable because there was enough awareness of it in the Dutch press, in public opinion and within the ruling élite.\textsuperscript{1277} Nevertheless the defence weakness was not redressed in time, causing the Anglo-Saxon powers concern and irritation, as has been discussed in the previous two chapters.

This chapter is titled "The Netherlands". Most of this chapter is dedicated to the defence of the Netherlands East Indies, which was however determined by the policies and foreign diplomacy of the government of the Netherlands. We have therefore chosen the name of the mother country as title of this chapter.

3.2. History of the Netherlands East Indies.

In order to understand the political and economic environment, in which Dutch defence planning for the NEI took place, we should provide a short overview of NEI political and economic history for our non-Dutch readers. The colonial army was one of the pillars of Dutch colonial society and was the largest employer in the colony, being paid by taxes levied in the NEI, and not in the Netherlands. This indeed complicates comparisons in defence expenditures as given in the introduction to this chapter. The colonial army consisted of more than 70\% of indigenous soldiers. The loyalty of these volunteer soldiers to the Dutch cause was essential for upholding Dutch sovereignty over the island empire. Therefore a short description of the colonial society in the late thirties should be given in order to understand Dutch defence policies and how these were affected by rising


\textsuperscript{1277} For the anxieties about the Japanese threat as perceived by Governor-General Van Limburg Stirum, see E.B. Locher - Scholten: "Een liberaal autocraat: gouverneur-generaal mr. J.P. graaf van Limburg Stirum (1916 - 1921)", Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden (to be referred subsequently as BMG), 95 (1980), 68 - 76.
nationalism.

3.2.1. Colonial History up to 1900.

On 22 June 1596, four Dutch trading ships under Captain Cornelis de Houtman anchored at Bantam Bay, west of contemporary Jakarta, establishing a relationship between a small country on the North Sea and an overseas territory now called Indonesia that was to last for 353 years. De Houtman returned to Holland with enormous riches, causing a gold rush, with enterprising Dutch traders in almost every important Dutch city founding trading associations. Dutch State Secretary Johan van Oldenbarnevelt fused these competitors together in de Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (United East Indies Company) or VOC in 1602, giving the VOC the monopoly of trade to all lands east of the Cape of Good Hope, and west of South-America. The VOC has been rightly called the first modern trade corporation in history, earning sizable profits for its stockholders. It drove the Portuguese from the Moluccas, thereby taking over their spice trade monopoly. In 1618 the Dutch VOC-chief in the Indies, J.P. Coen, founded Batavia near Bantam as a warehouse facility to store goods from the Moluccas, China and Japan before final shipment to Europe.

The VOC was a trading company, but had to defend its coastal warehouses ("factorijen") against attacks from local potentates and other European competitors, such as Spaniards and Englishmen. The VOC quickly developed a sizable military garrison force, and armed its trade ships to fight off pirates. At the end of the eighteenth Century, the VOC held sovereignty over almost the whole of Java. On the other major islands it possessed trading posts at Padang on Sumatra, Malaka on the Malay peninsula, the Minahasa in Northern Celebes, Ternate, Ambon and Banda in the Moluccas, and Macassar in South-Western Celebes. At all these locations, trade and defence went hand in hand.

The French-inspired revolution of 1795 in the Netherlands resulted in the demise of the VOC. Its possessions and debts were taken over by the Government of the Batavian Republic. After the Napoleonic Wars, in order to stabilise the emerging Kingdom of the Netherlands, the East Indies possessions were handed back to the Dutch. With the Tractate of London in 1824 some colonial possessions were swapped: the Dutch acquired Benkulen in Sumatra and the Mentawei Islands from the British, but lost their old colony Malaka. The treaty removed all sources of irritation between the Dutch and British empires in the East. In the words of Lord Canning, British Foreign Minister, Great-Britain and Holland had become "the exclusive Lords of the East."

From 1830 onwards the Dutch Government exploited Java as a source of income. The indigenous people were forced to grow and deliver products with a high international market value to state agencies: sugar, coffee, indigo, spices, later also tea and tobacco. This infamous Cultuurstelsel (Cultivation System) lasted from 1830 to 1870, and made Holland rich. In the fifties, the profits earned with this exploitation comprised 31% of

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the revenues of the Dutch State.

The Cultivation System ended in 1870, and was replaced by the liberal policy of the "Open Door", making it possible for Dutch, American and Western European firms alike to invest in new agricultural activities like rubber and palm oil. Until 1870, the East Indies were a colony dominated by civil servants and army officers; thereafter private firms took over more and more activities, but even in 1940 the pillars of Indian society were still described as being the government servant, the soldier, the planter, and the missionary.

For the Dutch people in the motherland, the Netherlands East Indies were always considered an area where personal fortune could be made. The tropical climate however frightened most Dutch off from going there. Until 1900 the colony was a typical men's world, with almost no European women. The result was the early emergence of an Indo-European population of mixed ancestry, which retained many of the cultural traits of the indigenous culture, but which saw itself as part of the European civilization. After 1900, Dutch women emigrated with their partners for a career in the East, resulting in the emergence of "European" cities with all amenities of Western life. In 1941 there were approximately 100,000 pure-blooded Europeans (mostly Dutch, of which about half was born in the NEI), around 300,000 Indo-Europeans, about 1,500,000 Chinese, almost 100,000 Arabs and Indians, about 7,000 Japanese, and more than 65 million natives, making it a true multicultural society.

Of all the colonies of Western powers in Asia, the NEI possessed the highest number of European colonists in both absolute and in relative terms. Malaya and British Northern Borneo counted 35,000 Europeans, in The Philippines lived around 30,000 Americans, and in French Indochina about 40,000 French were domiciled. In absolute terms there were, in the NEI, more than 10 times the number of whites living in each of the the other Southeast Asian colonies. And where the British and Americans succeeded in evacuating most of their women and children out of Malaya and the Philippines before or directly after the outbreak of war, there was no way in which the Dutch could have accomplished this at the time. Their number of dependents was just too large, and moreover the motherland had been lost to the Germans in 1940. The Dutch in the NEI were fighting with their backs against the wall, and they knew it.

Unlike the French or the Spanish, the Dutch never exported their culture, religion or language to the colonies. Nevertheless, during the VOC days proselytising took place in the Moluccas and the Minahassa. A large number of the indigenous soldiers of the colonial

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army up to 1941 came from these areas. Modern Indonesia counts about 10% Christians, in a human sea of Muslims. That Christian minority is one of the few enduring results of the Dutch colonial experience. In contrast, little remains in modern Indonesia of the one million people who spoke Dutch in 1940, although modern Bahasa Indonesia still contains literally hundreds of words and expressions of Dutch origin.

The Dutch established an excellent system of education for their children and those of the Indo-Europeans and of the Chinese and indigenous elite, but the Dutch government never seriously tried to stamp out analfabetism, which still affected around 85% of the total population around 1940. It was only after 1907 that primitive primary schools appeared in the villages, with a very basic three-year curriculum in Malay. In 1940 only about 40% of the indigenous youth between 6 and 9 years of age were enrolled at these schools. Because only the children of the indigenous elite could attend the Dutch primary schools, the number of indigenous academics was exceedingly small - around 450. Around 1930 only 85,000 indigenous children were enrolled at Dutch-language primary and secondary schools, or about 0.14% of the total population. There was no all-round University in 1940, but only a faculty of Medicine, a faculty of Law, (both in Batavia) and a faculty of Engineering in Bandung, from which one of the first graduates happened to be the founder of modern Indonesia, Achmed Soekarno. Specifically the lack of basic education for the indigenous people would severely hamper recruitment efforts for the colonial army in the late thirties. (See below).

Meanwhile, the Dutch colonial army or KNIL completed the consolidation of this empire by an almost continuous series of campaigns during the whole of the nineteenth century. The back of the old indigenous sultanate of Mataram on Java was finally broken during the bloody Java War of 1825 - 1830, which can be compared with the Sepoy uprising in British India of 1859. After the Java War, the power of the Javanese sultans was definitely over. Southern Sumatra was consolidated in the thirties after the Padri Wars, Northern Sumatra (Aceh) was conquered (but not pacified!) after a particularly bloody struggle of more than thirty years (1873 - 1904) against fanatic muslim guerrillas. In the Aceh war, 2,009 Dutch soldiers were killed in action, and an additional 10,500 died due to illnesses. It was a major war, and certainly no police action, and

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1246 Van den Doel, op. cit., 89.
1247 Insulinde, 170; Ricklefs, op. cit., 156 - 160; AGN, 14 (1979), 386 - 389.
1249 The acronym stands for Koninklijk Nederlandsch Indisch Leger, meaning "Royal Netherlands Indies Army". On subsequent pages the acronym KNIL will be used throughout.
1251 P.J.F. Louw: De Java-oorlog van 1825 - 1830. 6 volumes, Batavia 1894 - 1909.
it would shape the military culture within the KNIL in the decades to come. (See below).

In 1904, with the conquest of Aceh, the Dutch Empire in the east had reached its apex. The borders of the colonial state would also be the borders of the future national state of Indonesia, whose first ruler, Soekarno, was willing to start another war against the Dutch in 1962, in order to reunite Dutch New Guinea, which he maintained was an integral part of the Indonesian state. In that sense, the conqueror of Aceh, Governor-General J.B. van Heutsz, has to be considered the founder of the modern state of Indonesia.1254

While the Dutch Army in the Netherlands languished in an atmosphere of protracted neutrality and peace from 1839 to 1940, the colonial army in the NEI was continually involved in armed struggle with indigenous rebels up to 1906 (Bali). In 1941 however only a few older officers had war experience, but a strong military tradition based on the Aceh war existed in the KNIL up to 1941.

3.2. Late Colonial History, up to 1941.

The introduction of private companies and modern capitalism in the NEI after 1870 did not result in higher wealth for the indigenous people.1255 Due to sanitation measures taken by the Dutch, the population on Java grew spectacularly after 1870 (from 16.2 million in 1870 to 28.4 million in 1900 to 48 million in 1940).1256 This population growth almost nullified the measures taken by the Dutch government to improve wealth. Up to 1900 the net result was even a lower per capita income, resulting in poverty on an unprecedented scale1257, coinciding with a new awareness in Dutch ruling circles that they had the obligation to guide, elevate and educate the indigenous people to a western level of wealth. This so-called *ethische politiek* (ethical policy) was promulgated by the government in the royal discourse of young Queen Wilhelmina on 17 September 1901 at the opening of Parliament. The political responsibility for the Queen's discourse was with the Minister of Colonies, A.W.F. Idenburg.1258 The three pillars of this ethical policy were "irrigation, emigration and education". By improved irrigation the agrarian area was expanded by 30% between 1900 and 1940, and in that year Java was again a net exporter of rice. Less successful was the drive to reduce overpopulation on Java by relocating Javanese farmers to almost empty islands like Sumatra and Celebes. Only 200,000 Javanese emigrated in that period.1259 The educational efforts have been described above. Gradually, due to increasing agricultural exports, the wealth of the populace increased again after 1905, but even in 1940 there still was much rural poverty. Ricklefs argues, that Holland was just too


1255 Willem Wolters: "From corvée to contract labour; institutional innovation in a Central Javanese village around the turn of the century" in: R. Cribb (Ed.): *The late colonial state in Indonesia*, Leiden 1994, 173 - 190.


small and lacked resources to be able to outpace Javanese population growth. The battle against that population growth however was mainly lost due to lack of continuous investment in primary education of the Javanese.

Due to the open-door policy the amounts of Dutch and foreign investment in the NEI economy increased steadily. The growth of automobile production in the West resulted in increasing demands for rubber and petroleum products. In 1900 the Dutch had invested about a billion guilders in the NEI, or about 12% of a national fortune of 8 billion guilders; in 1938 four billion guilders had been invested or about 18% of a national fortune of 22 billion guilders. Of the private investments, 70% was of Dutch origin, 13% was British and 6% American capital. Even more spectacular were the shifts in trade. Export from the NEI to the United States increased from 2% in 1913 to 21% of total exports in 1939, while exports to the Netherlands decreased from 34% to 15%. In 1913 the import into the NEI from Japan was barely 2%, in 1935 it was 30%. These statistics illustrate the openness of the NEI to world economy, and its lessening dependence on trade with the motherland. In the late twenties the NEI would enjoy an economic boom, but the international tariff walls of the mid-thirties would cause an enormous slump in its economy.

The world depression of 1929 hit the NEI even harder than the Netherlands. The reason was the open export-oriented economy, based on raw materials. In the four years between 1929 - 1933, the NEI export lost 70% of its value. Specifically, the sugar exports went down dramatically, due to the loss of the two main export markets: Japan and British India. In the same period 140 of the 178 sugar mills were closed. In 1929 the sugar culture in Java employed 88,512 permanent and 58,354 seasonal workers. In 1934 the numbers were 21,523 and 21,027 workers respectively. In 1929 the wages paid in the sugar business amounted to f 102 million, in 1934 this had been diminished to f 9.75 million. Total income of the NEI Government was reduced to 256 million guilders in 1934, or less than 50% of what it was in 1929. Company taxes earned the government f 59.3 million in 1928; in 1934 this had been reduced to f 7.8 million. Because the NEI Government maintained balanced budgets, the consequence was a rigorous economizing within all Government departments, including reduction in salaries of government workers of around 20%. Defence expenditures were slashed to the bare minimum. The private sector suffered also: of the 50,000 Europeans working in the private sector in 1930, around

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1280 Rickels, op. cit., 162.


1282 Van den Doel, op. cit., 234.


1285 Peter Post: Japans bedrijvigheid in Indonesië, 1868 - 1942. Amsterdam, 1991, 93.

10,000 had lost their job six years later.\textsuperscript{1267} Dividends to Dutch and foreign investors declined from $287 million in 1928 to $20 million in 1934.\textsuperscript{1268}

The monetary union between the colony and the motherland proved to be fatal.\textsuperscript{1269} The NEI had to earn money in export markets with cheap currencies, dominated by the Pound Sterling and the Yen. Great Britain abrogated the gold standard in September 1931, resulting in a gradual devaluation of the Pound by 40%. The Japanese Yen left the gold standard in December 1931, resulting in a devaluation of the Yen by 60%. The public debt of the NEI had been placed in the Netherlands, and therefore interests and redemptions had to be paid in hard-currency guilders. Around 26% of the yearly budget of the NEI Government was earmarked for these payments in 1935. Maintaining the gold standard (until 1938) by the Netherlands Government resulted in an enormous loss of wealth in the colony. As the Netherlands were the last country to abandon the gold standard, the NEI gained little from the worldwide economic improvement which started in 1933. In the statistics of the League of Nations, the NEI had the dubious honour of being classified as the country which had suffered most by the economic downturn.\textsuperscript{1270} The Government of the motherland refused however to take over part of this debt, a decision severely criticised even by the organisation of rabid Dutch Imperialists, the Vaderlandse Club ("Fatherland Society").\textsuperscript{1271}

The unprecedented reduction in salaries\textsuperscript{1272} caused one of the tragic incidents in the antebellum period. This was the mutiny of the crew of the largest unit of the Dutch navy, the armoured cruiser HNMS DE ZEVEN PROVINCIËN. In the night of 4 to 5 February 1933 the officers on board were arrested, and the mutineers set course from Aceh to Surabaya. This caused real panic within the government, as the ship could not be stopped by the other units of the Navy, because these were more lightly armed. Near Sunda Straits the ship was stopped by the Naval Air Service, which hit the ship with a bomb, causing numerous casualties. That was the end of the mutiny, which at the time was thought to be communist-inspired. Both within and outside the NEI defence establishment the question was posed, whether the natives would be loyal to the Dutch if the NEI was threatened by an external invader.

3.2.3. The Colonial Administration.

Already during the VOC-days, the Dutch had always cooperated closely with the indigenous nobility. The Dutch were interested in trade, not in war, and therefore avoided the


\textsuperscript{1268} G. Gonggrijp: \textit{Schat van economische geschiedenis van Indonesië}, Haarlem 1957, 180.

\textsuperscript{1269} AGN, 14 (1979), 392.

\textsuperscript{1270} Post, op.cit., 94.


\textsuperscript{1272} For an illustration see the salary tables for naval personnel before and after the salary reductions in J.C.H. Blom: \textit{De Muiterij op de Zeven Provinciën}, H & S, Utrecht 1983, 41 - 42.
elimination of troublesome sultanates, but tried to use their governmental structure to further their own purposes. Even after the Dutch Government took over the VOC possessions, this policy was continued with remarkable success.

One of the institutions taken over from the old VOC days was the position of the Governor-General (G.G.), the sole supreme executive authority in the colony. The Governors-General however acted most of the time as advocates and defenders of a Netherlands Indies state and its subjects, rather than simply as agents of the Netherlands. Nominally the G.G. was subordinate to the Dutch Minister of Colonial Affairs; in practice however their relationship was more as between peers, specifically after the Colonial Administration Reform Law of 1922, which made the NEI a "Rijksezel" or Dominion, only subordinate to the Ministry of Colonial Affairs.

Normally, the G.G. was appointed by the Monarch for a period of 5 years. Only in times of war was this period extended with agreement of both parties. In the twentieth century this happened only twice, with G.G. Idenburg (due to the First World War) and with the last G.G., due to the second World War. For the period under consideration, the following Governors-General ruled from Batavia:

- Dirk Fock, 24 March 1921 - 6 September 1926.
- Squire Andries Cornelis Dirk de Graeff, 7 September 1926 - 11 September 1931.
- Squire Bonifacius Cornelis de Jonge, 12 September 1931 - 15 September 1936.
- Squire Alidus Warmoldus Lambertus Tjarda van Starkenborgh Stachouwer, 16 September 1936 - 17 October 1945. (Detained as Prisoner-of-War by the Japanese from 9 March 1942 to 26 August 1945).

The Colonial Administration of the NEI in the antebellum was rather complex. In effect there were in existence three parallel administrations, each with its own legal system and jurisdiction. The Governor-General was responsible to the Dutch Minister of Colonial Affairs for the functioning of all three administrations. The European Administration included also the Japanese, who were considered as Europeans since 1899, which was rather unique in East Asia at that time! Laws, tax collection, government and representation were all different between the three administrations. European Law applied to the administration representing Europeans and Japanese, but not to the other two administrations, which were the Indigenous Administration and the Administration of Chinese and other foreign Asian natives not belonging to the indigenous people. The subdivision resulted in legal racial discrimination, which for example did not exist in British India, with its unified Indian Civil Service.

The Dutch Colonial Administration however was not

1273 R. Cribb (Ed.): The late colonial state in Indonesia, Leiden 1994, 3.


1276 See C. Fasseur:"Cornerstone and stumbling block: Racial classification and the late colonial state in Indonesia" in R. Cribb (Ed.): The late colonial state in Indonesia, Leiden 1994, 36.
racist in its intention, although the Indonesians and Chinese surely experienced its law practices as racial discrimination. Within those administrations there was a certain degree of self-rule. The Chinese maintained law and order within their group, being represented by "captains" or "majors" to the Colonial administration. The natives on Java were ruled by their kepala desa (village chieftain), wedana's and regents, who took care of law and order, maintained by applying the so-called Adat Laws (comparable to English "common" law). The village chieftains were democratically chosen by the village council or directly by the villagers. The Wedana's were district chiefs. On Java the districts in populous areas were subdivided in sub-districts, each with their deputy wedana.

A couple of districts formed a regency, governed by a regent, who in almost all cases was of Javanese nobility (the priyayi). Regents and Wedana's commanded the local indigenous police force, which maintained law and order in the villages and rural areas. They were also responsible for recruiting Javanese volunteers for the colonial army, and after 1940 for the selective conscription of able-bodied young men for the KNIL. Java counted 70 regency's. Regents, Wedana's and Deputy Wedana's were never democratically chosen, but appointed directly by the Governor-General. Regents were assisted by Indonesian Inspectors of the Civil Service.

The European community, and the Regents, were governed by the European civil service. The 3 Provinces on Java and the Governments of Aceh, Sumatra's East-coast and Celebes each had a Governor as the direct representative of the G.G. The Provinces or islands such as Borneo were divided into Residency's, with a Resident as Chief Executive. He could exert this responsibility by having a number of deputy-residents, inspectors and deputy-inspectors of the (European) Civil Service. The mostly very young deputy-residents had the supervision over the native Regents, with the help of their (Dutch) Inspectors ("Controleurs") and Deputy-Inspectors, and were responsible for the native population being well-cared for by its own nobility. The elite-corps of Inspectors of the Civil Service were the eyes and ears of the Dutch colonial administration. In the outlying islands, the civil administration was sometimes in the hands of military officers of the KNIL, who formed a kind of temporary regime in pacified areas before the Civil Service took over.

The larger cities on Java and Sumatra possessed their own Municipal Councils headed by a Mayor. The Mayor was always appointed by the G.G. The NEI counted 32 municipalities, of which 19 were situated in Java. The members of the municipal councils were always chosen directly by their respective populations (European/Indigenous/other Asians), but the European council members were always in the majority. The Regents were assisted by a Regency Council, which was partly elected by electoral colleges, partly directly appointed by the G.G., although the majority of the Regency Councils consisted of natives. In the same way the Provincial Councils were constituted, but in those councils European

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1277 S.L. van der Wal, op. cit., 851.
1279 In 1927 there were 18,880 of these villages on Java and Madura. See G.F.E. Gonggrijp, Geïllustreerde Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië. Leiden, 1934, 261.
representatives had a majority.

The highest Council in the NEI was, since May 1918, the People's Council, consisting of 60 members, of which 30 were indigenous people, minimally 25 were Dutch citizens, and minimally 3 were from the category "other Asian aliens". Twenty of the thirty indigenous members were chosen in twelve voting districts (4 on Java, 8 outside Java). Eligible voters were indigenous members of the provincial, regency and municipal councils within the district, and people who carried commensurate responsibilities. The Dutch members were directly elected by Dutch citizens of the NEI. The other Asian aliens in the Peoples Council were elected by the members of that population group represented in all councils in the NEI by their council members. The term was four years for all members of the People's Council. There were two sittings, one from 15 June to 15 September, the other from 10 January to 20 February.

The People's Council started in May 1918 as a pure advisory council, intended to give the European colonists a greater say in the internal matters of the NEI. In effect, the Peoples' Council was a result of a political movement named Indië Weerbaar ("A defensible Indies") to ensure that the defence of the NEI was less dependent on the motherland than before the First World War. At the end of 1918 a revolutionary tide washed over the war-weary continent of Europe. Rumours were spreading about a red revolution in the Netherlands and abdication of the Queen. (See this Chapter, paragraph 3.5.3.7, page 353). The G.G. at the time, J.P. Count van Limburg Stirum, even planned to negate instructions from a revolutionary government in the Netherlands and to announce a semi-independent NEI until the revolution had been stamped out. In November 1918 he announced that the People's Council would be elevated to a kind of legislative body, which would be democratically chosen. He installed a commission under the chairmanship of J.H. Carpenter Altin (the President of the NEI Supreme Court of Justice) to formulate recommendations into that direction. When the commission finished its report one and a half years later on 30 June 1920, the red tide had receded, and the recommendations of the commission for more autonomy for the indigenous people by democratically chosen provincial governments and further strengthening of the People's Council ran into severe opposition, both with the Europeans in the colony and with the political elite in the motherland. The very conservative Minister of the Colonies, Simon de Graaff, threw the recommendations of the Commission into the trash-bin, and in fact ended the ethische politiek as promulgated by the Queen in 1901. The power of the People's Council had been extended in the Constitution of 1922, but not as far as the Carpenter Altin Commission had advised. For the Nationalists (see below) this was interpreted as a broken promise, and up to 1941 they would accuse the Dutch Government of abandoning the November belofte (November promise of 1918). The fate of Van Limburg Stirum would haunt another G.G. (Tjarda van Starkenborgh Stachouwer, see below) and encourage him never to promise the

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1282 Ricklefs, op. cit. 161, 172.
1283 AGN, 14, (1979), 381.
1288 AGN, 14 (1979), 382.
Nationalists policies which he could not deliver, which made his rule inflexible at a time when instead it should have been flexible.

The People's Council had to agree on budget proposals by the Government, and had the right of initiative and amendment (but not the right of inquiry!) towards all laws applicable to the NEI Territory. It therefore had a say in the defence of the NEI, but not in its representation outside the NEI, because that was reserved for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Hague. If the G.G. and the People's Council could not agree on a budget, a petition or an ordinance, it was referred to the Dutch Parliament. The G.G. could attend the sessions of the People's Council in person, but in most cases he was represented by his Department Heads. The Executive Branch of the colonial administration was organized in Departments, comparable to Ministries in the Netherlands. The Department Directors defended their budget estimates and financial accounts in person at the People's Council sessions. There were nine Departments, seven Departments of General Administration and the Departments of War and Navy. The general administrative Departments were those of Justice, Finance, Civil Administration, Education and Religion, Economical Affairs, Traffic and Irrigation, and Civil Buildings & Construction.

After having been approved after long debate in the Peoples Council, the budget estimates went through the normal legal cycle in the Dutch Parliament, resulting in a net delay of 7 to 9 months, without any value added. Specifically for the military and naval estimates, this long legalistic procedure proved to be detrimental for the quick rearmament of the NEI.

We have explained the political organisation of the Dutch Colony, because in particular the People's Council was an important body, as in it were made public the wishes and opinions of all segments of NEI society, including the Nationalists. The People's Council was the public platform for exchange of viewpoints and opinions of both those who governed and those who were governed. Because of the yearly public debates about the estimates of both Service Departments we are today aware of the opinions of government and governed regarding the NEI defence.

The People's Council was not so much intended as a political platform for the natives but as a vehicle to give the Indian Dutch greater autonomy with respect to the motherland.

In fact it replaced an older institution, the Council of the Netherlands East Indies, which, just like the function of Governor-General, dated back to the early days of the VOC. The G.G. had to ask the advice of the N.E.I. Council for all proposed laws or ordinances, whether they originated from the G.G. himself or from the People's Council. The seven members of the N.E.I. Council were all appointed by the Dutch Monarch for a period of five years only. Two of the members had to be natives. The Vice-President of the Council was also the successor of the G.G. if he could not exert his authority by reason of illness or otherwise. The modern N.E.I. Council was instituted in 1825 to act as a counterbalance to the Governor-General (G.G.), who until 1918 held almost absolute power over the Administration as the highest Dutch authority in the colony, responsible only to the Minister.

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1277 W. van Heeslingen: Hecht verbonden in leem en leed, Amsterdam 1946, 52 - 54.

1288 About the importance of the Peoples' Council see S.L. van der Wal: "Nederland en Nederlandsch-Indië 1914 - 1942" in Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden (AGN), 14, Haarlem 1979, 384ff.

1299 Bob de Graaff, ibid, 203.
of Colonies in the Dutch Cabinet. He was also Commander-in-Chief of the Dutch armed forces in the NEI.

The executive power of the G.G. was not absolute. All financial matters had to be approved by the People's Council, as well as draft ordinances. These were also scrutinized by the Council of the NEI. Since 1910, the Colony had been financially separated from the motherland. All government expenditures therefore had to be paid fully from colonial taxes and other governmental revenues. The colony was certainly no democracy, but its inhabitants did have some influence on administrative affairs. Admittedly, this influence was minimal for the 65 million natives and the 3 million so-called non-native Asiatic aliens, (mostly Chinese), but was considerable for the roughly 400,000 Dutch inhabitants. The multilingual Press enjoyed reasonable freedom, and active political parties thrived, with nominated candidates elected to the councils from municipality up to the People's Council. Universal suffrage did not exist; native voters had to meet certain requirements of literacy and income. But political parties could raise their voice, and they certainly did so, including the Nationalist parties.

The Colonial Administration before the Second World War was professional and efficient in its dealings not only with the Dutch inhabitants, but also the indigenous masses. Indeed, many foreign experts such as Furnivall considered the NEI a model colony, resulting in very favorable foreign press reporting on the NEI. The Dutch administrators assumed that the vast mass of Indonesians were absolutely loyal to the colonial state, although the Dutch were never prepared to acknowledge that loyalty by raising an Indonesian Militia by conscription. This dichotomy in thought is difficult to explain, even after so many years have passed. Indonesian loyalty became an article of faith even in Dutch military circles, but the resistance against a stronger Indonesian influence in defence in the same circles was equally stubborn.

3.2.4. The Nationalists.

It is impossible to understand the military constraints facing the NEI Government in the twenties and in particular the thirties, without having some knowledge about the degree of acceptance of the defence of their homeland by the natives. It has to be remembered, that the professional manpower of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army consisted of over 70% indigenous troops. The Dutch administration assumed that these natives would be loyal to the Dutch, an assumption which history would prove to be incorrect. In order to understand why the native soldiers "melted away" at the approach of the enemy during Japan's three-month campaign in the NEI, Dutch policies with respect to the nationalist movements will be discussed in this subchapter. The Dutch lost the battle for the East Indies in the years preceding the Japanese invasion, and the great mass of the Indonesian population

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1290 They had to be able to read and write in the Dutch language, and had to earn more than 600 guilders a year. Bob de Graaff, ibid., 202.


therefore welcomed the Japanese as their liberators.  

The victory of Japan over Russia resounded in all Asian bazaars, and awakened aspirations to independence in the indigenous populations of all Western colonies in Asia. The Indian National Congress, founded in 1885, started working towards eventual independence after 1905. In recognition of British India's manpower contribution to the Great War, the British adopted the "Government of India Act" of 1919, which gave India a rather weak Parliament and democratic provincial governments. The Americans pioneered in the Philippines with a democratically chosen Assembly in 1907. The Jones Act of 1916 even promised eventual independence (page 22). Dutch politicians, like Colijn, however sharply criticized the Americans and British for what they considered irresponsible acts.  

The push towards more political freedom in the NEI however did not originate from the indigenous elite, but from Europeans, who protested against the autocratic government bureaucracy, which decided all and everything in the colony. As we have seen, this resulted in the establishment of municipalities in Java; with democratically chosen councilmen from the European community only. Municipal power, however, was strictly limited.

The traditional Javanese elite (the priyayi) worked closely with the Dutch and were therefore interested in maintaining the comfortable status-quo. Therefore, it was their children, young, western-educated native professionals who provided the stimulus to change things. The first indigenous movement, Budi Utomo, ("the fair aspiration") was founded in 1908 to emancipate the Javanese people. The movement was, however, too elitist to become a mass movement. In 1911 the Sarekat Dagang Islam was founded, a political, not an Islamic movement which wanted to curb Chinese influence in trade and industry. The Chinese themselves had become more assertive by the Chinese Revolution. The SDI was in itself inspired by the emancipatory movement of the "Young Turks" in Turkey, and became a real mass movement within a short time, and changed its name to S.I. (Sarekat Islam). The birth of the S.I. resulted in increasing violence against Chinese, and frightened the Europeans. In a National Congress at Bandoeang in 1916, the S.I. demanded a more democratic colonial administration.

A religiously-inspired movement as a reaction against the spread of Christian schools was the Muhammadya, which was a-political, and concentrated on the spread of Islamic-
inspired welfare. The Muhammadya movement concentrated on the building of primary schools, hospitals and co-operations. It would develop into another mass-movement in the interbellum, counting more than 900 branches in 1937, each with at least one primary school, and with women-, youth and scouting groups.

The influence of European socialists has been rather unappreciated in the emergence of the first trade unions in the NEI. From 1905 onward these trade unions were founded in the transport segment, in government (native teachers) and industry (sugar industry). An Indonesian Social-Democratic Party was founded in 1914 by the Dutch socialist H.J.E.M. Sneevliet. He inspired further radicalisation in the S.I. A political party which addressed the aspirations of the Indo-Europeans and promised them a free and independent Indonesia along the lines of the Philippines was the Indonesian Party, founded in 1912 by E.F.E. Douwes Dekker, a nephew of the famous writer Multatuli. This party was too radical for the Dutch Colonial Administration, and was forbidden in 1913. The Indo-European Verbond IEV (Indo-European Alliance), founded in 1919, emphasized the emancipation of Eurasians to European status, however, and therefore represented the Indo-European political voice up to 1942. The IEV was by far the largest of the European political parties.

One of the founders of the Indonesian Party, Soewardi Soerianingrat, was instrumental in the foundation of the Taman Siswa - movement (Literally "student garden") in the twenties. This movement financed about a hundred "wild schools" (i.e. not recognized by the Dutch Government), where pupils were given an education stressing Javanese culture and history. The Taman Siswa movement was a very effective way of indirect resistance to Dutch rule.

The effect of the proposals of the Carpentier Althing Commission (This Chapter Page 278) on the European colonists had been a shift to the right, rejecting any further political legislation aimed at greater autonomy for the natives. On the other hand, the Russian revolution of 1917 also radicalised some nationalists. The Indonesian Social-Democratic

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130 At the municipal elections of August 1938 the IEV obtained 110 seats out of a total of 207 seats for the European political parties. See Keesing's Historisch Archief, 23 August 1938, 3403.

Party, under the guidance of the aforementioned Henk J.F.M. Sneevliet, evolved into the well-organized Partai Kommunis Indonesia (PKI), a Communist party which would strongly influence the destiny of modern Indonesia. In February 1922 a strike was declared by the native personnel of the Pawn Service. The Government acted immediately and with force: the trade unionists were summarily fired, and the trade union leader, Abdul Muis, was arrested. This action by the Government split the Nationalists in two factions: one faction, dominated by the S.I., decided to accept the inevitable, whilst the other faction, dominated by the PKI, chose confrontation. Thereupon the government decided to arrest its leader, Semaoen, on 8 May 1923. That action resulted in the calling for a strike all over Java by the railway trade union. The striking personnel were summarily fired, and the railways taken under military control. That ended the strike, but it also forced the PKI underground, and polarized the relationship even further, making the Communists the bugaboo of the settled European and native elites.

On 13 November 1926 the PKI had planned a general strike all over the NEI, and an uprising in the Minangkabau region, on Sumatra's westcoast. Due to treachery, the Dutch authorities were informed, and the KNIL arrested the ringleaders all over Java on 12 November. In the Bantam region West of Batavia fighting occured, resulting in the death of 8 native policemen and an European railway official. The Government acted extremely harsh: 13,000 people were arrested, of which 4,500 were brought to trial. Of about 800 people no proof of subversive action could be found, but as suspicions still existed the G.G. used his power to banish them to a village in the jungle of Southern New Guinea, surrounded by cannibalistic Papua's. This became the infamous Upper Digoel penitentiary, which harboured around 1,400 internees in 1927. Digoel was neither a prison nor a concentration camp, but a place of utter isolation from the rest of the world, with the internees (and their families) surviving by subsistence farming and animal husbandry.

The resulting polarisation on both sides - nationalists and European colonials - proved the undoing of the ethical policy, and with that destroyed any chance of an orderly future transfer of power from the Colonial Government to the nationalists. At that time this was however not yet clear at all. A policy of repression had begun, which would be pursued with increasing severity until the Japanese occupation. The right of assembly was abolished, and the Press muzzled by the so-called "haatzaar"-articles proclaimed in the Press Ordinance of 1931. An Internal Intelligence Service called the Algemene Recherche Dienst (ARD) comprising 800 agents was established in order to spy on Indonesian nationalist movements. (See also this chapter, page 283 - 285). Even the

1308 Vincent Houben, op. cit., 91.
1309 Bob de Graaff, ibid 215.
moderate nationalists decided on a policy of "non-cooperation" with a colonial government from which they could no longer expect any positive move anymore. On 4 July 1927, the young nationalist Achmet Soekamto founded the Perserikatan Nasional Indonesia (PNI), which strongly emphasized non-cooperation. 131

On the other hand, the conservative Dutch colonials formed a political party of their own, the Vaderlandsche Club (VC), translatable as the "Fatherland Society", which stood for an uncompromising policy with regard to the Nationalists, and claimed Dutch sovereignty over the NEI for the coming ages. 132 The introduction of a new legislative system in 1931, along racial lines, resulted in the abolishing of multiracial political parties and the deepening of the rift between "white" political parties like the VC and the nationalist parties. 133 A retrograde development had begun in the colony, for which the Netherlands would pay dearly in the near future.

3.2.5. The Last Decade - A Lost Decade.

The last decade of peace in the NEI was characterised by increasing racism and conservatism on the European side, and further radicalization of the natives, with disastrous consequences for the loyalty of the indigenous soldiers serving in the KNIL. Many European officers however did not discern this gradual hollowing of their soldiers' loyalty. The political history of that last decade of peace is therefore of utmost importance in understanding the dismal performance of the KNIL as a fighting force against the Japanese in 1941/1942.

One of the less-known reasons for the spread of nationalist feelings within Indonesian society was the existence since 1906 of a more or less free and multilingual Press. 134 The Dutch Administration could interfere whenever it thought the Press strayed from the perceived common good, but in fact did so infrequently. Between 1931 and 1942, the Dutch Administration intervened 29 times, of which 5 interventions were against Dutch newspapers. 135 Within the context of a certain self-censure, editors were able to spread ideas and opinions rather freely. There were Dutch, English, Malay, Chinese and even Japanese newspapers available. Wellknown Dutch newspapers were Het Bataviasch Nieuwsblad, het Bataviaasch Handelsblad en De Java-Bode (all in Batavia), Het Soerabaajaasch Handelsblad (Surabaya), De Locomotief (Semarang), the Deli Courant (Sumatra), De Preangerbode (Bandoeng). An influential Chinese newspaper was Sin Po, and the best-read newspaper in Malay was Soeara Oemoem (the "Voice of the People", Surabaya-

The Dutch Press was rather localized and independent, and did not represent the views of certain political parties. However, the racial radicalization of the late twenties became also very obvious in the Dutch-language press, which wrote an offensive way about the nationalist movement. The nationalists fought back, and they surely did not lack a platform, as at the end of the thirties there were 37 daily, 122 weekly and 284 monthly periodicals in Bahasa Indonesia or other local languages.

The PNI meanwhile specifically recruited the indigenous students, and organized the 2nd Youth Congress on 26 and 27 October 1928 at Batavia. This Congress was of enormous importance. The students swore an oath (the sumpah pemuda) to one nation (Indonesia), one language (Bahasa Indonesia), one flag (the old red/white flag of Modjopahit) and one anthem (composed for the occasion by Rudy Soepratman and called the Indonesia Raya). Many of the students present would become the leaders of the Indonesian Revolution of 1945. They could do so, because the G.G. of that time, A.C.D. de Graeff, firmly believed in the ethical policy. He however could not resist the conservative grounds-well arising from the European populace who saw the PNI as a threat to the colony. On 29 December 1929 the offices of the PNI were searched, and its leaders arrested. However, G.G. de Graeff refused to use his banning powers to ship them to Digoel without due process. On 18 August 1930 the judicial process against Soekarno and three other leaders started at Bandoeng. Soekarno gave an impressive speech, in which he defended the fight for freedom of the Indonesian masses. He was sentenced to four years in prison, and the PNI was branded as a criminal organisation, which thereafter abolished itself. His stay in the Soekamiskin prison transformed the 30-year old Soekarno into a martyr for freedom and into a living legend.

After his release from prison Soekarno proved capable of mobilising the masses. Wherever he spoke, Indonesians by the thousands came to listen. The arch-conservative G.G. squire B.C. de Jonge could no longer tolerate this. Using the mutiny of the indigenous crew members of Hr. Ms. DE ZEVEN PROVINCIËN as a pretext, Soekarno was again arrested on 1 August 1933, and without due process banished to Flores, and later to Benkoelen, where he was freed by the Japanese. In February 1934 followed

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1238 Bob de Graaff, Ibid., 224, Rickels, op. cit., 185.


1243 Vincent Houben, op. cit., 104.

the arrests of two other prominent nationalists: Mohammad Hatta\textsuperscript{1205} and Soetan Shah-rir, both of whom were banished to Banda and Digoel respectively.\textsuperscript{1236} In contrast to the impact which the mutiny on board of this ship had on the Dutch political situation, which in the end proved to be minimal,\textsuperscript{1327} the mutiny had far-reaching consequences for the political situation in the NEI.\textsuperscript{1236} De Jonge's repression seemed successful; only in the People's Council existed a vocal group of Nationalists under the leadership of Mohammad Hoesni Thamrin.\textsuperscript{1230} Law and order were maintained in the NEI, which began to resemble a police state, to the embarrassment of the politicians and press in the Netherlands. The Dutch colonial population however admired De Jonge, and as the fast growth of the Dutch fascistic party in the NEI illustrated, they were not worried at all by the lack of democracy. The famous Dutch writer of mixed blood, E. du Perron, even referred to his country of birth as "that semi-fascist country."\textsuperscript{1230}

However, the NEI was no police state in the sense that the ARD (See page 275) had no power base in political or government circles. Moreover, its activities seem to have been free of torture and arbitrary detention.\textsuperscript{1331} The overall effect of its existence, however, was to alienate the politically active subjects from the Colonial Government, implying that a dialogue with that Government was impossible. The very visible presence and activities of the ARD at indigenous meetings therefore resulted in growing polarisation between politically active Indonesians and their Dutch colonial masters.

De Jonge however was strongly supported in his conservative views by the Dutch Cabinet, and in particular by the Prime Minister, H. Colijn, who doubled as Minister of Colonial Affairs at that time. In January 1936 Colijn even offered De Jonge an extension of his tenure as G.G. for another year, which offer De Jonge declined due to his health.\textsuperscript{1332} Colijn then selected the relatively unknown diplomat squire A.W.L. Tjarda van Starkenborgh Stachouwer as the new Governor-General, with the knowledge that Tjarda would continue the policy of his predecessor.

Before he left for Holland, de Jonge declared in an interview: "In my opinion, we have to stay in the NEI another 300 years before the time would be ripe for an independent East Indies."\textsuperscript{1333} This sentence would be quoted many times in the pre-war colonial press.

\textsuperscript{1205} Mavis Rose: \textit{Indonesia free: a political biography of Mohammad Hatta}. Ithaca, N.Y. 1987.


\textsuperscript{1207} J.C.H. Blom, op. cit., 281.

\textsuperscript{1208} Vincent Houben, op. cit., 104.

\textsuperscript{1209} Thamrin was the first Indonesian who was chosen in 1926 as alderman of a city, in this case Batavia. Bob de Graaff, ibid., 226.

\textsuperscript{1210} Bob de Graaff, ibid., 226.


\textsuperscript{1212} G. Puchinger: \textit{Landvoogd en Minister}, op. cit., 277.

\textsuperscript{1213} Koloniaal Tijdschrift, 25 (1936), 338.
The strong handling of the Indonesian political parties seemed successful. The thirties did not witness indigenous uprisings like the twenties. Conservative European colonists declared that the Nationalist movement was based on a small elite, and did not possess a popular base. That, however, was a false impression. Under Dutch repression the nationalist parties diversified into social, economic and educational activities, and therefore expanded their popular base. The Taman Siswa-movement is an example. But it also resulted in the formation of umbrella-parties, which combined a number of political movements in a few strong parties. In December 1935 the Partai Indonesia Raja (Parindra)\textsuperscript{133} was founded, which accentuated economic liberation of the masses by farming cooperations, financed by the Bank Nasional Indonesia which used Indonesian capital only.\textsuperscript{133}

The parties more to the left were fused into the Gerakan Rakjat Indonesia or Gerindo in May 1937 under the competent leadership of Indonesians such as A.K. Gani and later Amir Sjarifuddin. Gerindo recognised the fascist danger posed by Japan, and offered to cooperate with the democratic Dutch government, which haughtily declined the offer. How deep the nationalist feelings...had already penetrated the masses became embarrassingly clear, however, at the funeral of Thamrin, which brought thousands of ordinary Indonesians together in the streets of Batavia in January 1941.

Illustrative of the paternalistic views of the Dutch Colonial Administration is the so-called "Soetardjo-petition". Mas Soetardjo Kartohadikoesoemo was the leader of the Union of Indian Civil Servants in the People's Council, which succeeded in 1936 in getting a majority of the People's Council to vote for a request to give the NEI Dominion status within ten years.\textsuperscript{133} In formulating his petition, Soetardjo had been strongly influenced by the example of the Philippines, where the Americans had founded a parliamentary commonwealth and had promised independence in ten years' time.\textsuperscript{page 23} The Dutch government rejected the petition without much argument on 16 November 1938.\textsuperscript{137}

Frustrated by this apparent lack of appreciation, Thamrin succeeded in uniting the Nationalist factions Gerindo and Parindra into the Gaboengan Politik Indonesia (Gapi) in May 1939, which due to the increasing Japanese menace, tried to cooperate with the Colonial Government in the area of defence. However, the Gapi demanded a more parliamentary form of government.\textsuperscript{133} This however was seen as political blackmail by the G.G., Tjarda van Starkenborgh Stachouwer, who refused acceptance of Gapi's demand on formal legal grounds. The only gesture he was willing to make in the direction of the Nationalists, was the appointment of a commission under F.H. Visman, member of the NEI Council, in September 1940. The commission was to study governmental reforms,


\textsuperscript{136} See R.M. Margono Djojohadikoesoemo: "De Parindra en haar economische organisaties" Koloniale Studiën, Vol. 23 (1939), 164 - 179.

\textsuperscript{137} Bob de Graaff, Ibid., 234.

and interviewed a large number of Indonesians, but not the Nationalist leaders. Its final Report therefore was out of touch with reality - a reality in which the majority of the Indonesian population had turned away from the Dutch, and would welcome the Japanese as their liberators. The Dutch Administration had failed spectacularly in the objective, formulated in 1913, to integrate the different populations of the NEI into one nation. Instead, the rift between masters and servants had been widened considerably, and within Gapi the Indonesians had accomplished their integration into one anti-colonialist bloc on the eve of Japanese aggression. Inexorably, and invisible to most Dutch observers, they switched loyalties from the Dutch to the Japanese "liberators". According to Ricklefs, when Dutch rule ended, "it left behind few friends among the Indonesians"

In his exhaustive study on the Department of Colonial Affairs, de Graaff postulated that with regard to nationalism, the Governor-General had a large measure of freedom in dealing with the Nationalists. However, the G.G. did not use this freedom at all, because by personality he and his predecessor were not willing at all to take the Nationalists seriously. Representative of the thinking within the more progressive Dutch governing circles was the opinion of dr. G. Hart, who noted in his diary that he foresaw for the NEI "a gradual process of becoming independent under the lenient tutelage of a highly-developed, trade-conscious, unarmed nation like The Netherlands, which would have the political primacy within the Dutch empire". In this statement we find all the elements of Dutch chauvinism, moralism and over-estimation which irritated so many Indonesians, but also foreign diplomats and observers at that time.

The reason that we have covered the Nationalist upsurge in some depth is because of the enormous influence, that Dutch repression had on the morale of the Indonesian soldiers in the KNIL. This was one of the main factors in the ignominious defeat of the KNIL by the Japanese. A young Dutch civil servant at that time, J. Jonkman, later described that he worked together with 60 Indonesian colleagues in a firefighting unit in Batavia in 1941. He talked with each of them and found an unanimous disbelief that the Dutch administration would ever introduce real reforms. On the day of Dutch capitulation, they even produced little Japanese flags! In the same period 1940 - 1941 the American Military Intelligence Service interviewed a number of American citizens returning from the NEI. From these interviews the MI officers concluded that the natives, and the Indonesian soldiers in

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1328 Verslag van de Commissie tot bestudeering van staatsrechtelijke hervormingen, ingesteld bij gouvernementbesluit van 14 september 1940, 2 volumes, Batavia 1942 and New York 1944.

1340 For an exhaustive review, see R.C. Kwantes (red.): De ontwikkeling van de nationalistische beweging in Nederlandsch-Indië. 4 vols, Groningen 1975 - 1982.

1341 Bob de Graaff, ibid., 240.


1345 Ricklefs, op. cit., 195.


1348 G. Hart, op. cit., 82.

the KNIL, would not be loyal to the Dutch in case of a Japanese attack. They confronted the Dutch military attaché in Washington, Weijerman, with their conclusions, which he indignantly rejected out of hand.¹³⁷

Why was Weijerman - and with him almost every European in the NEI - so sure about indigenous loyalty? The reason was that, in the tumultuous period we have just described, the KNIL stood up as a rock. Its soldiers had been used to break railway strikes in the twenties, and even patrolled the naval base and city of Surabaya during the mutiny of HNMS DE ZEVEN PROVINCİÉN (See this chapter, page 273). None of the social and disciplinary turmoil within the Navy seemed to affect the KNIL and its indigenous soldiers. Unobserved by the Dutch decisionmakers however was the gradual erosion of loyalty and morale of the indigenous troops after rejection of the Soetardjo-petition of 1938, and because of the nefarious influence of Japanese propaganda broadcasts in Bahasa Indonesia, which started from Formosa in September 1941. These broadcasts were never jammed by Dutch transmitters.

3.2.6. Conclusions.

The Dutch Government (and public opinion) before the war considered the NEI a model colony, with an efficient colonial administration and with much regard for the well-being of the indigenous population. Of course this was a self-serving delusion, but widely held as being true in Dutch public opinion.

In reality the NEI was like an apple, shiny on the outside, but rotten inside. The indigenous people had been disillusioned in the interwar years, more radical native politicians had been banished out of public view, but were still exerting their influence. In Javanese custom and culture, it is "not done" to speak the plain truth to the face of your interlocutor, and the lack of revolutionary fervor in the thirties combined with the compliant attitude of the natives was widely interpreted by both the administration and the white populace as a sign that Dutch supremacy had been finally accepted. Nothing could be farther from the truth, because nationalism had gone underground, like a peat-moor fire, partly fueled by Japanese subversive propaganda.

Therefore, when a serious external challenge to Dutch authority materialized, the whole artificial building of the NEI Administration and defense collapsed like a stack of cards. The firm foundation of a loyal native population had been eroded beyond salvation by a repressive Government specifically in the thirties. Without native loyalty to the Dutch Administration, all military resistance to the invading Japanese was doomed to failure in the end. Therefore, it is important to appreciate the history of increasing repression during the interwar years in order to understand one of the most important factors in the downfall of Dutch imperial power.

On the previous pages, we have tried to show the complex process by which the Dutch administration lost its support in the native community. It has been a challenge to do this in a few pages, but its understanding is absolutely essential for the things to come.

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¹³⁷ ARA, London Archives MvK, acc.nr. 2.10.45, inv. nr. 741.
3.3. Foreign Policy of The Netherlands.

3.3.1. Introduction.

Dutch foreign policy was a consistent policy of aloofness for almost 110 years, made necessary by the possession of an enormously rich colony in the Far East, while the motherland was rather insignificant in terms of European power politics. The Far Eastern colony in fact evolved under British protection, provided as such by the Royal Navy. Therefore, it would have made sense both politically and militarily, if the Netherlands had closed a defensive alliance with the British against the encroaching Japanese.

As the British had already allied themselves with the Japanese in 1902, this however was not a realistic proposal until the Washington treaties of 1922. Such a defensive alliance would have exposed the little Kingdom on the North Sea to an attack by Germany in case of a conflict of that country with the United Kingdom, which was a distinct possibility from the end of the 19th century onwards. The emergence of a united Germany in 1870 had resulted in extensive trade relations with the Netherlands, with Rotterdam being the main transit port for German imports and exports. In addition, the Boer War caused strong anti-British feelings in Holland. Therefore, in a strictly European context, an alliance with Germany against England made more sense than an alliance with England, but such an alliance would result in the loss of the Netherlands East Indies in case of an European war to either British or, even worse, Japanese occupation, as Japan was allied with Great Britain. Dutch foreign policy between 1900 and 1940 therefore was on the horns of a dilemma, and a flight into strict neutrality seemed the only viable solution.

With the growing might of the Axis in Europe after 1933, and of Japan in the Far East, the question became whether aloofness was still an effective policy. A large majority of the people and the political parties in democratic Holland were horrified by German totalitarianism and Japanese militarism. It would have been logical to search for a kind of understanding with the two strongest western democracies, Britain and France. Moreover, in the Far East the colonial possessions of both empires were threatened by Japan, such as the NEI. But neutrality had been effective in the First World War, and anyway it was a very cheap foreign policy in terms of expenditures for armaments, and therefore in line with the fiscally conservative cabinets of the interbellum. This subchapter will cover the Dutch foreign policy in that period, and try to see if there were other alternatives.

It has to be observed, that Dutch historians of course have debated this question in depth. Manning and Blom have pointed out the real lack of alternative policies for the Dutch government, rejecting alternatives like teaming up with the Scandinavian States and Belgium. H.W. von der Dunk is very critical about Dutch aloofness, but does not

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1346 H.L. Wesseling: "The giant that was a dwarf, or the strange history of Dutch Imperialism" Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History. Vol. 16 (1988), 58 - 70.

1349 A.F. Manning, in AGN. 14 (1979), 364.


identify a clear alternative. Van Diepen has pointed out correctly, that Dutch aloofness did not preclude a Dutch policy aiming at support of the League of Nations, and arbitration in conflicts between states. Of course, the presence of the International Court in the Hague was an important factor in this Dutch policy.

3.3.2. Personalities and Organisation.

Dutch politics between the wars was of a very provincial nature, as befitted the closed political culture resulting from the policy of aloofness for a century, isolating it from developments in the outside world. Moreover, Dutch society was deeply divided politically. No political parties had been able to obtain an absolute majority in a Parliament with strictly proportional representation, and therefore the dominant political culture was that of consensus within the ruling coalition parties. This culture was not unlike that of a Municipal Council. To navigate the seas in the gathering storm in East and West in the thirties, Holland clearly needed a statesman of Churchillian proportions, but such a statesman was lacking. Within this confinement however there were a few personalities perceived as political leaders with an outstanding reputation, dominating public opinion, and being looked upon by their peers with due respect. A few of these personalities will be covered here rather summarily.

The dominant politician in the interwar years was without a shade of doubt dr. Hendrikus Colijn (1869 - 1944), who presided over four Cabinets between 1924 and 1939. Colijn was born the son of a protestant farmer. Without wealth, the intelligent Colijn had to settle for a training as a teacher, after which he joined the instruction battalion of the KNIL at Kampen in 1886. Appointed 2nd Lieutenant in 1892, he went to the East Indies in 1893, where he distinguished himself on the Lombok expedition of 1894, where he earned the highest Dutch military decoration, the Militaire Willems-Orde. Sailing in Aceh, he distinguished himself again, earning the admiration of the Dutch Commander, General van Heutsz, who made him Military Governor of the conquered territory. In 1904 he was appointed Adjutant to the then Governor-General van Heutsz, who promoted him to Secretary of the NEI Government. Returning to The Netherlands, Colijn pursued a political career under the tutelage of the leader of the Orthodox Protestant party, Abraham Kuijper. Colijn served as Minister of War from 1910 to 1914 with distinction. In 1914 he left politics and began an international career with Shell Oil, where he became Director. The reason for this switch was his financial insecurity, lacking a wealthy background. In private business he was very successful too, becoming a Member of the Board of Shell Oil Company in London in 1920. In 1922 he had amassed a personal fortune, making a re-entry possible in Dutch politics. He was elected into Parliament in 1922, and after the disaster of the rejection of the Draft Fleet Law (see here-under) he became Prime Minister until 1925. Between 1933 and 1939 Colijn again was Prime Minister of a series of coalition cabinets, and during that time he dominated the Dutch political landscape. His fifth Cabinet fell in June 1939, ending his political career.

Colijn was a statesman of the English breed: internationally oriented, well-informed, pragmatic, erudite. He was indeed pro-British, but not anti-German. He hoped to appease

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130 G. Puchinger: Nederlandse Minister Presidenten van de Twintigste Eeuw, Amsterdam 1984, 125 -137.
the Germans. Due to his character and upbringing, he was fiscally very conservative and therefore he pursued a policy of financial austerity, adhering too long to the gold standard for the Guilder. When the gold standard was at last left in 1936, Holland had one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe, and the recovery from the crisis took much longer than in other countries. Colijn lacked the vision to effectively tackle the three great political issues of the decade: colonialism, neutrality versus the need of the re-armament of the NEI, and the economy. Notwithstanding continuing cuts in defence estimates for years, he remained unrealistically optimistic about the power of the NEI defence. After having received two dire warnings from the Dutch Minister in Tokyo, Pabst, about Japanese military designs towards the NEI, he wrote in a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs that in his opinion, Japan would not attack the NEI as long as the Japanese were assured of oil imports from a neutral NEI, even in case of a Japanese -American war. He also completely misjudged the situation after the German occupation of Holland, which resulted in him quickly losing his popularity and standing with the Dutch populace. His stance tarnished his well-earned reputation to the effect that even today he is not considered a great statesman, notwithstanding the dominant position in Dutch politics he had for two decades in the interwar years.

One of the few Dutch politicians who survived the war years with an enhanced reputation was the last Governor-General of the Netherlands East Indies, Jonkheer (Squire) Alidius Warmoldus Lambertus Tjarda van Starkenborgh Stachouwer (1888 - 1978). He was born into a noble family which had its roots in the Dutch province of Groningen. After obtaining a Doctorate in Law at Groningen University in 1911, the young nobleman pursued a diplomatic career, marrying Christine Marburg, the daughter of an American diplomat, during his stay at the Washington Legation in 1915. He returned shortly to Washington in 1921 - 1922 as the Secretary of the Dutch delegation to the Washington Fleet Conference. Between 1925 and 1933 he was provincial Governor of Groningen (like his father before him). After 3 years in Brussels as Minister, he was rather surprisingly appointed Governor-General of the Netherlands East Indies by Colijn on 16 September 1936.

Tjarda was a member of the Liberal Remonstrant Church, and very attached to Groningen. He was reserved and unpretentious, dutiful and living almost frugally, with only a few good friends. He had a strong and critical mind, was exacting, but his appearance exuded integrity, self-confidence and dignity. He inspired confidence, and was a born leader. His speeches were clear, unambiguous and forceful. During his tenure as Governor-


\[1310\] For example, his speech at his honorary promotion at Groningen University on 20 March 1957, in which he defends his policies with respect to the Indonesian Nationalists and the Japanese Government. Stikker, op. cit., 63 - 77.
General he did much to stimulate the economy and higher education in the NEI. He worked closely with the Volksraad, which he took very seriously within the framework of the Constitution. He loathed the Nationalists, because in his vision, full independence of Indonesia would set back by decades the progress of the colonial society to a democratic multicultural and wealthy independent state. In contrast to his predecessor he considered the evolution of the colony to autonomy and dominion-status as inevitable, but he lacked the pragmatism to work out an agreement with the Nationalists, which could have saved the colony, even when, after the fall of the motherland, he had the power and stature to do so. Nationalist wishes for a more independent policy were rejected with rather legalistic arguments, but at the same time he demonstrated an independence of mind in his relationship with the Cabinet in London with respect to foreign policy which caused much embarrassment in the Cabinet. Alas he did not display that same independence in relation to the internal problems, which he approached in a very legalistic way. In this respect he remained the conservative, regentesque but able administrator that he was, underestimating the depth of the nationalist feelings within the Indonesian masses. One wonders whether history might have run a different course if he had used his considerable talents and powers in working with the Nationalists, and had been more pliable in his internal policy.

Tjarda earned much respect from both friend and foe for his forthright and courageous attitude during enemy occupation, choosing the humiliation of capture and imprisonment together with the thousands of fellow Europeans whom he had advised to remain on their posts. A few months after the war he refused another term as Governor-General because he had less liberal views on dealing with the Republican insurgents than the Minister of Colonial Affairs, J.H.A. Logemann. Again he displayed the same rectitude and integrity which had won him so many admirers. He served his country very well after the war in a number of important diplomatic posts.

A third man of influence was Dr. Eelco Nicolaas van Kleffens (1894 - 1983), who obtained his Doctorate in Law in 1918, and after a few years at the League of Nations secretariat in London and the Royal Dutch Shell became Deputy Chief of the Legal department of the Foreign Ministry in The Hague. After a fast career he became Director of the Political Department of this ministry, and was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs on 10 August 1939. He escaped to England with his wife in a light plane from the beach at Scheveningen on 11 May 1940. In London he succeeded in reconstructing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a skeleton staff of only 19 people.

Van Kleffens was an intelligent civil servant, but remained a civil servant even as Minister. He was very avaricious, and as he was rather ruthless in his dealing with his subordinates, he inspired more fear than trust. Van Kleffens was very intelligent and hardworking, but not a born leader. According to Hart, van Kleffens was no statesman, and too submissive to the British Foreign Office and its policies. In his view, "Van Kleffens was a competent civil servant who did not possess any statesmanlike qualities" In dealing with the

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1384 G. Hart, op. cit., 144.
issues of war however, Van Kieffens was not a defeatist like most of his colleagues in the Dutch Cabinet. However, he lacked vision, and he acted rather opportunist. His arrogance did not win him many friends in contacts with his peers in the Foreign Office in London or the U.S. State Department. Like so many of his Cabinet colleagues, he underrated the Americans. He was known for his megalomaniac views on the importance of The Netherlands as a nation. The title of most successful Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs surely does not belong to him, but should go to another politician, Dr. Van Karnebeek.

Squire Herman Adriaan van Karnebeek (1874 - 1942) was of rather dark complexion, due to his Indo-European mother. Queen Wilhelmina and her mother Queen Emma nicknamed him "the nigger" in their correspondence, but she appointed him chamberlain extraordinary. He obtained his Doctorate in Law from Utrecht University, after which he spent ten years at the Department of Colonies. In 1911 he became Mayor of The Hague. Although he was rumored to be pro-German, he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1918, and he proved to be a very succesful Minister. His masterstroke was the defence of the Dutch view on the Belgian demand for border corrections at the Peace Conference of Versailles in 1919. Because of their neutrality, the Dutch had lost much sympathy with the Allied countries. But he could convince the allied leaders that it was unwise to honor Belgian demands, and he brought the Netherlands back in international politics. Holland shortly thereafter joined the League of Nations.

During the Washington Disarmament Conference of 1921 - 1922 he skilfullly obtained a guarantee for Dutch integrity in the Far East from the four major Pacific powers including Japan, without any concessions from the Dutch side. (See also subchapter 1.5.2, page 93ff) However, he overplayed his hand in the signing of the Rhine-Scheldt Treaty with the Belgians in 1925, leading to his defeat in the Senate in 1927, and subsequent resignation. He was without question the most brilliant Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs of the first half of the century, and may be even of the whole 20th century. His closed nature and natural arrogance however made him few friends.

The most tragic figure in Dutch politics during this century undoubtedly was Prime Minister de Geer, who presided over two Dutch Cabinets between 1926 - 1929 and 1939 - 1940 and was Minister of Finance in two other Cabinets. Squire Derk Jan de Geer was born in 1870, and made a fast career in politics, which brought him the title of Chairman of the Christian Historical Union faction in the House of Representatives in 1913. He was self-conscious and willful, very detailistic, wanting to know all and everything, and not very communicative. But in ability, energy, and eloquence he had few peers. Dutch internal politics had his interest; he did not care at all about foreign policy. According to van Kieffens, de Geer avoided all contacts with the Corps Diplomatique at the Hague. If he was given a copy of the Government estimates, then he could, with uncanny speed, identify errors because budgets were his speciality. Therefore, he was judged "a small-minded provincial" by de Jong. He was a pacifist at heart, expecting (too) much of the League of Nations, and he was a strong supporter of Dutch aloofness. As a financial

1367 Van Kieffens, op. cit., 45.
specialist he stressed austerity in all fields, but especially defence. In 1921 he became Minister of Finance, only to resign due to the introduction of the Draft Fleet Law in 1922. In 1926 he formed the first Cabinet with his name, to the dismay of Colijn. In 1929 he continued as Minister of Finance in the 3rd Cabinet of Ruys de Beerenbrouck (1929 - 1933). In the fall of 1939, he formed the ill-fated 2nd Cabinet de Geer, which for the first time in Dutch history included 2 socialist Ministers.

It was this Cabinet which took refuge with the Queen in London in May 1940. In London, he proved to be the most defeatist of all Ministers. On 20 May he appealed on the BBC to the Dutch population to work closely with the German invaders. This attitude quickly lost him the support of the Queen. She was instrumental in his resignation on September 1940 as PM. On his way to the NEI on a government mission he defected in Lisbon, and returned to Holland, where to his astonishment he only met disapproval. In April 1942 he wrote the pamphlet "The Synthesis in War" in which he again pleaded for peace with the Nazis. For that act, he was condemned to prison after the war. His orders and decorations were withdrawn by Royal Decree in 1950, a humiliation which embittered him until the end of his long life. He died as a recluse in 1960.

Next we will cover the Dutch Foreign Ministry and discuss some important personalities in that department, which we will encounter a number of times in this dissertation. Looking at the organisation of the Dutch Foreign Service, one is struck by the small size of its staff, while Holland was, and also considered herself, an important country in those pre-war days. On 15 May, 1940 the Diplomatic Service of the Kingdom counted only 59 diplomats, distributed over 24 legations. The Consular Service counted 44 members, the Translator Service 11 members in China, Japan and Tanger. The best-known translator in the Dutch Diplomatic Service has been Dr. Robert van Gulik, who was employed as translator at the Dutch Legation in Tokyo. After the war, he would become a well-known author.

The Ministry in The Hague counted 69 civil servants in October 1939, and was as such the smallest of all Dutch Departments. That the Dutch Cabinet was less informed about developments outside the Netherlands than it should have been, should therefore not come as a surprise.

This was not only a matter of quantity. Also in quality, many Dutch diplomats proved to be less than capable. Dutch fugitives who escaped from German occupation complained bitterly about the lack of interest in them as displayed by Dutch diplomats in France, Spain and Portugal. The situation in Tokyo was even worse. The Dutch Minister there since 1923 was Maj.-Gen. KNIL J.C. Pabst, who at the time of his appointment lacked any diplomatic experience. He was a bachelor, and did not develop close relationships with influential Japanese, not even before 1940, when that was still possible. The quality of his advice and reports deteriorated over the years, and his lack of dependable informants on matters Japanese became painfully obvious before 1940. Moreover, he was

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138 Kersten, Ballingschap, op. cit., 80 afp.


137 Kersten, Ballingschap, op. cit., 193.
already 68 years of age in 1941, and not in perfect health. The G.G. asked a number of times to have Pabst replaced by a more competent diplomat, but he was rebuffed by Van Kleffens, who therefore has to carry the responsibility for the lack of essential information from Japan during the very risky crisis in Dutch - Japanese relations from 1940 onwards.

On the other hand, two other ministers served their country well. In London the Dutch Minister was the competent squire E.F.M.J. Michiels van Verduynen, who maintained excellent contacts with the F.O., but lacked contacts with Churchill and his inner circle. In Washington the equally competent squire A. Loudon oversaw the expansion of his Legation to a staff of 35 members in 1941, due to the increasing importance of the U.S.A. in supplying the Allies with weapons. He fell ill however during a crucial period in 1940, causing the G.G. in Batavia much discomfort.

A very important factor in Dutch foreign policy became the Queen. Because the Cabinet lacked the restraining influence of a democratically chosen Parliament, and an independent Press, the Queen gradually dominated the members of her Cabinet, until they were more or less her Ministers, a situation which existed in The Netherlands between 1813 and 1848. It was, however, Van Kleffens who imposed his rationality on the impulsive and emotional Queen, and because she respected him because of his intellect he therefore could more or less restrain her in her actions within his field of responsibility, which was quite an achievement. Others, like Hart for example, considered van Kleffens too servile to the Queen, however.

At the end of this sub-chapter, a word has to be said about the organization of another important Ministry, that of Colonial Affairs. Relations between the two Ministries had been strained even before the outbreak of war, and their physical closeness in London in the war years did not do much to improve the situation. The Minister of Colonial Affairs was politically responsible for what happened in the colonies, especially in the sensitive Netherlands East Indies. His instrument was the Ministry of Colonial Affairs. In an exhaustive study, De Graaff has described this department as complacent, reactive and authoritarian, peopled by underpaid and aging civil servants and not up to the task of implementing the political modernisation of the NEI. It hardly initiated any new policies, but it preserved and codified existing policies. Nevertheless, it was considered an elite

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1373 Telegram G.G. to Welter, no 238, 27 July 1940. ARA Archives MvK, 1940/45, accession nr.2.10.45, inv. nr. 123. Telegram G.G. to Welter no 12z/A.S., 12 December 1940, Ibid.


1376 Kersten, Ballingschap, op. cit., 326 - 331.

1377 Kersten, Ballingschap, op. cit., 299.


1379 Bob de Graaff, op. cit. 650.
Ministry,\textsuperscript{1380} which seems paradoxical. Without doubt it was an organisation which lacked dynamism, also because of its closed culture, stressing promotion from within. But there were more such Ministries, for example Foreign Affairs, and the Service Departments. Therefore, it might be inferred that the organisational woes of the Ministry were the same as that of other Dutch Departments in the interbellum. New departmental histories, which still have to be written, will have to prove that the subculture within Colonial Affairs was indeed different, as claimed by de Graaff.\textsuperscript{1381}

The Ministry of Colonial Affairs had its counterpart in the Colonial Administration in Batavia. It has to be realized, however, that communications at that time were still slow, and consisted mainly of letters and telegrams. In the period under consideration, the power balance shifted gradually towards the colonial administration in Batavia, due to the growing international importance of the NEI.\textsuperscript{1382} The Ministry of Colonial Affairs remained a small department; in 1939 the staff consisted of 152 civil servants, who together ran an Empire!\textsuperscript{1383} Retired officers of the colonial army held many important posts, and added to the authoritarian and strongly hierarchical culture of the Department.\textsuperscript{1384} It has to be emphasised, however, that the Minister was not depending on information about the NEI from his civil servants, because there was a direct line of communication between the Minister and the Governor-General through their semi-private correspondence.\textsuperscript{1385}

The colonial ministry was organised into departments, which reflected the departmental organization of the colonial administration in Batavia. The 6th department concerned itself with the defense of the NEI, and had close contacts with the War department and with the KNIL General Staff in Bandung. It lacked, however, close contacts with the Navy Department in Batavia, which was an obvious organisational weakness, because it was the Navy which was of paramount importance in the defence of the NEI.\textsuperscript{1386} Of growing importance in this respect was also section G "War Material" of the Commission of Indian Affairs, a bureau attached to the Ministry which performed inspections of (war) materials bought for NEI defence. This section consisted of 12 civil servants under Colonel H.J.W. Verniers van der Loeff, who would escape to London in 1940 and who would become the influential chief of the 6th Department of the Ministry of Colonial Affairs in London.

\textbf{3.3.3. An ingenuous foreign policy.}

The last time that the Netherlands were fighting a war on European soil was in the period 1831 - 1839, when it tried to keep the Belgians from seceding. After a bitter struggle, the southern part of the Kingdom seceded, forming the modern state of Belgium with British...
and French support. Dutch foreign policy in Europe thereafter became one of a strict neutrality.\footnote{J.C. Boogman: "The Netherlands in the European scene, 1813 - 1913", in: J.H. Leurdijk, ed.: The Foreign Policy of the Netherlands. Alphen ad Rijn, 1978, 31 - 48; Amry Vandenbosch: Dutch foreign policy since 1815: A Study in small power politics. The Hague, 1959; C.B. Wels: Aloofness and Neutrality. Utrecht 1982.} Moreover, the Dutch had the luck that the first forty years thereafter were a quiet period in European history, but after the proclamation of Imperial Germany at Versailles in 1871 the question arose whether this emerging power would leave Holland alone.\footnote{A.J.P. Taylor: The Struggle for mastery in Europe, 1848 - 1918. Oxford, 1954.} It is now known that the German General Staff had already planned a campaign against Holland in 1897.\footnote{J. Steinberg: "A German Plan for the invasion of Holland and Belgium, 1897". In: P.M. Kennedy, Ed.: The War Plans of the Great Powers, 1880 - 1914", London 1979, 155 - 170.} The Von Schlieffen Plan of 1905 envisaged the occupation of Dutch and Belgian territory by its enormous flanking movement around Paris. But Holland escaped the fate of Belgium in 1914 because of a number of factors which induced the Germans at the last moment to respect its territory.

After the First World War, Dutch politics had turned inwards, assisted by a romantic revival of its rich Protestant-Calvinist roots dating from the struggle for independence against Spain. In this view, which was however never dominant in the interbellum, the Dutch nation was considered chosen by the All-Mighty, like the Old Testament Jews. The miraculous neutrality of the country during the First World War reinforced these high-flying ideals about Dutch destiny. In this view, elucidated by the conservative Protestant Parties, the Netherlands had a divine calling to be a guiding light to other nations; to be a nation with such high moral and ethical standards that it would act as a source of inspiration for more powerful States. The Dutch expression for this is Gids-land. (Guiding Country) In the words of De Geer, one of Holland's leading protestant politicians at that time, Holland was "a light-tower in a dark world"\footnote{J.C.H.Blom: "Durch kamen sie doch". Het Nederlands defensiebeleid in de jaren dertig opnieuw beschouwd". In: G. Teitler, Ed: "Tussen Crisis en Oorlog". Dieren, 1984, 118.} As Brands\footnote{M.C. Brands: "The Great War" die aan ons voorbijging. De blinde vlek in het historisch bewustzijn van Nederland. In: M. Berman & J.C.H. Blom, Eds.: Het Belang van de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Sdu, Den Haag 1997, 9 - 20.} has shown, the escape from the brutality of a worldwide conflict isolated the Netherlands from the mainstream of European history, making the country mentally a 19th century enclave in a 20th century Europe up to 1940.

Holland was one of the earliest modern European nation-states, counting its birth from 1579 and the so-called Unie van Utrecht, and therefore one of the oldest existing nations in Europe. It clung to the only major colony which England had left it in 1813, the NEI,\footnote{During the Napoleonic Wars, England annexed the rich Cape Colony, and Ceylon. After 1815, the Dutch, next to the NEI, were left with six small islands in the West Indies and the colony of Surinam in South-America, the colony of Guinea on the Westcoast of Africa, and a small trade outpost at Decima in the harbour of Nagasaki, Japan.} and formulated a civilising task for its colonial policy, based on its long relationship with the region since 1596. It was also in Holland, that the unique political theory of "ethical defence" was developed: the rather naive belief that a country which ran its business in an exemplary way, would not cause the envy, but the respect of the other

\footnote{\textcopyright 1880 - 1914, London 1979, 155 - 170.}
business in an exemplary way, would not cause the envy, but the respect of the other nations. It was a logical follow-on to the *gidsland-concept*. Logically, this concept was also extended to the rich colony in the Far East. The Netherlands in this vision was unique in possessing the moral force to develop the East Indies into a model colony. This ethical policy, like aloofness in foreign policy, found a very broad support in the fragmented Dutch political landscape, from the protestant right to the social-democratic left, and therefore became a dogma - an everlasting truth which did not need to be discussed. Aloofness was simply a paradigm, which was taken for granted.

Another factor, which promoted aloofness in international relations, was Dutch trade. The Netherlands have always been a trading nation, accumulating enormous wealth because of its monopoly trade in spices from the East. Dutch traders became staunch supporters of free trade after the Dutch had lost their powerful navy after Napoleon. Building on the tradition of Hugo Grotius, the The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 codified the international Law of the Seas, giving neutral nations the opportunity to continue trade as long as they stayed strictly neutral. This was important for Holland, as it possessed the seventh largest merchant fleet in the World in 1939. The Liberal-Conservative Party found its power base in the trade-oriented bourgeoisie and was therefore strongly in favor of neutrality.

The legacy of Hugo Grotius (Hugo de Groot in Dutch) resulted in a strong emphasis in Dutch foreign policy on International Law. This was already recognized by the founding and location of the International Court of Arbitration in The Hague in 1907, which was taken over by the League of Nations as the Permanent Court of International Justice in 1921. To become a diplomat in the Dutch foreign service, one had preferably to be of noble origin, and one needed at least to have a degree in Law. It was widely believed in Dutch public opinion, that International law and the League of Nations would end all international conflict. On an election poster of the leftist Liberal-Democratic Party (Vrijzinnig-Democratische Bond) for the election of 1925 a lawyer is depicted, halting the wheels of war with his hands in which are clasped the codex of International Law.

**References**


1304 The well-respected professor in Law, J. de Louter at Utrecht University, published a number of books on this theory, which he defined in his first publication, "De taak van een kleine Staat," Utrecht 1900, and was further refined in his book "De roeping der kleine Staten" Amsterdam 1918.


1307 For the contemporary Dutch view on aloofness see J.A. van Hamel: "Can the Netherlands be neutral?" *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 16, January 1938, 339 - 346.


1309 For a reproduction of this naive poster, see Beunders, op. cit., 62.
The birth of the League of Nations posed a problem for Dutch foreign policy. Should The Netherlands stay aloof from the League, like Switzerland, or the United States, or had it to join it. Not joining the League would also jeopardize the continuation of the presence of the prestigious International Court of Justice in The Hague. After much debate in Parliament, the Dutch decided to join the League of Nations, also because its articles on collective security were promising for a small nation like The Netherlands. The decision was broadly supported in public opinion, and the Dutch faithfully co-operated in a number of cross-border activities in the service of the League of Nations. An example is the participation of a company of Dutch Marines in maintaining order in the Saar region during the plebiscite in 1934.140 In this respect, there was certainly no "neutrality" towards the League of Nations, which was seen by many in Holland as the saviour of world peace. When the League of Nations turned out to be impotent as an organisation to impose sanctions on aggressor states like Japan (Manchuria 1931) and Italy (Abyssinia 1935) Dutch aloofness increased strongly in popular support and as a foreign policy in the second half of the thirties.1401

This brings into focus a fourth factor, which was a peculiarity of Dutch internal politics: the sharp division of the political landscape in factions, (the so-called zuilen, an untranslatable Dutch expression) which only co-operated with each other at the top. This factionalism started at the end of the 19th Century and reached its peak in the interwar years and the fifteen years thereafter. In effect there were four different Dutch entities: a protestant entity, a roman-catholic, a liberal and a social-democratic entity.¹⁴⁰² Each had at least one political party as champion, but each faction also had its own schools, newspapers, broadcasting company, scouting clubs and youth organizations, but also hobby clubs, sport clubs and societies. None of these factions had a majority in the population, and by default, of seats in Parliament. Governing meant the forming of coalitions, which could easily fall by internal dissension. Coalition Cabinets have as a consequence that compromises have to be reached on major issues. An alliance with a major foreign power (Germany and the UK were the two candidates between 1900 - 1914) would create, as a consequence, a rift in any coalition, because of the different loyalties. The Liberal faction was considered to be pro-English, the Protestants were pro-German (especially after the Boer War), and the Catholics and Socialists hopelessly split. Moreover, the social-democrats were strongly anti-militaristic, and supported between 1919 - 1930 around thirty anti-militaristic societies." The Army was German-oriented, the Navy was strongly pro-British. Thus neutrality was the easiest way out of this political dilemma, satisfying everyone.

With respect to the colonies, the political parties did not differ very much in their opinion about the Colonial Administration. There had been no parliamentary crises about the colonies in the interbellum, proving the existence of a strong political consensus on this


¹⁴⁰¹ Remco Van Diepen, op. cit., 247 - 264

¹⁴⁰² J.C.H. Blom: "De mutilarj op DE ZEVEN PROVINCIËN, reacties en gevolgen in Nederland". Bussum 1975, 17-24, 352-353. To be referred to subsequently as "Blom".

¹⁴⁰³ H.W. von der Dunk., op. cit. 15.
Of course there were different accentuations. The protestant parties adhered strongly to the idea of the unity of the Empire (the *Rijks-Eenheid*) under Dutch Royalty; the Catholics however were habitually far less interested in the colonies. The social-democrats would be the traditional defenders of the rights of the indigenous people. Not so in Holland, however. Many socialists in fact feared loss of income for Dutch laborers should the NEI become independent.\textsuperscript{140} The only political party which was staunchly anti-colonialist since its inception in 1918 was the Dutch Communist Party, demanding immediate decolonization "now!" It was also the only party which reserved a Parliamentary seat for an Indonesian communist. Under the growing worldwide menace of fascism, however, even the Dutch Communist Party lost its anti-colonial virulence, concentrating instead in the formation of a common Dutch-Indonesian front against fascism.\textsuperscript{142} In conclusion, the Dutch Parliament in the interbellum left the administration of the NEI to the Minister of Colonial Affairs and the Governor-General, and only discussed colonial finances, and issues of (maritime) defence.

The Netherlands have been a parliamentary democracy since 1848. But even before then a long and successful tradition existed of strong local and regional government, which was dominated by the trade-oriented high bourgeoisie in the cities and the sea-provinces of Holland and Zeeland, and by the landed gentry in the other provinces. For several centuries, they comprised the ruling elite, the *regenten* (regents) who divided governmental posts by a system of co-optation. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, this "old-boys network" was partly replaced by a meritocracy, but like in other European countries the elitist networks existed and extended also to the top of the zuilen. Those networks were an integrating factor on that top level, guaranteeing that the fabric of Dutch society was not torn apart by strife between the zuilen.

The system of pillars resulted in strongly politicized media which never attained the power of the English and American media, which were less or even not politically affiliated. Although nominally free, the Dutch media - with the exception of media belonging to the opposition - never used their power to correct the parties in government. Even the media supporting the opposition parties, i.e. the Social-Democratic and Communist parties during the interbellum, respected certain standards of behaviour. The result was in effect an anomaly: a closed, but democratic, political system with much self-satisfaction. Anxiety about telling unpleasant truths to the public became almost pathological. Prime Minister Colijn, before the Second World War, became a kind of father figure, reassuring Dutch listeners over the radio that they indeed could sleep peacefully.\textsuperscript{147} It illustrates the almost instinctive urge of the governing elite towards secrecy and the hiding of unpleasant facts from public opinion. This, by the way, also applied to the Netherlands' East Indies Government. As is clear from correspondence between the Foreign Ministry and the Minister in Washington, the care which President Roosevelt took with respect to American public opinion was utterly incomprehensible for Dutch diplomats.

\textsuperscript{140} Bob de Graaff, Ibid., 258.

\textsuperscript{142} Bob de Graaff, Ibid., 250.

\textsuperscript{144} Bob de Graaff, Ibid., 251.

The result of all these factors was rather puzzling to all foreign observers: a strongly internally oriented political élite who had almost no interest in foreign affairs as long as it did not intervene with free trade. At the helm of government was a rather naive political élite, very content with itself and therefore not interested in developments in other countries, which therefore continuously made wrong estimates about other countries' foreign policies and intentions. Illustrative in this respect was the first parliamentary session after the recess of the Summer of 1939, which took place on 4 September, 1939. No political party touched the subject of the war in Europe which had just broken out, except the Communists. During the budgetary debates in October 1939 the mantra of neutrality was recited by almost all parties - a dogma which made contacts with other democratic Western powers a taboo. An observer of the nineties, reading the text of all those debates, is struck by the lack of any real emotion about the impending catastrophe and the fate of other nations, and by the smug self-sufficiency and self-conceit which obscured the observation of the real dangers for the Dutch nation. Von der Dunk therefore is sharp in his condemnation of prewar politicians, when he observes:

The political elites in the Netherlands, which still maintained an unbroken regents' mentality and a belief in 'th century values, had lost all real contact with modern developments elsewhere. Their shortsighted horizon and limited grasp were at least partly historically determined. The war as such was a traumatic experience, but changed in effect little. In October 1945, a fiery debate took place in Parliament on the subject of the absence of the name of God and His blessings in the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations, implying that because of that oversight the Netherlands should abstain from joining the UNO. At the same time, Dutch subjects in the NEI were murdered by the hundreds in the so-called "Bersiap-period" of the Indonesian struggle for independence.

The three guiding principles of Dutch foreign policy have been neatly summed up in one of the best studies of Dutch foreign policy after World War II. They were: "Peace, Profits, and Principles"! Dutch foreign policy resembled an aquarium: the fishes within it were very busy making profits and fighting each other on principles, but in a closed system, and unaware that an enemy could shatter the aquarium with one hammer blow. That was what happened in 1940 in Europe and in 1941 in Southeast Asia.

Looking at the neutrality policy of other small European nations in the interwar years, Dutch neutrality can be best compared with policies in Denmark and Norway. All three countries pursued a passive neutrality on moral high ground, in contrast to Belgium, Switzerland and Sweden, which pursued an active, outward-oriented neutrality based on a

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1408 HTK, 1938/1939, 2250 afp.
1412 HTK, Tijdelijke Zitting, 1945, 123 afp.
willingness to defend their neutrality with weapons, if needed. The two Scandinavian countries mentioned were even less well armed than the Netherlands. Denmark possessed a so-called police army, and was overrun by the Germans in a few hours on April 9, 1940. The Norwegians had to mobilise during the German attack. A very readable and sometimes even hilarious account of Norwegian unpreparedness is presented by Kersaudy.

In an interesting study, Riste concludes: "An important consequence of that dual foundation for Norwegian security was that it seemed to make a national defence effort irrelevant. Either the great powers would leave Norway alone, or the British would, in their own interest, see to it that the Royal Navy prevented any hostile power from gaining a foothold on the Norwegian coast. In either case there would be no need for Norwegian armed forces beyond a symbolic neutrality guard". The same conclusion was drawn by Dutch policymakers, for the European part as well as for the Asian part of the kingdom, with Great Britain and its Navy as the silent guard of Dutch neutrality. This kind of neutrality has sarcastically been called a parasitic neutrality because implicitly and in silence it was assumed that other western democratic powers would assist Holland when it was attacked.

In the period around 1934 it became clear that Dutch and Imperial defence was insufficient. Warnings came from retired officers and other sources. Still, the cabinet, based on a parliamentary majority of conservative christian and liberal parties, maintained a frugal policy with respect to re-armament, although the estimates went up. Even the traditionally anti-militaristic socialists became restive, especially after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Fascism had to be stopped, and nice words did not accomplish anything. But the conservative ruling elite stuck to legalism, and in effect acted as the famed ostrich by putting its head in the sand. The hypocrisy of maintaining strict neutrality without any contacts beforehand with Great Britain and France was not discussed in the Press or in Dutch society. The German invasion would therefore become the most traumatic experience of the Dutch national psyche in the whole of the twentieth century, even eclipsing that other trauma: the loss of the NEI.

In fact the realisation that Dutch aloofness was going against the best interests of the country was voiced already in the thirties, in the NEI, where the Japanese threat was much

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149 H.W. von den Dunk, op. cit. 18.


more visible than the German threat in Europe. A representative of the Vaderlandse Club (VC), Kruyne, complained aloud in the People's Council in 1938: "...this policy of aloofness à outrance, which reappears in any official document which we receive from our Government, is in flagrant contradiction to a real policy of independence."\(^{422}\)

As we have seen, foreign policy in the strongly internally oriented Dutch political culture of the interbellum, did not arouse much interest from the public. The same can be said with respect to the interest of the general public for its largest colony. Holland lacked the colonial societies of e.g. Great Britain and France. The general public viewed the colony in the east as a source of income for a small group of wealthy Dutchmen.\(^{1423}\) Pupils in primary and secondary education had to study the geography and history of the NEI, but by and large there was emotionally no real public attachment to the NEI, while, for example, there was a very emotional attachment to the House of Orange. According to a research study there were only 782 books of the 14.826 publications appearing between 1925 and 1940, with the NEI as its subject, or less than 5% of all titles.\(^{1424}\) This lack of understanding by the general public about its governments' political responsibilities in the Far East would severely hamper Dutch foreign policy in both the antebellum period and in the immediate postwar years.

In its final consequences, aloofness as a foreign policy, in combination with internal circumstances resulted in a stagnant, strongly internalized political culture\(^{1425}\), which did not match the growing international economic interdependence, and which locked the Dutch into conservative nineteenth-century policies until deep into the 20th century. This lag became evident in a number of policy fields, like foreign policy, defence, economy and the management of the colonies.

Was there a serious alternative? There was, as is made clear by the British Government during the secret talks with Colijn in 1936. Both Eden and the COS wanted to prod the Dutch to take seriously their responsibility for the defence of the NEI. Britain was not willing to pull the Dutch chestnuts out of the fire.\(^{1426}\) The alternative was chosen by Belgium, Sweden and Switzerland: arming to the limit of their resources. With the totalitarian states on the rise, it was the sole credible alternative, and rearmament also started in Holland and the NEI too, but too late. Like in Britain, Dutch rearmament should have started in 1934 after Hitler's rise to power, or at least after the Colijn talks in 1936, but certainly not as late as 1937.

3.3.4. The London period (1940 - 1941).

Dutch aloofness ended with a bang on 10 May 1940, the day the Germans invaded the Low Countries. After a few days of confused fighting, the Queen and her family, and the Cabinet decided to move the center of government from The Hague to London, where a

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\(^{1422}\) Handelingen VR 1938/1939, Vol. 1, 152.


\(^{1424}\) Bob de Graaff, Ibid., 245. For an interesting discussion on this subject, see W.H. van Heeslingen, editor: Hecht verbonden in lief en leed. Amsterdam 1946, 146 - 152.


government in exile was formed. However, during the first weeks, the Cabinet members still had to absorb the shock of the loss of their country, sitting dejectedly in the lounge of their hotel in the evenings, like "a flight of sparrows soaked by rain", as one of the refugees described his Ministers.\textsuperscript{1427}

One of the first issues to be decided was that of the seat of government. The British government had welcomed the Dutch government in exile, and had offered their full support.\textsuperscript{1428} The NEI however were still free, and within the Cabinet there was a strong desire to move the government to Batavia.\textsuperscript{1429} The Governor-General more or less expected such a move,\textsuperscript{1430} and welcomed it, as it would strengthen the Dutch position in relation to the British and the Japanese. In a personal letter to baron van Boetzelaeler at the Washington legation the G.G. indicated why he considered such a move as important, as he lamented: "The occupation of the motherland and the fact that our Government in London is under direct supervision of the British government have resulted in the sad situation of today in which we are helpless and dependent. Thanks to God the East Indian part of the kingdom is still free, and foreign policy concerning that part can still be executed within the framework of independence."\textsuperscript{1431}

Most members of the Cabinet for the same reason opted for a move to Batavia. Notwithstanding the unanimous Cabinet decision, the Queen however refused to leave London, because, as she explained, she could not stand the tropical climate\textsuperscript{1432} in taking that position, she exceeded her constitutional limits, and when the Cabinet, under the weak leadership of Prime Minister De Geer, accepted her desire to stay, she in effect became the leading figure in determining the course of the Cabinet. Due to the lack of a regulating and controlling body like the Parliament, and a critical public opinion, the Cabinet was not able to match the strong personality of Queen Wilhelmina. The Cabinet remained in London during the entire war, and was considered by the Queen as "her" Cabinet, particularly after she replaced De Geer as Prime-Minister by P.S. Gerbrandy, who previously had been Minister of Justice.

In a letter to all Dutch legations, van Kleffens denied that Dutch foreign policy had come under tutelage of the British.\textsuperscript{1433} But in fact, Dutch foreign policy was indeed harmed by the presence of the Dutch government in London. When for example the Director of the Dutch press agency Anep-Aneta, mr. N.A.C. Slotemaker de Bruïne, made an extensive tour of Japan and Manchuria in the summer of 1940, he discovered that Japanese of all


\textsuperscript{1428} DBPN, C, I, 36, 32.


\textsuperscript{1430} Hart, op. cit., 75; DBPN, op. cit., 291, 347.

\textsuperscript{1431} Tjarda to van Boetzelaer, 1 October 1940, DBPN, op. cit., 409, 466.

\textsuperscript{1432} Minutes Cabinet Council, 31 July 1940, DBPN op. cit. 229, 253 - 255.; Letter van Kleffens to Loudon, 19 August 1940, DBPN, op. cit. 296, 352 - 353.

\textsuperscript{1433} Letter van Kleffens to all legations and consulates, 19 October 1940, DBPN, op. cit., 447, 521 - 522.
ranks thought the Dutch Government was under the guardianship of the English.\textsuperscript{1434}

The Cabinet as a whole had only a few strong personalities, and as such was a clear reflection of interwar Dutch political culture. The strongest interwar politician, Colijn, was not a member of this Cabinet. Welter, de Geer, Dijxhoorn (Minister for Defence) and Van Kleffens proved to be weak and not up to their responsibilities. One of the Department Heads within the Department of Colonial Affairs was the very capable Dr. George Hart. He has left a diary of the period May 1940 - May 1941, which reveals his unabashed opinion about the Dutch Ministers.\textsuperscript{1435} He considered most of them incompetent, amateurish and weak, and too easy on the British Government. He was joined in this unfavorable opinion by one of his target Ministers: Van Kleffens. In his autobiography, van Kleffens described a discussion he had with Welter and Welter’s legal adviser, W.G. Peekema, on board an American steamer on their way to the NEI in 1941. According to van Kleffens, both gentlemen were Pétainists and defeatists as such, and he broke off the discussion\textsuperscript{1436}.

The first two months after the Dutch capitulation the Dutch government kept its distance from the English government. The Dutch government did not declare war on the Italian Government,\textsuperscript{1437} and they informed the French Vichy government that the Dutch had their separate responsibilities, which in a number of cases were not parallel to those of the British.\textsuperscript{1438} It was not yet clear whether Britain would survive the German onslaught, and therefore a certain amount of prudence was called for. In this evaluation, the Dutch were not alone. The Americans too expected the imminent loss of Great Britain (See pages 87 - 88), based on the pessimistic reports of their Ambassador, Joseph Kennedy, and on the opinions of the American military Attaché, Maj.-Gen. R.E. Lee USA.\textsuperscript{1439}

After the Battle of Britain, and because of the developing resistance against German occupation within the Dutch populace, spirits in the Dutch government started to rise. But there were no regular conversations with the British Government about common war goals. According to Manning, this made sense because the British government considered the NEI as a kind of Dominion, and were unwilling to give it a security guarantee.\textsuperscript{1440} After September 1940, Van Kleffens displayed a more pro-British position, to the dismay of Welter, who castigated him for “running after the English”. Only after the replacement of de Geer by Gerbrand however on 3 September 1940, did it dawn on most Cabinet Members that they had to play the English card. The Cabinet however overrated the importance of the NEI for the Allied war effort, and counted on the same views within the British

\textsuperscript{1434} Report of visit of Slotemaker de Bruïne to Japan and Manchuria, 3 October 1940, DBPN op. cit., 420, 481.


\textsuperscript{1437} Letter Van Kleffens to Halifax, 17 June 1940, DBPN, op. cit.; doc. 111, 112.

\textsuperscript{1438} A.F. Manning: "De buitenlandse politiek van de Nederlandse regering in Londen tot 1942". Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis, 91 (1978), 53.


\textsuperscript{1440} Manning, London, op.cit., 54, 60.
government. In the opinion of the Dutch Cabinet, The Netherlands were a "middle power" and therefore of more importance to England than small powers like Poland, Norway and Belgium. The Dutch government maintained this arrogant stance until after the Battle of the Java-Sea, hurting many people sympathetic towards the Dutch cause.

3.4. Foreign Policy in East Asia.

3.4.1. Introduction.

Dutch foreign policy in East Asia was founded on these principles:

1. Absolute neutrality. (See previous subchapter)

2. An economic policy based on the "Open Door", allowing foreign companies free access to the raw materials and internal markets of the NEI. In practice however, this policy was less open than suggested, because Japanese investors were decidedly less welcome than those from Western European countries and the United States. The hidden objective of the economic "Open Door" was that due to these investments, the great powers would oppose the take-over of the NEI by any other power. (i.e. Japan).

3. Based on a colonial policy of paternalistic care for the natives, the Dutch profiled themselves to the outside world as enlightened, efficient colonial administrators, running a model colony. Again, the thought behind this was that by running a model colony, the great powers would not feel obliged to take over the colony. Any occurrence which clashed with this idealized image caused the wrath of the NEI government.

A case in point were the actions undertaken against a French critic of Dutch colonialism. The French professor G.H. Bousquet had written a very critical book on Dutch colonial policy ("La politique musulmane et coloniale des Pays Bas"). He was a frequent visitor of the NEI.144 An English-language excerpt in the influential American periodical Pacific Affairs resulted in a request by the Minister of Colonial Affairs to his colleague of Foreign Affairs to protest to French authorities about the contents of this article.144 The same Minister, Welter, also asked for an intervention directed against the publisher of "Pacific Affairs", the Institute of Pacific Relations in Princeton, NJ.144 The English version of the French book, titled "A French view of the Netherlands Indies", was even the subject of an import ban into the NEI.144 These actions illustrated the thin skin of Dutch authorities concerning the image of the NEI to the outside world.
3.4.2. The Conference of Washington.

As the major powers correctly did not consider the Netherlands to be a serious naval power any longer, the Dutch were not invited by U.S. President Harding to the Washington Naval Disarmament Conference. The Dutch Government protested, and claimed that the Netherlands were indeed a Pacific Power. Due to the size of its colonial possessions, that was difficult to deny. When the other small countries involved (e.g. Portugal) also loudly protested, Harding decided to invite them together with China for the non-military part of the Conference, which was concerned with the Open Door to China.

The Dutch delegation was purposely small, and was headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.A. van Karnebeek. The delegation was not invited to take part in the Naval Disarmament part of the Conference. When however the British delegation tried to ban the submarine as a war weapon, van Karnebeek talked to both A. Briand (leader of the French delegation) and A. Balfour (leader of the British delegation) to inform them that as a small nation Holland needed submarines as a cheap substitute for battleships to keep the Japanese out of the NEI. On a direct question by Balfour, whether the Dutch feared the Japanese, Van Karnebeek answered with an unequivocal "yes".

On 22 November 1921 Van Karnebeek had an informal dinner with Elihu Root, former Secretary of State and member of the American delegation. Root maintained that the real problem in Asia was the temporary weakness of China, which destabilized East Asia. It was therefore the purpose of U.S. foreign policy to gain time for China, in order to enable her to sort out her difficulties. If China could reconstitute itself quickly, so much the better, because none of the Western Powers was willing to risk a war with Japan for China's future.

The same day, Van Karnebeek had talks with Lord Arthur H. Lee, viscount of Fareham and First Lord of the Admiralty, in order to discuss the submarine question. The discussion turned to the defence of the NEI. According to Van Karnebeek, in a letter to the Dutch Prime Minister: "Lord Lee informed me without any hesitation that the English Admiralty would never permit any other Power to take hold of the NEI, and that the Royal Navy would act decisively in such case, irrespective of the political relationships then existing between England and us, or between England and other States. Although allied with Japan, England would never tolerate any action of Japan against the NEI. England would act, even if we would not wish English protection, because it considered it essential that the NEI would not be occupied by any other Power. According to Lord Lee, the position of the Archipelago was one of the main foundations of international relations and of English foreign policy. He understood that for reasons of national self-respect we would try to do our best to take care of the defense of the NEI, and of our international duties. However, he argued that English policy was independent of those considerations. I even got the impression that this was the British attitude towards the security of the Philippines. I thought that

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147 Telegram Chargé d'Affaires de Beaufort to Foreign Minister van Karnebeek, 14 July 1921. DBPN, period A, Vol. II, doc. 408, 544 - 545.

148 Beunders, op. cit., 56.

149 Diary of van Karnebeek, 18 November 1921. DBPN, A, III, RGP 173, 61, 108.

150 Diary of van Karnebeek, 22 November 1921. Ibid., 68, 115.
This information, coming from the highest responsible person to address this problem, was of such an importance that I had to inform you immediately about it... I cannot deny, that I am very impressed by what are obviously the military consequences of having these colonies, and how keen the situation in our colonies is observed by other powers. I am glad, that I am here in person, because that gives me the opportunity to find out about these important considerations.\textsuperscript{1461}

This discussion with the English was very important, because it convinced future Dutch Cabinets that indeed there existed an unspoken British guarantee for the security and integrity of the NEI. Beunders\textsuperscript{1462} maintains, that Van Karnebeek was disgusted by the arrogant statements of Lee, and became even more anti-British, but I cannot find this in the comments in Van Karnebeek's diary and in the letters to his PM. On the contrary I have to conclude that Van Karnebeek was awed by the evident strategic importance of the NEI for the security of other nations in the Pacific, which he had underestimated like so many of his compatriots. The contents of that discussion in Washington were to have a far-reaching influence on Dutch defense policy for the NEI in the coming twenty years, because it offered the fiscally conservative Dutch leaders a perfect excuse for not investing too much in the defence of the NEI.

The last sentence of the quote also illuminates the provincial outlook and naïveté of Dutch politicians, of which Van Karnebeek was still one of the most internationally oriented representatives. He had headed the Dutch delegation at Versailles, and had worked prominently in institutions of international law before the First World War. From his mouth, these words indeed gain a higher significance.

On 9 December 1921, Van Karnebeek was informed by the U.S. Secretary of State, C.A. Hughes, about the contents of the concept of the Four-Power Treaty, which was to be signed on 13 December 1921. He remarked to Hughes that the NEI was the only area in the Pacific of which the status quo had not been guaranteed by one or more of the four signatories. He therefore pleaded for the insertion of a clause in the treaty in which the Four Powers would also guarantee the possessions of the other Pacific powers, i.e. the Netherlands and Portugal.\textsuperscript{1463} In the discussions which followed, the suggestion was made by the Dutch delegation that the signatories of the Four Powers each individually would guarantee the integrity of the NEI in a letter to the Dutch Government. On 5 February 1922, the Ministers of the Four Powers in The Hague each gave this assurance to the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs in four almost identical letters.\textsuperscript{1464} This really was a triumph for Dutch diplomacy, because the guarantee was not bound in time (the Four-Power Treaty had a validity of only 10 years), and was unilateral: Holland had not to guarantee the Four Powers.\textsuperscript{1465}

\textsuperscript{1461} Letter van Karnebeek to Prime Minister Ruys de Beerenbrouck, 22 November 1921. Ibid., 68A, 115 - 116.

\textsuperscript{1462} Beunders, op. cit., 103 - 105.

\textsuperscript{1463} Diary of van Karnebeek, 9 December 1921. Ibidem, 93, 167.

\textsuperscript{1464} For the text of the Japanese letter see Stafwerk KNIL, Vol. I, 8 - 9.

\textsuperscript{1465} N.A. Bootsma: "Nederland op de Conferentie van Washington" BMG, 93 (1978), 101 - 126.
3.4.3. Dutch relationship with Japan.

As will be discussed in Chapter 6, the Dutch were the only western power which were allowed to trade with Japan after its closure to outside contacts in 1637. Dutch relations with Japan remained good after the opening of Japan. When the Japanese bested the Chinese in the Chinese-Japanese war of 1895, the Dutch even decided to grant the Japanese in the NEI equal rights with the Europeans. This was rather unique in comparison with all other western colonies.

The British-Japanese alliance of 1902 enhanced the status of Japan even further, but the Japanese victory over the Russians at Tsushima scared many colonists in the NEI. Japanese propaganda reinforced those fears, as they paraded captured Russian warships in the East, allowing natives to visit these ships, on which placards noted in the Malay language, that these ships had been conquered from the Europeans. The last guerilla fighters in Aceh even appealed to the Japanese government to provide them with modern weapons.

More worrying than eventual military expansion however was Japanese economic penetration in the NEI. Japanese entrepreneurs were using the Dutch "Open Door policy" to the utmost. Japanese emigration to the NEI increased considerably, evoking fears of a situation as existed in Hawaii. Moreover, the very security-conscious Dutch authorities expected every Japanese trader to be a potential military spy. Reports on Japanese spying activities in the NEI have been sent to the Netherlands since 1905. In the early thirties the Japanese share of imports into the NEI rose from 10% to 31%, while imports from Holland were reduced from 20% to 12%. One of the reasons for this spectacular shift was the devaluation of the Yen by more than 60% with respect to the Guilder in December 1931. The depression resulted in a decrease of buying power for all inhabitants of the NEI, but the flood of cheap Japanese textiles and manufacturing goods somewhat alleviated the effects of the depression.

After the Washington Conference, things in East Asia quieted down considerably. The catastrophic Kanto earthquake on 1 September 1923 generated much sympathy towards the Japanese, and required a considerable reconstruction period in Japan.

During the Manchurian crisis of 1931/1932 the Dutch Government maintained a strict neutrality, and did not join in the condemnation of the Japanese by the other members of

150 Bob de Graeff, op. cit., 262.
151 J. Wisselink: "De economische penetratie van Japan in Nederlandsch-Indië" *ESB*, 19 (17 Nov. 1934), 1001 ff.
152 See correspondence of envoy J.C. Pabst in ARA Archives Cabinet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accession nr 2.05.19, box nr 299, Reports from Tokyo 1919 - 1929.
the League of Nations in 1933.\footnote{See Remco van Diepen, \textit{op. cit.}, 97 - 101} It was obvious for the Dutch however, that a period of relative stability had passed. To the dismay of the Dutch Government, the Japanese representative in the League of Nations, Yosuke Matsuoka, declared to the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs during a visit to The Hague on 6 March 1933, that Japan was interested in New Guinea as a place to relieve the Japanese population pressure\footnote{Letter Beelaerts van Blokland to Pabst, 10 March 1933, DBPN, B, II, 276, 527 - 529.}. This was however not the the first inkling of Japanese interest in South-East Asia, or the Nanyo, as the Japanese called this region, but anyway this was a serious and disquieting proposal. In early April, Matsuoka had another conversation with Minister of Colonial Affairs De Graaff, asking him for the admission of 700,000 Japanese into New-Guinea. Afterwards de Graaff remarked to G.G. de Jonge rather pensively: "Therefore I am afraid that the Japanese problem will become one of the most serious threats to us in the years to come"\footnote{Letter de Graaff to G.G. de Jonge, 9 April 1933. \textit{Ibid.}, 317, 592.}

The decision of Japan, to leave the League of Nations on 27 March 1933, caused a number of panicky telegrams from Minister Pabst in Tokyo, who feared a Japanese \textit{coup de main} against the oil harbours of Tarakan and Balikpapan, if the U.S. Government would implement a rumoured oil embargo.\footnote{Ibid., 260, 506.} Thereupon the Dutch Government quietly mobilized the militia in the NEI between 28 February and 4 July 1933, but nothing happened.\footnote{Ibid., 261, 507.} Pabst however remained on the alert, and strongly disagreed with plans to reduce defence spending in the NEI.\footnote{Letter Pabst to S. De Graeff, 20 December 1933, DBPN, B, III, 171, 276 - 280.} He caused the ire of Minister of Colonial Affairs, H. Colijn, who considered Pabst to be too pessimistic.\footnote{Letter H. Colijn to Minister of Foreign Affairs S. de Graeff, \textit{Ibid.}, 209, 348 - 350.} In the view of Colijn, the Dutch would still be able to export oil to Japan in case of a Japanese - American conflict, thereby alleviating the necessity for Japan to occupy Dutch oilfields. An unmistakably serious warning however was the announcement of the Japanese Government on 17 April 1934, coinciding with the Amau Declaration (page 31) that it no longer considered the Nine-Power-treaty of Washington as valid.\footnote{Letter Pabst to De Graeff, 26 April 1934, \textit{Ibid.}, 285, 459 - 460.}

As a result of the deepening economic crisis, trade relations became more important in foreign relations. Countries concluded bilateral trade treaties with each other. The Netherlands were in a difficult position because of the maintenance of the Gold Standard, making exports too expensive to be competitive in world markets. Therefore trade talks with the British Empire were a failure. Even in the NEI the government was forced to abandon free trade and to introduce a policy of quota's to block undesirable imports. In concert with other nations, certain exports were limited to maintain a reasonable price. For example, an International Rubber Restriction came into force in May 1934, to the dismay of consumer countries like the United States. (See below)
In September 1933 the Crisis Import Ordinance declared import quotas on a number of goods, and also restricted the possibility of Japanese immigration. The Japanese government and press reacted furiously. In order to restore normal relations, the Dutch offered trade talks in Batavia, starting on 4 June 1934. The Japanese delegation leader Haruichi Nagaoka caused a row by declaring, on his arrival, that the Japanese considered themselves the protectors of the native population of the NEI. Moreover they emphasized an open door for Japanese goods into the NEI, while the Dutch wanted to agree upon a quota system for Japanese imports. Therefore, the talks failed, and the NEI government unilaterally imposed quotas on Japanese import items, resulting in a net Japanese share in NEI imports of 15% in 1938.

The international rubber restriction was an attempt by the Rubber Grower's Association, with support of their governments, to reduce the production of rubber in order to stabilise world prices. This to the dismay of consumer countries, like the United States and Germany. The United States even asked for a representation of the consumer nations in the meetings of the Rubber Restriction Committee. The International Rubber Restriction was signed in London by the United Kingdom, Netherlands, France, British India and Thailand on 7 May 1934 for a period of 4 years. The geopolitical importance of the Rubber Restriction was that it fueled a movement in the U.S.A to decolonize the Western European colonies in the Far East as fast as possible without risks for the U.S. position.

An interesting event was the visit of a Japanese naval squadron to Tg. Priok, the harbour of Batavia, from 4 to 6 April 1935. Squadron Commander was Vice-Admiral N. Nakamura on the armoured cruiser ASAMA. On board were three Imperial Princes, nephews of the Emperor. Four sailors were wounded in an electric tramway accident in Batavia on the first day of the visit. Next day the Japanese reporter Tsutomu Matsubara of the Batavian periodical Java Nihon wrote a rather denigrating article on the way the uncivilised Dutch had reacted to the accident, and accused Dutch authorities of rude treatment of the "Sons of heaven", the Emperor's nephews. The article resulted in an official Dutch protest to the Japanese Consul-General, and strained relations with Japan even further.

The New Guinea question returned again in 1936, when Pabst again warned about a coup de main against New Guinea or the Celebes. According to the Minister in London, the British Foreign Office could not confirm the rumours about such a coup de main. A year later Lovink of the DOA produced an interesting report on the New Guinea

1476 Ibid., 324, 527 - 528. See also A.C.D. de Graeff: Van vriend tot vijand: de betrekkingen tusschen Nederlandsch-Indië en Japan, Amsterdam 1945, 185 ff.
1479 Letter H. Moww to G.G., 8 June 1935, ARA ADK, Box 450, File H-11.
1480 Letter de Graeff to de Marees van Swinderen, 23 April 1936, DZ/GA 2169/214, ARA Archives of Dept. Foreign Affairs, Archives London Legation, accession nr. 2.05.44, inv.nr. 844, file 107.
1475 Letter de Marees van Swinderen to de Graeff, 30 April 1936, no 792/267, Ibid as above.
question. Based on well-informed sources, it confirmed that it were indeed young officers under Capt. Yasuo Inoue within the Nanyo department of the Japanese Navy Department, who were seeking a "perpetual lease" of New Guinea to the Japanese. According to this source, the Japanese officer corps was practically out of control of the civil authorities.

It did not escape the Dutch that the English reaction to the Japanese aggression in China was less than forceful. The fate of Shanghai made it clear, that in the case of a Japanese "incident" in the NEI, the Royal Navy would not come out in force to protect the NEI. Therefore, when the British Government suggested to the Dutch as co-signatories of the Nine-Power Treaty to host a conference of the nine Powers in the Hague, the Dutch Government refused the request. It did not want to arouse Japanese ire and suggested Brussels, where the conference indeed took place in November 1937.

Directly after the outbreak of war in Western Europe in 1939, the British Consul-General at Batavia asked the NEI Government for the assignment of 6 retired British Naval Officers to Batavia, Surabaya, Medan, Sabang, Balikpapan, Ambon and Ende on Flores. It was clear that the British Admiralty wanted look-outs for German naval activities in the NEI. The Dutch Government rejected the request out of hand. Next to Japanese spies, the NEI did not want to watch over British spies.

Growing nationalism in Japan in the late thirties caused increasing problems in the relations between the two countries. Japanese officials claimed more and more openly that Japan ought to have a prominent position in South-East Asia, integrating the NEI economy within a "Greater East Asian co-prosperity sphere". Moreover, the Japanese increasingly used arguments in public discussions calculated to cause unrest in the Indonesian population. A case in point is the founding of the "Alliance for the Emancipation of the Southeastern Asiatics" in Tokyo on 24 January 1941. One of the founders was Kenzo Adachi, former Minister of the Interior. At the founding ceremony Emilio Aguinaldo of the Philippines was one of the invited speakers, as was an Indonesian who wanted to remain anonymous due to his forthcoming return to the NEI. He had his speech read by another participant. In his speech he declared emphatically, that "the natives of the Netherlands Indies are oppressed by their white rulers, and desire freedom and self-determination". He added however that "the NEI desires freedom, and not merely the exchanging of control by the Netherlands for control by Japan". At his visit to Japan, the Dutch director of the Anep-Aneta Press Office mr. Slotemaker de Bruijne reported the existence of a very anti-Dutch attitude by Indonesian students studying in Japan about a year earlier.

1476 Report DOA no 99 X37, 24 June 1937, ibid as above.
1477 Letter de Marees van Swideren to de Graeff, 19 August 1937, no 1798/625, ibid as above.
1478 De Graeff to Van Limburg Stirum, 19 October 1937, no 6813/807 ibid as above.
1479 Letter Van Kleffens to Michiels van Verduyen, 20 September 1939 DZ/GA 9358, in ARA MK GA 1938, accession nr. 2.10.36.051, inv. nr. 562, file P - 37.
1480 Letter Pabst to Van Kleffens, 29 January 1941, no 190 P2(G)/35, MinBuZa London Archives, Political reports from Tokyo 2, 1941, file nr. 229.
1481 Report of visit Slotemaker de Bruijne to Japan, 5 October 1940, DBPN, C, 1, 420, 482.
3.4.4. Ally in the West, Aloof in the East.

The German invasion of The Netherlands on 10 May 1940 drove that country in an unforeseen alliance with Britain against Germany. As we have seen, the Dutch government even took refuge in London, where it established itself. The Dutch government however took care to keep its British ally at arm's length. (See paragraph 3.2.2. on page 271).

As there were still a number of German raiding ships on the high seas, including in the vicinity of the NEI, the question arose about the way in which the Dutch would cooperate with the Royal Navy in giving chase to these raiders. In this respect, the Royal Navy also raised the question about mining the approaches towards Singapore in the Riouw archipelago, the scattered islands around the toe of the Malayan Peninsula under Dutch administration. The G.G. however drew a very clear line. In case of action against German raiders he would not hesitate to involve the Dutch Navy and to cooperate fully with the Royal Navy. In case of a Japanese attack on Hongkong or Singapore, the G.G. declared that the NEI would not "automatically" be allied with Great Britain against Japan.1482

This telegram resulted in an agonizing discussion at the Dutch Department of Foreign Affairs. To what extent was it possible for the Dutch government not to ally itself with Great Britain against Japanese encroachments? The conclusion was that aloofness towards the British position in the Far East was impossible, as long as the British themselves had no interest in having a neutral NEI next to their colonial possessions.1483 And obviously neither the British Naval Station Commander at Singapore nor the F.O. saw a neutral NEI as being in the British interest. Moreover, in a meeting between representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Vice-Admiral Furstner, the latter declared that Dutch neutrality was untenable in the case of a British - Japanese conflict.1484 The Admiral even stated emphatically: "We stand and fall with the British Empire". At that time, this was surely not yet the common opinion within the Dutch Cabinet, although Van Kleffens agreed with the Admiral. The G.G.'s policy was therefore an embarrassment in the eyes of the Dutch Foreign Ministry, and Welter was duly informed.

Welter thereupon instructed the G.G., that The Netherlands would be non-belligerent in case of a British - Japanese war.1485 The consequence of this would be that neither Japan nor Britain would be allowed to fight battles in Dutch waters. The G.G. was urged to allow regular contacts between the British and Dutch naval commanders in the Far East, and to close off the straits in the Riouw-archipelago with (British) mines, since no Dutch mines were available.1486 The G.G. confirmed his acceptance of the non-belligerency status and the high-level naval contacts with utmost secrecy, but he did not agree to the

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1484 Report meeting between Van Vredenburgh and Furstner on 26 July 1940, in MinBuZa London Archives, secret archives, GA/DZ D-2, box 60, accession nr. 897, I (1941).

1485 Telegram Welter to G.G., no 264, 31 July 1940. Ibid.

1486 Letter Welter to Queen Wilhelmina. ARA Archives MvK 1940/45, accession nr. 2.10.45, inv. nr. 123.
The secret naval contacts took place rather quickly. Already on 23 August, Welter told Van Kleffens that the G.G. had informed him that the British had not enough mines available in Singapore to close those straits, and that therefore the straits would remain open until war broke out between Britain and Japan. The Dutch plan for the positioning of the minefields in that case would not be communicated to the British Naval Commander, but would be available at the Dutch Consular Office at Singapore in a sealed envelope. The policy of the Governor-General with respect to the prospective ally, Great Britain, remained therefore very reluctant and rather aloof.

The highest civil servant at the Dutch Foreign Office, W.F.L. Count van Bylandt, disagreed with the attitude of the G.G. In a memorandum dated 16 October 1940 he advised the Dutch Cabinet: "to break resolutely with the thought that scrupulous maintenance of neutrality from our side would save the existing status quo. This status quo only has the effect of doing nothing, which gives Japan a pretext to accuse us of breaking the status quo...There is no longer any justification for the maintenance of such a delicate neutrality, in order to keep us out of the war. We have to face a coalition war with all its inherent problems". This document is very important, because, for the first time, the Dutch Department of Foreign Affairs marked the end of a policy of aloofness in the Far East which had lasted more than a hundred years.

Admiral Layton, Commander-in-Chief of China Station (in effect the British fleet squadron stationed at Singapore) kept up the pressure. In a telegram to the British Admiralty he complained about the headstrong attitude of the Dutch Governor-General. On 9 November 1940 the G.G. informed Welter that according to Layton, an agreement had been reached between the two governments, and that in deep secrecy Layton would send an officer to Batavia. Welter responded the same day, that an agreement had indeed been reached to exchange information, but that no politically binding agreements had to be made between the two Naval Commanders.

Later in that month the British invited the NEI government to participate in the secret Singapore Staff conversations. At last the G.G. gave in to the combined pressure of the British Admiralty and the Dutch Foreign Office and Admiralty.

The Singapore Staff conversations at the end of November revealed the political problem...

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1487 Telegram G.G. to Welter, 3 August 1940, no 259. Ibid. Also in DBPN, C, I, 244, 274 - 275.

1488 There were only 5100 sea-mines available at Singapore. See Letter Welter to Van Kleffens, no 379, 23 August 1940, in MinBuZa, ibid.

1489 Telegram G.G. to Welter 30 August 1940, according to letter Welter to Van Kleffens 2 September 1940, ARA Archives MvK 1940/45, accession nr. 2.10.45, inv.nr. 123.

1490 Memorandum from Van Bylandt to Van Kleffens, 16 October 1940. MinBuZa archives, Ibid. Also DBPN, C, I, 438, 511 - 513.

1491 The English Minister, Sir Neville Bland, showed the telegram to the Dutch Minister. See Letter Michiels van Verduynen to Van Kleffens, 12 November 1940. Archives MinBuZa, Ibid. Also in DBPN, Ibid., 25, 25.

1492 Telegram G.G. to Welter, 9 November 1940, no M 4. Archives MinBuZa, Ibid.

1493 Telegram Welter to G.G., 9 November 1940, no CU. Archives MinBuZa, Ibid. Also in DBPN, C, II, 18, 21.
caused by the attitude of both governments in the case of Japanese aggression against either the British in Malaya or the Dutch. Admiral Helfrich expressed his opinion that without clear instruction from the government, the Dutch fleet would have to await instructions in case of such a Japanese attack against Malaya, thereby wasting valuable opportunities to strike.\textsuperscript{1404} He reiterated his viewpoint in a frank and open discussion with the British Naval Liaison Officer in Batavia on 18 January, 1941, who reported the meeting to the Admiralty on 23 January. According to this report, Helfrich stated that without a reciprocal agreement between the two governments made in advance that each would be automatically at war in the event of an attack by (a) Japan on the Malay peninsula and Singapore, or (b) an attack by Japan on Java or any other part of the NEI, he would be unable to assist with the NEI fleet for some considerable time after (a) had taken place. Admiral Fürstner obtained a copy of this report from the Admiralty, and offered it to the Cabinet on 29 January 1941.\textsuperscript{1405}

The G.G. was aware of this situation, but offered no suggestions for a political solution. However, he pointed out that staff talks were also taking place at Singapore with the Americans. In his opinion "the American naval staff and the Admiral of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet are convinced that the U.S. would intervene in the case of a Japanese attack on the NEI, and the operational plans of the U.S. Navy have foreseen this possibility already."\textsuperscript{1406} He was more in favor of close cooperation with the Americans because the material support from Manila was already exceeding that from Britain. In taking this position the G.G. touched on a subject which would be vexing Dutch war policy in the coming years, i.e. whether to play the American or the British card in the Far East. To play both simultaneously was difficult, because of the divergence regarding colonial policies, market views, power projection, military organisation and weapons production capabilities.

Therefore, on the strong urging of the G.G., Dutch foreign policy was aimed at convincing first the British government, and thereafter the American government, that a strongly-worded warning should be given to Japan by all three governments, if Japan occupied the whole of French Indo-China (Tonkin in the northern part had been occupied since early September 1940). Neither Great-Britain nor the United States were very receptive to this idea however.\textsuperscript{1407} In secret, the Singapore Staff conversations were to be continued, now with full American participation, but without political commitments being made. During his stay in the Far East, Van Kleffens also spoke to high American officials in Manila, and thereafter became convinced that the American government would not enter into political agreements with the British and Dutch governments.\textsuperscript{1408} The G.G. shared this view, but in his opinion such a formal political commitment was no longer necessary, because all governments concerned would help each other in the case of a Japanese attack on any of

\textsuperscript{1404} Telegram Helfrich to Fürstner, 10 January 1941, code 0110/1215. Archives MinBuZa, London Archives, secret archives GA/DZ, D-2, box 60, accession nr. 898, ll (1941). See also DBPN, C, II, 153, 191 - 192.

\textsuperscript{1405} Letter Fürstner to Cabinet, no 29 ZG, 29 January 1941. MinBuZa Archives, Ibid.

\textsuperscript{1406} Telegraph G.G. to Welte, cipher CR/CU, 3 February 1941. Archives MinBuZa, Ibid.

\textsuperscript{1407} Telegram Welter to G.G., cipher KF/KG, 2 April 1941. MinBuZa archives, Ibid.

\textsuperscript{1408} Telegram Loudon to Van Bylandt, cipher EO 329/332, 11 April 1941. MinBuZa archives, Ibid. Also DBPN, C, II, 336, 431.
them. However, that opinion was not shared by the Dutch Department of Foreign Affairs in London.

The Dutch Government therefore tried to obtain a ratification of the agreements made at the last Singapore Staff conference of 21 - 27 April 1941, because those agreements made explicit the military and naval moves needed in case one of the scenarios foreseen developed into reality. Those enemy moves therefore had also political consequences. Loudon however reported from Washington, that the ratification of the Singapore protocols was out of the question. The British government too proved to be extremely reluctant to ratify the Singapore protocols, to the dislike of the Dutch Minister at the Court of St. James, who expressed his strong personal feelings about this in rather undiplomatic language to the British Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs, Butler. To play it safe, the Dutch government decided to ratify both the Singapore protocols of February and April and informed the governments of Great Britain, the United States, Australia and New Zealand accordingly on 11 June 1941.

The letter in which the Dutch Minister announced the intended ratification to Eden was aimed at obtaining a British agreement to ratify the protocols too. Because of the rather servile posture by the Dutch government, the letter had too many options for the British to consider, and was therefore not very convincing. In a subsequent meeting, Eden kept his distance. In a meeting with Van Kleffens on 25 June, he even conceded that he was not informed about the Singapore-protocols of April. Michiels van Verduyven sensed a trap, and wrote Van Kleffens that he had discussed this subject a number of times with Eden, concluding that "this event illustrates that this statesman has a doubtful love of the truth". The incident certainly did not improve the relations between the two Foreign Offices.

The Dutch pressure had some effect, as Eden handed over a letter to Michiels van Verduyven in the afternoon of 1 August, 1941, in which the British government declared:

1402 Telegram Loudon to Van Bylandt, cipher HF 457/HI 462, 21 May 1941. Archives MinBuZa, Ibid.
1403 Memorandum Michiels van Verduyven to Van Kleffens, 28 May 1941. Archives MinBuZa, Ibid. DBPN, Ibid., 434, 578 - 579.
"We have already assumed the duty of safeguarding and restoring the possessions and rights of the Netherlands Government to the best of our ability during the war and after peace. It follows therefore that an attack on the NEI would lead us to do the utmost in our power. We must, however, remain the sole judge of what actions or military measures are practicable and likely to achieve our common purpose. Should the United States be disposed to take supporting action many things would become possible which we cannot undertake now."

According to Michiels, Eden confirmed verbally that the British would assist in the case of a Japanese attack on the NEI. But the Foreign Secretary pointed out that the Royal Navy had no capital ships available for the Far East at that time. The old battleships were too slow, and only new battleships like the KING GEORGE V and the PRINCE OF WALES would be fast enough to catch fast and powerful Japanese raiders of the KONGO-Class. Therefore, only the United States was in a position to guarantee the NEI, because they had a battles fleet available and ready for interference in the Archipelago.

We witness here the British willingness to transfer power to a reluctant United States. British Foreign Policy was quite aware of its limited influence on halting Japanese expansionism, and clearly looked upon the other Anglo-Saxon Power with interests in S.E. Asia in order to protect all Western interests in that region.

In Chapter 2 we have dealt in depth with the British policy with respect to Dutch security requests. We can only remark here that, notwithstanding physical closeness to British policymaking, the Dutch government did not succeed in getting the British government to a common policy vis-à-vis Japan. Prime Minister Churchill and his cabinet had other priorities, and the Dutch figured rather low on this scale of priorities.

3.4.5. The Japanese Economic Missions.

In Chapter 1 (Page 36ff) we have concluded that at the end of the thirties the United States was slowly developing a more effective policy towards Japan, based on the Achilles heel of Japan: the import of raw materials. The American cancellation of the Japanese - U.S. Trade Treaty of 1911 on 26 July 1939 was a clear warning, but more was to come. An increasingly nervous Japanese Government therefore explored other possibilities for replenishing the raw materials which could not any longer be imported from the United States.

As a result, the Japanese Minister in The Hague presented a Memorandum to the Dutch Government on 2 February 1940, asking for a trade conference. The Japanese Memorandum proposed in effect the removal of all trade barriers between Japan and NEI, free entrance of persons and capital of the two partners, and censure on anti-Japanese press publications in the NEI Press. Germany invaded The Netherlands before the Dutch Government could answer the Japanese Memorandum, which clearly hinted at an incorporation of the NEI in the Greater - East Asia Coprosperity Sphere.

A new Memorandum was presented by the Japanese Minister in London to the Dutch Government in exile on 20 May 1940. In this Memorandum the Japanese asked for

1968 Note verbale Ishii to Van Kleffens, 14 May 1940. DBPN, C, I, 22, 18.
minimum yearly shipments from NEI to Japan for a number of strategic raw materials. The most important were tin (3000 tons/year), rubber (20,000 tons/year), oil and oil products (1 million tons/year) and bauxite (200,000 tons/year).\footnote{Letter Pabst to Van Kleffens, 24 May 1940. DBPN, ibid., 44, 41 - 45.} The Dutch government responded on 6 June 1940 that the amounts of raw materials requested were rather on the high side, but that the Dutch Government was willing to sit down with the Japanese to see what could be done to meet these quantities. The reason behind this diplomatic move was to gain time in order for the NEI to re-arm, and avoiding a possible Japanese attack by a straight refusal to negotiate. On 16 July 1940 the Japanese answered that they were planning to send an Economic Mission to Batavia in order to start trade negotiations.\footnote{Letter Pabst to Van Kleffens, 18 July 1940, DBPN, ibid., 185, 199 - 200.}

The Japanese Government had no lucky hand in appointing a chairman for their delegation. The swashbuckling Japanese General Kuniako Koiso made some remarks about Dutch colonial policy at a press conference which made him immediately \textit{persona non grata} for the Dutch.\footnote{For his statements see DBPN, ibid., 316, 373, note 5. The reaction of the G.G., see ibid., 258, 293.} Thereupon the Minister of Trade and Industry in the Konoye-Cabinet, Ichiro Kobayashi, was appointed as Chairman of the delegation. The G.G. however did not want to negotiate in person with any Japanese delegation. In order to send their delegation, the Japanese therefore had to swallow that Koiso had to be replaced, that neither the G.G. nor his second-in-command (H.J. Spit, Vice-chairman of the Council of the NEI) would be involved in the trade discussions, and that no political issues would be discussed. When the Japanese grudgingly accepted these conditions, the Dutch Government urged the G.G. himself to welcome the Japanese delegation, which had already left Kobe on 29 August 1940 with somewhat undue haste.\footnote{Telegram Welte r to G.G. no 393, 2 September 1940, Secret Archives MinBuZa, London period, DZ A i 4(1), file 401.}

Kobayashi arrived at the head of a sizable Japanese delegation\footnote{The delegation consisted of 23 people, including officers of Army and Navy. See Appendix to letter of Pabst to Van Kleffens, 27 August 1940, no 1350 A/287, 1522 GA, ibid as above.} on 12 September 1940 in Tg. Priok, where he was received by his Dutch counterpart, the Director of the Economics Department H.J. van Mook. In order not to cause a diplomatic row, van Mook had to be elevated to the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary,\footnote{By Royal Decree no 4 of 20 September 1940, ibid as above.} therefore putting him on a par with Kobayashi. The Japanese however were not fooled, and protested, in vain.\footnote{Telegram Pabst to Van Kleffens no 78, 3 September 1940, ibid as above. Also DBPN, ibid., 387, 444 - 445.}

Pabst informed Van Kleffens that the Japanese insisted on Spit as negotiating partner, and repeated their refusal to negotiate with a mere Department Head like Van Mook.\footnote{Telegram Pabst to Van Kleffens, 7 September 1940, no 81/82 ibid as above.} Characteristically, Van Kleffens did not answer Pabst's urgent telegram until the Japanese delegation had arrived in Batavia, and he had received information from the G.G. that they
had accepted Van Mook as their counterpart. Internally, the G.G. also had to overrule the Council of the NEI, which insisted on the appointment of mr. Spit because it felt itself sidestepped by the appointment of Van Mook.

How important the Japanese considered this mission can be deduced from the fact that this was only the third time in modern Japanese history, that a mission was sent outside Japan, headed by a Cabinet Minister. The first time was to Peking in 1905, which resulted in the Treaty of Portsmouth and the end of the Russo-Japanese War. The second time was during the Washington Conference on Naval Disarmament.

Kobayashi met the G.G. on 13 September 1940, and asked van Mook to be replaced by the Vice-President of the Council of the NEI, H.J. Spit, who was considered to be the second in power after the Governor-General. The G.G. refused, explaining that only Van Mook had the required knowledge about NEI economics.

The Dutch negotiators were walking on eggshells, because they had been informed that the United States would look with disfavor on any long-term contract for delivering crude oil and aviation gasoline to the Japanese. To ensure that the Dutch got the message, a number of delivery contracts for weapons and planes were cancelled for good measure. The G.G. considered this inconsistent with American interests, but insisted the Dutch Cabinet to avoid any hint of a close political co-operation between the United States and the NEI in the upcoming trade talks.

The trade talks started in earnest on 16 September 1940. The most important discussion topic was oil. The Japanese wanted lots of it. And they were willing to share in its exploration and production. What they had in mind was an import of oil and oil products from the NEI of around 3.150.000 tons/year, broken down as shown below in Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Light Crude oil</th>
<th>1.100.000 tons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paraffinic Crude Oil</td>
<td>100.000 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other crude oils</td>
<td>1.050.000 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aviation Gasoline with O.N.87</td>
<td>400.000 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diesel Fuel</td>
<td>500.000 tons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By way of comparison: the total amount of oil and oil products shipped to Japan in 1937,
1938 and 1939 had been 650,000 tons/annum. The Dutch Government thereupon declared that it was unable to discuss production volumes with the Japanese, as the oilfields were in the hands of private companies: Royal Dutch Shell and Standard Oil. Both companies had been invited by the Dutch Government to send trade negotiators to Batavia. The Shell representative was mr. J.C. Panthaleon Baron van Eck, member of the Executive Board. For Standard Oil this was mr. Frederick H. Kay, also a member of the Executive Board. The results of these oil negotiations were the signing of a number of delivery contracts between Kobayashi and the two negotiators in the name of their respective companies on 18 October 1940.

The Japanese got far less than they had asked for. For light crude oil this was 120,000 tons, for paraffinic crude oil the 100,000 tons requested could be delivered, but the other crude oils were limited to 540,000 tons. A sale for 33,000 tons of high-octane aviation gasoline could be arranged, but not more. In Diesel Fuel they could only get 116,500 tons. The total was 909,500 tons of oil and oil products, which was still a sizable increase compared with the mean average value of the last three years (650,000 tons), but it was far less than what the Japanese had wanted. Moreover, the oil companies had refused 5-year oil contracts, and instead had offered 6- to 12-months contracts.

During the negotiations, the Dutch delegation acted with considerable constraint. There was no question of flatly refusing the Japanese demands, because the NEI Government did not want to provoke the Japanese into an attack. This called for a very cautious attitude. But the Japanese too had their problems. They had assumed that the sending of a large delegation from different departments, including actively serving officers, headed by a Minister of Cabinet Rank, would impress the Dutch sufficiently to start conversations of a general nature about Dutch - Japanese relations. The refusal of the Dutch delegation to discuss anything more than deliveries of raw materials confused the Japanese delegation considerably.

The original aims of their delegation had been the neutralization of the NEI and its incorporation in the Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Another reason for Dutch constraint was the fear that strategic materials like rubber and tin would reach the arch-enemy, Germany, by way of the Russian transsiberian railway. The Japanese demands were quantitatively of such a scale that the Dutch could not rule out that possibility. Moreover, Pabst had noted that the Russians in Tokyo were rather easy in issuing ultimate buyer's certificates, enabling Japanese ships to carry these strategic materials straight to Wladiwostok. After the war, captured documents of the

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1933 Telegram Van Kieffens to Loudon, 1 October 1940, DBPN, ibid., 405, 461 - 462.
1934 Telegram G.G. to Welter, 21 October 1940, DBPN, ibid., document 449, 524.
1936 Telegram G.G. to Loudon, 19 September 1940, DBPN, ibid., 377, 432 - 433.
1937 Letter Bos to Flaeis in Peking, 15 October 1940, DBPN, ibid., 437, 509 - 510.
1938 Telegram G.G. to Welter, 11 October 1940, MinBuZa Archives Ibidem, DBPN ibid., 432, 503.
1939 Letter Pabst to Van Kieffens, 22 April 1940, no 535P3(G)/158, MinBuZa London Archives, Political reports Tokyo 1940, file 228.
Auswärtige Amt have indeed revealed that Germany expected to be supplied with strategic materials by Japan via the Transsiberian Railway.\textsuperscript{130}

During the negotiations the atmosphere was further poisoned by a number of incidents in which Japanese subjects in the NEI were maltreated. A Japanese civilian was molested in Magelang by four drunken soldiers on 22 July 1940. In Medan, a Japanese hotel owner was beaten by a native soldier on 13 July 1940. The cook of the Japanese Consul-General in Batavia was molested by a drunken Dutch soldier on 3 July 1940. In Bandoeng a Japanese party dining in a Chinese restaurant were attacked by Dutch diners on 11 August 1940. In the same city a drunken soldier burned a Japanese flag. On the same day Chancellor Ariyoshi of the Japanese Consulate-General in Batavia was manhandled by the Batavia police for photographing the G.G.'s palace, although that was not forbidden.\textsuperscript{131}

Upon further investigations the Japanese complaints proved to be justified, illustrating a growing hatred by the Dutch common people against the Japanese.\textsuperscript{132} The Japanese reacted in kind to these incidents by arresting L. Speelman, the Dutch Agent of the KJCP L shipping line residing in Kobe on 2 August 1940, accusing him of espionage.\textsuperscript{133} Speelman was released by the Japanese Military Police, Kempei Tai, on 17 August 1940.

The U.S. Government meanwhile warily followed the course of the negotiations. Dutch foreign policy however failed in pressing the U.S. Government for an acceleration of weapons and plane deliveries in lieu of denying the Japanese the extra oil imports they were seeking.\textsuperscript{134} It lacked the finesse for such a trade-off. Moreover, the Dutch wrongly concluded from the results of the ongoing negotiations that the Japanese had as yet no aggressive intentions.\textsuperscript{135}

To show its discontent with the poor results, Kobayashi was recalled by the Japanese Government on 20 October 1940. The oil expert of the Japanese delegation, Tadaharu Mukai,\textsuperscript{135} now pressed for the designation of exploration concessions for exclusive Japanese use. He had in mind areas in Sumatra along the Asahan-river, Borneo at the land side of the coast opposite Tarakan, Celebes, New Guinea and the Aru-Islands. This

\textsuperscript{130} See in particular Memorandum by the Director of the Economic Policy department to Foreign Minister Von Ribbentrop, Berlin March 21, 1941, in Documents on German Foreign Policy, series D, Vol. XII, no 190, 327 - 329.

\textsuperscript{131} Note verbale of Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Ohashi to Pabst, 28 November 1940, Archives MinBuZa ibidem, also DBPN, C, II, 78, 106 - 107.

\textsuperscript{132} See for the Dutch answer Memorandum Pabst to Matsuoka 31 January 1941, DBPN, C, II, 197, 244 - 245.

\textsuperscript{133} Archives MinBuZa, London Archives, Secret Archives DZ/GA A-I 3 (16), box 33, file 383.

\textsuperscript{134} A.F. Manning: "De Buitenlandse Politiek van de Nederlandse Regering in Londen tot 1942." Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis, 91 (1978), 55.

\textsuperscript{135} Letter G.G. to Welter, 18 October 1940, DBPN, 441, 516.

\textsuperscript{135} Tadaharu Mukai was the Managing Director of the Japanese petroleum company Mitsui Gomei Kaisha, and had closed deals with the Japanese representatives of Shell Oil and Standard Oil in the past.
request was met with stony silence. The Dutch also complained about the lack of concrete Japanese proposals while the members of the large Japanese mission were nosing around in Java. Therefore the Dutch proposed to end the talks.

Next the Japanese appointed a new Chairman of their Trade Delegation, mr. Kenkichi Yoshizawa. He had been Ambassador in China and Paris, and he had been Minister of Foreign Affairs for a short period. Yoshizawa arrived in Batavia on 23 December 1940. On 16 January 1941 he presented a memorandum with Japanese requests. It contained a large number of proposed trade measures, which, when accorded, would have made the NEI part of the Japanese Great-Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, and therefore these proposals were utterly unacceptable. The Dutch delegation however decided not to break off the discussions, but to keep them going in order to win time. Those last months delegation leader Van Mook received via the British C.G. Walsh from the F.O. supersecret decoded messages from the Japanese government to Yoshizawa and vice versa. (See page 153). After some months of foot-dragging, both parties agreed to announce the failure of the ongoing trade negotiations, stressing that this would not imply a change in the normal relations between Japan and the NEI. The announcement was made on 17 June 1941, followed by the departure of Yoshizawa on 27 June, 1941. The Dutch had scored a diplomatic victory by their stubbornness, but this was to be a shortlived one. To show their displeasure, the Japanese already hit back on 7 July 1941, when they placed export restrictions on a number of goods destined for export to the NEI.

The American oil-embargo of 26 July 1941 nullified the gains which the Kobayashi-mission had made. It had been agreed with the two oil companies that Japan would pay for the extra oil in dollars in cash. The freezing of Japanese bank accounts in the U.S. meant that the Japanese could not pay for the extra 900,000 tons of oil which the Kobayashi-mission had obtained.

3.4.6. The Dutch Oil Embargo.

The American decision to freeze oil exports to Japan might have come as a surprise for the outside world, but both the Dutch and the British Cabinets had been informed beforehand, although only in a broad outline. On 23 July 1941 a Dutch diplomat attached to the Court of St. James was invited at the F.O., where he was informed about American plans in the case of a Japanese occupation of Southern Indochina. The plans consisted of the following measures:

a. Freezing of Japanese bank deposits in the USA (which had already frozen the German and Italian bank deposits!)
b. Imposition of import licenses for goods from Japan;
c. Further restrictions on the export of crude oil and refined products to the level of the average of the export quantities over the years 1935 and 1936.


1958 Letter Van Kleffens to Pabst, 11 November 1940, DBPN, Ibid., 21, 22.


The U.S. had asked the British to follow the same attitude, and the F.O. enquired if the Netherlands would also comply.

The G.G. must have received some information from the Dutch legation in Washington, because a day later (24 July) he informed Welter that he was in favor of an oil embargo and hoped for a common front from the USA, the UK and Holland against Japan.\(^{1541}\) On 25 July dr. Hart from the Dutch Ministry of Colonial Affairs met the Director-General of the British Ministry for Economic Warfare, Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, who again stressed the importance of Holland joining a British-American trade embargo. Hart postulated that signing of the Singapore protocols by the British Government would surely improve Dutch willingness to join the embargo, but alas he did not pursue that point.\(^{1642}\) Next day Van Kleffens asked Loudon to inform the US Government, that the embargo proposed by the Americans would imply severe security risks for the NEI.\(^{1543}\) All this feverish activity took place before the official announcement of the American measures on 26 July 1941.

On 28 July Van Kleffens tried to make a deal with Eden: British signature of the Singapore protocols versus the NEI joining the British/US oil embargo.\(^{1544}\) The same day the G.G. announced publicly, in the name of the Dutch Government that the NEI had joined the American and British Governments in freezing Japanese bank deposits, and in the introduction of a system of export licenses. The Dutch explained their actions as retaliati-
on to the Japanese export restrictions of 7 July, 1941.

The Americans intentionally made it unclear to the Japanese which crudes and what refined oil products were still allowed for export, and in what quantities. (Chapter 1, page 49ff) The American Export Control Office had established a classification of all crudes and refined products. Forbidden for export to Japan were the A- and B-crudes, from which aviation gasolines could be distilled. The crudes classified C (so-called topped crudes and long residuum) could not yield aviation gasoline anymore, and these crudes were still allowed to be exported. A number of refined products like gas oil, distillate fuel oil and residual fuel oil could still be exported to Japan within certain limits. Those limits were not divulged to the Japanese, because the fuel oils concerned could be used for ships, and the US government was afraid that the Japanese would order quantities up to the limit. Not embargoeing these fuel oils also was a gesture towards the NEI, as the Japanese Navy could still acquire fuel oils.

As we have seen in Chapter 1, the American embargo was not intended to be absolute, but became so due to bureaucratic procedures and the freezing of Japanese monetary assets. As the NEI Government had decided to comply with the American export controls, two Japanese tankers at Soengeigerong and Pladjoe (both in Sumatra near Palembang) had been sent back because the Sumatra-crude was an A-crude. But another Japanese tanker at Tarakan posed a problem, because Tarakan-crude was a C-crude, and thus not restricted. The American banks however refused to unfreeze Japanese dollar-accounts to pay for this crude, and without American dollars the Dutch government refused the loading

\(^{1541}\) Telegram G.G. to Welter, cipher QM/QR, 24 July 1941, MinBuZa ibid, DBPN, Ibid., 130-A, 174 - 175.


\(^{1543}\) Van Kleffens to Loudon, 25 July 1941, no 776/777. MinBuZa ibid., DBPN Ibid., 126, 168.

\(^{1544}\) Letter Van Kleffens to Welte, 28 July 1941, MinBuZa ibid., DBPN, Ibid., 135, 180.
of the tanker. Therefore Van Kleffens, on the urging of Welter, asked Loudon what the position of the American government was in the case of Tarakan-crude. Loudon's answer was clear: the Americans refused to unfreeze dollar assets on Japanese accounts, therefore making the export of oil from the NEI to Japan. After two weeks of waiting, the Japanese oil tanker returned to Japan empty!

The G.G. was very irritated by what he perceived as American intransigence in deblocking dollar funds. In his view it would result in the complete freezing of all exports to Japan, also of non-strategic goods. The NEI Government had hoped for reduced trade with Japan of non-strategic raw materials versus Japanese textiles. Loudon informed his government on the volumes based on 1935/1936 average exports of non-strategic oil products from the NEI. According to this table, the Japanese had already imported more Tarakan-crude in 1941 than the average of their 1935/1936 imports of Tarakan crude. Therefore, sending the empty tanker away had been correct.

Based on Loudon's telegram, the G.G. proposed the allowance of the following quantities of oil products to Japan in the remaining months of 1941: 40,000 tons diesel oil, 30,000 tons topped crude class C, 60,000 tons low-octane gasoline, 20,000 tons kerosene and 40,000 tons of fuel oil. Export of these quantities however was politically undesirable as long as the Americans did not export even minute quantities of these products themselves, which were not on their list of embargoed products. It has to be remembered, that in Washington the conversations had started between the Japanese and the Americans on the embargoes. The G.G. again protested against the American plan to establish export volumes for non-strategic oil products without unfreezing Japanese dollar funds to pay for them.

In a meeting on 10 September 1941 at the British Ministry of Economic Warfare the differences between the Dutch, British and American approaches became apparent. The Dutch wanted to continue trade with Japan, excepting certain strategic materials. The British wanted limited trade, importing from the Yen-block materials like magnesite and exporting materials like wool and jute. The Americans wanted no trade at all, even in non-strategic goods. While the Dutch insisted on exporting bauxite ore, manganese ore, and limited quantities of rubber and tin to Japan, the English and Americans considered these raw materials as strategic too. Specifically bauxite ore was difficult, because the Netherlands Indies were practically the sole suppliers of bauxite to Japan, which in 1940 had imported 400,000 tons of it.

During the Eastern Supply Conference in New Delhi in November 1940, which was attended by a Dutch delegation as observers, many critical remarks had been made about

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1545 Telegram Van Kleffens to Loudon, 28 August 1941, no 878/882. MinBuZa Archives, Ibid.
1546 Loudon to Van Kleffens, 1 September 1941, cipher OC 743. MinBuZa Archives, Ibid.
1547 Telegram G.G. to Welter, 5 September 1941, cipher VH/VK, MinBuZa Archives, Ibid.
1548 Loudon to Van Kleffens, 8 September 1941, cipher OM 766. Archives MinBuZa, Ibid.
1549 Telegram Van Kleffens to Loudon, 13 September 1941, cipher 920/925, MinBuZa archives Ibid., DBPN ibid., 266-C, 351 - 352.
1550 Minutes of Meeting at MEW by Dr. Hart, 10 September 1941. Archives MinBuZa, Ibid.
this supplying of bauxite to Japan.\textsuperscript{1551} Cutting off this export might be military and politically even more dangerous than cutting off the oil supply.\textsuperscript{1552} In effect, the whole Japanese aviation industry depended on bauxite from the NEI! But under British pressure, the Dutch accepted a total embargo on exports to Japan of rubber, tin, copra, bauxite ore and manganese ore. No British compensation in another field (guarantees for the NEI, or sign-off of the Singapore protocols) was obtained, again illustrating that critics of Dutch foreign policy like Hart might have been correct in stating that the Dutch were too servile to the British.

3.4.7. The last six months.

The characteristic factor of Dutch foreign policy in the Far East in the last six months before the war was the change in attitude towards Japan from a very cautious one to a more confrontational attitude. The military back-up given by the Singapore-conferences was instrumental in realizing this turn-around. As a case in point, the Japanese were asked to provide information about the whereabouts of their ships in the archipelago, in order to avoid "misunderstandings and incidents."\textsuperscript{1553} This would have been impossible only two years before. Concurrently the chase of Japanese spies in the NEI was intensified. American planes were authorized to use NEI military airfields in October 1941.\textsuperscript{1554} Shortly thereafter the American government even asked for permission to build American air bases at Celebes, Tarakan and Ceram.\textsuperscript{1555} The reason for this request was the planned ferrying of American long-range bombers and, at a later stage also fighters, from Australia to the Philippines. The US Government was even willing to give financial and technical assistance in this airfield construction, and - if necessary - to execute the construction itself. (See also pages 121 - 122.) The G.G. however rejected this offer, in order to maintain Dutch political independence.\textsuperscript{1556}

A real improvement in the American attitude towards Dutch rearmament was caused by the visit of a personal friend of Roosevelt to the NEI in early September 1941. Mr. H.F. Grady visited the naval base at Surabaya and the KNIL Airbase at Andir, and the KNIL weapons facilities and GHQ at Bandung. He reported on 12 September 1941 to the State Department\textsuperscript{1557}:

"Accomplishment of much of this development [of the wharves, repair facilities and drydocks at Surabaya] has occurred in the past year, and the present efficiency and the prospects for increased efficiency and expansion impressed me very much...In all bases I found not only facilities for repair and maintenance, but a considerable degree of manufacturing of

\begin{enumerate}
\item Report Dutch delegation to Eastern Supply Conference, New Delhi 25 October - 25 November 1940, in ARA Archives MvK., 1940/45, accession nr. 2.10.45, inv. nr. 774.
\item Memorandum Welter to Van Kleffens, 13 September 1941, no 1840/EA/9.1301, Archives MinBuZa Ibid. Also on DBPN, ibid., 266-A, 341 - 345.
\item DBPN, Period C, Vol. III, 335.
\item DBPN, Period C, Vol. III, doc. 348, 381.
\item Memorandum Dreisel to Van Kleffens, 17 October 1941, in MinBuZa Archives, London Archives, DZ/GA D5, accession nr. 910. See also DBPN, C, III, doc. 348, 464 - 465.
\item Telegram G.G. to Welter, 29 October 1941, cipher ABW/ACA. Archives MinBuZa, Ibid.
\item Telegram Grady to Cordell Hull, 12 September 1941, copy in letter J. van den Broek to Welter, 29 September 1941. ARA Archives MvK, 1940/45, accession nr. 2.10.45, inv. nr. 737.
\end{enumerate}
airplane parts, munitions containers, etc. They are even producing certain precision instruments. Training of native labor for skilled work is carried on successfully. The Dutch will maintain in excellent condition whatever we can find to let them have of the supplies, machines and planes they need and in case of need their facilities for serving airplanes and naval units (even large cruisers) will be available for the British and for ourselves. To find in this part of the world such present and prospective facilities ... is most encouraging. Excellent morale has been noted among all those that I have met. It has not come to my attention if any appeasement sentiment exists in the Netherlands Indies."

This report, in combination with that of the US Airforce mission under Brigade-General H.B. Ciagett from Philippine Command, ended the last American reservations about the fighting attitude of the Dutch. (See Chapter 1, page 114)

There were not only informal assurances from the American side, but informally also from the British side. This became clear at the visit of Duff Cooper to Batavia. Duff Cooper was an intimate of Winston Churchill, who appointed him as Minister of Information in his War Cabinet. According to Dutch sources, he failed at that post, and was therefore sent to the Far East by Churchill to act as his troubleshooter over there. In the weekend of 19-20 september, Duff Cooper was the guest of the G.G. at his mountain retreat in Tjipanas, where they held lengthy conversations, about which talks the G.G. reported to Welter.

In order to forestall a Japanese move into the Portuguese part of the island of Timor, an occupation of that part of Timor was planned together with the Australians as prospective Allies. On instigation of the G.G., the Dutch Cabinet even decided, on 28 October 1941, to declare war on Japan in case the United States, Great Britain or the Soviet Union got involved in a conflict with Japan. All these measures highlighted the conviction within the Dutch Government that the fate of the Allied Powers in the Far East was so intertwined that neutrality was no longer a realistic option.

From the same conviction stemmed the Dutch drive to be involved in the American negotiations with the Japanese in Washington. It was specifically Van Starkenborgh, the G.G., who was adamant that the Dutch should be involved in these conversations. He loathed the vagueness of the State Department towards the Japanese about the extent of the U.S. embargo, and considered this ambiguity as dangerous. After 18 November 1941 the Dutch Government obtained not involvement, but at least consultation, in the ongoing conversations. The Dutch Government was the only Government consulted, which

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in the end, but not wholeheartedly, gave its approval to Hull's proposed *modus vivendi* (Chapter 1, page 48). However, the Dutch government did not realize the strong pressure from American military circles on Hull to do anything to win time, in order to reinforce the Philippines.¹⁵⁶⁴ That was also a Dutch interest of the first magnitude, but it was not recognized as such by the Dutch government.

Based on earlier agreements with the London Government, the G.G. was able to declare war on Japan in the name of the small Kingdom on the North Sea in the early morning of 8 December 1941, Batavia time. Japan at that time had not yet attacked Dutch territory, but the G.G. had received reports about the attacks at Pearl Harbor and Hongkong. The Netherlands were the first of the Western colonial countries to declare war on the Japanese, even before the United States or Great Britain.¹⁵⁶⁵

Dutch Government foreign policy during the whole London period was hampered by the lack of good high-level contacts with the decisionmakers in London and Washington. In London the relationship with the Foreign Office was excellent and reasonable with the military staffs, but almost non-existent with Churchill and his advisers. In Washington, Loudon had good contacts at the State Department, but far less so with the influential people who had access to the President, like Harry Hopkins, Sumner Welles, Henri Morgenthau, Frank Knox.¹⁵⁶⁶ Moreover, Minister Dr. A. Loudon was ill during the very critical period of May - November 1940. The G.G. complained about this to the Government in London, but no action was taken.¹⁵⁶⁷ The Dutch voice was therefore not heard in Washington. That this resulted in a slavish adherence to the whims of American foreign policy, as suggested by Kersten, is however not true.¹⁵⁶⁸ Specifically in late 1940 Dutch foreign policy as pushed by Van Starkenborgh clashed regularly with American aims in foreign policy.¹⁵⁶⁹ (pages 125 - 126).

3.5. Dutch Naval Defence Policies in South-East Asia.

3.5.1. Introduction.

In the nineteenth century there was no urgent need for the defense of the rich Dutch colonies in S.E. Asia against an external threat. Superpower Great Britain handed back the East Indies to the Dutch in 1815 and after the Tractate of London in 1824 it might therefore have been assumed that England respected Dutch Administration of the colony, and would protect it if needed. Therefore, the Netherlands ran her empire under the umbrella of the *Pax Britannica*, and as long as England ruled the waves, there was no real enemy in sight.¹⁵⁶⁹ However, many Dutchmen distrusted British aims, as it was very

¹⁵⁶⁴ Kersten, op. cit., 86.


¹⁵⁶⁶ A. Kersten, op. cit., 89.

¹⁵⁶⁷ G. Hart, op. cit., 102.

¹⁵⁶⁸ A. Kersten, op. cit., 90.

clear to them that English foreign policy lacked the high moral standards of Dutch foreign policy, and was based on pure self-interest. At the end of the nineteenth century the British had acquired such an extensive empire, that physically they simply could not absorb another sizable chunk of colonial territory as presented by the Netherlands East Indies. This knowledge gave the Dutch a certain sense of safety.

Those irenic circumstances changed at the end of the nineteenth century. The expansion of the German Empire meant that it also sought to establish colonies, and in 1884 Germany obtained the North-East coast of New Guinea and part of the Solomon Islands as a protectorate. Germany manifested itself strongly in China, where it obtained a naval base at Kia-chou, as a pendant of British Hongkong. Another young expanding power was the United States, which obtained the Philippines from Spain in a kind of colonial blitz-krieg which surprised both the Dutch and English Governments in 1898. And last but not least there was the emerging Asian power, Japan, which steadily increased its influence in Northern China. Japan was bound to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty since 1902, and therefore a nominal ally of the British, who thereupon withdrew their battleships from the Far East, to the dismay of Dutch and Australians alike. More and more, Japan as a possible enemy began to dominate Dutch defense planning, specifically after 1905 and the end of the Russo-Japanese war.

At the start of the new century, Japan already possessed a navy which was stronger than the Dutch squadron in the NEI, and it increased in strength with each passing year. The Dutch realised, that it would be unrealistic to assume that they would ever be called upon to defeat a Japanese aggressive move singlehandedly. Dutch defense policy in the Far East in the first quarter of this century was therefore based on risk strategy: a potential aggressor had to accept unacceptable risks in attacking the NEI in force. If it happened anyway, time should be gained to enable interference by presumably another Western colonial power. Moreover, the Dutch defence establishment had to be of such quality that in case of a war between two powers with asian interests and/or colonies, such as England and Germany, Dutch neutrality would be respected.

From a defence viewpoint, these goals had to be translated into an adequate response in case of each of the following three scenarios:

1. **An attack in force, presumably by Japan.** This had as a consequence an invasion attempt of the main island of the NEI: Java. In such a situation, the fleet had to prevent an enemy fleet from reaching Java; the Army afterwards had to beat off an invasion attempt.

2. **A coup de main.** This was an attack, out of the blue, by a fast squadron of warships with landing parties on board. The purpose of a coup de main was the temporary occupation of a harbour, city or area with wealth in order to obtain that wealth. A coup de main could be made by an invasion attempt in force; but it was also possible that the enemy squadron would disappear. An interesting example of a coup de main with an invasion afterwards was the attack of the American Asia squadron under Admiral Dewey on the Spanish fleet and base in Manila Bay at Cavite, and the subsequent occupation of Manila in 1898.

3. **Neutrality violations.** These would mainly occur at the fringes of the Dutch Empire, along the outlying islands. To counter coup de mains and neutrality violations, a reasonably strong fleet was a prerequisite, as the defence of the main island (Java)
did not figure too prominently in those two last scenarios.

It will be clear that the financial consequences of the three scenarios were different. The containment of neutrality violations was the cheapest; the enforcement of neutrality the most costly scenario. Dutch internal policy tended to save as much as possible on expenditures for defence. This policy was defended by the allegation that the small Kingdom in Western Europe - because of its limited resources - was not able to defend its enormous Empire in the Far East. De Graaff strongly voiced this opinion in his thesis. However, The Netherlands have been, and still are, a sizable economic power since the sixteenth century, notwithstanding their small geographic size. In 1913, and again in 1939 - 1941 there were no financial problems at all to finance the building of a number of capital ships (and the expansion of the NEI Airforce). Much poorer countries, like Portugal, had to defend an empire much more spread over the globe than the Dutch. The Dutch problem with the defence of their colony was doublesided and somewhat hypocritical: they did not want to pay the insurance costs for their colonies, but out of fear of losing their grip on power over the colonies they also refused to mobilise the natives as the English had done in British India before the First World War. Both factors will be further elucidated in this sub-chapter, and it will be explained that by not making a hard choice, the Dutch lost all and everything.

3.5.2. The organizational Context.

The Dutch Naval Organization was a complex one, because the Koninklijke Marine or KM (Netherlands Royal Navy) had an imperial mission in addition to a localized mission: the protection of the integrity of the Netherlands East Indies (NEI). That localized mission absorbed the major part of its fleet strength, but in the NEI the Navy was subjugated to the Dutch Governor-General (abbreviated to G.G.), who was constitutionally the Commander-in-Chief of both Dutch defence services in the colony.

Therefore, the Commandant Zeemacht (abbreviated CZM) or Commander-in-Chief of the Netherlands East Indies Fleet reported administratively to the Minister responsible for the Department of the Navy (or Department of Defence after 1928), but operationally to the G.G., who in turn reported to the Minister of Colonies, who was therefore politically responsible for the defense of the colonies. Because neither the KM nor the Dutch Government wanted an "indianized" Navy, the CZM was always selected from career officers serving in The Netherlands. Administratively however, the CZM did not report directly to the Minister, but reported to the Commanding Officer of the Netherlands' Royal Navy, the Bevelhebber der Zeestrijdkrachten or BDZ, who was always based in The Netherlands.

It is interesting to note the organisational differences between the CZM and his peers in the Anglo-Saxon navies. In the Royal Navy he was comparable to the Commanding Officer China Station, based at Singapore. This officer reported to the British Naval Chief of Staff. In the US Navy he was comparable to the Commander in Chief US Asiatic Fleet, a full Admiral reporting directly to the American CNO. None of these officers reported operation-

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ally to a Governor or Governor-General, which made responsibilities more clear, but had as a consequence that the naval defence of Malaya and the Philippines was ultimately executed from London, respectively Washington.

The complex Dutch naval organisation resulted in a very slow and awkward decision-making process with regard to important changes in naval policy, e.g. new Fleet Laws. These changes had to be agreed upon by both the NEI Administration and by Dutch Parliament, resulting in long delays in a very bureaucratic approval cycle. As will be illustrated below, this was a clear drawback with regard to decision making on rearmament in 1912/1913 and again in 1939/1940 with respect to a sizeable reinforcement of fleet strength. Before the war, the constitutional expert Prof. J.A. Eigeman lambasted the slow and cumbersome decision-making process at the top of the Navy Department, and urged a re-organisation in which the CZM would be made responsible directly to the BDZ like his Anglo-Saxon counterparts.1572 Failure to recognize the existing organisational problems was one of the factors in the decline of the Dutch Navy in the pre-war years. For example, it has been well-documented, that the BDZ during the first war year, Vice-Adm, J.Th. Furstner, loathed the fact that he had no say whatsoever over the East Indies squadron.1573

Due to further professionalisation of the Navy, a Naval Staff was instituted in 1886 to assist the Minister in policy preparation, and to guarantee continuity in its execution. This was rather late, as the Dutch Army had already a General Staff since 1814, and the Colonial Army since 1873. Moreover, due to its small size, the Dutch Naval Staff remained insignificant. It was considered with disdain by career officers. Like another Navy with a long history and fighting tradition, the British Royal Navy, command of a vessel at sea was considered the best way to advance on the career ladder. The Naval Staff therefore had no standing at all in naval circles. In 1909 it consisted of 5 officers and 8 non-commissioned officers.1574 The Staff also lacked the intellectual superiority to guide the Navy through the technical revolution which took place in other large navies, specifically in the British Navy.1575 Due to the lack of naval attachés the Naval Staff had to obtain information from newspapers and professional journals.1576 It was only in 1935 that a Naval Intelligence Service was added to the Naval Staff. Its Commander contacted the American Naval Attaché in Brussels to obtain information about the organisation of the U.S. Naval Intelligence Service - information which was readily given and which proved to be invaluable.1577 In 1936 the first Dutch Naval Attaché was appointed in London.

It is therefore not surprising that the Commandant Marinestaf (CMS) or Naval Chief of Staff even after the First World War was still reporting to the BDZ, which ran counter to develop-

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1573 G. Hart, op. cit., 269.


1576 Brouwer, op. cit., 24 - 25.

1577 Brouwer, op. cit., 43.
ments in the Anglo-Saxon Navies, where the Royal Navy had its Naval Chief of Staff, and the U.S. Navy had its Chief of Naval Operations, as the highest-ranking flag officers in their organisations. When the Dutch Navy Department was merged into a Department of Defence in 1928, the Naval Staff still consisted of only 5 officers. It was only after the evacuation of Naval headquarters to London in May 1940 that the functions of BDZ and CMS were combined into one person, that of Vice-Admiral J.Th. Furstner. On 27 July 1941 Furstner became Minister of the Navy Department and member of the Cabinet in exile; he also remained BDZ. Captain J.W. Termijtelen became the new CMS. The combination of the functions of BDZ and Navy Minister was of course constitutionally impossible, but within the constraints of the actual situation, without a Parliament and functioning political parties, it performed excellently.

Teitler has rightly pointed out that organisationally the KM was slow to implement a "learning organisation". At the end of the nineteenth century there was a technological revolution which changed the whole seascape, culminating in the DREADNOUGHT. The Dutch had no naval attachés, and missed therefore firsthand information on the ongoing naval revolution. A Naval War College was not instituted in Holland before 1921, thirty years after those in England, France and the U.S.A. As the Naval Staff was too insignificant in the first four decades of its existence, the Dutch Navy lacked departments for gathering information, evaluating events, battles and wars, and developing scenarios and doctrines, up to around 1935. Therefore the Naval War College had to act as a substitute for a Naval Staff for certain activities mentioned above.

The CZM also acquired a small Naval Staff in Batavia in 1902, but this was an operational organisation in order to assist the CZM in his ever-growing operational duties. It was a small staff, consisting of only 3 officers, and like its counterpart in the Netherlands, it lacked an intelligence department. In comparison, the KNIL General Staff was far larger, and more active with respect to Intelligence. Contacts between the two naval staffs were rare, due to the difference in rank of the naval officers serving in these two staffs, and because of the geographical distance. It was only after the occupation of the motherland in May 1940, that the CZM Naval Staff came into its own, although the emphasis remained primarily an operational one. The new Chief of the NEI Naval Staff appointed just before war broke out, Captain J.J.A. van Staveren, served a very dominant CZM (Vice-Adm. C.E.L. Helfrich), but the two proved to form a good team.

As we will see in the following pages, the lack of an adequate Naval Staff both in the motherland and in the NEI would be one of the deciding factors in the decline of the Dutch

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1578 Brouwer, op. cit., 35.
1579 Brouwer, op. cit., 47.
1580 Teitler, Anatomie, op. cit., 7.
1584 G. Teitler, in Brouwers, op. cit., 65.
Navy as an important factor in the defence of the NEI, and would also result in an inconsistent view of the real needs for a successful defence of the NEI.

To complicate organisational matters even further, the Dutch also possessed a separate Government Navy (Gouvernementsmarine) in the East Indies, which was founded in 1866 to suppress pirates and smugglers, who used small, fast native ships. This Navy therefore had a purely internal mission and reported to the Department of Finance in the colonial Administration. The personnel of the Gouvernementsmarine however came from the Koninklijke Marine on assignment basis. As the Gouvernementsmarine was never intended to fight modern enemy naval units, it will not figure in the discussions below. It added however an additional layer of organisational complexity to a navy which could hardly permit itself such an additional organisational burden.

The officer corps of the Dutch Navy was a very closed group. All career officers had graduated from the Naval Academy "Willemsoord" a.k.a KIM (Koninklijk Instituut voor de Marine or Royal Institute for Naval Officers) in Den Helder, the Netherlands. The 3-year curriculum emphasized character building, not so much formal education. Real intellectual formation took place at the HMKS (Hoogere MarineKrijgsschool or Naval War College), founded at The Hague in 1921. It was the HMKS which in close collaboration with the Naval Staff, also located in The Hague, worked out stratégical problems for the Naval Staff, and this resulted in strategic and specifically tactical concepts, which were reflected in the few ships, built in the twenties and thirties.

Coordination of policy between Navy and Army was almost non-existent. In 1903 an Interdepartmental Commission was instituted, which was succeeded by the Defense Council of 1908. The Defense Council was a permanent Council, consisting of the BDZ and Army Commander, the two Chiefs of Staff, and four civil members. The Defense Council was based in the Netherlands, and was expected not to deal with the defence of the NEI, which was considered the responsibility of the Minister of Colonial Affairs. The practical effect on policy coordination between the Services was therefore small, but that was solved in a typically Dutch way by numerous Interdepartmental Commissions which were appointed in the period under consideration to advise the Government on Defence aspects. We will encounter a number of these Interdepartmental Commissions in this sub-chapter.

In May 1940 the Koninklijke Marine was the only Service that, due to its inherent strategic mobility, could escape to England with a number of ships, some of which were nearing completion. Its main fighting strength was in the NEI, and was still intact. The Dutch Admiralty accomodated itself in London at the offices of C&A in Oxford St. under the capable leadership of Vice-Admiral J.Th. Furstner, the BDZ. Furstner was strongly pro-British, and he clashed regularly with the Cabinet and specifically with Welte and his staff at the Department of Colonial Affairs, who condemned his "servility" to the British. As the Queen fell out with the Defence Minister, A.H.Q. Dyxhoorn, the Dutch Prime

1086 Jungsager, op. cit., 177.
1087 G. Hart, op. cit., 156.
1088 G. Hart, op. cit., 257.
Minister decided to split the department into two Departments in July 1941, with Furstner as the new Navy Minister.

To conclude this subchapter, we have added short biographies of the two naval personalities who determined the way the KM was being commanded just before and in the Second World War. They are the BDZ, Vice-Admiral Furstner, and the CZM in the Far East, Vice-Admiral Helfrich.

J.Th. Furstner was born in 1887, and was a curiosity in Dutch naval circles: a brilliant intellectual in uniform. After earning his commission in 1906, he rose rapidly due to his sharp intellect and commanding personality. After finishing the Military Staff College in 1921 he directly became one of the teachers at the newly established Naval Staff College in the Hague. He was allowed to attend the *École navale de guerre* in Paris from 1927 to 1928, where he was strongly influenced by the French strategist Admiral Raoul Castex. Afterwards he was appointed Director of the Naval Staff College (1930 - 1936), and as such he was responsible for the executive training of all future officers of flag rank of the Dutch Navy. On 1 July 1936 he was appointed CMS (Chief of Naval Staff), and promoted to Vice-Admiral on 1 January 1938. He became Commander-in-Chief (BDZ) of the Dutch Navy on 1 September 1939.

Under his forceful leadership as Chief of Naval Staff he modernized the Dutch Navy, improved staff procedures, and ended the endless bickering between different schools of thought within the navy. Due to his foresight, he escaped with his staff and almost all Dutch warships to Great Britain after the German invasion, against the express order of the Dutch Supreme Commander, General Winkelman. On 27 July 1941 he was elevated to Minister of the Navy in the Gerbrandy-Cabinet, giving him an important political platform to push for closer co-operation with the British. As we have seen in the previous subchapter, Furstner clashed regularly with the G.G. and his policy of aloofness, and took care not to send the Dutch warships remaining in European waters to the Far East, but to integrate them within fleet squadrons of the Royal Navy.

Furstner was intellectually brilliant, but as a person he was aloof, authoritarian and arrogant. He lacked charisma and flair, and he could not handle the Press. Furstner certainly was no "sailors' admiral", he lacked empathy with the men and this might have been aggravated by his lack of experience in operational commands on board of ships. He had a broad strategic vision, and he was instrumental in the design of the Fleet plan of 1922 and the Battlecruiser plan of 1939. His largest contribution however has been the change of course of the Dutch navy from a top-heavy lethargic, outdated organisation before 1936 into an efficient fighting force in 1940/1941, which however sorely lacked ships to do the job.

The CZM in the NEI just before and during the war was almost his opposite in character. Vice-Admiral C.E.L. Helfrich was born in Semarang in 1886, and served after his graduation in 1907 as a torpedo officer. He attended the Naval Staff College from 1922 to 1924 and assisted Furstner with the 1922 Fleet Plan. He became Commanding Officer of the destroyer PIET HEYN from 1928 to 1931, and thereafter became Chief of Naval Staff NEI squadron and commander of the Dutch NEI naval squadron 1935 - 1937. He was promoted to Rear Admiral in 1938 and became Director of the Naval War College 1938 - 1939. As such he was a strong proponent of the Battlecruiser plan. In September 1939 he was appointed CZM: Commander-in-Chief Navy in NEI, and he was promoted to Vice-Admiral.
Helfrich was a born leader, and he was very much appreciated by his subordinates. He was a real "sailor's admiral" who indeed cared for his men. He was a dynamic, aggressive personality, very communicative and with a good sense of public relations, but at times he could be ruthless. He was not an intellectual high-flyer, but compensated this by getting things done. He remained to the end very much attached to his native land, the NEI, which he indeed defended almost to the last ship, sending Admiral Doorman to his doom at the Battle of the Java-Sea, about which he had no regrets.

3.4.3. Dutch Naval Strategy.

3.4.3.1. Risk Strategy.

For the Dutch Navy after 1815, there was no chance to regain the mastery of the seas, as its most probable opponent, Great Britain, indeed ruled the waves supremely. At the battle of the Doggersbank in 1792, Admiral J.W. de Winter could still fend off a sizable English fleet with his ships of the line. In 1815 that margin had disappeared completely, although in 1860 the Dutch still possessed the fifth largest warfleet of the world. Therefore the Dutch resorted to a strategy of the "Fleet in being". This strategy diminished in credibility over time however due to the relative decrease of the fleet in number of capital ships and firepower. After 1905 (the Battle at Tsushima) the Dutch therefore reverted to a strategy, which has been best described by German Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz and is called the "Risk strategy". According to Von Tirpitz, the German Hochseeflotte needed to be of such a size, that in a confrontation with it, the British battlefleet would risk such losses, that its supremacy could be succesfully contested by other nations which also possessed battlefleets. Therefore the expression "risk strategy". Because the existence of the far-flung British Empire depended on British maritime supremacy, the political risks for the British were indeed enormous. Churchill as First Lord of the Admiralty said of the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet in 1914, that Admiral Jellicoe was the only man in the whole Empire, who could "lose the war in an afternoon". Specifically in the period 1900 - 1930 the Risk Strategy was very appealing for a fleet called to defend the extensive Indian archipelago against a stronger enemy whose repair bases were more than 5000 kilometers away, i.e. Japan. A damaged Japanese warship had to limp back the whole distance or had to be abandoned. The distance between aggressor and defender therefore acted as a force multiplier for the defender. Even in 1941, the Japanese naval base which was closest to the NEI and which was able to repair battleships, was the naval base at Sasebo on the southernmost Japanese island, Kyushyu.

It must be admitted that the same reasoning applied also to the Dutch Navy as the defender, because the NEI had no wharves where heavily damaged ships could be repaired. The motherland was more than 20,000 kilometers away, and there were no Dutch bases in between. This was not seen as a restraining factor in Dutch naval opinion, because it had been assumed since 1815 that the NEI fleet squadron would fight the

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invader to the last ship anyway. This unspoken assumption was not even part of a formulated strategy, but was heartfelt by almost everybody in the Dutch squadron as "being the right way". It was this unspoken, underlying assumption which was the real cause that when a battle was fought in the Java-Sea against a Japanese fleet, the whole Dutch squadron was destroyed.

3.5.3.2. Naval defence Plans, 1892 - 1912.

The first serious defence plan of the NEI against an enemy attack dated from 1853, with Great Britain as the most probable potential enemy. France and the United States were also identified as potential adversaries, but they did not possess naval bases in S.E. Asia. In 1892 an Interdepartmental Commission was appointed by the Dutch Cabinet, consisting of Army and Naval officers with experience in the NEI. Named after its Chairman, Maj.-Gen. J.H. Kromhout, this so-called Kromhout Commission reported as such to the Dutch Cabinet. As the Army considered Java to be the most important island, the Navy's primary role was the destruction of an enemy invasion fleet bent on the capture of Java. Secondary tasks for the navy were the avoidance of a coup de main in the outlying islands, and reconnaissance of an enemy approach in the sealanes between the islands leading up to the Java-sea. England was still the principal potential enemy, although Germany, France and Russia in that order were also seen as potential enemies.

Based on the recommendations of the Kromhout commission, the Government issued the so-called Defence Foundations of 1892. For the Navy these had the consequence that, more than in the past, the fleet would be tied to the coastal defence of Batavia and environs, for which role the so-called Strijders (English: Warriors) had to be designed. Strijders were heavily armed and well-armoured, but slow ships, a kind of coast defence monitor or pocket battleship. The strijders were supported by fast small torpedo-boats for night attacks. A few cruisers (fast, but moderately armed and armoured) would be used to protect the outlying islands from neutrality violations and coup de mains. In contrast to the recommendations of the Kromhout Commission, which wanted the main fleet base to be Tg. Priok (close to Batavia), the existing fleet base at Surabaya was retained for reasons of cost effectiveness.

Teitler has pointed out that these Defence Foundations went against the naval trends of the time. Tying the main part of the fleet to the defence of (a part of) Java seemed at odds with the growing importance of Sumatra and Borneo for international trade and investments, and with the increasing risks of becoming involved in international conflicts in S.E. Asia.

In the recommendations of the Kromhout Commission, one recognizes the strong influence of the Colonial Army (KNIL), which in effect delegated the Dutch Navy to second position. It is clear that the small Dutch naval staff was not up to the intellectual level of the officers of the Colonial Army, resulting in recommendations which were strongly in favor of the Army, and not in the interest of the security of the NEI as a whole. It was the first time, but surely not the only time, that the lack of an adequate Naval Staff would severely hamper

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1993 ARA, Department of the Navy, Commandement Maritieme Middelen, Willemsoord, inv. nr. 253.

1994 Teitler, Anatomy, op. cit., 73.
the formulation of a consistent Dutch naval policy for the NEI.

In effect, Japan as a potential enemy was mentioned for the first time in a secret strategic study emanating from the naval staff in 1910. The study is of some significance, because one of its conclusions was that in case of a Japanese attack on the NEI, the American Government would interfere on behalf of the Dutch. The British, traditional protectors of the NEI, were thought to be too restrained by the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of 1902 to be able to offer any assistance. Consequently, it was assumed that the U.S. Navy would intervene in case of a Dutch-Japanese conflict in the next two decades.

One of the main fears of the Dutch colonial Administration was a coup de main. (See page 319). Most larger fleet units of the large powers at that time indeed had landing parties on board, mostly consisting of marines. Harbours in the NEI which were considered to be exposed to that kind of raiding parties were situated on the west coast of Sumatra (Sibolga, Padang, Benkulen) and in the Moluccas (Menado, Ambon, Ternate). When the Russian Baltic Fleet was on its way to Tsushima in 1905, there was genuine fear of coup de mains by this rather powerful fleet during its passage through NEI waters.

The Dutch fleet squadron in the NEI at the beginning of the 20th century was the result of the recommendations of the Kromhout-Commission, and was a rather powerful squadron, consisting of a nucleus of potentially six “strijders”, the mini-battleships DE ZEVEN PROVINCEN (7000 tons) and the JACOB VAN HEEMSKERCK and TROMP (both 5000 tons), and three ships of the older KORTENAER-Class. Of these, the JACOB VAN HEEMSKERCK had been specifically designed for service in the West Indies, but in time of trouble it could be despatched to the East Indies forthwith. The newest ship (from 1909), the DE ZEVEN PROVINCEN, was a floating fortress armed with 2x11 inch (28 cm.) guns, 4x5.9 inch (15 cm) guns and 10 x 3 inch (7.5 cm) guns and one mortar 7.6 cm. It was heavily armoured with a 6 inch midship belt, but it was rather slow (top speed was 16.3 knots), and did not carry torpedo tubes. It was a Coast Defence Battleship, comparable to the Swedish SVERIGE-class Coast Defence battleships of that time.

The 5500-tons Coast Defence battleships JACOB VAN HEEMSKERCK and TROMP were armed with 2x9.4 inch (24 cm.) guns, 6x5.9 inch (15 cm) guns, 6x3 inch (7.5 cm) guns, one 7.6 cm mortar and two torpedo tubes. They were heavily armoured, but slow (16.5 knots maximum), and comparable to the Swedish Coast Defence Battleships of the ARAN-Class, and the Norwegian TORDENSKJOLD- and NORGE-Cases, although they had a very low silhouette compared to these Scandinavian ships. The older strijders of the KORTENAER-Class of 4000 tons with its one tall chimney were armed with 3 x 8.2 inch (21 cm) guns, 2x5.9 inch (15 cm)guns and 6x3 inch (7.5 cm) guns. In addition they had 2 torpedo tubes each, and they were heavily armoured too with a 6 inch belt, but

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1906 Westerveld, op. cit., 16.


1908 These ships however were not always based in the NEI, but were also present in the West Indies and in the Netherlands. See Bosscher, opus cit., Vol. I, 37.
again it were slow ships (16 knots maximum).

In addition to these Strijders, there were seven armoured cruisers potentially available. The three cruisers of the KONINGIN REGENTES-Class of 5000 tons were armed with 2 x 9.4 inch (24 cm) guns, 4 x 5.9 inch (15 cm) guns and 8 x 3 inch guns, and 3 torpedo tubes of 18 inch. The ships could make about 16 knots, which was slow for an armoured cruiser. Faster were the four armoured cruisers of the GELDERLAND-class, which could make 20 knots. The GELDERLAND was armed with 4 x 5.9 inch guns, the NOORD-BRABANT and HOLLAND with 10 x 4.7 inch (12 cm) guns, the ZEELAND with 2 x 5.9 inch guns and 8 x 4.7 inch guns. These ships had to act against neutrality violations and coup de mains in the outlying islands of the archipelago.

Compared to the squadrons of other navies in the area in the first decade of this century, this squadron could easily hold its own in a purely defensive role: the defence of the Javanese shores - even against the Japanese Navy of that time. That is why we have gone into details of armament to show that really these were fighting ships with a lot of punch. The ships lacked speed for offensive operations however. The Germans at that time had the strongest squadron of any Western power in the Far East, based at Kia-chao, and consisting of 4 armoured ships and 6 cruisers. At its core were the two big, fast and powerful armoured cruisers SCHARNHORST and GNEISENAU which each had 8 guns of 8.2 inch (21 cm). In a purely defensive role the Dutch Strijders had a fighting chance against those ships, but they were too slow to prevent, for example, a German coup de main against the coaling station at Sabang.\footnote{Teitler, "Anatomie", op. cit., 121.} The Americans and British had no battleships in the Far East at that time. The Japanese were building new Dreadnought-type battleships, but against their older, existing battleships the Dutch Strijders still had a fair chance on a ship-to-ship basis.

However, this sizable Dutch squadron was reduced to the status of steaming museum pieces by technological developments caused by the "Fisher revolution."\footnote{Teitler, "Anatomie", op. cit., 199.} After 1906, all the big navies acquired DREADNOUGHT-type battleships and battlecruisers, which the Dutch were unable to build themselves, causing rapid obsolescence of the East Indies squadron after 1906. Specifically, the DE ZEVEN PROVINCIENT was already obsolete when put to service in 1909 - a missed chance to build a modern artillery ship like HMS DREADNOUGHT.

The building of modern battleships by Japan changed all the equations of naval strength in the Far East. To advise the government, an Interservice Advisory Commission was appointed under the chairmanship of the retired Governor-General Lt.-Gen. W. Rooseboom in 1906. The Rooseboom-Commission, in its final report of 22 May 1908, advised surprisingly against heavy artillery ships and emphasized the new torpedo weapon. The armoured ships had to be replaced by a large number of small torpedoboats, backed by a few destroyers.\footnote{Teitler, "Anatomie", op. cit., 207.} In this proposal, echoes are heard of the French Jeune école which also stressed the torpedo weapon. In France around 1880, Admiral Aube had declared "La
marine cuirassé a fait son temps. But while the French wanted to use the torpedo for commerce raiding, the recommendations of the Rooseboom-Commission were revolutionary because the commission planned to use the torpedo weapon in a strictly defensive role against enemy transport fleets and the accompanying escort ships.

The Rooseboom-Commission recommended a fleet of 6 light cruisers/destroyers and 44 torpedoboats. The Commission also recognized, that the Netherlands alone would not be able to withstand a dedicated enemy (i.e. Japanese) attack in East Asia, and therefore had to acquire a powerful ally in the Far East. This however would be a break with the ingrained traditional policy of aloofness, and therefore this recommendation was unacceptable to the Dutch government. The other recommendations were partly honored, and from 1911 the East Indies squadron was reinforced by 8 destroyers and a small number of submarines, all torpedo-carriers. The emphasis on the torpedo-weapon however caused much resistance within the naval officer corps, which correctly concluded that the artillery fleet was doomed to disappear, and with that the possibility of promotion.

Official reactions to the recommendations of the Rooseboom-Commission were slow to come. The Dutch CZM, Vice-Adm. A.H. Hoekwater, officially commented on the final report towards the G.G. in June 1910, more than two years after its release. The NEI bureaucracy added almost another year: the Governor-General (A.W.F. Idenburg) gave his official consent in March 1911. Only after the position of the NEI government had been made clear, the Dutch Cabinet could act. It is incomprehensible why the NEI government needed almost three years after release of the final report to come up with its advice, while the Japanese fleet increased its strength year by year. Certainly there was no sense of urgency within the NEI Administration. In hindsight, it is also clear that in not going for battleships like every other contemporary navy, including the French Navy, did at that time, valuable time was lost in acquiring such ships. That doomed the maritime defence of the NEI in the forties.

By 1912, it was painfully obvious that the Dutch East India squadron was not even a deterrent for a third-class seapower, and therefore something needed to be done quickly in order to give the risk-strategy some credibility. When Navy Minister J. Wentholt, tired of waiting for the official response of the NEI administration on the report of the Rooseboom-Commission, announced the building of another ship like DE ZEVEN PROVINCEN, this raised such a storm of protest within the Navy, that Parliament rejected the construction of the ship on 7 May, 1912, after which Wentholt resigned. The planned ship was obviously inferior to the dreadnoughts then under construction in other navies, and Wentholt could not convince Parliament about the wisdom of building another Strijder. His adversary in the Navy was Captain J.J. Rambonnet, who had proposed, in the maritime press, the

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building of five small battleships of about 15,000 tons with 8 guns of 30.5 cm, equal to the artillery on board of the Japanese battleships then in service, and using the Spanish ESPANA class battleships as an example. The whole episode clearly illustrated the consequences of the lack of a competent Naval Staff, advising the top of the department and the politically responsible Minister.

Wentholt's successor ad interim became H. Colijn, Minister of War, who served in this temporary function until 29 August 1913. Colijn initiated discussions with the Krupp Germania Werf in Kiel, Germany, which resulted in an offer dated 25 November 1912 for the construction of a battleship. The specifications as given by Colijn to the Germans in September 1912 were for a battleship with 21,000 tons displacement, a main armament of eight 34 or 35 cm guns, a trial speed of 21 to 22 knots and an armoured belt 250 mm thick. The battleship proposed by Germania was based on the design of the German KAISER Class battleships, but it had a higher speed and less armour, and was therefore more a battlecruiser than a battleship. The proposed ship had an endurance of 8000 nautical miles at a speed of 12.5 knots, which meant that it could indeed give battle to the Japanese in their home waters, or act on their communication lines. It was also heavily armed: 8 guns of 34.3 cm en echelon.

Rambonnet, who would eventually succeed Colijn as Minister of the Navy, was instrumental in the installation of a new Interservice Advisory Committee, formally installed by Colijn on 5 June 1912 under Chairmanship of the Minister for Internal Affairs, Th. Heemskerk. Deputy chairmen were the Ministers of the Navy and of Colonial Affairs. This Commission became known as the State Commission of 1912, and was charged with an evaluation of the defence requirements for both Navy and Army in the NEI, and of recommending to the Cabinet appropriate measures to improve these defences. Its report, released on 21 May 1913, is of such an importance that it merits more than a passing remark.

3.5.3.3. The State Commission of 1912.

In its final Report, the State Commission defined for the first time in an official report Japan as the most probable enemy, accepted the need to defend the whole of the NEI archipelago and not Java alone, and seriously studied the means to counter a Japanese attempt to conquer the whole of the NEI. It was a seminal report, which in effect set the framework for discussing the defence of this territory in the interwar years.

The Commission opted very clearly for a strong defence, which would not make it necessary to obtain allies in the Far East, therefore reinforcing the continuation of the traditional policy of aloofness. The Koninklijke Marine was seen as the service best suited...
for the defence of the archipelago because of its inherent strategic mobility. Moreover, it had to defend the whole of the archipelago, and not only Java. In order to do this, the commission recommended the building of a fleet of nine battleships over a 30-year period, resulting in the permanent availability in the NEI of a battlefleet of five battleships of 21,000 tons each, with a main armament of 8 guns of 13.5 inch (34.5 cm), a secondary armament of 16 guns of 6 inch (15 cm) and 12 guns of 7.5 cm, and a speed of 21 knots. In case of emergency 8 battleships would be available in the NEI. The five operational battleships however were considered sufficient to counter the four battleships and four battlecruisers which Japan was building at that time, also equipped with 13.5 inch guns. The battleships would be built gradually over thirty years, with the four oldest battleships to be sent to the Netherlands for training purposes after fifteen years.

Of course the battleships needed a screening force, which the Commission recommended to consist of six light cruisers, eight destroyers and eight submarines. To solve the problem of manning such a large fleet, the Commission recommended the use of Dutch conscripts supplemented with native volunteers from the NEI. Both the German and Japanese navies had good experiences with conscripts.

With respect to the naval base, it was recommended to base the fleet at Tandjoeng Priok east of Batavia, as the approaches to the Surabaya naval base were too shallow. Dutch warships were limited in size by the 6.9 meter depth of the Surabaya naval base at that time. The depth of the western entrance varied between 7.9 m at high tide to 5.9 meter at low tide. The eastern entrance of the base varied between 7.0 meters at high tide to 3.6 meter at low tide. The entrance to the new base at Tg Priok would have a depth of 9.8 meters at low tide, sufficient for the battleships. Moreover, bunkering stations would be needed at Sabang, Makassar and Ambon, and these stations had to be protected against a coup de main by KNIL forces.

A weak point of the recommendations was the excessively long building time of the battleships, which also assumed that no technological changes would take place during the thirty-year construction period. In reality, the whole area of marine engineering was in a rapid state of technological change, comparable to that of aeroplanes in the thirties. This is aptly illustrated by the fact that between 1913 and 1914 changes in the design specifications for the Dutch battleships resulted in a weight increase of around 20%.

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1612 Staatscommissie, 20 afp.
1615 Staatscommissie, 46 - 47.
1616 Staatscommissie, 50 - 59.
1617 Staatscommissie, op. cit., 70 - 76.
1619 Staatscommissie, 89.
1620 R.F. Scheltema de Heere, op. cit. 740, 745.
Of course the building and manning of such a fleet would mean increased estimates, but in its financial part of the report the Commission proved that the additional financial burden was not too excessive. The costs would also be shared by the Dutch and the NEI Governments. At that time, the costs of the NEI defence by the KNIL were paid for by the NEI Government, the costs for the (imperial) Navy were shared, with f 17.4 million per year being paid by the motherland, and f 8 million by the NEI. The 45.5 million guilders for this fleet expansion had to be equally shared by the motherland and the NEI.

The Treasurer of the Ministry of Finance, who was a member of the State Commission, disagreed however, and his viewpoint was published in a separate memorandum. Dr. A. van Gijn maintained that this fleet, in itself, could not guarantee the security and integrity of the NEI, and therefore would not make the NEI a desirable partner in defence for other colonial powers in that area. He concluded that a small fleet for police tasks would suffice, because "a colony that would be governed in such a way that it would be considered as a model to be imitated by other countries, is not apt to be removed from the possession of its motherland, as long as that motherland continuously improves the government of its colony". This line of reasoning by a scion of the Dutch ruling elite illustrates the increasing isolation and alienation from reality of a growing part of that class, an alienation which would become obvious in the twenties and thirties.

The State Commission was very outspoken regarding the eventuality, that the Netherlands would have to fight alone with its battlefleet. Without explicitly mentioning Great Britain, it is clear from the wording of the document, that it was assumed that Great Britain and/or Australia (the RAN existed since 1909!) would interfere and assist the Koninklijke Marine. It is the only fleet plan of the many which were published up to 1940, in which the question of outside help had been addressed so clearly.

On the basis of the final report of the State Commission, the new Minister for the Navy, J.J. Rambonnet, announced the preparation of a Fleet Law, which would cover a ten-year funding period to guarantee uninterrupted building of four battleships. As only a few Dutch wharves were capable of building these big ships, and the Netherlands as yet did not possess blast furnaces and steel works to produce the necessary steel, a few of the battleships and all of their armament and armour had to be ordered outside the country. However, based on a specification dated 10 November 1913, offers had been requested from eleven wharves outside the country, with bids to be received by 4 June 1914. Included were the Germania-Werft at Kiel, Germany, and Blohm and Voss, Hamburg. Armstrong Whitworth and Cantieri Ansaldo Genoa were also invited. During the proposal stage, the Dutch government informed the firms of an increase in displacement from

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1621 Staatscommissie, appendix 9.
1622 Staatscommissie, 125 - 132.
1623 Memorandum van Gijn, Staatscommissie, 15.
1624 Staatscommissie, op. cit. 10.
22,000 tons to 25,000 tons, of speed from 21 to 22 knots, endurance from 5,000 nautical miles to 6,000 nm, and the caliber of the main armament from 34.3 cm to 35.6 cm (14 inch).

Within the period specified offers were received from Germaniawerft (project no 806, with one interesting design variation with two quadruple turrets for the main armament, as was much later realised with the battleships of the English NELSON- and French CLEMET-CEAU-Classes), from Blohm & Voss (project no 733) and Vickers (project no 694 and 695). These designs have been extensively discussed and compared by Van Dijk and Scheltema de Heere. All builders could deliver the ships within 28 months. At the outbreak of the First World War the Dutch Government cancelled all further contacts with the wharves. In all possibility, the Dutch Naval Staff favoured the design by Germania- werft with some Blohm and Voss features, and as Germany was now belligerent, the Dutch staff saw no possibility of pursuing the matter.

It is a pity that Rambonnnet was not somewhat more insistent towards his staff, as Italy was not in the war until 1915, and the United States even not until 1917. Sweden and Spain remained neutral during the whole period of war, and were able to build battleships. With the wharves in these neutral countries, discussions on designs could have continued, resulting in orders to build the ships. It cannot be traced however, what the Italian offer consisted of, and how it was rated by the Naval Staff. Obtaining offers from wharves in the United States and Sweden had not been contemplated at all. As the (small) Dutch Naval Staff lacked an international vision and was far more acquainted with British and German fleet developments, it did not consider other possibilities, and therefore missed an historic opportunity.

It must be pointed out here, that in Dutch historiography the conclusion that the outbreak of the world war made further plans and a Fleet Law illusory, is drawn too easily. In addition, even during the war, warships could have been purchased from other navies. Even after 1913 it would have been possible for the Dutch to obtain battleships. The story of the English-built Brazilian battleship RIO DE JANEIRO of 27,000 tons with 14 guns of 12 inch calibre is wellknown. The ship was sold to the Turkish Government after completion in January 1914 and renamed SULTAN OSMAN I. In August 1914 the ship was expropriated by the British after the Turkish entry into war, and renamed HMS AGINCOURT. The Greek Navy obtained 2 pre-dreadnought battleships from the US Navy in early 1914.

The slow decision making process within the NEI Administration, the Navy Department and in particular at the Naval Staff, with its continuously changing specifications, had as a consequence that the Dutch Navy did not have even one battleship under construction at the end of the world war, let alone five of these ships. In 1942 these ships would not have

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1627 Van Dijk, op. cit. 399 - 402


been too old yet. The comparable Japanese battleships of the KONGO-Class gave the Americans plenty of problems during the Second World War.

In place of the battleships, the Dutch Government commenced the building, at Dutch wharves, of 3 light cruisers of the JAVA-Class, to the design of Krupp-Germania. These were ships of 6000 tons, with ten guns of 15 cm (6 inch) and a speed of 30 knots. Compared to their sisterships in other navies at that time, these cruisers were decidedly superior. Building started in 1916.

In military history, it certainly is rather uncommon that an army designs fleet bases for its sister service the navy, not to help it but in order to regain importance. As Teitler has made clear, this was exactly what happened in the NEI. One of the most intelligent critical appraisals of the report of the State Commission came from a Colonel of the General Staff of the KNIL, W.R. de Greve, who later on would become its Commander. He pointed out that Tg. Prick was unsuitable as a naval base, and suggested an alternative location between the Zutphen Islands (Poelaau Rimaebalak) and the Sumatra shore, close to the Soenda Straits between Sumatra and Java. This sea passage is subdivided by a number of islands and islets, which could be reinforced, as the Americans had done in the entrance to Manila Bay. To close both ends of the straits, an enemy navy needed to split its forces in two equal parts, one for the southern entrance from the Indian Ocean, and the other to close off the entrance from the Java Sea, because the Dutch fleet in its base could use both passages, resulting in a better opportunity for the Dutch squadron to defeat each of these enemy squadrons one by one.

The publication of de Greve's pamphlet in 1913 resulted in lively polemics in the press between officers of both services about the relative merits of different locations for the naval base and the protecting forts, which are neatly summarized by Teitler. All this publicity resulted in the installation of another Commission to study the relative merits of the Soenda Straits naval base in 1917. Its Chairman was Captain W.J.G. Umbgrove. The final report of the Umbgrove Commission strongly recommended a naval base between the islands of Merak Besar and Merak Ketjil and the Java shore, protected in the north by a mountain, and opening in the Soenda Straits. With coastal defence batteries consisting of 40 cm guns on the islets between Java and Sumatra the Straits would become almost impassable by an enemy fleet, while the Army
would retain freedom of movement between the two most important islands of the NEI:
Sumatra and Java. Alas, at the time this Commission delivered its final report (1920), the
battleships which would use this base had faded away in the postwar economic crisis and
general war-weariness.

As is obvious from the above, the recommendations of the State Commission were based
on a clear risk strategy with strong Mahanian influences. A fleet of 5 battleships would of
course not stand up to the Japanese battlefleet of 4 battleships and 4 battlecruisers, but
for the Japanese Navy with its long lines of communications, this Dutch battlefleet would
indeed have been a serious and credible deterrence to Japanese expansion plans in the
Nanyo (S.E. Asia). The strategy pursued by the State Commission was therefore a pure
risk strategy.

Some Dutch historians have argued, that the recommendations of the State Commission
would have resulted in an armaments race with Japan, which would result in them building
even more battleships. This however is highly improbable. In Chapter 6 it will be shown
that Japanese maritime construction capacity was up to its ceiling during the whole period
under consideration.

In hindsight, it is obvious that the time slot for building Dutch dreadnoughts was limited.
The State Commission in effect was convened too late, as will be illustrated below. If the
State Commission had come in place of the Roosenboom Commission, Holland might
have had its battleships, as building time for battleships at that time was between two and
a half and three years. Was this delay explainable because the consequences of the naval
revolution caused by the launching of the real DREADNOUGHT in 1906 had to be
studied? This is highly improbable, since the Germans immediately started building that
type of capital ship in 1907. Smaller navies acted quickly too. The Brazilian Navy for
example ordered 2 modern battleships in England in 1907, the Argentinian Navy followed
suit by ordering 2 dreadnoughts in the United States in 1910. The Turkish navy ordered a
modern battlefleet in England in February 1911 (later to become HMS ERIN), the Chilean
Navy also ordered a dreadnought in England in November 1911 (later to become HMS
CANADA). The lack of urgency on the Dutch naval side, and the building of an already
outmoded DE ZEVEN PROVINCEN are proof that Dutch naval staff work at that time was
not of the required quality. The bureaucratic slowness in official naval and military
comments on the recommendations of the Commission-Roosboom also illustrated the
lack of urgency in a military bureaucracy which had not been challenged by real wars for
too long. There was absolutely no sense of urgency. The many changes of Navy Ministers
did not help either.\footnote{There were 12 Navy Ministers over the period 1900 - 1920. See Teitler, Anatomie, 407 - 408.}

3.5.3.4. In search of a naval policy, 1919 - 1922.

At the end of the First World War, two new weapons had blossomed into full fruition, the
submarine, and the airplane. It was clear that a new appraisal of Dutch naval policy had to
take place, taking into consideration the impact of these two new weapons. Submarine
officers claimed that large well-armed submarines could patrol all of the NEI with submari-
ne motherships in support of them.\footnote{E.J. Langelaan, Lt-Cdr (Retired): De verdediging van Nederlandsch-Indië met een vloot van klein materieel. Haarlem, Tjeenk Willink, 1919. (Lecture by "Onze Vloot", The Hague 24 November 1919.)} In Parliament, members\footnote{Of the coalition Ro-}
man Catholic Party railed against a Dutch "Hochseeflotte" and joined the socialist opposition parties. The general feeling however was that the NEI squadron was totally inadequate and technically obsolete. The fleet was described in Dutch Parliament as "that deplorable lot", and Navy Minister W. Naudin ten Cate aptly described the fleet as "an unusable pile of rust". In order not to lose its prestige, Holland had to do something. Even the responsible Minister conceded that the fleet had to be renewed. Governor-General Van Limburg Stirum informed the new Minister of Colonial Affairs De Graaff that "our fleet policy gives the impression of complete desperation. How many years do we already struggle with this issue, without delivering something of substance".

Most political parties also realized too well that a fatal weakening of the fleet would in due time result in the loss of the colonies. Navy Minister H. Bijleveld proposed to stop further construction of the two cruisers JAVA and SUMATRA, but leakages to the Press by officers of the naval staff in combination with the general feeling that the fleet could not be further weakened resulted in a rejection of the Naval Estimates, and the resignation of Bijleveld. His successor obtained approval for the cruisers, but only after promising a thorough study of the Far Eastern defence problems.

This was all the more urgent, as the number of navy personnel which left the service increased dramatically. In 1919 the percentages of people leaving the Navy were 26.5% of the officers, 13.6% of the non-commissioned officers, 22.6% of the machineroom personnel and 57.4% of the sailors. It was already inferred by some commentators, that there would be no sailors available to man the two new cruisers. Reasons for this high turnover were lack of career prospects for officers and non-coms, and the weeding-out of unreliable sailors as a result of the "red week", when the trade union for sailors had threatened the occupation of The Hague (See paragraph 3.4.3.7). Around 1 July 1920, the Navy had less than 1000 sailors, 718 officers and 2410 non-coms - too many chiefs and too few Indians therefore. Due to lack of personnel, half of the squadron in the NEI had to be immobilized: 1 armored cruiser and 4 destroyers. Morale and fighting efficiency decreased even more steeply, and caused much concern within the government.

All this resulted in the installation of an interdepartmental commission on 29 May, 1920

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1600 See speech of the influential politician of the Roman Catholic Party mr. J.A. Bomans, HTK, 11 February 1919, 1300.

1601 Bob de Graaff, op. cit., 422.


1605 Parliamentarian M.W.F. Treub, HTK, 11 December 1919, 873.

1606 HTK, Staatsbegroting dienstjaar 1920, 2, VI, 28, Memorie van Antwoord, 15. The turnover was also high in the first quarter of 1920. See HTK, 26 March 1920, 1770.

1607 A.P. Staalman, HTK, 21 December 1920, 1214.
with the task of recommending to the Dutch Government which steps should be taken to improve the defence of the NEI in the light of the latest technological developments. The commission was named after its chairman, Captain A.F. Gooszen KM, and consisted of naval and army officers, the Treasurer of the Department of Finance, and civil servants from the Department of Colonies.\footnote{For its members, see Jungslager, op. cit., 198.}

The naval policy framework for the commission was significantly different from that of the State Commission eight years hence. The assumptions were no longer those of a strong naval deterrence, but were the scouting of an enemy force, harassment of that enemy force, and if possible attacks on its transport fleet and its lines of communications\footnote{Jungslager, op. cit., 94.}, while waiting for an interference by another, stronger Navy (presumably the U.S. Navy). The foundation of the League of Nations and the general war-weariness and growing pacifism even in neutral Holland had clearly influenced the definition of the Commission's tasks.\footnote{In Dutch Parliament a motion was introduced by the Social-Democratic Party on 11 February 1919 to abolish the whole Fleet. The motion was defeated by 58 versus 23 votes. Handelingen Tweede Kamer, 1918 - 1919, session 13 February, 1317.} But it was also the time of the naval arms race, and Japan had adopted a fleet plan for 16 capital ships (the 8:8 plan of eight battleships and eight battlecruisers).\footnote{Jungslager, op. cit., 84.}

The Gooszens-Commission recommended a small-material fleet, a "minimum fleet", with submarines as the principal units to attack an approaching enemy. Main base would be Tg. Priok, and not Surabaya. Screening forces consisting of destroyers and seaplanes would continually patrol the narrow approaches to the Java-Sea between Malaya and Borneo near the Natuna and Anambas islands, between Borneo and Celebes near Tarakan, and between Celebes and Flores.\footnote{For detailed patrol charts of each of these passages see Jungslager, op. cit., 106 - 111.} If Japanese fleet units were detected crossing these lines, there were still two full 24-hour periods available before the north coast of Java was reached. Time enough to send the submarines into the attack. The recommended fleet strength for the NEI was 4 cruisers, 24 destroyers, 4 gunboats, 32 attack submarines and 14 air squadrons with 72 seaplanes.\footnote{Rapport van de Interdepartementale Commissie, 29 May 1920 (Secret), 17 afp.} The fleet units had to be built during a 12-year period, covered by a Fleet Law in order to guarantee continuity in the fiscal appropriations. Fiscally this was a rather revolutionary proposal, because up to that time Parliament had voted for building outlays at the discussions on the yearly estimations for the Ministry concerned. From a naval policy standpoint, the proposed fleet plan was unique, in that not artillery ships, but torpedoships and planes would be the main offensive weapons. As far as is known today, this was the only fleetplan in the world which did not have the artillery ship as its main line of defence. As such it was a regression to the recommendations of the Rooseboom-Commission in 1906 with its torpedo-fleet. The plan also rested on the assumption that in case of Japanese aggression the League of Nations would assist the Dutch by sending (Anglo-Saxon) warships which would reach the theatre of war within 3 to 4 weeks.
The plan can be criticized on a number of points. The defence of the NEI was in effect concentrated on only a part of the NEI - the whole archipelago east of the Celebes was abandoned to the enemy. It was assumed that submarines would be effective against warships, and this in fact was a lesson not learnt from the First World War, as the German U-boats had concentrated on merchant shipping. It was unclear what could be done by this fleet when Japan had acquired a foothold in the eastern part of the archipelago by for example a coup de main against Ambon. Moreover, the plan explicitly assumed help from outside by the League of Nations, to be executed by the only nations which had, at that time, a fleet in the Far East: The United Kingdom and the United States, and probably France. Again it appeared that naval staffwork of insufficient quality was put into the plan. But it was obviously much cheaper than the previous fleet plan of the State Commission of 1912, and it must be admitted that the Japanese some twenty years later followed the same invasion routes which had been foreseen in the Final Report of the Gooszens-Commission.

The unconventional nature of the plan would cause political and legal deadlock in the coming fifteen years, because it was considered worthless by the numerous advocates of the heavy artillery ship, and resulted in a guerilla both within and outside the Koninklijke Marine, which had as a consequence deep divisions within the Navy leadership itself. As a consequence, politicians, and specifically financial specialists, in Parliament could and did point out the lack of unanimity in the Navy itself, and therefore refused to agree on investments in new warships. The socialist parliamentarian F.W.W. Hugenholtz remarked in 1924 that having read the many articles by naval officers, every one urging a fleet composition different from the others, the proposed draft Fleet Law of 1924 could only result in a trash fleet. This lack of unanimity within the Navy command structure due to the lack of a professional Naval Staff continued until the end of the thirties and resulted in a fatally weakened fleet, as will be discussed in the following pages.

3.5.3.5. The Draft Fleet Law of 1922.

The recommendations of the Gooszens-Commission were found unacceptable by the Navy Minister ad interim, General W.F. Pop. This deadlock was broken because Pop was forced to resign on another issue in June 1921, and was replaced by J.J.C. van Dijk. Van Dijk accepted the recommendations, but he sensed the resistance in and outside Parliament against the recommendations of the Commission, and decided to scale down the goal of a Draft Fleet Law (DFL) to the building of half the fleet strength recommended by the commission, over a period of six years instead of twelve years. By limiting the duration of the DFL to six years, he hoped to convince those Parliamentarians who opposed the financial recommendations of the commission because those would effectively remove Parliamentary budget control for a number of years. By defining the goal of the intended DFL as a fleet, which at the end of the six-year period was completed he hoped to convince those Parliamentarians who found the whole fleet too expensive for a small

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1654 Bosscher, op. cit., 62 afp.


1656 Schoonoord, op. cit., 205.

1657 See remarks of mr. P.J. Oud on this subject in the Second Chamber, HTK, 18 October 1923, 146, and of mr.H.C. Dresselhuys, ibid. 149.
country as the Netherlands, as well as those who argued against a Fleet Law because it would not take into account the dynamics of technological change, resulting in ships which would be obsolete when put into service. Moreover, in order not to jeopardize the ongoing construction, he decided that as long as the DFL was not yet accepted, he would ask Parliament for yearly budgets for new ships, using the recommended minimum fleet of the Gooszens Commission as a guide. This proved to be a farsighted measure, because as the DFL discussions dragged on in Parliament, it enabled the Navy to build destroyers and submarines and other small warships for the East Indies.

Politically at that time, there was a very vocal minority which was dead-set against any armament, let alone re-armament. It consisted of communists, social-democrats and leftist liberals, who together commanded about one-third of the total votes in Parliament. They were also very vocal in the national Press, and could count on the loyalty of well-organized trade unions. In addition, the conservative majority in Parliament contained a number of Parliamentarians who were fiscally very conservative, and who opposed a major fleet expansion on fiscal grounds, or because there would be no parliamentary control over fleet building for six years. The influential politician De Geer voiced objections of the second kind. In order to get the Draft Fleet Law passed, van Dijk had to convince these financial conservatives.

The Draft Fleet Law was proposed to Parliament in April 1922. The timing was unfortunate for a number of reasons. An important external factor was the Washington Naval Disarmament Conference, which had resulted in guarantees for Dutch colonial positions in the Far East by Japan and the three Western Powers, England, France and the U.S. The prospect of a Japanese attack therefore diminished considerably. Internal factors were the conflict between the KM and KNIL about the relative merits of the Fleet Law for the land defence of the NEI, the internal dissension within the naval officer's corps, and the negative opinion about the DFL by the highest Dutch advisory college, the Council of State. Moreover, a Parliamentary election was scheduled for May 1922, and the leaders of the majority parties did not want to put the DFL at the center of those elections, due to the dissension within their parties. The half-hearted explanation in Parliament by the Minister of Foreign Affairs about the consequences of the DFL for Dutch foreign policy, coupled with his absence for some months due to an International Peace Conference, was not very convincing. His absence therefore gave a perfect excuse to defer the DFL for procedural reasons until after the parliamentary elections. This proved to be a tactical error which would have considerable consequences.

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1886 Jungslager, op. cit., 127.


1888 HTK 1921/1922, Bijlagen 320.2 t/m 8, Ontwerp van Wet, signed by Queen Wilhelmina, 8 November 1921.

1889 Jungslager, op. cit., 128.

1890 Minister of Foreign Affairs H.A. van Karnebeek in Second Chamber, HTK, 6 April 1922, 2357 - 2359.

1891 Beunders, op. cit., 216.
Also the contents of the DFL were qualitatively sub-standard due to sloppy staff work by the undermanned Naval Staff. Specifically the financial consequences of new construction over the long term, the personnel consequences, operational costs, (around f 63 million a year) and the amounts of depreciation, were not very well explained. The total investments of around f 545.000.000 over twelve years were considerable by Dutch standards. The proposed financial coverage by raising excise taxes, which are traditionally sensitive to business cycles, was not very convincing either.

The proposed DFL became a subject of considerable press coverage, and aroused public interest. The deferral of the DFL gave the adversaries time to mobilise public opinion against the law, resulting in polemical articles by proponents and adversaries in the press. In July 1922, after the Parliamentary elections, which were won by the Christian Democratic coalition parties, the second Cabinet Ruys de Beerenbrouck was installed, with J.D. de Geer as Minister of Finance. De Geer was opposed to the DFL, because of its long duration and because he considered the costs involved to be excessive. Therefore a new commission was installed on 23 November 1922 to review the recommendations of the Gooszens Commission. This Commission-Patijn (after its Chairman R.J.H. Patijn) received an instruction that was equivalent to solving the quadrature of the circle: realising the half-minimum fleet within six years at far less expense.

As could be expected, the recommendations of the Commission which were made public on 30 March 1923 were rather nebulous. The main recommendation was that the DFL should proceed in Parliament, with some minor changes. It was recognized that the financial situation in both Holland and the NEI was perilous, but the main argument was that the loss of the colonies to an aggressor would be irreversible and of utmost consequences. The Treasurer of the Department of Finance, L.J.A. Trip, declared that he was a proponent of deferring the actual construction of the ships after the DFL had passed Parliament. The Cabinet decided however to put the DFL before Parliament, resulting in the resignation in August 1923 of the Minister of Finance, De Geer, who was still opposed to the DFL.

After a worldwide economic upturn in the period directly after the First World War, there was a worldwide recession after 1920, which also inflicted both the Netherlands and the NEI. This had been one of the reasons that the U.S. Government had convened the maritime powers for the Washington Naval Disarmament Conference. The finances of the NEI were also in bad shape, and therefore the Governor-General of the NEI, D. Fock also opposed the DFL. The Minister of Colonial Affairs, S. de Graaff, backed the DFL however. The recession reached its lowest point in July 1923, causing economic hardship both in The Netherlands and the NEI. But even then, financially the DFL could be financed without serious problems, as indeed pointed out by its proponents.

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1664 HTK, 1921/22, Bijlage 320.5, 38.
1665 HTK, 6 december 1922, 856.
1668 The Navy Estimates due to the DFL would absorb 28% of the NEI Budget over a number of years. Beunders, op. cit., 97 - 98.
The heated discussion between proponents of airpower versus those of conventional warships which raged in England and in the United States, also echoed in The Netherlands. Under the pseudonym "Marin" somebody who knew the field very well indeed argued in a well-known newspaper (the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*) that in the future airpower would be the deciding factor in the defence of the NEI. Marin proposed airfields near the northern straits, and an independent airforce consisting of 180 bombers and 180 fighters, with a reduction of twelve of the number of destroyers in the minimum-fleet as proposed by the Commission Patijn. Of course, his articles drew heavy fire from maritime authors, but also caused a rift in the ranks, because some naval officers sided with Marin. It is illustrative for the atmosphere in the KM at that time, that this dissident published his opinion in the naval press under a pseudonym. All this verbal warfare did not help the cause of the DFL, and surely not the standing of the Navy in the eyes of the general public and the politicians.

It has to be admitted that the Department of the Navy (and the Naval Staff) had not developed a consistent naval policy for the NEI over the last thirty years. Looking back to that period, the Social-democratic leader P.J. Troelstra remarked with some justification in Parliament: "Every new Minister of the Navy came to Parliament with a plan for new ships, which was different from that of his predecessor. He started of course with painting a very bleak picture of the present situation, stating that we were absolutely lost if nothing happened, and then presented as inescapable his new plans and ships. Then he got his new ship, or Parliament approved his plans, only to have the whole circus start again with the arrival of a new Minister of the Navy." Alas, there was a lot of truth in this remark, as we have seen above, pointing out to deep divisions within the Navy Department, which could manifest itself because of the lack of a strong naval staff, aggravated by the large number of Navy Ministers over that period of time.

Although it did not play a role in the discussion, it is of interest to mention here, that the (British) Royal Navy, and therefore the British Government, was not a strong proponent of the DFL. It is not clear however why the British did not want a strong Dutch Navy around Singapore at that time, as the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had ended. The explanation given by Bosscher does not sound very convincing.

The discussions in the House of Representatives (the Dutch Second Chamber of Parliament) on the DFL started in October 1923. The new Minister of Finance, H. Colijn, had announced, at the start of the Parliamentary season, a reduction of the salaries of the civil servants and a reduction of welfare payments, which caused an outcry on the left. Those parties mobilised the Trade Unions, and succeeded in collecting more than a million signatures against the DFL within a month, and offered those signatures in bundles to the Cabinet. It might have influenced the doubters on the fiscal-conservative side. Against all

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1. It has been suggested by Teitler, that behind the pseudonym of Marin was the future CZM, vice-admiral J.C. Jager. See G. Teitler. "De Slagluchtmacht" Mededelingen Sectie Militaire Geschiedenis, 7 (1984), 93 - 146, note 15.


3. HTK, Interpellatie Troelstra, 11 October 1923, vel 10, 37.


this public emotion the Government defended the DFL with timidity and an "all-or-nothing" strategy, not being able to explain in clear and simple terms why the NEI needed the fleet expansion.\textsuperscript{1674} On 26 October 1923 the DFL was voted down with 50 against and 49 votes in favour, and the Cabinet resigned.

Van Dijk's foresight now paid off, and in effect resulted in saving the "half minimum fleet"-concept. The two light cruisers JAVA and SUMATRA were completed in 1925, and submarines and new destroyers to replace the old ones were being built at a rate of two per year. The continuity of available fleet materiel was therefore guaranteed. But the NEI fleet squadron of 2 cruisers, 8 destroyers and 13 submarines of the early thirties had no relationship whatsoever to any strategic or tactical concept, and was plainly the result of what was assumed to be the financial possibilities of the wealthy and roaring twenties. As stated by the Parliamentary Fleet Commission in its comments on the Naval Estimates of 1924 after the rejection of the DFL, it had become useless for the Government to make comparisons between Dutch Fleet strength in the Far East and that of other nations in the region as an argument for a stronger fleet.\textsuperscript{1675}

What were the consequences of the rejection of the DFL, the most important political event of the twenties in The Netherlands? Amazingly enough, notwithstanding all the public emotion and parliamentary drama, the effects of the decision have not been made subject of historical study. Maybe, because the "what if?"-question remains academic, as in this case.

Henri Beunders, who wrote a thesis on the subject, did not discuss the consequences. He used the rejection of the DFL as a casus to compare with the parliamentary NATO missile crisis of 1983.\textsuperscript{1676} Bosscher, in his History of the Dutch Navy during the Second World War, mentions the continuing emphasis on reducing Naval estimates during the "rich" years 1925 - 1930 as the only effect.\textsuperscript{1677} De Jong rightly points out, as an important effect, the ensuing demoralisation of all Navy personnel, who sensed correctly that there was no longer a consistent vision behind Dutch naval policy.\textsuperscript{1678} The most opinionated was Admiral Helfrich,\textsuperscript{1679} who concluded in his Memoirs that the rejection had been very damaging for the Navy, because as a consequence it lacked a framework which the Fleet Law could have provided to develop the KM into an efficient fighting force. Even without speculation, it is clear that a fleet of 4 cruisers, 24 destroyers and 32 submarines would have materially contributed to the chance of stopping the Japanese tide in S.E. Asia by winning time - time which was now lost by too weak a naval force.

3.5.3.6. The Fiscal Policy Fleet, 1924 - 1933.

After the defeat of the DFL in Parliament, the size of the fleet was no longer a matter of

\footnotesize{1674} Beunders, op. cit., 215, 223.

\footnotesize{1675} HTK, Voorloopig verslag Marine-begroting, 2.VI.26, 6 March 1924, Bijlage A, 50.

\footnotesize{1676} Beunders, op. cit. 225.

\footnotesize{1677} Bosscher, op. cit. I, 71.


\footnotesize{1679} C.E.L. Helfrich, Memoirs, I,(1950), 5.
naval strategical views on maintaining the integrity of the Dutch territory in the NEI, taking into consideration an appreciation of a potential enemy's fleet strength, but was at the mercy of fiscal policy. Although, economically, the years 1925 - 1930 were a boom period with increasing state income, the shock of the rejection of the DFL took some years to overcome, and paralysed early political initiatives from the protestant parties, which were traditionally oriented towards a strong colonial defence. As Minister Westerveld had stated during the defense of the DFL, not accepting the DFL would mean the liquidation of the Navy. As we will see, the final result was not that tragic, but the desolate slump in the Navy's fortunes would painfully affect it for a number of years.

Politically, the rejection of the DFL was damaging due to its effect on the Ministry of Colonial Affairs. No longer were successive Ministers willing to push for a strong (naval) defence. Instead, they adapted the defence plans to the current financial situation, which most of the time was considered as grim by the conservative politicians at that time. A case in point is Colonial Minister de Graaff, who wrote to Governor-General Fock in May 1924, that there was only a small chance of the NEI being involved in an Asian conflict: "In each case, it would indicate a lack of self-knowledge to base the organisation of the NEI defence on independent action without support of any allied power against an aggressor." Therefore de Graaff took the easy route of conforming to the wishes of the Treasury Department, in place of teaming up with the Minister of the Navy, who had as much at stake as the Minister of Colonial Affairs. The 7th (Military) Bureau of his Department supported him in his opinion by concluding, that as long as The Netherlands gave at least the impression of willingness to defend the NEI, the Americans and the British would support the NEI against Japanese aggression. Note the influence of the English guarantee as reported by Van Kamebeek at the Washington conference. Rightly, Governor-General Fock, declared De Graaff's vision in harsh terms as "ostrich policy". De Graaff's successor, Ch. Welter, thereupon decided to review the defence policies, and put the 7th Bureau to work.

Thereupon the 7th Bureau reviewed the Defence Foundations of 1892. Due to the perceived lack of financial means the Bureau advised that the objective of both fleet and army could only be the maintenance of neutrality and internal order. After a review by the Council of State, the two responsible Ministers J.C. Koningsberger (Colonial Affairs) and Lamboooy (Navy) reached agreement on issuing a Royal Decree spelling out updated Defense Foundations for the NEI. The Queen, however, who always had been much interested in NEI Defence and the position of the Navy, objected. She considered the naval strength allotted to the NEI as too insignificant. The issue was decided by inserting the qualification "minimal strength" in the text of the Royal Decree of 18 March 1927, no 49, which spelled out the new Defence Foundations for the NEI.

1892 HTK, 8 December 1922, 919, 927.
1893 ARA MinvKol., V2-5-1924-P5, letter De Graaff to Fock, 3 May 1924.
1894 See also Bob de Graaff, op. cit. 431.
1895 See also Bob de Graaff, op. cit. 431.
1896 ARA, MinvKol., V20-1-1925-F1, memorandum 7th Section, 16 January 1925.
1897 Bob de Graaff, op. cit. 431.
1898 Bob de Graaff, op. cit., 433.
Both the Parliament and the People’s Council had been bypassed in the issuance of this Royal Decree, as were the Directors of the two Service Departments. In these “Defensiegrondslagen” (Defence Foundations) the KNIL was held responsible for the security and integrity of Java, the KM was responsible for the security of the other territory in the NEI (indicated as the “Buitengewesten”). The degree in which these responsibilities could be executed, would be dependent on available “financial and personnel resources” (paragraph 4), but a minimum size was defined which was equal to the existing fleet (paragraph 5). Compared with the rejected DFL, this had as a consequence a further reduction of the East Indies squadron with 4 destroyers and 12 submarines. The fleet would have only one base (Surabaya), to be defended by the KNIL. Surabaya therefore became the only major fleet base in the world, to be commanded by an Army general.

The last paragraph (8) of the Defensiegrondslagen underscored the inability of the defence establishment in the NEI to uphold the sovereign rights of the Dutch in their richest colony. It stated that: “in the case that the NEI - notwithstanding serious endeavours not to be involved in war - would be drawn into such a war, the available defence forces will oppose to the best of their effort any attempt of occupation of our territory; in expectation of the support which might be given to us.”

Dutch integrity and security of the NEI had therefore become dependent on some outside source of help. Because of their self-imposed financial limits, the Dutch had decided to gamble the future of their colony on the grace of some potential (Anglo-saxon) ally, and not on the capabilities of the expected aggressor. Koningsberger acknowledged this to the new Governor-General, A.C.D. de Graeff. Moreover, Dutch foreign diplomacy emphasized strict neutrality; therefore no secret alliances could be arranged beforehand. There is a built-in conflict between strict neutrality and the attainment of agreement with a prospective Ally about its possibilities of eventual support. Dutch foreign policy had chosen for the first objective, thereby negating the second objective, with disastrous results.

The most likely Ally was Great Britain. We have looked at Foreign Minister’s Van Karnebeek’s discussions in 1922 in Washington with the English First Lord of Admiralty. (See page 306). Afterwards, no other contacts on such a high level have surfaced in diplomatic or military source material; we therefore have to assume that Van Karnebeek’s understanding of the British position was the underlying argument for the inclusion of the statement on foreign assistance in the Defensiegrondslagen. The knowledge that the British were building a strong naval base at Singapore might also have been interpreted as a token that Great Britain would not abandon its neighbour, if it was attacked by Japan. As would be proven by future developments, this was a shaky assumption.

The Netherlands did not have to wait very long before an event occurred which shook Dutch national pride. The NEI was not well defended, the small Dutch possessions in the Lesser Antilles even less so, where there were not even warships on station. On 8 June

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1686 G. Teitler; “Het KNIL en de Vlootwetten: toedracht en uitwerking van de Defensiegrondslagen van 1927” Mededelingen van de Sectie Militaire Geschiedenis Landmachtstaf, 4 (1981), 9 - 79. This publication will be subsequently referred to as MSMG.

1687 Bob de Graaff, op. cit., 434.

1688 Jungslager, op. cit., 172.

1689 Jungslager, op. cit., 178.
1929 the Venezuelan revolutionary Rafael Simón Urbina with his band stormed the Dutch Fort Amsterdam at Willemstad, Curacao and escaped afterwards, taking with him as hostages the Governor and the Garrison Commander, a number of handguns and the money they found in the Treasury. It was a shameful episode, but worse was to come.

3.5.3.7. Of Officers and Men - The Soul of the Fleet.

The pride of any Navy are not exclusively its ships, but also the seamen who man these ships. If the crews are imbued with true spirit, steeped in the traditions of their service, and competently commanded, then even a small navy will be a formidable opponent. At the end of the nineteenth century the Dutch Navy had all these ingredients on board. The Navy had a long and proud tradition, going back to the time that it ruled the world seas in the sixteenth century, Holland’s golden age. It was well respected by the landlubbers, and its officers were held in high esteem by Dutch society. Nevertheless, something went wrong in the new century.

The fast technological developments at the end of the nineteenth century professionalised the work of the sailor. The consequence was that the sailors could no longer be recruited from the lowest social strata, but had to come from the labour class, with some formal schooling. All Dutch Navy personnel were full-time professionals, there was no conscription until after World War II. The Dutch Navy, at least in the nineteenth century, underpaid its personnel including the officers. It is therefore not surprising that at the end of the nineteenth century the first Sailor’s Trade Unions emerged to improve living conditions on board. The most important of these Unions became the Algemeene Bond voor Nederlandsche Marine-Matrozen (General Union of Dutch Navy Sailors). The traditional distance between the Officer’s Corps and the crew below deck had as a consequence many conflicts between the trade union representatives and these officers. This to the detriment of the KM, because the fast-growing social-democratic political movement adopted the Sailor’s Union. The Sailor’s Union attained a very high degree of organization: 92% of the sailors, 64% of the marines, and 40% of the firemen in 1912. This high degree of organisation made the actions of the Union very effective, to the annoyance of the commanding officers. Therefore, a conflict was in the making.

The Minister of the Navy, J.J. Rambonnet, challenged the trade union when he formally forbade all activities of the Sailor’s Union on Her Majesty’s Ships in February 1914. The lock-out resulted in a number of incidents, the most serious of which was in Surabaya in 1916, where members of the crew of the flagship of the Dutch East Indies squadron, DE ZEVEN PROVINCIEN, refused to obey orders. The Sailor’s Union in the NEI had been always traditionally more radical than the unions in the motherland, and when the communist H.J.F.M. Sneevliet went to the East Indies, the Board of the union radicalized

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2. Blom, op. cit., 72, 73.
even more to the left. A mutiny by the sailors of the German *Hochseeflotte* in their naval bases on 30 October 1918 was well publicised, and rumors circulated in Holland that the Sailor's Union would also attempt a grab for power in order to force an abdication of the Queen and the Government. On the basis of these unsubstantiated rumours, the Commander of the Den Helder Naval Base ordered loyal officers to remove critical elements of the propulsion units of the ships at the base on 14 November 1918, thereby immobilizing the fleet. The next day Army units even occupied the naval base and disarmed the sailors and the guns.

According to Bosscher, in those hectic days of November 1918 when an impending revolution failed, the trade unions of sailors, corporals and non-commissioned officers surely were not aiming at a revolutionary destruction of lawful authority. Their political coloration was social-democratic, not communist. But it is not certain, if higher Authority would have ordered the use of fleet personnel against revolutionary labourers, whether there would not have been massive disobeyance of orders. Anyway, the whole affair proved that the traditional pillar of lawful authority, the *Koninklijke Marine*, could no longer to be trusted by the bourgeois establishment. According to parliamentarian Van Embden: "the Navy is, in these critical days, more a danger to, than a support of our constitutional government" - a conclusion which was to harm the KM in the future.

The years after the First World War saw many improvements in the working conditions of the sailors. But salaries remained below standard; the strong incentives for a naval career being the relative young retirement age, the job security it offered, and the adventurous side of naval life. The trade unions were politically inspired by the Social-Democratic Party, and not by the Communists. The Dutch Social-Democratic Party (SDAP) however was extremely anti-militaristic between 1920 and 1930, and therefore the union members were still looked at with suspicion from above.

In February 1921, a certain degree of institutionalized consultation with the trade unions of sailors, corporals and non-commissioned officers (united in the "Cambo") had been realized. But the Navy leadership - again ay be because of the lack of a competent Naval Staff - never succeeded in clearly defining and communicating what it considered acceptable union behaviour and what behaviour would not be tolerated. Therefore, it left the commanding officers, specifically in the NEI, groping with their responsibilities in an area which they did not fully understood. The impression was given that local troubles with the unions should be solved locally, and not be reported to higher authorities. The result in the early thirties was lax discipline on board of some ships and in naval establishments. Moreover, because they were paid much less than Europeans, for economic reasons the percentage of Indonesian sailors had gradually increased over the years to
just above 50% of all sailors aboard the ships.\textsuperscript{1700} In combination with the lack of adequate and realistic training (because of reduced funds), and the demoralizing influence of being members of a shrinking organization without prospects for future growth, it is clear, in hindsight, that something would happen. The Invergordon Mutiny of Royal Navy personnel in September 1931 was a taste of things to come.

The inducement to a mutiny was the announcement by the Dutch Government of another reduction in salaries for officers and men serving in the NEI in January 1933.\textsuperscript{1701} On 30 January 1933 some 400 European seamen disobeyed orders at the Naval Base of Surabaya. On 3 February 1933 this was followed by disobedience by native personnel, also in Surabaya. The naval commander had to swallow his pride, and called in troops from the KNIL garrison in order to suppress the troubles. On 4 February 1933, a mutiny happened on board of the DE ZEVEN PROVINCIENT, then at anchor in Olehleher in North Sumatra.\textsuperscript{1702} The ship had a complement of 141 Europeans and 256 natives on board, of which 80 were young sailors from the native sailors' school in Macassar.\textsuperscript{1703} The mutineers raised steam and departed for Surabaya, with unclear objectives. They did not raise red flags, however, and still treated the captured officers with respect. The DE ZEVEN PROVINCIENT was the largest unit of the Dutch Naval Squadron in the NEI with the heaviest main armament, although it lacked anti-aircraft batteries. Therefore the ship was ultimately forced to surrender after a seaplane had thrown a 50-kg bomb which, on impact, killed 19 sailors and wounded 18. In the light of later experiences with air bombardments of ships it might have been a lucky hit, but in any case this hit ended the mutiny.\textsuperscript{1704}

The authorities redressed the situation with utmost speed. All the officers on board the ship were courtmartialed and sentenced. Of the 164 mutineers, all were sentenced to imprisonment and almost all dishonorably discharged. A commission was appointed to advise the Minister about measures to improve discipline. The Cambo disappeared from the scene. The screening procedures, especially with regard to native personnel, were improved. Because they earned far less than their European colleagues, more natives had been hired in the past few years, resulting in a higher percentage of native sailors on board the ships. Although no direct links could be established between the mutineers and the Nationalist organisations in the NEI, background screening of native sailors was introduced. The percentage of native sailors aboard ships was reduced from over 50% to around 30%. All this, but also the improvement in material conditions, the expansion of the Navy after 1936 and the growing threat in both Europe and the East resulted in an uplift in morale. The gradual conversion of the Social-Democratic Party to a more militant anti-fascist position resulting in the abandonment of pacifism surely assisted in this. The result was that in 1939, the Navy had overcome the humiliation of 1933, and in the trying years to come proved to be a dedicated and professional fighting force, representing the best of


\textsuperscript{1701} Blom, op. cit., 40.

\textsuperscript{1702} Blom, op. cit., 47 - 55.

\textsuperscript{1703} Blom, op. cit., 44.

\textsuperscript{1704} The mutiny has been exhaustively studied by two authors, Blom and Mollema. See J.C.H. Blom: \textit{De Muiterij op de Zeven Provinciën, reacties en gevolgen in Nederland}, Bussum 1975 (to be referred to subsequently as Blom) and J.C. Mollema: \textit{Rondom de muiterij op de Zeven Provinciën}, Haarlem, 1934.
what The Netherlands could offer to the cause of the Free World.\textsuperscript{1705}

A problem remained the fact that because of the lean years between 1925 and 1936, the proportion of young officers and of sailors was too low. It was partly improved after 1937, but the recruitment of new men could not fill the generation gap of those lost ten years. It caused Vice-Admiral H. Ferwerda, in his position of CZM, to comment that the quality of commanding officers was not what it should be, because of "a lack of training in strategy and tactics. They did not lack theoretical knowledge, but they lacked the capacity to apply theory to practice. Some lacked outright imagination to be able to do so."\textsuperscript{1706} In a Memorandum in June 1939 on Fleet reinforcement he even commented that many officers in the upper ranks were either less capable or even unfit for duty.\textsuperscript{1707} He was to be proven correct in this observation, as many Dutch flag officers were considered unfit to fulfill responsible positions within the Allied command structure in 1942.

As we have pointed out in sub-chapter 3.5.2., the Dutch Navy organisation lacked an intellectual foundation due to the weakness of the Naval Staff.\textsuperscript{1708} This had as a consequence that on subjects like strategic objectives and the fleet plans, there was no consensus between warring parties within the Navy. The Naval Staff could not act as an arbiter in these discussions, and therefore was not able to present a united front to the political parties and the public, due to its weakness. There was also a management problem in the Department, due to the lack of continuity in the more important positions within the Dutch Navy. The period between 1918 and 1939 saw 7 different Chiefs of Naval Staff.\textsuperscript{1709} With the exception of Furstner, who stayed longer as BDZ and therefore was indeed able to develop consistent fleet plans, this fast change of management jeopardized continuity and, according to the politicians, made the \textit{Koninklijke Marine} an organisation which lacked focus. But the politicians themselves have also something to explain, as in the same time span the function of Navy Minister or Minister of Defence changed hands no less than 20 times, spread over 15 different Navy Ministers! With an "average life time" of around a year not any Navy Minister could get a good grip on his Department. This too resulted in a weak political representation of the Navy in Parliament, and therefore on continuous paring of the Naval estimates from 1918 to 1935.

A sharp observer of the Dutch political landscape, the Dutch banker Heldring, remarked about the Battlecruiser Plan (See sub-chapter 4.2.7) in 1939: "I know...that since the reorganisations of our Navy, covering more than thirty years, ships have almost never been delivered which were not obsolete, defective or inefficient after completion. As long as there are no safeguards that this will not happen again, the amount of money allocated for building these ships has to be written off as an unwarranted expenditure."\textsuperscript{1710} A very damning observation indeed.

\textsuperscript{427} Hart, op. cit., 77.

\textsuperscript{1706} Letter Ferwerda to Defence Minister van Dijk, 29 November 1938. ARA Department of Colonies, V 10 March 1938, J-9.

\textsuperscript{1707} H. Ferwerda: Memorandum on Reinforcement of the Fleet, June 1939, in ARA Department of Colonies, 5 July 1939, X-25. See also Ph. Bosscher, op. cit. Vol. II, Chapter II, note 126, 443.

\textsuperscript{1708} G. Teitler gives an interesting graphical representation of the number of officers employed at the Naval Staff between 1905 and 1949. See L. Brouwer, op. cit. 84.

\textsuperscript{1709} L. Brouwer, op. cit., 128.

Nevertheless, even in 1939 the Navy was not a "learning organization". It remained a bureaucratic, strongly hierarchical and centralized organization, with much stress on theoretical knowledge, but not on team-building, necessary to ensure the highest fighting efficiency of the ship crews. The organization remained very closed, with up to 1938 no Naval attaché's, no study trips, no assignments of capable young officers to other Navies. A rather damning report about the state of the Dutch Navy was written by one of its future Flag Officers, then Lt. Cdr. J.F.W. Nuboer. He rightly points out that the forced frugality of decades had created a culture within the Navy, which emphasized conservatism over new construction, even when that was no longer cost-effective. This attitude in fact only disappeared after the Second World War.

3.5.3.8. Naval defence policies in the thirties.

The Defensie-Grondslagen had fixed the strength of the Navy in the Far East to 3 cruisers, 12 destroyers and 18 submarines, including the material reserve. As there were only 2 cruisers, 8 destroyers and 12 submarines present, the construction of 1 cruiser, 4 destroyers and 6 submarines was needed. The Minister of Defence, L.N. Deckers, therefore introduced, in 1930, the draft supplementary law to finance the construction of these ships. It was not a Fleet Law, but a Fleet Plan. Moreover, he proposed the construction of 2 flotilla-leaders, a new type of ship in between the destroyer and the light cruiser. It would not lead a flotilla of destroyers, like in other navies, but would be used for training of gun crews, and to show the flag. The armament of the third cruiser, which as the DE RUYTER became famous as Rear-Admiral Doorman's flagship in the Battle of the Java Sea, became subject to heated debates in the press and in Parliament. For financial reasons the Government opted for a smaller ship than the two existing ones, with a displacement of 5,250 tons and an armament of only six guns of 15 cm. (5.9"). Naval circles strongly pushed for a 8500 tons cruiser armed with 6 guns of 21 cm (8") guns, a Washington-cruiser or A-cruiser. Early in 1932 a compromise was struck: the cruiser would be a light cruiser of 6.500 tons with seven 15 cm guns. On 1 August 1932 the building of the ship was authorised. Again, financial constraints had determined the design of the ship; and not the enemy she had eventually to fight. The DE RUYTER was commissioned on 3 October 1936. The ship, with its German-inspired fighting mast and clean and beautiful lines, became the flagship of the NEI squadron.

The deepening economic crisis called for a re-evaluation of the expenses for Army and Navy. The new Minister of Colonial Affairs, H. Colijn, already had informed Governo-
General de Jonge a few days after his installation, that a firm defence was important, but "To survive without bankruptcy is the first priority, which dominates all the other priorities." He wanted the expenses of the NEI to be reduced to the level of 1913. The strong-willed de Jonge wanted to economise, but not to that level of expenditures. Therefore Colijn installed, on 1 September 1933, the Idenburg-Commission, which had as a goal a cut in operating expenses of the Navy of around 13 million guilders on a total operating budget of 45 million guilders. In its final Report, dated 6 January 1934, the Commission indeed suggested a number of cuts, and indicated that reducing the fleet to a submarine fleet would result in major savings. In order to further study the consequences of such a fleet reduction, which ran counter to the Defensiegrondslagen, another commission was installed, the Kan-Commission. This Commission was named after its chairman, retired Minister J.B. Kan.

This Commission had to evaluate the relative merits of bombers versus warships, and did not reach an unanimous conclusion. The Naval Members of the Commission, who were in the minority, all stated that the squadron strength as mentioned in the Defense Foundations plus the expansion foreseen in the Deckers Fleet Plan had to be maintained, in combination with a Naval Air component of 96 seaplanes (flying boats). The KNIL Members of the Commission wanted to swap the cruisers for 108 landbased strategic bombers. The Naval members explicitly warned that the building of airfields on the outlying islands would decrease the security of Java, because of the risks of enemy occupation. In effect, it was the old quarrel between KNIL and KM about the strategic role of each service. Due to this difference of opinion, the Report of the Commission Kan has never been officially published. Therefore, it did not have its intended effect of a further reduction of Defence Estimates, because at the end of 1935 it had become clear that the days of peace were over. Italy had annexed Abyssinia, and Germany was re-arming at an alarming speed. After the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, the Dutch Government proposed on 22 October 1935, the establishment of a Defence Fund. This was more or less equivalent to the proposed method of financing the DFL of 1914, because like the DFL proposal large expenses could be paid from such a fund and spread over a number of years. In March 1936 a Defence Fund of about 55 million guilders was established to increase short-term investments in defence preparations. About half of it was earmarked for naval expenses. This marked the end of a period of penury in defence expenses.

Although the recommendations of the Kan Commission had not been realised, it is interesting to note that there are Dutch historians like De Graaff who maintain that a submarine fleet supported by airplanes would have put on a better performance than the "harmonious fleet" of Decker's Fleet Plan. This is a very debatable position. Boer

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178 For its members, see Bosscher, op. cit., Vol. I, 90, note 45.

179 For its members see Bosscher, op. cit., Vol. I, 97, note 73.


182 Bob de Graaff, op. cit., 450.
has demolished the role of the Dutch bombers in the defence of the NEI. His book(s) have not been studied by de Graaff, which is a remarkable omission. Bosscher has rightly pointed out that the Dutch submarines, notwithstanding their initial successes, did not stop the Japanese invasion fleets. The cruisers of Doorman's Combined Striking Force did so, alas for just one day due to their inferiority in numbers.

Meanwhile, Deckers had been replaced by the Prime Minister himself as Defence Minister ad interim. In July 1936 the Spanish Civil War had brought war back to Europe. Mr. Colijn took his new responsibilities in stride, conferring in deep secrecy with the British Government (See pages 206 - 209). Colijn decided that the KNIL Members of the Kan Commission had a point, because in December 1936 he asked for a suppleatory budget for 39 Glenn Martin bombers. Parliament consented - the days of disarmament were really over. According to Bosscher, Parliament was now willing to invest considerable amounts of money in defence, but the Defence Department was still reluctant to come up with growth plans for the two services, Navy, and Army, and their air components. According to one Parliamentarian the Dutch Parliament had approved all Defense estimates since the DFL of 1923, and he was right. The opportunity offered by this more realistic attitude by the Dutch Parliament after 1936 was not acted upon by the Navy Staff - again because of its small size.

In the Fleet Plan of 1930, it had been announced that the two cruisers JAVA and SUMA-TRA had to be replaced in 1945 and 1946 respectively. Therefore, funds for the construction of two replacement cruisers were requested in the financial estimate for 1937. On 26 February 1937 the Upper House of Parliament voted the initial funds for the construction of the first of the replacing cruisers in the 1938 Naval Estimates. The following year's voting for the second cruiser went rather smoothly in Parliament, without the acrimonious debates of the past. The new light cruisers were rather powerful ships of 8,350 tons with ten guns of 5.9" (15 cm.) in two triple and two twin turrets. When the Germans invaded Holland, both ships were still unseaworthy hulls on the slips at Rotterdam wharves.

It was clear to everybody, however, that the Defense Foundations of 1927 did no longer reflected reality in the Far East. But what had to come in its place? The warships of the NEI squadron were clearly not up to their task. Even the new G.G., Tjarda van Starkenborgh Stachouwer, admitted the situation as such when he wrote on 22 January 1938 to H. Colijn as Minister of Colonial Affairs: "It is clear that of our fleet, which we nominally have, a lot is lacking." The CZM at that time, Vice-Admiral H. Ferwerda, clearly preferred a gradual build-up of the squadron in the East Indies to a "balanced fleet" of 6 heavy and light cruisers, 24 destroyers and 24 submarines. He came to this recommendation on the basis of the lack of personnel and the limited training resources available.


1725 Mr. Th. F. M. Schapman of the Catholic Party, HTK 7 December 1939, 733.


in both the Netherlands and the NEI to expand the fleet quickly. However, things were moving fast, and his sensible advice fell on deaf ears in the Netherlands and the NEI general public due to factors outside his control.

3.5.3.9. Dutch strategic and tactical planning in the thirties.

The development of naval strategy in the Netherlands has been more or less the work of one man: Vice-Admiral J. Th. Furstner. Furstner’s qualities had been recognized early because of his intelligence and organizational capabilities. Therefore he was allowed to attend the course at the Ecole Navale de Guerre in Paris in 1928, the more prestigious equivalent of the Dutch Naval Staff College, as the first (and only) Dutch naval officer. He became influenced by the teachings of Rear-Admiral Raoul Victor Castex (1878 - 1968). Castex had adapted Mahan’s strategic thinking to the French situation of a fleet which was inferior to its prospective enemy (the British), and therefore had to use the weapons of the weak: submarines, light surface forces and airplanes. This of course was also the situation of the Koninklijke Marine versus the Japanese Imperial Navy. One of the central concepts of Castex, that of a balanced fleet, was introduced by Furstner during his years as Director of the Dutch Naval War College in the Hague, 1930 - 1936. As Chief of the Naval Staff after 1936, Furstner strengthened the naval staff considerably and used it to implement his ideas on an operational level, and to sell his ideas to Parliamentarians.

Thinking about the real requirements of NEI defence however remained sketchy until 1938, not least because of the severe parliamentary financial constraints. It is interesting to note that only after the mobilization of the Netherlands on 1 September 1939, costing about 1.7 million guilders a day, thinking about defence was at last freed from its financial shackles, and put in the broader context of state security. It was therefore only after this mobilization that Furstner was able to present his strategic ideas to the Navy, who had these ideas discussed in Dutch Parliament on 7 - 8 December 1939.

Dutch Parliamentarian M.J.M. van Poll argued that the Dutch empire could be best compared with the French empire in terms of wealth and number of inhabitants, only with the important difference that the most important French colonies were relatively close to the motherland, and the Dutch colony in the Far East was decidedly not. In line with the size of the French navy, a Dutch imperial fleet was needed of 4 to 5 battlecruisers, 6 to 7 heavy cruisers, 12 to 15 light cruisers, and around 60 destroyers and about 80 submarines. This would also be more in balance with the position of the Dutch merchant navy at seventh place in the world. Unlike the American, British and Japanese navies, the Dutch did not need to have the capability to fight for the supremacy of the high seas, and in that respect Dutch fleet requirements were more akin to those for the French and Italian navies. In order to finance and equip such a sizably balanced fleet however, the resources of the NEI, including its human resources, should be used to their full potential, requiring a new constitution and an enhanced role of a more autonomous NEI in an imperial framework. Van Poll presented Furstner’s ideas forcefully, and compared to only a few years ago met with general, albeit cautious, approval.


1730 HTK, 7 December 1939, 727.

1731 HTK, 7 December 1939, 743 ff.
One of the more interesting developments in strategic thinking within the Koninklijke Marine was the re-discovery of the Dutch Merchant Navy as an asset worth protecting. In the preceding years of the "fiscal navy", the main task of the navy had been defined as the defence of the NEI, with scant concern for the lines of communications to the motherland. All that changed after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and the need for convoy protection in the Street of Gibraltar. The growing menace of the resurgent Kriegsmarine added urgency to this neglected aspect of maritime power. The seventh largest merchant fleet in the world was the Dutch merchant marine and surely it was an important asset. After the loss of the NEI, it was in fact the only asset which the Dutch government could offer its allies.

Strategic thinking has to be cast in tactical doctrines in order to be operationally usable. Again, it was Furstner who was instrumental in developing these doctrines after 1935. Its most important elements were:

- Very close co-operation between ships (including submarines) and airplanes. The airplane in the MLD was primarily for air reconnaissance, although the Dornier Flying Boats also carried anti-shipping bombs. This co-operation was perfected in such a way that the Dorniers were able to direct submarines towards the enemy. Alas, in the MLD the torpedo plane was neglected, and the potential of the dive-bomber not recognized until it was too late.

- Strong emphasis on night operations. In this respect the Koninklijke Marine was unique in Western Navies, and only the Japanese Navy pursued night fighting with equal zeal. The cruisers and destroyers of the NEI squadron were trained in this kind of action, using their relatively superior searchlight technology and an extensive knowledge of the waters of the archipelago. Submarine crews too were trained in night attacks. Admiral Doorman therefore took his cruisers, without hesitation, into night action during the Battle of the Java Sea. A weakness existed however with respect to concentrated torpedo launchings by the destroyers during night actions.

- Together with the French Navy, the Koninklijke Marine was the only navy which developed flotilla-leaders: ships between the destroyer and the light cruiser. The TROMP was a very successful example of this ship category, with relatively heavy artillery and torpedo armament combined with high speed. The other leader, the JACOB VAN MEEMSKERK, was converted to an anti-aircraft cruiser in England in 1940.

- The use of the submarine to attack the enemy (invasion) fleet, not his lines of communications. The Dutch developed and practiced "wolfpack"-tactics even before the Germans,

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175 In November 1940, an allowance was made to buy 12 dive bombers and 12 torpedo planes, which did not arrive in time. L. Brouwer, op. cit., 139.

operating with two to four submarines.\textsuperscript{1737} Wireless communication between the subs was therefore perfected.\textsuperscript{1736} The Dutch were the inventors of the submarine air intake pipe, which enabled submarines to use their diesel engines even submerged. They also perfected the launching of submarine torpedoes without bubble traces.

- Tactically the submarines perfected stealth operations in coastal waters, making it possible to approach enemy landing fleets very close to the coastline, making detection by the enemy much harder. Against the Japanese invasion beaches in Malaya and British Northern Borneo, these tactics bore fruit early in the war. American and British subs in contrast were not allowed at all to get that close to their targets.

- Awareness of the dangers of air attacks. The modern units of the Dutch squadron were all armed with the stabilized double-barreled 40 mm anti-aircraft Bofors machinegun with integral firecontrol, which made these ships redoubtable adversaries against low-flying planes. The American Navy even copied the Hazemeijer-NSF Fire control arrangement on board the gunboat VAN KINSBERGEN after the ship gave a demonstration of its capabilities in the West Indies in 1940.\textsuperscript{1738}

All in all, when war broke out, the Koninklijke Marine was a small, but well-trained and highly professional and relatively modern navy, albeit quantitatively far understrength in relation to her enormous responsibilities. The turnaround from the demoralised Navy of the early thirties was primarily the work of Admirals Ferwerda and Helfrich in the NEI and of Furstner as Chief of Staff and later on as BDZ in the Netherlands.

\subsection*{3.4.3.10. The Battlecruiser Plan.}

The Munich crisis was an eye-opener in both The Netherlands and the NEI. It illustrated the weakness and vacillation of the two major Western Powers, and public opinion realized with a shock that there would be no protective umbrella from that side, neither in Western Europe, nor in the Far East. The Dutch, with all their wealth and a rich colony in the Far East, were dependent for their safety on the British tax-payer, who paid more than hundred guilders a year for his defence forces in 1939, while the Dutch tax-payer was being taxed only 27 guilders for his defence.\textsuperscript{1740}

In the NEI, immediately after Munich the Dutch Press started clamoring for a battlefleet to protect the colony.\textsuperscript{1741} The Press in The Netherlands more or less adopted the same

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{1737} See H.O. Bussemaker: \textit{Goede Tactieken en Slechte Leiding}. Unpublished manuscript June 2000, 2 - 10.


\textsuperscript{1739} Bosscher, op. cit., Vol. I, 342.


\textsuperscript{1741} See the article "De Stem van Indië" in the Semarang daily newspaper \textit{De Locomotief} of 14 November 1938.
\end{flushright}
In the view of the editors, the Dutch colony had to stand up alone to Japanese naval power, and the only way to at least contain that power was a classic Risk Strategy: the possession of a fleet powerful enough to act as a deterrent to the Japanese fleet, because that fleet also had to contain the US fleet in the Pacific. And for that purpose, battleships were needed, estimated between one as a minimum to 3 or 4 to have a believable deterrent force. Japan was unable to send its full battleship fleet of 9 battleships to the NEI, because that would open Japan proper to the US Pacific Fleet lurking on the Japanese lines of communications at Pearl Harbor.

This press campaign started to influence parliament. Specifically the association Onze Vloot ("Our Fleet") with 7,000 members was a powerful lobbying force, pointing out that The Netherlands could easily pay for a drastic Fleet expansion by issuing a Fleet Loan of f 250 million. A few parliamentarians questioned Defence Minister van Dijk about this. Van Dijk however refused to consider battleships, keeping in mind the average cost of a new battleship as between 60 and 70 million guilders. He agreed with the Minister of the Colonies, Chr. Welter, who preferred Ferwerda's plan for a balanced fleet of cruisers, destroyers and submarines.

In December 1938, three officers of the Naval Staff discussed the changed maritime situation. All three - the Lieutenant-Commanders Nuboer, Bussemaker and Van Waning - had previously published articles about defence strategy in the Far East. Bussemaker specifically was worried about the vulnerability of the airfields being built in the outer islands in case they fell in enemy hands. But there was more. It was clear from the experiences in the Straits of Gibraltar that the Dutch Merchant Fleet needed escorting forces. Moreover, in the Far East the three officers evaluated the possibility of the stationing of a British Battlefleet at Singapore, and judged this possibility to be close to zero. The consequence was that the Dutch Navy in the NEI had to fight alone for longer than was foreseen in the defence foundations. Therefore, it was recommended to have three battlecruisers in the NEI in order to execute a more credible deterrence strategy vis-à-vis Japan. That potential enemy was kept busy in China, and therefore it was assumed that there was still time to build the battlecruisers. The approach taken by the naval officers was original in the sense, that they did not go for battleships, but for battlecruisers: fast, heavily armoured ships with smaller calibre guns than the 14", 15" or 16" guns of conventional battleships.

The results of the discussion were brought to the attention of the Chief of Naval Staff, who

1743 See Ke sing's Historisch Archief, 22 Juni 1938, 3345.
1744 Teitler, "Slagkruisers", 16.
acted with commendable speed.\textsuperscript{1747} A "Technical Commission" was instituted to define the specifications for these battlecruisers, for which the new German battlecruiser GNEISENAU was used as a model. On 18 February 1939 Defence Minister J.J.C. van Dijk authorized the Naval Staff to work out designs for such battlecruisers, on the basis of the Naval Staff requirements defined on 17 February 1939.\textsuperscript{1748} In March 1939 the Minister of Defence informed the Cabinet about the new plans of the Naval Staff.\textsuperscript{1749} In this letter the same strategic reasoning is to be found as already developed by the three aforementioned staff officers. The Technical Commission released its (secret) report on the naval defence of the NEI on 31 March 1939\textsuperscript{1750}. At a subsequent meeting of the Technical Commission on 10 July 1939 the Chief of Naval Staff (Furstner) postulated, that in case of a Japanese attack, the Dutch Navy would have to fight the Japanese for a considerable period without immediate help forthcoming.\textsuperscript{1751} Therefore, it was already clear to the Dutch Naval Staff that there would be no British Main Fleet to Singapore.

After being informed by the Minister of Defence, the Prime Minister (H. Colijn) agreed in principle with the plan. He wrote to the G.G. on 21 April 1939 that the construction of 3 battleships would "increase the chance of a successful defence of the NEI manyfold".\textsuperscript{1752} But he was realistic enough to doubt whether the ships would arrive in time, writing in the same letter: "What is worrying me constantly is, when the decision in the Far East will take place. Do we still have the time for 6 or more years? For this is the number of years before we have the ships in NEI waters, even if we start construction today". This state of mind might have been the reason for Colijn's demarche to the British Minister about the possibility of an outright purchase of 3 British battleships in April 1939. (See Chapter 2, page 227).

As the Dutch warship designers were 25 years out of date with capital ship building, the Naval Staff intensified contacts with both the French and the German Naval Staff, in the hope of obtaining design drawings from the French DUNKERQUE Class Battleships, and/or the German GNEISENAU Battlecruiser. The Germans were more helpful than the French, and German Rear-Admiral K. Bartenbach was appointed as liaison officer to the Dutch Naval Staff on 25 April 1939.\textsuperscript{1753} Germany would also supply some important materials and systems for the construction of the three ships, which would be built on Dutch wharves. In exchange for those systems and materials, Holland would deliver agricultural products to Germany, which would boost incomes within the important agrarian sector of the Dutch economy.

The Germans however proved to be reluctant informers on their own ships. The reason

\textsuperscript{1747} Algemeen Memorandum Marinestaf, 22/20, 17 Februari 1939.

\textsuperscript{1748} These requirements can be found in J.S. Noot: "Battlecruiser design studies for the Royal Netherlands Navy 1939 - 1940" Warship International, Vol. 17 (1980), no 3, 243, 245.

\textsuperscript{1749} Letter van Dijk to Cabinet, 31 March 1939. ARA MVK 1939 M 37/247.

\textsuperscript{1750} Report in ARA MvK, secret Archives 1938, accession nr. 2.10.36.051, inv. nr. 5629, file M-37.

\textsuperscript{1751} ARA, Marine, Commandement Maritieme Middelen Willemsoord, no 252.


\textsuperscript{1753} Letter Vice-Adm. Vos to Minister of Defence, 9 December 1939, ARA DVK 1939 M 37/247.
was that they had cheated the naval world community on nominal displacement of their battlecruisers, which were not 26.000 tons standard, but closer to 32.000 tons. Instead, they handed over a detailed design study with various possible schemes of protection on 21 August 1939.\footnote{See J.S. Noot, op. cit., 249 - 257. Included are detailed design drawings.} Moreover, they tried to convince the Dutch that they should adopt the very high-pressure steam boilers operating at 44 atmosphere, then in use with the German heavy units. Therefore, in early 1940 a Dutch technical commission was sent to Italy, where they visited Italian wharves where the battleships of the LITTORIO-Class were under construction. The commission was even allowed to inspect the almost completed battleship VITTORIO VENETO.\footnote{L.L. von Münchinger: "Slagkruisers voor Nederlands Indië 1939" Het Marineblad, Vol. 76 (1966), 131.} The Italians proved to be very cooperative and well-informed, also about German naval construction, and they provided the Dutch with more inside information about German building practices than was ever received from the Germans themselves.\footnote{Ibid., 132.} The conclusion of the commission was that the Dutch designs had to be completely reworked. The third and final design of 10 April 1940 was therefore a markedly improved design, with far more consideration of the effects of air attacks on the ships.

In Batavia, the CZM, Admiral H. Ferwerda, was rather surprised by this volte-face in far-off The Hague. In a memorandum to the Cabinet\footnote{Memorandum Vice-Adm. H. Ferwerda, June 1939. Private Papers Vice-Adm. J.J.L. Willinge, AMH. This is the same Memorandum as has been referred to in note xxx, and which can be found at ARA, Archives Dept. of Colonies.}, he pointed out the enormous personnel consequences of the Battlecruiser Plan, but he also delivered a fundamental critique against a squadron which in his view was unbalanced. Ferwerda preferred a squadron of 6 modern heavy cruisers of the German ADMIRAL HIPPER-Class, 24 destroyers and 32 submarines, in addition to the 3 light cruisers already in service. In effect, on his insistence the Minister of Defence ordered the Naval Staff in December 1939 to prepare a design study for a 16.000 ton heavy cruiser with 9 guns of 24 cm.\footnote{Results of this study in J.S. Noot, op. cit., 259, 263.} Again we notice here the division in maritime circles about the strategy to be pursued and the means for executing that strategy,\footnote{See for the Furstner-Ferwerda controversy G. Teitler "Slagkruisers", 25 - 34.} which had hobbled Dutch Naval Defence Policy for the first four decades of this century. The only difference was now that the discussion was between the Dutch Naval Staff in Holland and its counterpart in the NEI. This difference of opinion was even discussed in Parliament.\footnote{HTK, 6 December 1939, 699.} Also in the Dutch periodical Het Marineblad, which was widely read in naval circles, arguments flew, but most authors were in favor of the Battlecruiser Plan.\footnote{Schoonoord, op. cit., 149.} To understand the reasoning behind the Battlecruiser Plan, we have to go back to the risk assessment undertaken by the Naval Staff by order of Furstner. Because battleships were out of the question with the Cabinet, the idea of wrestling control of the sea from the
Japanese, which was so prominent in the State Commission of 1912, was abandoned. Instead, it was argued by the Naval Staff that fast battlecruisers could be used to threaten the Japanese communication lines. Fursten's reasoning was pure Risk Strategy. According to him, the present squadron in the NEI offered a preventive security of 40%. To avoid occupation of the NEI by the Japanese, safety had to be acquired from outside. Two new light cruisers would increase the safety margin only to 45%, four of these ships to 50%. Two battlecruisers would increase the safety margin to 80%, four battlecruisers even to 96%. Only battlecruisers would overpower the large number of heavy and light cruisers which the Japanese Navy possessed, and by having the battlecruisers, the Japanese had to employ their battleships as a covering force.1762

The Dutch battlecruisers would be patterned after the German battlecruiser GNEISENAU, but the ships would not be identical. The final design of 10 April 1940 shows a battlecruiser which did not so much resemble the GNEISENAU as it resembled the German O, P and Q battlecruiser designs of 1939.1763 The final design was for a battlecruiser of 28,400 tons design displacement and a full displacement of 31,300 tons with a maximum draught of 7.8 meters. Main armament would be 9 German Krupp 28 cm (11") guns in 3 turrets (2 forward, one aft). These guns had a maximum range of 42,600 meters at 45 degree elevation, and a shell weight of 315 kilograms. Firing rate was about 2.5 rounds a minute. Secondary armament would consist of 12 Bofors 12 cm stabilised semi-automatic dual purpose guns with a rate of fire of 12 rounds/minute and a range at 30 degrees of 19,000 meter with Hazemeijer/NSF fire control. Furthermore 14 stabilised Bofors double-barreled 40 mm anti-aircraft machineguns with a rate of fire of 90 rounds per minute, and 8 - 20 mm anti-aircraft machineguns were planned. The GNEISENAU in comparison carried a secondary battery of 12 - 15 cm (6") guns, 14 - 105 mm (4.1") anti-aircraft guns and 16 - 37 mm anti-aircraft guns.1764

The reason that the secondary battery of the Dutch design was lighter than the German one was to increase speed.1765 The Dutch design was for a maximum speed of 34 knots with 4 screws and a 180,000 shp power plant based on 8 Werkspoor oil-fired boilers and 4 turbines. The range was 4500 miles at 20 knots, indicating that the battlecruisers were not expected to operate against Japanese shipping deep in the Pacific Ocean. The Archipelago and adjoining seas would be their theatre of operations. The GNEISENAU in comparison had 3 steam turbines with 12 Wagner extra-high pressure oilfired boilers with an output of 160,000 shp driving 3 screws with a maximum speed of 31 knots. The range of the GNEISENAU therefore was 10,000 miles at 17 knots, enabling it to make deep penetration raids in the Atlantic Ocean.

Like the GNEISENAU, the Dutch battlecruisers would be heavily armoured. The armoured bulkheads would have 300 mm armour, side armour would be between 100 and 225 mm,

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1764 All data on Dutch designs from Breyer, op. cit., pages 454 - 456. All data about GNEISENAU from pages 295 - 299. Also Report of Technical Commission, 31 March 1939, AR A MvK 1938, as quoted above.

deck armour 100 mm, torpedo bulkhead armour 40 mm, barbettes 250 mm, turrets 250/100/130 mm. Armour would be 36% of the total weight of the ships, as compared to 40.2% with GNEISENAU, which had heavier armour in the secondary gun turrets and the ship bridge and conning tower.\[176\]

Without doubt, the Dutch battlecruisers would have proven to have the same staying power in battle as the German battlecruisers and battleships did during their career, making them formidable opponents. It has to be remembered that 4 German capital ships tied down more than half the British battlefleet during the war, even with the British having air dominance. It could be argued, as Bosscher\[177\] has done, that in the same way the Japanese would have had real troubles in containing these ships, even with the assistance of their superior naval airforce, which was far better than the British had in Western Europe. It has been argued that the Japanese naval airforces sunk the PRINCE OF WALES and the REPULSE without much trouble, and that the same fate would have fallen on the Dutch battlecruisers. But the anti-aircraft firecontrol on the British capital ships was notoriously inferior (See page \[180\]). The Dutch battlecruisers would have carried a heavier anti-aircraft armament and they would have had better fire control, and as was proven during the battle of Santa Cruz on 26 October 1942, a modern battleship could handle intensive air attacks. The new battleship USS SOUTH DAKOTA shot down 26 Japanese attacking planes in thirty minutes during that engagement. Also the experience of the Allied Combined Striking Force, which in February 1942 lost just one ship notwithstanding continuous daily Japanese air attacks illustrates that air power in itself does not need to be decisive.

The natural adversaries of the Dutch battlecruisers would have been the 4 Japanese KONGO-Class 35.000 tons fast battleships,\[178\] which were inferior in speed (max. 30 knots) and armour (only 28% of total weight), but superior in firepower with 8 guns of 35.6 cm (14”). Their better armour protection and speed would have given the Dutch battlecruisers the upper edge in a one-to-one engagement, however. Therefore, to be sure to protect their invasion convoys sufficiently, the Japanese would have to revert to employing a large part of their battlefleet, as the British did against their German adversaries.

The Technical Commission chaired by Furstner also discussed the problem of auxiliary ships for the battlesquadron. Based on 1 battlecruiser being available in The Netherlands for training purposes, the Dutch Fleet in the NEI would consist of 2 battlecruisers, 2 B-cruisers of 8.300 tons (which had just been approved by Parliament), 2 flotilla leaders (almost completed), 12 destroyers (8 present, 4 being built), 18 submarines (all available), 20 MTB's and 96 large seaplanes. The DE RUYTER and the JAVA and SUMATRA would be used in Home waters for training purposes.\[179\] This has to be compared with Ferwerda's plan for 6 A- or B-cruisers, 24 destroyers and 32 submarines.

Both plans were commented upon by the NEI Government. Ferwerda as CZM remained


\[178\] All data about KONGO-Class from S. Breyer, op. cit., 333 - 341.

opposed to the battlecruiser plan, to the annoyance of Furstner, who tried to convince him with the argument that "with battlecruisers in the Dutch Navy any attempt of the KNIL to usurp power is nipped in the bud". Ferwerda did not take the bait, however. As an additional argument Ferwerda used the information he had obtained in October 1939 from a British Intelligence Officer that Japan had started the construction of two 30,000 ton battlecruisers with 30 cm guns.

The KNIL (not surprisingly) and the Dutch Council of the NEI also had reservations about the Battlecruiser Plan. The final advice of the Governor-General therefore was an endorsement of the Battlecruiser Plan with a number of qualifying remarks and suggestions and a statement, that the NEI were not able to bear the exploitation costs of such a battle squadron. Another objection of the G.G. is illuminating. He observed that the battlecruisers would not only impress the Japanese, but also the British, because he still did not rule out a British attempt to take over the NEI. One of the cautious proponents of the battlecruiser plan within the KNIL however was an officer of the General Staff, the later Commander-in-Chief of the KNIL Captain S.H. Spoor. His argument was that the possession of the battlecruisers would only increase the importance of the army defence of the Surabaya naval base. Therefore he pleaded for a harmonious re-armament of both Navy and Army.

The results of the Battle of the River Plate, in which the German pocket battleship ADMIRAL GRAF VON SPEE was chased into a neutral harbour by one heavy and two light cruisers on the British side, reinforced the case for Ferwerda, and at least made the Minister of Colonial Affairs, Chr. Welter, very reluctant to endorse the Battlecruisers. But on 5 February 1940 the Cabinet overruled Welter and the G.G. and decided in principle for the Battlecruisers. It resulted in a Concept Fleet Law which, with a Memorandum of Explanation was discussed in the People's Council in Batavia, and accepted on 29 April 1940. The German invasion on 10 May 1940 halted all further progress, however. It is clear however from the previous discussions in Parliament in December 1939, that the battlecruisers would have been approved, although a number of Parliamentarians already criticized the lobbying efforts in the Press by the Naval department. It is also clear, that many Parliamentarians realized that the ships would not be available in time. In the 1st Chamber in March 1940 a few Senators lamented the lack of speed of the government

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1770 Letter Furstner to Ferwerda, 26 April 1939, Collection Ferwerda Paperes, AMH The Hague.
1771 Teitler: "Slagkruisers", op. cit., 43, note 64.
1773 Letter G.G. to Minister of Colonies, 14 November 1939, ARA, Archives Dept. of Colonies, V, 1 December 1939, K-51.
1774 S.H. Spoor: "De verdediging van Nederlandsch-Indië in het licht van het slagkruiserplan" IMT, 71:5 (1940), 487 ff.
1775 G. Teitler, "Slagkruisers", op. cit., 55.
in preparing the new Draft Fleet Law.\textsuperscript{177}

Teitler has pointed out, that even after the loss of The Netherlands, the Government in exile in London laboured on an expansion of the fleet. In the Autumn of 1940 a Fleet Plan was adopted, in which 3 battlecruisers were accompanied by 2 aircraft carriers and 2 heavy cruisers, 24 destroyers and 32 submarines. Moreover, the Naval Airforce would be equipped with dive bombers and torpedo planes, which had already been ordered. It was a synthesis of Ferwerda's plans and those of the Technical Commission.\textsuperscript{178} This Fleet Plan would exercise a strong influence on Dutch Naval policy after the Second World War.

What if the Dutch Navy had those three battlecruisers available in 1941? "What if"-questions are not popular with historians because of their speculative nature. Again Teitler has explored this question in depth, concluding that those ships would not have stopped Japanese aggression, but would have resulted in a far more important role of the Dutch in the Allied strategy.\textsuperscript{179} In all possibility Java would have been saved from invasion and occupation, with the bloody sea- and airbattles of the Solomons Islands being fought instead around and between Borneo and Sumatra. Today we know that the Fall of Singapore and the invasion of Java were shoestring operations at the limits of Japanese power. The presence of three battlecruisers in combination with the British Eastern Fleet would have required a far more elaborate Japanese planning. Teitler\textsuperscript{179} acknowledges that the Dutch battlecruisers would have stood a far better chance to victory in a confrontation with the Japanese naval air units due to better co-operation between Dutch Navy and MLD, and superior fire control and anti-aircraft weapons. Thus the Japanese timetable might have been upset, and the British and American planes and the Australian Divisions which were being rushed to Java might have arrived in time to make a Japanese invasion illusory.

In my opinion however it was politically impossible that Parliament would have voted for 2, let alone 3 battleships in the timeframe of 1932 - 1934, because the latent Japanese threat towards the NEI had not yet materialized at that time, and the Depression caused lack of funds for re-armament. Even Great Britain and the United States did not start to build new battleships till after 1935. However, a really missed chance in my opinion was the dropping of the draft Fleet Law in 1914, based on the recommendations of the State Commission of 1912. If building the 4 battleships outside the Netherlands had proceeded, even as haphazard as the building of the JAVA and SUMATRA on Dutch wharves, the Dutch Navy would have had warships, which like the Japanese KONGO's could have been completely modernized in the 1935 - 1939 timeframe, and would have posed grave risks for the Japanese Navy. Therefore, the NEI were lost not in the decade before Pearl Harbor, but in the 1910 - 1914 timeframe.

Before concluding this sub-chapter, something should be said about the deployment of Dutch warships over the theatres of war. The BDZ, Furstner, was a strong proponent of full

\textsuperscript{177} Mr.A.G.A. Ridder van Rappard, mr.H.M.J. Blomjous, HEK, 6 March 1940, 342.

\textsuperscript{178} G. Teitler, "Slagkruisers", 65.

\textsuperscript{179} G. Teitler, "Slagkruisers", 71 - 74.

\textsuperscript{180} G. Teitler, op. cit. 72
cooperation with the Royal Navy. Grudgingly the Dutch Cabinet agreed with his proposal to keep the ships which escaped from Holland in May 1940, in the war against the Germans (and Italians), which had as a consequence that they were not sent to the NEI. To a certain extent, this made sense for the new anti-aircraft cruiser JACOB VAN HEEMSKEK, but far less so for the modern, large destroyers ISAAC SWEERS and TJERK HIDDENZ and a number of submarines. Eventually, these ships were sent east, but they arrived too late. One imagines that after the loss of the aircraft carrier INDOMITABLE which had been planned as an escort for the two English capital ships, the JACOB VAN HEEMSKEK with its new and impressive anti-aircraft guns could have accompanied the two British capital ships to Singapore. It even might have been the case that the anti-aircraft cruiser would have saved the two capital ships from their eventual ignominious end at the hand of the Japanese torpedo-bombers. In the archives no documents could be found about any discussions between the Dutch and British naval staffs on the employment of that ship for this purpose.

It is now also known that Furstner and his naval staff went so far as to develop plans to use the Dutch squadron in the NEI for chasing German raiders in the Indian Ocean. The CZM would no longer report to the G.G., and be placed under the direct command of the C-in-C East Indies Station at Colombo, or under direct command of the BDZ. This move would have disastrously weakened the fleet strength in the NEI, which was already found wanting. In that light it is clear that Furstner with all his considerable abilities did not have all his priorities right.

The result was that due to the conflict between the Dutch Admiralty and the NEI Administration, the squadron in the NEI did not possess some additional modern ships which could have been of importance in the coming battles. In essence the Dutch squadron in the NEI had to fight the Japanese with 4 light cruisers, 7 destroyers and 15 submarines. Although some submarines were obsolete, most ships were reasonably modern and their crews well-trained and motivated. Nevertheless, Japanese superiority in number of ships proved insurmountable, and in the ensuing battles the Dutch fleet would be almost completely annihilated. The men however fought with valour, earning the respect and admiration of the free world.

3.5.3.11. Conclusions.

Looking back over fifty years (1892 - 1942) of Dutch naval policy, it is strikingly clear at this distance in time that something went wrong during that period. The recommendations of the Kromhout Commission of 1892 were put into action in due time, and resulted in a powerful coast defence navy in the NEI around 1900, built around coast defence battleships, the "Strijders". However, the Fisher revolution made these ships obsolete, and the Japanese challenge forced the issue of finding new answers. Those answers came, but they were inconsistent, contradictory and uncoordinated in time and contents, causing confusion with the decisionmakers in Parliament, and therefore - by lack of an unifying maritime vision - resulting in a distinct lack of political support, and therefore of financial means.

Therefore, it has to be concluded that the lack of leadership within the Navy itself at the

1781 Bosscher, op. cit. I, 346.
1782 Bosscher, op. cit. II, 95, note 321.
end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century was one of the main factors in the defeat of 1942. No adequate Naval Staff existed up to 1936, which could have lightened the workload of the Navy department leadership, and could have prepared consistent plans and scenarios, analysing technological developments and therefore presenting a united front to the outside world. There was no organisation to coordinate reports from naval attachés, who in any case were not appointed until 1936. The fact that the Dutch Navy was not drawn into the First World War, made it in effect a nineteenth-century organisation up to 1940. In contrast to the other allied navies, the Koninklijke Marine did not learn how to put in place an effective naval organisation after that war.

A factor which has often been overlooked, is the high turnover among Ministers of the Navy (17 Ministers in the time period 1891 - 1919\(^\text{176}\)). This high turnover compounded the problems resulting from a Naval Staff which was too small to offer effective technical guidance to the Navy Ministers.

Another important factor was the lack of a proper industrial base. Until 1916 the Dutch did not possess steel works of their own, and therefore had to import steel for shipbuilding. The same applied to gun manufacturing, specifically heavy guns. Other navies overcame the same limitations by working closely with foreign shipyards, but Dutch pride made this impossible to consider. Therefore, more than in other navies, there was a strong tendency to search for solutions for strategic problems which could be realised with the constrained Dutch wharves, but which were considered unwise in other navies, like a submarine fleet only, for example.

This lack of focus can be illustrated by comparing the recommendations of the interservice commissions, which were brought into being to advise on defense scenarios for the NEI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Commission</th>
<th>Main Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Kromhout-Commission</td>
<td>Coastal Defence battleships for the defence of Java. (&quot;Strijders&quot;).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Rooseboom-Commission</td>
<td>Light torpedo-fleet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Heemskerk-Commission</td>
<td>Seagoing Battlefleet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Gooszns-Commission</td>
<td>Balanced fleet of cruisers and destroyers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Idenburg-Commission</td>
<td>Submarine Fleet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Kan-Commission</td>
<td>Submarine Fleet plus bombers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Naval Staff HQ (Furstner)</td>
<td>Battlecruiser fleet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Naval Staff Batavia (Ferwerda)</td>
<td>Heavy Cruiser balanced fleet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{176}\) Teitler, "Anatomie", op. cit. 407 - 408.
From this list it will be clear that the proposed naval forces swung between extremes: very light forces on one hand, consisting of submarines and light torpedo ships on one hand (Roosbeoom, Idenburg, Kan), and a heavy artillery fleet on the other hand (Kromhout, Heemskerk, Furstner), with in-between the positions of Gooszen and Ferwerda for a "harmonious" balanced fleet of cruisers, destroyers, submarines and planes. Moreover, in the thirties a murderous paper war was going on between proponents of an airforce (KNIL General Staff, and some naval experts) and those of artillery ships. The lack of intelligence about developments in other navies, reinforced by a too small naval staff all resulted in a confused picture to the outside world of a Navy department which was unsure about the course to be followed, and did not put its act together, thereby giving the politicians a good excuse to keep the purses closed until the experts could come to an agreement.

Morale had been a problem in the Koninklijke Marine since the 19th century and the emergence of the socialist movement. Officers complained about the lack of careers due to a fleet which did not modernize; crews complained about the class divisions on board and living and working conditions. The depression increased the differences between officers and men, and lack of leadership resulted in mutiny. In this light, it still is quite a performance and very remarkable, that after the catastrophe of the mutiny on the DE ZEVEN PROVINCÏEN, the Department succeeded in building up morale with the crews to such an extent, that the crews fought remarkably well when the hour of destiny came. Men like Furstner, Ferwerda and Helfrich earn praise for that achievement.

Lastly, there were the financial constraints. Holland was (and still is) a rich country, and as has been proven in 1913 and 1939, there was in effect no financial constraint to expanding the fleet. Lack of money was a pseudo-argument. The pernicious effect of a neutrality policy, with its false illusion of security, combined with lack of naval and thereby political leadership and a fractured opinion on how to build for the future, resulted in a state of paralysis, achieving almost nothing in the crucial interwar years. It must be added here, however, that at least in writing, the Dutch naval officer corps accepted neutrality almost to the end. It was only after May 1940, that a group of officers such as Lieutenant-commanders A.J. Bussemaker and G.B. Salm started to openly criticize the policy of neutrality vis-à-vis Great-Britain as practiced in the NEI. For these officers it resulted in a reprimand by Vice-Admiral Helfrich due to interference with Dutch international policies.1784

In the end, the sad main conclusion must be however, that Dutch naval leadership over the years proved itself incapable of adjusting the naval organisation to the technical evolution caused by the Fisher revolution and the appearance of the airplane, and to the changing social circumstances. Insufficient political and naval leadership and insufficient integration of the two resulted in a faltering Department for more than thirty years (1905 - 1935). At last Vice-Admiral J.Th. Furstner proved to have the leadership capabilities to turn the organisation around after 1936. Time however was then running out for providing the navy with new ships, because large ships need a few years before completion.

1784 D.C.L. Schoonoord, op. cit., 37.
3.6. Army Defence Policy.

3.6.1. Introduction.
According to a proposition by Teitler the developments between 1880 - 1950 within the Koninklijke Marine can only be understood when studied together with the developments within the Colonial Army - the KNIL. This proposition can also be turned around: the developments within the KNIL can only be understood in comparison with those in the KM. Both services distrusted each other, but were interdependent.

The KNIL had a double mission since its inception in 1830. Firstly, it had to defend the main island, Java, against an enemy conquest. The last conquest happened in 1811, when an English expeditionary army conquered the whole of Java. This mission was a purely defensive one. The other mission was the expansion of Dutch sovereignty over the archipelago within the internationally agreed borders by subduing sultanates and chieftainships, and maintaining order in already subdued regions. This was an offensive task, resulting in the sometimes prolonged absence of an important part of the colonial army in far away places. On the other hand, the leadership, equipment and logistics of an expeditionary army against a riotous sultanate were of another nature than war against a well-led and equipped foreign (western) aggressor. This double mission did not include the maintenance of the integrity of the whole NEI against a foreign aggressor. The archipelago was too extended to be able to cover it with a colonial army of the KNIL's size, and therefore that mission was bestowed upon the Koninklijke Marine, with the additional responsibility to try to sink an enemy transport fleet on its way to the main island: Java. Therefore, the missions and responsibilities of the two services matched, but were quite different.

The KNIL was a regular and professional army of volunteers, without conscription, and based on professional soldiers who signed on for at least six years. Roughly two-thirds of the soldiers were natives who had volunteered to serve with the KNIL. In 1900, at the end of the Aceh War, the KNIL counted 9.100 Dutchmen, 6.200 other Europeans, and 15.700 native soldiers. As such it did not differ much from other colonial armies. The English had at that time around 77.500 Englishmen and 202.500 natives in the Indian Army, the French Armée Coloniale counted 20.000 Europeans in the Foreign Legion, and 30.000 natives. For the expeditionary mission of the KNIL this force composition sufficed, but with the growing menace of Japan the question was whether conscription should not be introduced. A professional army like the KNIL was also not a part of East-Indian society, and that became more and more of a liability. Because of the lack of sufficient professional manpower, introducing conscription was seriously considered, also for natives, which would indicate to the outside world that the natives felt responsible for their own defense, and would show acceptance of their Dutch masters. This proposal was fiercely debated in the first decade of the new century, but in 1916 only conscription for Europe-
ans was introduced. The debate on native conscription would re-emerge, however, in the thirties. (See also subchapter 6.4)

The KNIL had been almost continuously involved in military action since its inception, in contrast with the Koninklijke Marine. Defining its internal culture and outlook however were the thirty years of continuous fighting in Aceh (1873 - 1903). It was only after developing a coherent doctrine of counterguerrilla warfare that the Dutch succeeded in subjugating the wily Acinese. Teitler has compared this counterguerrilla doctrine with those which the Americans developed in Vietnam, and he arrived at the conclusion that the Dutch doctrines were generally speaking superior. The amassed knowledge of generations of counterguerrilla warfare by the KNIL was codified in the VTPL ("Voorschrift voor de Uitoefening van de Politiek-Politieele taak van het Leger"), translatable as "Manual for the Execution of the Police tasks of the Army") of 1928, which was extensively used until the armistice with the Indonesian guerillas of 1949. The VTPL discounted firepower, but stressed mobility and stealth as executed by small units of up to 19 men, the so-called Marechaussee Brigades. These small groups raided the back country in search of guerilla groups, using the same tactics. They were armed with the klewang (sable) for close combat, and with a light carbine of 6.5 mm caliber, which was adapted to the slight posture of the native soldier. As the KNIL consisted of professional soldiers, the men in the brigades learned to know each other very well and developed a strong team spirit. Even during the counterguerrilla operations against the Indonesians in 1947 - 1949 the VTPL was still found to be very valuable.

3.6.2. The organizational context.

As we have seen in sub-chapter 2, the KNIL and the KM had different reporting lines. The Commander of the KNIL reported to the Governor-General, who was Commander in Chief of both Army and Navy in the NEI. But as the Minister of Colonial Affairs was politically responsible for the administration of the colony, he maintained in his Department in The Hague a separate branch, called the 6th Bureau, which could advise him on military matters, and whose chief was an officer of the General Staff of the East Indian Army.

The KNIL obtained a General Staff in 1873 under Maj. Gen. G.P. de Neve, who thereafter became Commander-in-Chief of the KNIL from 1875 - 1879. The KNIL was far ahead of the Dutch Army and the Koninklijke Marine in having such an organisation, although the General Staff at the beginning was still small. Its officers were trained at the Royal Military Academy in Breda, the Netherlands, and promising staff officers were sent to the War College in the Hague. Both institutions were very professionally-led and gave the General Staff of the KNIL an intellectual capability which the Koninklijke Marine lacked up to 1936.

Notwithstanding the laments in the official Staff History of the KNIL, it actually suffered less from the red pencil in the period 1919 - 1935 than its sister service, the KM. Even at the depth of the Depression in 1935, the KNIL estimates were 65.2 million guilders, the Navy estimates to be paid by the NEI government were 6.5 million on a total budget of


170 Communication by Colonel KNIL Sjoerd Lapré, MWO, war veteran. 23 May 1997.

170 Stafwerk, Vol. 1, 197
25.5 million for the KM as a whole. The total budget for the NEI at that time was around 350 million guilders. The KNIL estimates were about 16.5% of the total NEI budget in 1923, to decrease to a minimum of 13.0% in 1934, bouncing back to 19.0% in 1939.\textsuperscript{1762}

The KNIL estimates were structurally higher than those for the Dutch Army. The estimates for the latter were 36.6 million guilders excluding pensions for 1936. A professional Army like the KNIL was of course more expensive than a conscript Army like the Dutch Army.

The total manpower strength of the KNIL was 36,577 men in 1922, decreasing to 32,500 men in 1926. The communist-inspired troubles in West-Java and Sumatra resulted in an increase of troop strength to 38,300 in 1929 which gradually declined to around 36,000 in 1935.\textsuperscript{1763} The KNIL counted around 1300 officers, overwhelmingly Dutch and Indo-European. Of the troops, around 7,000 were European, 14,000 Javanese, 9,000 Ambonese and Menadonese (who were considered very loyal to the Dutch because they had been christianized long ago), with other Indonesian races supplying the remaining 3000 men. The European and Indo-European ethnic element was strongly represented in the group of non-commissioned officers.

A new Army organization was implemented in 1922 based on the divisional structure.\textsuperscript{1764} The Army in Java consisted of 2 divisions, each with 3 regiments of 3 battalions each, and 2 independent battalions. Each battalion consisted of 15 officers and 598 men. Next to the field-battalions there were 12 garrison battalions all over the NEI and 3 depot battalions on Java. Army cavalry consisted of four mounted squadrons of 869 horse; primarily on Java. The field-artillery consisted of 2 regiments; each regiment consisted of 1 battalion of field artillery with guns of 75 mm, 1 battalion mountain artillery with guns of 75 mm and 1 battalion mechanized artillery (Howitzers of 105 mm), each battalion consisting of 3 batteries, with 4 guns each. In addition there was one battalion of heavy artillery with 12 howitzers of 120 mm with motor traction. Moreover, the KNIL organisation in Java possessed in addition a battalion of Engineers, and since 1912 the KNIL also boasted the possession of an Army Air Force (the so-called Afdeling Militaire Luchtvaart, abbreviated to KNIL-ML). The ML consisted of 2 Wings in 1922, each with 3 squadrons of 6 planes each.

The KNIL infantry battalion consisted of 4 infantry companies and 1 platoon with 6 machineguns of 6.5 mm as part of the battalion staff. This battalion organisation deviated from European Armies, in which each battalion consisted of 3 companies. Because of its augmented strength the KNIL-battalion could be well put to use in the outlying territories, where most of the time the battalion was the highest organisational unit. Each infantry company possessed 9 light machineguns. Individual weapons consisted of the carbine and the long infantry sable, the kiewang.

The strong features of the KNIL battalion organization were much manpower and good mobility in difficult terrain.\textsuperscript{1765} This mobility was obtained by the extensive use of pack animals (and their caretakers), which made the KNIL battalions of that time very mobile and totally independent of roads and railroads, which anyway were scarce outside Java.

\textsuperscript{1762} Keesing's Historisch Archief, 9 maart 1939, 3691.

\textsuperscript{1763} Stafwerk, Vol. I, 183.

\textsuperscript{1764} Stafwerk, Vol. I, 182.

Each regiment had a fire support group of 6 machineguns 6.5 mm, 6 mortars 80 mm and from 1935 onward a section of 6 machineguns 12.7 mm (.50 inch) against airplanes. Sandberg commented, that "notwithstanding the reduction of manpower, the Army still had maintained and even improved its firepower."

Already before the Second World War, but specifically after the disastrous outcome of the war in the Far East, Dutch military historians have stressed that the KNIL was in effect a "police Army", and therefore not up to its task of fighting a modern and well-equipped enemy. The KNIL General Staff, in comparing its army organisation with those of the Germans and French, rang alarm bells about the lack of firepower and armour in the KNIL, compared to modern European Armies, not realizing however that the Japanese Field Army was also not on a par with European adversaries, as became painfully obvious at the little-known Nomonhan Incident with the Red Army in Outer-Mongolia in 1939. (See Chapter 6, pages 658 - 659). As its Japanese adversary in 1941 was not much better equipped than the KNIL, the myth of the KNIL "police Army" has to be taken with a grain of salt. As we will see in this sub-chapter, this so-called police Army did possess a rather powerful Army Airforce, tanks and artillery in 1941, equipment which is not normally associated with a police army.

Concluding this short paragraph, a few notes should be written on the personalities of the pre-war KNIL Commanders Berenschot and Ter Poorten.

Lieutenant-General G.J. Berenschot was an Eurasian, born in 1887 at Solok in Sumatra. After finishing the Military Academy at Breda in 1907, he was appointed 2nd Lieutenant in the KNIL. He served with distinction in Aceh 1910 - 1915, followed the Staff College in the Hague 1919 - 1921, became a Colonel in 1930, and Chief of Staff KNIL in 1934. He succeeded Lieut.-Gen. M. Boerstra as Commander-in-Chief KNIL in July 1939. After meeting the British C-in-C Sir Robert Brooke-Popham in Batavia on 13 October 1941 he returned to KNIL HQ in Bandoeng, but his plane crashed after take-off. Berenschot is buried at the Menteng Pulu Dutch military cemetery in Jakarta.

Berenschot displayed outstanding leadership qualities. He inspired his troops, and was very popular both with his soldiers and the Dutch civilian population of the NEI. His untimely death just before the Japanese attack caused a serious loss of morale.

His successor as C-in-C became Lieutenant General (then Major-General) Hein Ter Poorten. Ter Poorten was born in Buitenzorg in 1887, and graduated from the Military Academy at Breda in 1908 as an artillerist. After a stint at the Artillery Workshop at Delft he was the first Dutch professional officer to obtain a pilot license in France in 1911. He became a pilot-observer in the fledgling Dutch air arm. After returning to the NEI in 1913, he was involved in the experimental "Proef-Afdeling" of the KNIL which tested aeroplanes under tropical conditions. In January 1915 he was sent to the United States to get acquainted with the Glenn Martin scout planes which had been ordered by the KNIL. In February 1916 he crashed with one of these planes near Bandong. He was severely wounded, but his passenger, the KNIL C-in-C Lieut.-Gen. J.P.M. Michielsen, was killed. He attended the Army Staff School from 1919 to 1922. Ter Poorten became a Major-General in 1937, and was appointed Chief of the KNIL General Staff in July 1939. He signed the capitulation of the Allied Forces in the NEI at Kalijatni in March 1942, and went into Japanese internment with the G.G. The dismal failure of the KNIL as a fighting force

1796 Sandberg, as above, 586.
against the Japanese was blamed on him, but due to the Indonesian Revolution no Commission of Inquiry was installed, although he was asked to prepare a written account of his conduct during those months of war. He died an embittered man in The Hague in January 1968.

Hein Ter Poorten was a brave and extremely hard-working, hard-driving and hard-drinking general, who enjoyed life (he was a reputed womaniser) but who lacked political feeling, smoothness and finesse. He could be very rude, but was loved by the common soldier. He was disliked by the far more reticent G.G., and he lacked the inspirational qualities of his predecessor, Berenschot. The final verdict is not yet out on him as a a military leader, but probably he was undeservedly treated as a scapegoat after the war.

3.6.3. The defence of Java.

As Java was the main island in terms of economic importance and also the seat of the Dutch colonial administration, the defense scenarios of the KNIL against an external (European) enemy focused on this island. During the whole nineteenth century a protracted discussion raged within the KNIL Staff about the relative merits of a coastal defence, concentrated on the three most important coastal cities Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya, and that of a defence in depth, where the choices were between the highlands in West Java (the Preanger) and those in Central Java around Ambarawa, which had as an additional advantage, that the two sultanates Yogyakarta and Soerakarta, the remains of the once impressive native state of Mataram, could be watched closely. The mutiny leading to the bloody Java War (1825 - 1830) had started in these sultanates. The defense plan chosen in 1836 was that of a mobile field army in a central redoubt in central Java, behind a fort in Ambarawa and the Toentang river, and with fortifications around Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya. The adoption of this plan resulted in the construction of strongholds around Ambarawa (Fort Willem I) and the preparation of identical strongholds along the Toentang-line near Ambarawa, and smaller strongholds around Surabaya, Semarang and at Ngawi between Surabaya and Semarang. It was the intention that the central government would move from the very exposed coastal city of Batavia to Bagelen (North of Poerwodadi and West of Yogyakarta) in Central-Java, from where there was an easy access to Java's southern harbour, Tjilatjap, which was also fortified.

New Governors-General and Commanders of the KNIL resulted in new ideas, specifically about retaining Batavia as seat of the Government, or moving it to the hinterland. In 1853 a new defense plan for Java was adopted. This de-emphasized the defense of Batavia, as it was the intention to move the Government to Bagelen in Central-Java. The Surabayen defences were considered to be too grandiose, and were reduced in strength. This resulted in Tjilatjap being actually better defended than Surabaya. This defence plan was essentially executed.

Between 1882 and 1892 the discussion about different defence scenarios started anew,
caused by the growing importance of the outlying islands. Sumatra specifically gained in importance. The continuing debate was temporarily ended by the imposition of new defence foundations in 1892. In that year, the State Commission Kruys-Kromhout-Haver Droeeze delivered its report on the defence of the NEI, which dealt primarily with the defence of Java. The main enemy was considered to be England, with Imperial Russia a close second. In the recommendations of the commission, a synthesis was attempted between a mobile field army spread over peace garrisons all over Java, and the defence of the capital, Batavia. The introduction of the telegraph and the existence of a reasonably dense rail net on Java made it possible to concentrate the KNIL around Batavia in sufficient time in case of war to await an enemy landing. There the final battle would be fought. Not the Government, but only the War Department would be moved to the center of West-Java, to Bandoeng.

We have dealt with the nineteenth-century defence plans of Java in some depth to convey the message, that already at its birth in 1830 the KNIL was charged with the defence of Java against an external enemy, which in that century meant an European enemy. Therefore the KNIL was equipped and trained as an European, 19th century Army, a legacy which was carried over to the next century.

This defence scenario however changed in 1899, after Japan had acquired Formosa, and the United States had captured Manila in a classical coup de main, and thereafter acquired the Philippines in 1898. The new Governor-General, Lieut.-Gen. W. Rooseboom (1899 - 1904), came from the staff of the Dutch Army and was therefore not a KNIL career officer, but he recognized the weakness of the previous defence policy in the light of those two events, and pushed for a central redoubt around Bandoeng. He started with concentrating the KNIL depots and military hospitals around Bandoeng, to be followed by the War department in 1902, and by the KNIL arsenals for gun maintenance and a small-arms ammunition factory.

Bandoeng is situated on a plateau about 700 meters above sealevel. In the North and the South it is closed off by chains of volcanoes more than 2000 meters high, which merge at the Eastern end of the plateau. The mountain plain is drained by the river Tjitaroem which flows out to the Java-Sea in Northwestern direction. The road/rail-distance between Bandoeng and Batavia is about 120 kilometers.

From Batavia there are two railroads and three roads leading to Bandoeng. The most frequently used road is from Batavia south to Buitenzorg (Indonesian Bogor), and from there over the 1100 m. high Poentjak-Pass (Ind. Puncak) North of the G. Gedeh to Sindanglaja and further on to Bandoeng. This is the shortest route. A well-paved road and a railroad go South from Buitenzorg along Soekaboemi, where the road from the Poentjak Pass is joined at Tjlandjaer. A second road/railroad combination goes from Batavia to the East, past Krawang to Tjikampek, where both turn South and join the other road/railroad near Padalarang. For an enemy landing at Java's flat North coast, these approach routes

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1890 E.K.A. de Neve: "De Grondslagen der Reorganisatie van het Indisch Leger". De Indische Gids(1890) no 12, 1122 - 1131.

1891 Bob de Graaff, op. cit., 419.

1892 Teitler, "Anatomie", op. cit., 70 - 73.

1893 G. before Gedeh stands for Goenoeng (Ind. Gunung) or mountain or volcan.
would be attractive. An enemy could also attempt a landing at the Wijnkoops-baai on the Indian Ocean coast West of Soekaboemi, but the Wijnkoopsbaai is not protected from the Indian Ocean swells. A road/railroad combination connects Bandoeng to Central Java, and could be used as an approach by an enemy landing near Tjilatjap on the South Coast of central Java. This access to Bandoeng however could be easily defended, as were the two other accesses to the North by road from Bandoeng via Lembang and Tjiater to Soebang and the plain of Northern Java, and the road from Bandoeng via Soemedang to Cheribon on Java's North coast. In effect, a Japanese brigade used the steep road from Tjilatjap to Lembang to break into the Bandoeng redoubt in March 1942.

The Bandoeng redoubt (also called the Preanger redoubt after the district Priangan in which Bandoeng is located) therefore was most vulnerable from the west. However, an enemy approaching the redoubt from Tjiangjoer had to cross the Tjitaroem-river, which at this place was a formidable barrier, difficult to outflank. East of Radjamandala runs a mountain range called the Bengkong Range which consists of deeply eroded chalk cliffs with very steep, unscalable walls. In itself, this was a very strong defensive position especially useful as an artillery platform with howitzers in predisposed positions, enabling the closing of the road and railroad coming from the north, from Krawang and Tikampek. The range could be outflanked in the north at Tjiopoendoej, and at Tjiilitin in the south, but both would require a sizable force. At the north end of the Bengkong Range, near Tjiopoendoej, was the Batoe Karoet Mountain, which was difficult to scale or to outflank, and which also controlled the road/railroad from Tjikampek. An artillery battery with supporting troops could block a sizable enemy force using this access route.

From Cheribon on the north coast of Java to Bandoeng there were no natural strong points until near Soemedang, in the shape of the Palasari Mountain. The access valley however was rather spacious and could only be closed off with a sizable force of infantry and artillery. This was therefore a potentially dangerous access route. That was far less the case with the access route from Tjilatjap. The first natural strongpoint there was the Babakan Mountain near Bandjar. But even more easy to defend was the defile at Nagreg between the G. Mandalawangi and the G. Kaledong, which could not be outflanked easily.

Rooseboom himself visited a number of these natural strongpoints in 1902, and started the building of casemates and artillery positions at these points. This continued up to 1912, when of the seven indicated strongpoints, three had been equipped with artillery and machinegun positions: Batoe Karoet, Palasari and Nagreg.\[^{184}\] The Palasari position for example had 6 guns of 75 mm and 4 of 70 mm in concrete casemates with an infantry detachment of 150 men.\[^{185}\] However, it was incorrect to boast of a "fortress Bandoeng", but it must be admitted that under the influence of the Russo-Japanese War the defensive capabilities of the Preanger high plain were considerably augmented, and the concentration of the KNIL around Bandoeng was realized.

The defence of Surabaya remained a problem, because the KNIL refused to split itself into two forces: one in West-Java, and one around Surabaya. Governor-General Rooseboom therefore approved a purely naval defence of Surabaya, consisting of a powerful coastal battery of 6 guns of 170 mm at Semamboeng near Grissee, a battery of four guns of 170 mm at Kali Dawir east of the naval base, and a battery of five rapid-fire guns of 150 mm

\[^{184}\] Teitler:"Anatomie", op. cit. 177 - 190.

\[^{185}\] Teitlers, as above, 176.
(6") near Kedong Tjowek to cover the entrance of the Oostervaarwater to the base. Together with the existing 75 mm guns at the mouth of the Kali Mas this gave Surabaya an adequate protection against coups de mains.\footnote{\textit{Anatomie}, op. cit., 136.} In order to place things in perspective, it should be remembered that at that time, Singapore had no heavier coastal batteries than a few 6" rapid firing guns.

It has been pointed out by Teitler,\footnote{\textit{Anatomie}, op. cit., 190.} that this period was characterised by a considerable widening between the war scenario's of the KNIL and Koninklijke Marine. The KNIL had reinforced the Preanger position, and was ready to draw the enemy into the Javanese highlands in order to fight the decisive battle away from the coast. The KM still had a coast-defence strategy and a coast defence fleet based 900 kilometers from the capital city, Batavia, which was therefore exposed to a coup de main, and which was not adequately covered by the Army. There was obviously no integration whatsoever between the different war scenario's.

The State Commission of 1912 added to this conundrum. The Commission was appointed by H. Colijn, then Minister of War in the Dutch Cabinet, against the opinion of the Minister of Colonial Affairs, J.H. de Waal Malefijt.\footnote{Bob de Graaff, op. cit., 420.} It recommended that the whole of the NEI be covered by a mobile fleet, thereby relegating the role of the Army to the protection of the Naval Base and of the capital city, Batavia. (See subchapter 3.5.3.3., pages 338ff) This was of course not to the liking of the KNIL. The formal reply of the G.G. in 1916 (3 years after the publication of the State Commission Report) was therefore, that if the Navy had been beaten by the enemy, the Army must still have the capacity to at least defend Java. The existing force was considered inadequate even for this purpose,\footnote{Stafwerk, Vol. 1, 32. Rapport Staatscommissie [Heemskerk], Den Haag 1913, 10 afp.} and therefore conscription for the Europeans in the NEI was introduced in 1917.

The secret appendix to the public report of the State Commission is very interesting, because in it the potential aggressors are reviewed. England and the U.S.A. would only intervene in the NEI if and when the colony was no longer able to defend itself against another aggressor. England would not oppose American intervention. Germany, France, Portugal and Australia were considered as representing no dangers. China was still too immersed in its internal troubles. However, aggression of Japan even on short notice was a distinct possibility.\footnote{Bob de Graaff, op. cit., 420.}

In an interesting comment on the State Commission's Report, armchair strategist Van der Sluis developed a scenario in 1914, in which Japan invaded Java from Tjilatjap and occupied Central Java, before attacking Batavia and Bandoeng by a landing in Bantam Bay. The scenario highlighted the fact that without a naval base in Soenda Straits, the enemy fleet could encircle Java at will. Van der Sluis, a naval officer, was therefore a
strong supporter of Colonel De Greve's plans for a naval base in the Soenda Straits.  

(See subchapter 3.5.3.3., page 333 - 334).

As we have seen before, the Draft Fleet Law of 1924 did not pass Parliament. The recommendations of the NEI Defense Council for a mobile field army of two divisions on Java became therefore unhinged too, although the decision to re-organise the KNIL into regiments and divisions had already been taken in 1922.  

In the end, the resulting deadlock was broken by the Defence Foundations of 1927.

3.5.4. Expanded responsibilities.

The Defense Foundations of 1927 consisted of 8 paragraphs, and specified the respective role of Army and Navy in the defence of the NEI. There was no longer any thought of successfully defending the NEI against an enemy bent on total conquest. The main task of Army and Navy were the maintenance of peace and order within the NEI boundaries, and the protection of strategic spots against coup de mains. For the first time, two harbours outside Java were explicitly mentioned as possible enemy targets: Tarakan and Balikpapan, oil production centers on the East coast of Borneo.

The Defense Foundations were imposed upon the NEI Administration by decree. It is therefore not surprising that the People's Council objected to not being heard on such an important subject. The People's Council therefore decided to discuss the Foundations in the autumn session of 1927, during which the People's Council indeed amended the Foundations. However, the Dutch Government informed the G.G. on 25 January 1930 that it would not accept the amendment. The Dutch Parliament did not even discuss it.

In fact both the Dutch and the NEI Government accepted as inescapable that neither the Netherlands nor the colony had the financial resources to provide for an adequate defence against a powerful outside enemy. However, fifteen years before there had been plans for a sizable battlefleet, which was then considered affordable. The conclusion therefore should be, that the constraints of 1927 were not financial but political. After the rejection in Parliament of a proposal for a fleet squadron which was just a shadow of the originally proposed battlefleet of the 1912 State Commission, there was no longer a sound political base for a defence build-up in the NEI. Of course there was a strong correlation with external political factors: after the Washington Treaties it was quiet in the Pacific; the prospective enemy Japan did nothing to arouse suspicion under a string of civilian-led Governments, and Great Britain was building its great naval base at Singapore, which was seen by everybody in the NEI as a kind of safeguard against eventual Japanese expansion. The late twenties were an idyllic time in the Far East, and every guilder spent on defense against a hypothetical enemy from the outside was seen as wasted.

This political and military stability gave the accountants the perfect excuse to delay the earmarking of funds for the expanded responsibilities as defined by the Foundations. The

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1813 For complete text, see Stafwerk, Vol. I, 40 - 42.

oil harbours Tarakan and Balikpapan needed to be reinforced by a battalion each, for which barracks and other accomodations were needed, and had to be equipped with coastal batteries. Although the Defense Foundations were issued in 1927, it would be March 1930 before the Volksraad accepted the additional budgets needed for the defence of the two oil harbours. Just as was the case with the Navy, there was a general lack of urgency, which of course was also explicable by the irenic situation then existing in the Far East.

Alas, in October 1929 the New York stock market crashed, and a deep economic depression hit the NEI specifically very hard because of its open boundaries. Moreover, in September 1931 the Mukden- Incident took place, and Japanese militarism became clearly visible for those who were not blind. The Dutch Government however appointed a Commission to further reduce expenses on the Colonial budget. This Welter-Commission, named after its Chairman, Ch.J. Welter, recommended in 1931 to increase the defence estimates! Therefore, a new Commission was appointed in 1933, the Idenburg-Commission, specifically to study the defence estimates and recommend possible reductions to the Government.

The recommendations of the Idenburg-Commission were rather draconic. The regular Army would have to take over the function of the field police on Java, which would save 3700 men, and which would have made the KNIL a real police army. Moreover, the (horse) Cavalry would disappear, and artillery reduced by 25%. The Army strength itself would be reduced from 36.500 to 33.300 men. Cavalry would be replaced by a squadron of 18 armoured cars, and an additional bicycle company.\textsuperscript{187} The increasingly deteriorating international situation however had as a consequence that the recommendations of the Commission-Idenburg were never implemented. The estimates for the KNIL however reached their nadir in 1935: 43.5 million guilders.\textsuperscript{188}

At the Ministry of Colonial Affairs in the Hague, an officer on assignment from KNIL General Headquarters studied the problem of NEI defences anew. Major R.Th. Overakker wrote a remarkable report at the end of 1934, which did influence the Minister of Colonial Affairs at that time, H. Colijn. In his report, he prophesied that Japan and the United States would collide in the near future, and that therefore Japan would have to occupy the Dutch oil sources with a lightning attack. Overakker was specifically concerned about the lack of demolition facilities in Tarakan and Balikpapan, and stressed the importance of a credible defence of these locations against a Japanese \textit{coup de main}.\textsuperscript{187} The importance of his recommendations were highlighted by the military rebellion in Tokyo (the 2-26 Incident) on 26 February 1936 (See page 643), and the highly alarming telegrams sent by the Dutch envoy in Tokyo, J.C. Pabst. (See also paragraph 3.4.3, page 301). According to the American Consul-General in Batavia, Foote, the Dutch authorities in the NEI were "in a virtual state of panic" about impending Japanese aggression.\textsuperscript{188} Even Colijn in far away Holland recognized, that something had to be done quickly.


\textsuperscript{188} G. Teitler: \textit{De Indische defensie en de bezuinigingen.} Den Haag, 1985, 111 - 112.


\textsuperscript{188} Bob de Graaff, op. cit., 441.
One of the recommendations of the Idenburg-Commission had been to eliminate the navy cruisers and to replace them with a fleet of destroyers and submarines on one hand, and a landbased bomber airforce on the other hand. The pros and cons of this proposal had to be studied in more depth, and a new commission was instituted to report on this issue. This became the Kan-Commission (after its Chairman, retired Minister J. Kan). Early in 1935 the Commission presented its conclusions, which were however not unanimous. A small majority had concluded, that the cruisers could be scrapped, leaving a navy consisting of 12 destroyers, 18 submarines and 54 large seaplanes, and reinforcement of the KNIL-ML with 108 strategic bombers. A large minority of the commission wanted to maintain the cruisers and a seaplane force of 96 planes. This exemplifies the deep divisions between Army and Navy.

The real issue was of course the role of the KNIL-ML, the Army Airforce. The Defense Foundations had been clear in giving the responsibility for the defence of the outlying islands to the Navy, with the Army bound to Java and the two oil harbours in Borneo. But the capabilities of the modern strategic landbased bomber made it possible to defend the outlying islands with planes. During the whole Summer and Autumn of 1935 a discussion raged in the Dutch press between the bomber-enthusiasts and the fleet adepts. The man who had to make the decision was Premier H. Colijn, who at that time doubled as Minister of Colonial Affairs and Minister of Defense ad interim. He declared in the Cabinet that in order to prioritize the scarce resources for NEI defences it would be wise to consult the British Government. This would however run counter to the policy of aloofness. Nevertheless, he took the courageous and unprecedented step to ask the British defence establishment in deep secrecy for their opinion. For that purpose, he met the three British Military, Naval and Air Attachés in The Hague in secrecy (page 206 - 207), and afterwards under the guise of a holiday in England he visited the Foreign Minister A. Eden, the Cabinet Secretary of Air, the First Lord of Admiralty, and other military experts. Colijn realised that he had to make an important decision for the future defence of the NEI, and the deep split in opinion between his Naval and Army Commanders necessitated in his view the judgment of a more or less independent third party: the British.

Colijn came to the conclusion that the fleet should keep its cruisers, but that indeed the KNIL-ML had to get its bombers. He counted on a strong deterrence by the bombers, and took the advice of the British Chiefs of Staff, who unexpectedly advised against a strong Dutch Navy.(page 210). Very much to the dismay of the Dutch CZM, Colijn in effect accepted the line of reasoning of the KNIL-Commander, Lt. Gen. M. Boerstra. A tentative order for 39 Glenn Martins was signed, and Colijn surprised the outside world, when he introduced and defended in Parliament on 15 December 1936 a suppletory budget for the procurement in the U.S.A. of these 39 Glenn Martin B-10 heavy bombers. Due to the threatening international situation, it was approved without difficulty. It was a considerable investment, equal to that of three destroyers for the Koninklijke Marine. Even then, Colijn had to defend the purchase of these bombers to those critics who stated that the Glenn Martin was already obsolete. Colijn denied that the Glenn Martins were released for sale by the US Government only after they had obtained a better plane - the Boeing B-17
strategic bomber.\textsuperscript{1822}

The plan announced was to have 117 bombers in total, of which each squadron would have 9 bombers with 4 reserves. For the ML this was a hefty expansion with 9 bomber squadrons. It gave the KNIL the opportunity to enter an area of responsibility which had until now been exclusively reserved for the Koninklijke Marine. Their long radius of action made it possible for the bombers to attack an enemy fleet far out to sea, off the shores of Java. The KNIL-ML was reborn as a factor to be reckoned with, and her growth and rearmament will be followed in a separate subchapter. (See Subchapter 3.7.4.).

For many inhabitants in the colony, the rearmament which now started in earnest, went too slow. Politically, the members of the Vaderlandsche Club in the Volksraad strongly voiced their disapproval of the slow increase in strength and firepower of the KNIL, now that funds were available. They caused an uproar when they accused the KNIL of having too many old and conservative officers on responsible posts, blocking the promotion of younger and more capable officers.\textsuperscript{1823} Unfortunately, they were correct.

In contrast to the Koninklijke Marine, morale within the KNIL had not been a problem in those difficult years of retrenchment and economic crisis. The KNIL was not unionized, like the navy, and the salary cuts were grudgingly accepted. The reduction of manpower was compensated by more modern weapons, such as mortars and machine guns. Looking back to the period of economizing before 1935, Sandberg declared with some pride: "At that time we have already expressed our appreciation for the way in which the Army, notwithstanding the financial constraints, has been preserved as a harmonic whole, maintaining considerable fighting prowess."\textsuperscript{1824} The Commander-in-Chief of the KNIL, Lieut.-Gen. M. Boerstra, answered criticism in the People’s Council on the readiness of the KNIL with the statement that in case of war the KNIL would remain fighting the enemy, even if war losses approached 30%.\textsuperscript{1825} The European community more or less expected this tenacity from their Army, which in its long and fabled history had built up a tradition of valour in battle.

Therefore, it was more than bluff or political expediency when Boerstra, in the name of the Government, advised against the acceptance by the People’s Council of the petition Soetardjo/Gondosoebroto/Datoe Toemenggoeng of 16 February 1937. This petition asked for a study of the implementation of native conscription in order to strengthen the manpower situation of the KNIL. Boerstra’s answer was, that "a small but well-equipped professional army was to be preferred over a large army which was lightly armed."\textsuperscript{1826} The petition was however passed on 27 August 1937 with 24 votes for and 16 against, but as the People’s Council had no legislative power, the Dutch Government rejected the petition, as it disliked the political implications of native conscription, which was a large army of natives. The army’s position was that a small, well-equipped professional army was superior to a conscript army, and this position was defended in public by the KNIL Chief of


\textsuperscript{1823} See the reporting in the column “Uit de Volksraad”, IMT, 69 (1938), nr. 8, 781.

\textsuperscript{1824} J.R.M. Sandberg: “De organisatie van onze regimenten Infanterie” IMT, 68 (1937), nr.7, 586.

\textsuperscript{1825} Uit de Volksraad. IMT,66 (1935), nr 9, 999.

\textsuperscript{1826} Uit de Volksraad. IMT, 68 (1937), nr 9, 815.
Staff at that time, Maj.-Gen. Berenschot, in a public lecture at 's Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands on 14 December 1937.1827

3.6.5. The re-organization of 1940.

As we have seen above, the KNIL during peacetime was spread all over Java in cantonments and depots, but at the outbreak of war a concentration of troops would take place in the Preanger around Bandoeng, and around Surabaya, the naval base. Java was the only island of the Archipelago which had a rather extensive railway network, although most of it was single track. The KNIL employed railway companies to take care of the rail resources of Java at mobilisation. The Japanese invasion in Southern China at the Bias-Bay in 1939 illustrated however that they had developed a new doctrine of a direct strike towards the strategic goal after landing, and did not consolidate their bridgehead first, as had been done in previous amphibious operations such as at Tsingtao in 1914.1828 In the case above, the strategic goal was Canton.1829 The KNIL General Staff concluded that by an invasion in central Java, the Japanese could cut the vital railway links within a few days, making concentration of the Army impossible. This conclusion resulted in the genesis of the KNIL-doctrine in 1940 of mass-motorisation and mass-mechanisation, making the unit formations less dependent on rail for their movements. It was not realised however, that another dependency was brought in: that to a road, paved or unpaved. Undoubtedly the KNIL General Staff found support in the succesful military operations by German panzer and mechanized troops in Poland in 1939 and Western Europe in 1940. Those campaigns were subjected to detailed study within the KNIL General Staff.1830 Moreover, the KNIL had already ordered tanks and set up an experimental armoured tank unit in 1938 after evaluation of the use of tanks in the Spanish Civil War.1831 This experimental unit was used to develop a tank doctrine for use of the tank in Javanese terrain.1832 Within the KNIL, GHQ consensus had been reached about the usefulness of the tank around 1938, and the KNIL therefore ordered a number of light tanks even before the Dutch Army did so, and used them operationally.

The theory of defence against the tank was also well developed.1833 The KNIL possessed a number of antitank guns in 1942, but they proved to be of too small calibre to be really effective. Moreover, each infantry platoon possessed antitank rifles.

A problem was the lack of firepower at battalion level. If a KNIL battalion was provided with

1827 A report of this lecture in IMT, 69 (1938),nr 3, 283 afp.

1828 Stafwerk, Vol. II, 84.

1829 Stafwerk, II, 84.


1831 IMT, 68:9 (1937), 730.


the same firepower as a battalion in comparable European armies, that would result in a
battalion of 1200 to 1300 men, 250 pack animals and 80 chariots for the transport of
ammunition.\textsuperscript{183} This was of course unmanageable. Therefore the dilemma between
cross-country capability and higher firepower was solved by the introduction of heavy
mortars and heavy machineguns on battalion level, and by motorising the battalions.\textsuperscript{185}
By 1942 all KNIL battalions were completely motorised, with however the consequent loss
of cross-country capabilities. This mobility also had its negative aspects, as KNIL Head-
quarters were apt, during the Japanese invasion of Java, to send whole units on the move
at night, rushing them from one perceived threat to another, resulting in exhaustion and
declining morale.\textsuperscript{186}

The re-organization of May 1940 was based on the following premises. Java would be
defended by six mechanized, Independent Brigades, with about 5,000 men each. Such a
Brigade would closely resemble a German Panzer Regiment, as it would include 90 light
and medium tanks, a squadron of scout cars, 2 battalions motorized infantry, a battalion
mechanized field-artillery (12 pieces of 75 mm), mechanized anti-tank guns (27 guns of 37
mm) and mechanized anti-aircraft artillery (27 pieces of 40 mm). These six Armoured
Brigades would normally be distributed evenly over Java: two in West-Java, two in Central-
Java and two in East-Java.\textsuperscript{187} In the case of a Japanese invasion, depending on the
power projection and the exact location, one or more Armoured Brigades would drive to
the bridgehead and smash the troops just landed, assisted in this by continuous attacks by
the bombers of the KNIL-ML.

It should be remarked, that compared to British and American Regiments, the Dutch
Independent Brigades would still have less artillery firepower (See Table 8 on page 405).
The Americans decided to equip each Regiment with 12 pieces of 105 mm howitzers,
while each British Regiment fielded 24 of the famous 25-pounders. Compared to the
Japanese, however, the KNIL Regiment possessed more artillery firepower.

Next to the mobile armoured brigades with their sizable firepower, the territorial troops
would remain available for coast defence, defence of important road junctions and for anti-
aircraft defence including defence against paratroopers. The expanding KNIL-ML required
a large number of airfields, which were being laid out all over Java since 1940. Experience
in Holland, especially around the Hague in May 1940, had shown the vulnerability of
airfields against dedicated parachutist attacks. Large amounts of anti-aircraft artillery were
therefore ordered, together with 600 tanks for the armoured brigades and a large number
of vehicles. Money was no longer a problem, as for the whole reorganization the Volksraad
had voted a supplementary estimation of 400 million guilders.\textsuperscript{188}

\textsuperscript{183} R.B. van Dijken: "De organisatie van onze regimenten infanterie". \textit{IMT}, 68:9 (1937), 802 ff.

\textsuperscript{185} A. Haverkamp: "De tractie van onze gemotoriseerde artillerie" \textit{IMT}, 71:2 (1940), 148 ff, 3, 239 ff. D.N.
Blankenmeijer: "Motorisering van de berg-artillerie" \textit{IMT}, 72:3 (1941), 227 ff. F.L. Kroesen: "Motorisering van

\textsuperscript{186} H.Th. Bussemaker: "De geloofwaardigheid van de Indische defensie, 1935 - 1941". \textit{Mil. Spectator},
154:4, 167 ff.

\textsuperscript{187} Stafwerk, II, 210 afp.

\textsuperscript{188} Stafwerk, Vol. II, 209.
The objective of the 1940-reorganisation was a small, but offensively-oriented army with high firepower and mobility - a western-style Panzer army. Because of lack of time, mismanagement of the purchase function and American foot-dragging (page 113 -115), the equipment ordered did not arrive in time to complete the reorganisation. The question could be posed, why the KNIL Staff had chosen this alternative, in the face of an external enemy, which, compared to the KNIL, lacked sufficient firepower, but which possessed excellent cross-country mobility. It would have been more logical to adopt an army organisation with the emphasis on the defensive, as McArthur formulated for the Philippine Army. With their offensive organisation, the Dutch did not use the strong defensive potential of the Javanese landscape to the fullest, with its terraced ricefields and two-lane roads where even an armoured column could be halted by a few landmines. As Schuring has proved, the Javanese terrain had very strong defensive capabilities, specifically in the wet monsoon, which was exactly the period when the Japanese attacked. The Indonesian insurgents of 1945 -1949 illustrated perfectly how the terrain could be used to their advantage against a modern western army. It was surely a missed chance by the KNIL, which knew guerilla warfare so well from its own history, but failed to adopt defensive tactics against the Japanese army.

The re-armament of the Army part of the KNIL, based on its offensive-oriented organisation, will be covered in sub-chapter 3.7.4.

3.5.6. Airforce Defence Policy.

The NEI defence organisation did not have a separate airforce service, as the British had in Malaya. The KNIL (Army) had an Air Corps since 1914, which was expanded to the KNIL-ML (Militaire Luchtvaart, or Army Airforce of the KNIL). The Koninklijke Marine had its own Naval Airforce, the MLD (Marine Luchtwachtidens). In that respect, the Dutch organisational situation was the same as within the two future Pacific contenders: the U.S.A. and Japan, and contrary to the organisation of the Services in Great Britain and the Dominions, which all had a separate, third Service: the Royal Air Force.

In this subchapter we will concentrate on the KNIL-ML, the Army Airforce. It started rather inauspiciously with one Glenn Martin hydroplane at Tg. Priok and one licensed aviator, 2nd Lieut. H. ter Poorten (See this Chapter page 376). In 1917 the first KNIL pilots obtained their pilot's license at Kalidjati airfield. In 1920 the small airforce had 6 Fokker fighters and 24 de Havilland scouts/bombers. In 1925 the permanent base for the KNIL-ML became the new airfield of Andir, just Northwest of the city of Bandoeng. Smaller airfields followed in Sumatra, Bali and Timor. Within the KNIL, a small Aircorps was formed which experimented with planes and plane tactics under tropical conditions, and which had staunch supporters within the KNIL General Staff.

The debate between proponents of the strategic bomber versus the battleship admirals, which became so acrimonious in the Anglosaxon press, would also have its influence in the NEI. Already in 1922, discussing the Draft Fleet Law (DFL), the remarks of British Admiral Sir Percy Scott were used by antagonists of the DFL to question the value of
cruisers in the light of air superiority.\textsuperscript{1840} The debate became public when the recommendations of the Commissions Kan and van Idenburg became known. The majority of the Kan-Commission wanted to sacrifice the cruisers and replace them with 108 heavy bombers.\textsuperscript{1841} They found scientific support in an article by Van Dam,\textsuperscript{1842} who postulated in the IMT the superiority of attack planes even over speeding warships. The IMT was widely read as the authoritative periodical for officers of the KNIL.\textsuperscript{1843} A seminal article however was that of Boogh.\textsuperscript{1844} He analysed the recommendations of the Idenburg Commission for an airforce of 24 bombers, 48 fighters and 12 scouts. Boogh dismissed the use of fighters for object defence (such as the naval base at Surabaya) because there was no early plane detection and advance warning in place. He therefore stressed the importance of the large, fast bomber, a plane type then appearing in the U.S.A. and Germany. His article carried much weight, and was used by the KNIL C-in-C to argue the case for the purchase of these bombers in the U.S.A. As the new bombers flew even faster than the fighters of that generation, Boogh dismissed fighters as a waste of money. We have seen the same debate in the United States.\textsuperscript{1845} His viewpoint won the day and resulted in the neglect of the fighter arm within the KNIL-ML until the end of 1939,\textsuperscript{1846} notwithstanding articles in the Dutch colonial press arguing for more fighters.\textsuperscript{1847}

The developments within the ML towards a fighter-less airforce were diametrically opposed to those in the motherland, where the Dutch Army Airforce faced the growing strength of the German Luftwaffe, and therefore stressed the importance of fast and powerful fighters.\textsuperscript{1848} The Dutch Army Airforce stimulated the development of the powerful Fokker G-1 fighter, and even evaluated both the Spitfire and the Hurricane in 1938, which resulted in a recommendation in October 1938 to order 18 Hurricanes.\textsuperscript{1849}

From 1935, the funds for re-armament in the Far East gradually became available, and the future role of airplane versus artillery ship became more important. The discussion now raged also in the public press in both the Netherlands and the NEI. Officers of the Koninklijke Marine argued their case that both artillery ships and attack planes should have a role in defence. Bussemaker voiced the opinion of the majority of naval officers: the

\textsuperscript{1840} W. van Ravesteijn in Parliament, HTK, 6 April 1922, 2351.

\textsuperscript{1841} Bosscher, op. cit., Vol. I., 98.


\textsuperscript{1843} The "Indisch Militair Tijdschrift" (IMT) counted around 1100 military officers as subscribers on a total population of 1562 officers in active service with the KNIL in 1939 (G.Teilor: "De kolonels en generaals van het KNIL" Bijdragen Sectie Militaire Geschiedenis van de Landmachtstaf, Den Haag (1982), 4.

\textsuperscript{1844} W.K. Boogh: "Luchtmacht - de ontbrekende schakel". IMT, 66:6 (1935), 644 ff.


\textsuperscript{1846} Java-Bode, 21 and 22 April 1938, 12 May 1938.

\textsuperscript{1847} G.W.M. Smits: "Dreiging uit de Lucht - de Nederlandse discussie in het Interbellum", Militaire Spectator, 166:11 (1997), 524 - 532.

\textsuperscript{1848} Ibidem., 530.
cruisers had to stay. Perks argued that the antithesis of airplane contra warship was artificial; these weapons of war were mutually supporting. They were opposed by the retired Chief of Naval Staff, Vice-Admiral J.C. Jager, who had formulated his ideas in a public brochure and in numerous articles. Because of his past position, his ideas carried real weight. Jager was of the opinion that a powerful armada of bombers would suffice to deter (Japanese) aggression. He saw no place for artillery ships bigger than destroyers. His ideas had influenced the Kan-Commission, who had discussions with him.

Jager was enthusiastically supported by a number of officers of the KNIL-ML. The most outspoken Douhet-apostle was Captain E.T. Kengen, who had published an article in 1933 in which he outlined the advantages of a bomber airforce. Kengen would later become the Commanding Officer of the KNIL-ML. But unknown to Jager and Kengen, their most important convert was the Prime Minister himself, who declared in December 1936 in Parliament, that against an enemy penetration in the archipelago, there was only one way to react effectively: "by a massive attack of a large force of landbased bombers, who were faster than the naval seaplanes." Colijn could not have known that when war broke out, the KNIL-ML would waste its precious bombers in attacks on invasion convoys in small formations of 3 planes each, because the precision of the bombing runs was overestimated and Japanese fighter protection underestimated. Notwithstanding that in 1939, an observer of the Chinese - Japanese War had concluded, that attacks on ship concentrations with less than 36 planes were far less effective, and that therefore attacking formations needed a kind of critical mass of about 36 planes. Colijn could not have known that when war broke out, the KNIL-ML would waste its precious bombers in attacks on invasion convoys in small formations of 3 planes each, because the precision of the bombing runs was overestimated and Japanese fighter protection underestimated. Notwithstanding that in 1939, an observer of the Chinese - Japanese War had concluded, that attacks on ship concentrations with less than 36 planes were far less effective, and that therefore attacking formations needed a kind of critical mass of about 36 planes. Colijn could not have known that when war broke out, the KNIL-ML would waste its precious bombers in attacks on invasion convoys in small formations of 3 planes each, because the precision of the bombing runs was overestimated and Japanese fighter protection underestimated. Notwithstanding that in 1939, an observer of the Chinese - Japanese War had concluded, that attacks on ship concentrations with less than 36 planes were far less effective, and that therefore attacking formations needed a kind of critical mass of about 36 planes.

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Interestingly enough, not everybody in the KNIL supported the big bomber. Another retired general officer, Maj.-Gen. C. Kiës, wrote a brochure in 1938, in which he argued that, due to the natural defensive position of Java behind a shield of almost uninhabited islands such as Borneo, it was sufficient to have a powerful fleet of cruisers and destroyers to watch the approaches to Java. He saw no added value in heavy bombers, and explicitly warned against situating airfields in the outlying islands. In this, he found many adherents in the Koninklijke Marine, including the naval members of the Kan Commission. Unfortunately it is not known to me, if the two champions, Jager and Kiës, ever discussed their proposals face to face. It would have been an interesting happening: the retired Admiral pleading for a reduction of the Navy and an expansion of the Army Air Force, and the retired General proposing a more powerful Navy and a reduction of the KNIL field army!

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198 HTK, 1936/1937, 1030.
Colijn however decided for the bombers. According to Bosscher, only 13 of the American Glenn Martin bombers were initially available for sale. Had there been more bombers available, Colijn would have bought them all. The Dutch Minister of Defence, van Dijk, declared in Parliament: "In my opinion the best solution for the defence of the NEI is the one proposed: a seagoing navy at the indicated strength with small and large seaplanes, and in parallel powerful army bombers, as acquired by the NEI Airforce already now and in the future."  

On 20 January 1937 the first Glenn Martin 139-W bombers arrived at Andir from the United States. The Dutch Government had ordered 39 of these bombers. In financial terms, these were the equivalent of 3 destroyers for the Navy. The Glenn Martin bomber had a maximum speed of 325 km/h, a bombload of 1000 kg and a range of 1800 km. At the time of delivery it was a very modern bomber indeed. The Curtiss P-6 fighters which the KNIL-ML had stationed at Surabaya proved indeed to be slower than the new bombers. Their armament (4 machineguns 7.7 mm) was rather weak however. From Andir the first Bomber squadron of 9 planes made long flights to the other islands of the Archipelago: 6 hours flying time to Medan or Tarakan, 7 hours to Koepang on Timor, 8.5 hours to Ambon. The planes could indeed reach the whole archipelago from Java, and that would have as a consequence that enemy warships and transportships could be attacked far from the shores of Java. In the Glenn Martin, the KNIL thought it had obtained a weapon which could do the same as the Navy: wrest control of the sea from an enemy.

Manoeuvres and actual war experience in Western Europe seemed to prove the main arguments of the KNIL. The Royal Navy manoeuvres around Singapore in 1937 with the carrier HMS HERMES illustrated the vulnerability of that carrier against attacks by land bombers. The destruction of a Spanish Republican landing fleet on its way to Majorca by three Nationalist Savoya Marchetti bombers during the Spanish Civil War again illustrated the power of the land bomber.

Facts which pointed into another direction were ignored, however. The powerful Chinese airforce was annihilated after July 1937 in a series of systematic bombardments of airfields by carrier-borne Japanese planes and landbased bombers from Formosa. (See also Chapter 6, page 739). It illustrated the vulnerability of undefended airfields against surprise attacks. More worrying was the fact that all the Chinese air attacks against the old Japanese armoured cruiser HJIMs IDZUMO, anchored in the Whampa River opposite Shanghai, failed to sink the ship. Even more thought-provoking was the attack by 6 Chinese Glenn Martin bombers on a Japanese aircraft carrier at the mouth of the Yangtze river. The Glenn Martin bombers attacked at a height of 1500 meters due to low cloud cover. Of the 6 attacking planes, 5 were shot down by anti-aircraft fire from the carrier, and...
the sixth bomber limped home damaged. None of the bombers reached their target. These facts were however explained away by the air enthusiasts with arguments which had strong racist overtones, such as the alleged inferior qualities of the Chinese pilots.

In two secret reports obtained by the Dutch Military Attaché in Paris, an analysis was given of the air battles during the Spanish Civil War in 1937. The conclusion was that even fast bombers could not hold their own against enemy fighters. An unnamed officer of the 6th Bureau of the Ministry of Colonial Affairs criticized these reports to show his superiors that the reports could not be true. Because of the fact that the excellent Russian Polikarpov-16 "Chato" fighters could not stop Madrid from being bombed, it was concluded that "also at Surabaya the fighter airplane would fail in its role as an interceptor". This sentence is even underlined in the text. It illustrates the aversion of the KNIL-ML Staff at that time towards fighters. Also, reports from occupied China by retired Colonel De Frémery were ignored. In reports 18 and 19 he described Japanese bomber formations suffering 60% attrition within 2 weeks against Chinese fighters, forcing the Japanese to have their bombers escorted by fighter planes.

An example of writing to serve the goals of the KNIL General Staff is an article in the IMT describing the American Fleet manoeuvres of 1929 and 1932, whereby airplanes from the American aircraft carriers launched successful surprise attacks against the Panama Canal locks (in 1929) and against Pearl Harbor (1932). The Americans concluded the usefulness of aircraft carriers, and had more of them built. The author however highlighted the (unproven) vulnerability of aircraft carriers against attacks by land-based bombers, and concluded that the Glenn Martins had been an excellent choice for attacking enemy fleet units. The author was supported in his self-serving opinion by the previously mentioned retired Vice-Admiral J.C. Jager.

Another type of plane in which the KNIL-ML was not interested was the tactical support plane or light bomber. The KNIL was not alone in this, but shared the disdain for this type of plane with the British and French Airforce. Dive bombers were considered to be less cost effective than the Glenn Martin. Rather shamefaced, the editors of the IMT had to concede in a later issue the important role of the German Ju-87 Stuka divebomber

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1944 ARA ADK, Box 564, 30 September 1939 F-40. Although reports 18 and 19 are not included in this study, see for the activities of De Frémery also G. Teitter & K. Radtke: A Dutch Spy in China. Brill, Leiden 1999.

1939 J.W. Verhoeven: "De Amerikaansche leger- en marinemanoeuvres der laatste jaren, in het bijzonder voor wat betreft de luchtstrijdkrachten" IMT, 70:3 (1939), 201 afp.


in the Polish campaign.\textsuperscript{1669}

The KNIL-ML therefore concentrated on the (heavy) bomber, of which another 72 were ordered and delivered, bringing the total to 9 operational bomber squadrons.\textsuperscript{1670} Meanwhile, at home in The Netherlands Fokker Aircraft had developed a powerful two-propeller fighter, the G-1, but the KNIL still was not interested. Maj.-Gen. Berenschot, Chief-of-Staff of the KNIL, declared in an article in the Dutch newspaper \textit{Het Vaderland} of 4 October 1937, that fighters were less useful because of the lack of warning time, their short range and small excess of speed over bombers.\textsuperscript{1671} The G-1 fighter however had a range of 1500 kilometres!

This all changed rather dramatically after the Polish campaign in the Autumn of 1939.\textsuperscript{1672} The German Ju-87 Stuka divebomber had proven its effectiveness, and so had the 2-engined heavy fighter Me-110, which resembled the G-1. In a hurry orders went out for a fighter, the American Curtiss Hawk, which had a maximum speed of 480 km/h, an armament of 2 machineguns of 12.7 mm and 2 machineguns of 7.7 mm and a range of 1400 km. Also ordered were 162 Brewster Bermuda dive bombers. These could be equipped with one bomb of 900 kg, three bombs of 300 kg each, or one torpedo of 800 kg. The monoplane had a maximum speed of 525 km/h, a range of 2300 km and an armament of 5 machineguns of 12.7 mm. Nine squadrons would have been equipped with this plane, but because of delays they never arrived in the NEI.\textsuperscript{1673}

In the late thirties the KNIL-ML was busily expanding the number of airbases, both on Java, and also on the outlying islands. This to the dismay of the Koninklijke Marine.\textsuperscript{1674} Also the NEI Council in its advice of 13 May 1937, warned explicitly against the dangers of outlying airfields.\textsuperscript{1675} As long as the KNIL-ML had only airbases on Java or Sumatra (behind Singapore), an attacking enemy had to employ vulnerable aircraft carriers in the narrow sealanes of the archipelago, risking their demise. But if the KNIL started to build forward airbases in Borneo and the Celebes, the enemy could conquer these first, before attacking Java. The Council therefore objected strongly against the construction of these outlying air bases, even if they were "secret", on islands other than Borneo and Sumatra, supported in this by the Navy,\textsuperscript{1676} to no avail, however.\textsuperscript{1677} It has to be pointed out, however, that from 1935 onwards, civil aerodromes were built near cities on the large outlying islands in order to be served by civil airliners. This development could not be

\textsuperscript{1669} Ed.: "Het Duitsche Luchtwapen in Polen" \textit{IMT}, 71:1 (1940), 63 ff.

\textsuperscript{1670} L.C.A. van Dam: "Het werpen van bommen uit vliegtuigen". \textit{IMT}, 70, (1939), (6), 503.

\textsuperscript{1671} Quoted in \textit{IMT}, 68:12 (1937), 1143.

\textsuperscript{1672} P.C. Boer, op. cit. 18.

\textsuperscript{1673} Stafwerk, Vol. IV, 4.


\textsuperscript{1675} G. Teitler, Ed.: \textit{Tussen Crisis en Oorlog}. Dieren, 1982. 54.

\textsuperscript{1676} A.M.W. van Renesse: "Ongerustheid over de Indische defensie" \textit{Het Marineblad}, 52:11 (1936), 1096.

\textsuperscript{1677} For the two papers in which the question of the outlying airfields is discussed, see ARA ADK V 9 februari 1938 Z-6, where also the Report with recommendations of the NEI Council can be found.
stopped, and also played in Japanese hands.

One of the organisational errors made by the KNIL-ML was the lack of an adequate air raid warning system specifically for the airfields. Experience in China had shown that in 1937 the Japanese Airforce could almost wipe out the Chinese airforce by attacking its airfields. As there was no adequate early warning system, the Japanese fighters were strafing the airfields seconds after the first sirens started. The Chinese improved their system of air raid wardens, and dispersed their planes at the airfields, which minimized their losses after 1939. Experiences during the Battle of Britain highlighted the importance of early warning by both radar stations and air spotters. The training of air raid wardens and their location on the most probable Japanese approach routes to the Javanese military airfields could have been perfected around the end of 1941, because it was organisationally simple, and cheap, as Java possessed an excellent telephone service. Early warning of impending attacks even without radar, in combination with plane dispersal at the airfields could have saved KNIL-ML from the considerable losses at the airfields inflicted by Japanese planes unexpectedly striking out of the blue.

The strategy of the KNIL-ML is best explained by Captain P.G. Mantel in a presentation on 25 March 1938, which will be summarized below.\(^{176}\)

Mantel arrived at the following propositions:

- The shore based bomber is superior to the carrier-based bomber in terms of range and bomb weight.
- A powerful Army in Java will force the enemy to send more than one transport fleet to Java.
- A fleet is needed to force the enemy to adequately escort these transport fleets.
- The enemy will not employ carriers to protect the invasion fleets, due to the vulnerability of carriers against landbased bombers. Vide the results of the Singapore maneuvers of 1937.
- The transport fleets are very interesting attack goals for landbased bombers, which will not be hindered by fighters, as no carriers are present.
- The only way open to the enemy in order not to lose his transport fleets is to conquer airfields on the outlying islands, in order to use them for his landbombers. This would be a very slow process, as for example all the military airfields then under construction in Borneo were situated in the interior far from the coast.
- The role of the MLD is strategic reconnaissance, in order to find the location of the enemy transport fleet as fast as possible.
- A bomber fleet of nine squadrons would be able to smash any transport fleet nearing NEI territory.

In the often harsh reality of war, these propositions have been tested, and most have been found wanting. Japan did indeed not use its carriers in the narrow sealanes of the archipelago. However, the Japanese systematically conquered airfields for landbased bombers and fighters to protect their landing convoys on the next leg. The one really faulty proposition however was that of high level precision bombing of convoys. It turned out that high-level bombing attacks did almost no damage to convoys. That damage came from torpedo planes and divebombers - planes which neither the MLD nor the KNIL-ML possessed. It were Japanese landbased torpedoplanes which sunk the PRINCE OF

\(^{176}\) P.G. Mantel: "De harmonie in de weermacht in Nederlandsch Indië" IMT, 69:6, (1938) 511 ff, 7, 703 ff.
WALES and REPULSE with such ease.

In the discussion after Mantel's presentation, the naval officer Van Foreest prophetically pointed out the lack of training and doctrine in the Army Airforce in handling the torpedo weapon which later proved to be so deadly.\(^{1679}\)

It must however be admitted, that it was not only the Army Airforce which had at that time an exaggerated view on high-level precision bombing. A Naval flyer named Meester published tables in *Het Marineblad*\(^{1680}\) with scoring percentages of hits on ships under steam. The probability of a direct hit during an attack of nine bombers each with 8 bombs on a ship under full steam would be 86\% during a pass from left to right over the ship, and even 90\% if the pass was made in the direction of the ship's movement. In practice these probabilities turned out to be too high by a factor ten! And had not one single bomb forced the surrender of the mutineers on HNMS DE ZEVEN PROVINCÎEN in February 1933? (See this Chapter, page 273).

Nevertheless, the KNIL-ML was now in full swing to expand its organisation. Between 1937 and 1939 it had to crew nine bomber squadrons, thereafter nine fighter squadrons had to be manned, in combination with air transport and reconnaissance squadrons. And all this with a very small pool of potential aircrews available in the NEI! According to a radio-talk of the KNIL C-in-C, the KNIL-ML grew from 400 men in 1937 to 2600 in 1941 to 5000 in 1942.\(^{1681}\) The problem was not so much recruiting pilots, but recruiting technicians.\(^{1682}\) Pilots could be recruited from the "Vrijwillige Vlieger-Corpsen" (Voluntary Flying Corps) which had been established in the thirties by private initiative.

At the time of Pearl-Harbor the KNIL-ML possessed 100 bombers, 108 fighters and 36 reconnaissance planes, 106 training planes and 19 transport planes.\(^{1683}\) The Naval Air Arm consisted of around 60 flying boats, with about 12 on order. This combined airforce was at that time the most powerful Western airforce in South-East Asia, although the US Army Airforce in the Philippines was rapidly increasing its air strength and would at that rate of reinforcement surpass the Dutch airforce within a few months.

One of the reasons for the catastrophe of 1942, however, was the total lack of cooperation between the Naval Air Arm MLD and the Army Airforce, and between the Airforce and the (ground) Army. A history of years of conflict on the strategic direction of NEI defence, coupled with the inevitable fight between the two services for the meagre finances made available for defence expenditures, were the underlying causes for this lack of interservice co-operation. Both services have to take the blame for this sad state of affairs.\(^{1684}\)

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\(^{1679}\) P.G. Mantel, op. cit., 705.


\(^{1681}\) P.C. Boer, op. cit., 19, note 59.

\(^{1682}\) Stafwerk, ill, 5.

\(^{1683}\) Stafwerk, ill, 6 afp.

\(^{1684}\) Schoonoord, op. cit., 102.
Stranger still was the lack of co-operation between Army and Army Airforce, as they were both part of the same Service. One of the baffling facts of the war against the Japanese was that the appearance of a single Japanese reconnaissance plane could cause the dispersal of whole army field units. The KNIL ground troops had not been acquainted in training with the air power factor, and thus lacked actual experience about warplanes in action. Boer has noted, that "most KNIL-officers were not at all conversant about the possibilities of air power, and had a strong urge to do things without involving the airforce. Even air reconnaissance was not asked for. The liaison officers of the ML at the divisional headquarters had nothing to do, because they were not asked anything." It is a damning indictment of a lack of training, which could have been easily provided in the years before the war.

3.6.7.3.6.7. Conclusions.

When overviewing the two decades which were so important in deciding the fate of Dutch defence in the Far East, one is stuck by a number of inconsistencies.

Neutrality was a self-evident external policy, which in itself was never challenged by the political establishment. In the first decade of the century, and in the early twenties, there was much general support for ensuring that this neutrality would be respected by outside powers. This meant a powerful fleet, consistent with the strong chauvinism of specifically the protestant christian parties which formed the core of government during the entire interwar period. The problem was one of political leadership. Colijn, the leader of the orthodox protestants, was more interested in monetary stability and balanced budgets than in a strong defence, and warned as early as 1922 that expenditures for Defence had to be reduced. De Geer, the other protestant leader, did not see any danger from abroad, and was even more bent on balanced budgets than Colijn. Both political leaders failed to rally their parties behind a platform which would have confronted the anti-militaristic political parties. They failed to do so in the period 1925 - 1930, when the economy would have made modest re-armament possible, and in the period after 1934, when even then growth of defence outlays was not spectacular. They might have found an excuse in the unreliability of their Roman Catholic Coalition partner in 1925 - 1930, because it were the dissidents from that Coalition Party who had helped to defeat the Draft Fleet Law in 1924. But after the German occupation of the Rhineland, there was a political and social platform for quick re-armament, which was not utilised to the utmost by the two protestant leaders.

Blom has pointed out that even in the period of reluctant armament after 1934, the military did not succeed in using all the funds allocated to them. In the years up to 1940 there was consistent underspending by the military. In the critical year 1934 the KNIL was expected to spend f 51,542,000 but actually spent f 45,062,000, which means an underspending of f 6,480,000 or about 13% of the estimates. It might be a result of the military bureaucracy, which in defining new weapons systems to be acquired, took (too) much time in specifying what was wanted, and lost even more time in dealing with armaments suppliers. This study is interesting enough to mention here, because it defies the image of cash-starved Admirals and Generals.

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185 Beunders, op. cit., 110.


186 HTK 1935 - 1936, Begroting 1936, Bijlage A.
One of the obvious shortcomings of the Dutch defence establishment in the interwar years was its consistent underestimation of Japanese capabilities, and concurrent overestimation of its own capabilities and those of the Allies, and of the British in particular. This attitude started with the Queen, who remarked in February 1941 about the Japanese, that "we should tackle them firmly, and drown them like rats".

We have previously contrasted the problems of morale within the two Services; with morale in the KM steadily being built up into an excellent fighting performance, and morale in the KNIL plummeting after the loss of Tarakan and thereafter of Singapore, accompanied by lots of Japanese radio propaganda towards their kinsmen in native society. The same could be stated with relation to doctrine development in the two Staffs.

As we have seen in the previous sub-chapter, the Dutch Naval Staff up to 1936 was too small to exercise any influence. The much more powerful General Staff of the KNIL however exhibited signs of losing touch with reality after 1935. Two examples suffice to illustrate this development. The first was the maturing of a Douhet-like doctrine on the use of strategic bombers. Notwithstanding signals to the contrary, these doctrines were developed even further. The second example is the KNIL Army re-organisation of 1940, adopting German Blitzkrieg tactics which were not adapted at all towards the inherently strong defensive potential of the Javanese landscape. Responsibility for these developments within the once powerful KNIL General Staff has to be shared by the Generals Berenschot and Ter Poorten, who were both strong proponents of the ML and of the re-organization of 1940. Clearly the KNIL Staff overreached itself.

3.7. Preparations for War.

3.7.1. Introduction.

In this sub-chapter we will discuss the civil and military preparations for war undertaken in the NEI in the late thirties. In contrast to the situation in the motherland, the European civil population in the NEI was far more aware of the possibility that the NEI would not be able to maintain its neutrality and would be drawn into a worldwide war, and acted accordingly. The battlecruiser-plan, for example, was initiated in the NEI press. More examples of this attitude will be covered.

The occupation of the motherland by the Germans not only led to tears and grief, but also to a resolve within the European population to be better prepared for the war to come. With grim determination, those measures were taken which were deemed necessary to give the Japanese a good fight. Although the European population of about 350.000 people was very small in relation to the total population of the NEI, it is still remarkable to note how this small group motivated other parts of the population to join it in a kind of general mobilization. A few pages will be dedicated to the attempts to mobilise the native masses, which was becoming inevitable in order to have a credible defence organisation.

3.7.2. Civil Preparations.

Around 1930, the NEI estimates for KNIL and Navy combined were around 100 million guilders; five years later that budget was about half the 1930 figure, as the total governmental budget had been halved also. The worldwide economic crisis took its toll. But in

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\(^{159}\) Conversation between Queen Wilhelmina and Ch. Welter, quoted in G. Hart, op. cit., 258.
1935 Japan had left the League of Nations, and was spending half of its total budget on defence. Dutch public opinion in the NEI started to recognise, together with the political parties in the Volksraad, that military spending had to be increased. Specifically the representatives of the Dutch community in the NEI, united in the "Vaderlandsche Club" (VC) would be clamoring for a stronger defence with growing intensity. A joint resolution was accepted in the People's Council in August 1935, in which the People's Council urged the government to increase defence estimations.

Next step was the establishment of a National Defence Committee ("Algemeen Weermacht-comité") which included also Indonesian dignitaries, and which collected 84,000 signatures for a petition addressed to the Dutch government with a plea for increased defence spending. Moreover, each signatory paid a guilder into a fund, with which private aviation clubs were started. Of the about 220 private flyers who obtained a license, 80% later joined the KNIL-ML, which was a sizable defence contribution. But the petition fell on deaf ears in the Netherlands.

By Government Decree of 6 November 1935, a commission was appointed to deliver plans for the economic mobilisation of the NEI in case of war. The commission consisted of the KNIL C-in-C as Chairman, and the Directors of the Departments of Economic Affairs and Internal Affairs. By Government Decree of 18 April 1936 a Staatsmobilisatieraad or SMR (State Mobilisation Council) was instituted, which was charged with the task of preparing a general mobilization in the NEI. The Chairman of the SMR was again the KNIL C-in-C; (until 1938), when his place was taken by a retired Lieut. General. Members were the Department Heads, with as Permanent Secretary an officer of the KNIL General Staff. The institution of the SMR clearly illustrates the switch in public opinion regarding the growing threat of war in the Far East.

The SMR had far-reaching authority in preparing plans for economic mobilization and stockpiling. Arrangements were set up with private businesses for defining those tasks of the workforce which were really critical for ongoing manufacturing and production. Strategic stockpiles of food and other essentials for the population were defined and thereafter maintained, and a distribution system set up. Measures were taken to protect important public utilities against sabotage. Very extensive work was done in civilian protection against air-raids. Even before 1940, twelve cities on Java had extensive air-raid precaution facilities. With an intensive public relations campaign in the press, the populace was informed about self-protection, the building of air-raid shelters in private gardens, firefighting and damage control. Ambulance services were strongly expanded, and manned by students from secondary schools, organised in the Orange Youth Corps (See this Chapter, Page 413).

In March 1941 the People's Council accepted a plan for an ambitious expansion of the industrial base of the NEI. This was the so-called Industrie-Plan (Industry Plan). This plan nominated 8 projects, of which the most important were the processing of bauxite to

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181 HV, 1936/1937, 1273 - 1276.


183 A. Gottschal: "De Staatsmobilisatie en haar Voorbereiding in Nederlandsch-Indië". iMT, 1936, no 6.
aluminium, the founding of a steel industry and the production of basic chemicals.\footnote{Stafwerk, II, 241.}

The Rhiau archipelago, south of Singapore possessed extensive deposits of bauxite. This mineral was exported in increasing quantities to Japan, where it was processed into aluminium for the production of (war) planes. The export in 1940 had increased to 275,000 tons from an inauspicious start of 9,900 tons in 1935. As the processing of bauxite into aluminium requires much electric power, the plan was to build a hydro-electric power station in the Asahan-river in Sumatra, where the aluminium smelter would be located with an initial production capacity of 5,000 tons of aluminium in 1943.

Although the NEI archipelago possessed enough iron ore and coal to fuel blast furnaces, the plan was to erect a scrap processing plant, which would produce iron and steel from scrap iron, of which about 35,000 tons/year were being exported. A basic chemical industry would also be founded, in order to produce ammonium sulphate, caustic soda, formic acid for the rubber industry, and a number of other basic chemicals. The plants would be erected near the refinery at Tjepoe in Central Java. Other projects consisted of plants for the production of glass, paper, and plywood, and the erection of spinning mills for textiles. The *industrie-plan* was an excellent plan, and would have given the NEI the beginning of an industrial base. Like so many plans, however, it came far too late.

3.7.3. Re-armament of the Koninklijke Marine, 1936 - 1940.

Re-armament of a navy always is a long-term process, because ships have to be built, and it takes a lot of time to build a large warship. This "pipeline effect" was recognized too late in Dutch politics. It had nothing to do with the industrial basis in the Netherlands itself. The projected battleships of the Staatscommissie 1912 still had to be built on foreign wharves because the Dutch wharves did not have the capacity for building such large ships and the Amsterdam locks could not handle ships of more than 8000 tons. That situation had dramatically changed in the early thirties. A native steel industry could now deliver all grades of steel, Dutch wharves could and did build ships up to 40,000 tons, the Dutch firms Stork and Werkspoor could build all kinds of heavy propulsion equipment. The Dutch private armaments industry had expanded remarkably in other areas too. This came in no small measure because of the Versailles Treaty, which had restricted the German armaments industry. One of the results of that Treaty was the transfer of the Fokker airplane factory from Germany to The Netherlands. A.H.G. Fokker was a Dutchman who had built fighters for the German Air force during the First World War, and returned to a neutral safe haven. The expertise of his firm was a priceless asset for The Netherlands, which was however not used to the fullest extent by either KM or KNIL, due to perfectionism, a lack of any sense of urgency, and bureaucracy.\footnote{G.H.M. Smits: "Dreiging uit de lucht - de Nederlandse discussie in het interbellum" *Militaire Spectator*, 166:11 (1997), 532.}

Other German firms followed Fokker's example. In 1921 the German electrotechnic firm Siemens & Halske founded the firm Hazemeyer's Signaal Apparaten (HSA) in Hengelo with Dutch capital, which firm developed fire control systems. Siemens & Schuckert invested their expertise into Nedalo, also in Hengelo close to the German border. Nedalo specialized in searchlight systems. The famous Zeiss factory founded Nedinsco at Venlo,
also close to the German border, for the production of binoculars and fire control optics. In 1922, the German wharves funded an international ship design and construction office in The Hague, the *Ingenieurskantoor voor Scheepsbouw* IVS, which continued designing submarines and larger warships for foreign navies in order not to lose this capability. The Dutch firm Wilton-Feyenoord in Rotterdam started the manufacturing of guns based on cooperation with the Swedish Bofors gun factory. Moreover the Dutch had within their borders one of the largest electronics firms in the world, Philips. With help of Philips the Dutch firm *Nederlandse Seintoestellen Fabriek* (NSF) in Hilversum started manufacturing radio transmitters. NSF later also developed the Enigma coding/decoding machines based on German patents, which were used by the *Koninklijke Marine*. (See under Intelligence). All in all, the Dutch had developed, after the First World War, an industrial armaments capacity which was quite astonishing for such a small nation. The only real weakness was in airplane motors, which had to be imported. It must be said that the KM used this industrial base to the utmost for the few new ships which were ordered, and that in its turn Dutch industry produced quite advanced and reliable products The KNIL however avoided this industrial base, ordering almost all its weapons from Germany, Switzerland and Austria. It is not known what was the underlying cause for this attitude.

Compared to The Netherlands, the manufacturing industry in the NEI was quite inferior. The NEI lacked blast furnaces and steel mills, wharves and plane factories. Industry was strongly oriented to the processing of agricultural output, like sugar and rice mills and an expanding food processing industry. Textile mills were scarce, as were other consumer product factories. The oil and hydrocarbon processing industry was well developed, however. A budding armaments industry was based on the Bandoeng arsenals of the KNIL and the Andir airplane maintenance facilities. In hindsight, it was a tragic mistake that no heavy industries existed in the NEI. With the occupation of the motherland in May 1940, Dutch defense forces became utterly dependent on the crumbs which other countries were willing to throw to them.

The main base of the KM in the NEI was Surabaya, which since the beginning of the 19th century had been the main naval base. The harbour of Surabaya is protected by the island of Madoera, which gives the base two points of entry: from the West and from the East. The western entry (*Westervaarwater*) opens to the Java Sea, the eastern entry (*Oostervaarwater*) to the Strait of Madoera. Only the Westervaarwater had the necessary depth (of around 7 meter) to allow the larger ships of the fleet and merchant navy an entry to the harbour. But in order to accomodate battleships, the Westervaarwater had to be dredged. This activity was started in 1940. The Oostervaarwater was shallow (less than 4 meters) and therefore only passable by light craft, which gave the harbour a certain measure of protection, but also a back door which was useless for larger ships if the Westervaarwater was blocked by enemy action.

The main naval base, to the east of the merchant port, was well-developed. Although no battleships could be accomodated, like in Singapore, the naval arsenals were well-equipped and could handle even very complex repairs. In Madoera, near Batoe Porong, were the so-called pyrotechnical workshops, partly located in bombtree grottoes in the low limestone hills. Bosscher has stated that in terms of repair and maintenance capabilities Surabaya was far better equipped than Singapore and he could be right.\(^{1806}\)

Going back to the KM, we have seen that at the end of the thirties it was allowed to build

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more ships than in the previous decades. On the slipways of Dutch wharves in 1939 were the hulls of two modern light cruisers, another flotilla leader, and four big, modern destroyers. Alas, only the flotilla leader (the JACOB VAN HEEMSKERK), two new submarines and one of the destroyers (the ISAAC SWEERS) were in a sufficient condition to be rescued from the German occupiers. The hulls of 2 other new destroyers at Rotterdam could have been towed to England, but because of indecision by the responsible officers this did not happen. The other major units fell in German hands; the two light cruisers were delivered to the KM after the war. All seven major units could have been in use in early 1940 if their ordering and construction had been brought under tight control. But again, there was no sense of urgency in Holland.

The decision process in the case of the fast battlecruisers again was very slow. The sense of urgency in Parliament was far higher than in the Cabinet and in the Navy Department. Almost a year was lost by involving the East Indian Government and the People's Council. Constitutionally the Dutch Government could have taken its responsibility without involving the NEI, as it had done in the promulgation of the Defense Foundations in 1927.

The invasion of the Netherlands by the Germans robbed the KM of its most important source of recruitment. The NEI had an unlimited supply of natives to man the fleet, but for political and security considerations the percentage of natives serving on board Her Majesty's ships were limited to 30% of the crew, after the debacle with the DE ZEVEN PROVINC'IEN. Although the Naval Staff in London developed an ambitious fleet plan for the expansion of the KM after the war had ended, the Dutch Government had to reject the offer of the British to take over from them the newly armed 10,000 tons cruiser HMS BELFAST, due to lack of personnel to man that ship. Why the crew of the cruiser SUMATRA with its malfunctioning machinery was not used to man the BELFAST, is still to be studied. The BELFAST is now a Museum ship, and can be visited in London.

3.7.4. Re-armament of the KNIL, 1936 - 1941.

As we have discussed in previous sub-chapters, the gradual re-armament of the KNIL started in earnest in 1936. Funds then became available for the purchase of modern weapons. The KNIL had a long tradition of buying its weapons and ammunition in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Denmark and Sweden. Even when, in the Netherlands, a gun foundry (the "Hollandsche Industrie- en Handelmaatschappij" in Rotterdam) was producing all types of guns, including 10.5 cm guns for the new destroyers of the KM, the KNIL preferred foreign manufacturers. At the time, with the exception of Germany, all these armaments suppliers were located in neutral countries. It however became abundantly clear in 1936 that Germany would become an unreliable weapons supplier. However, it was realized too late that maintaining the well-known suppliers was

1907 For their building history, see J.J.A. Wijn: "Marinestaf, scheepsbouw en vlootplannen" in L. Brouwer, op. cit., 134 - 137, 141, 157 - 165.


1909 HTK, 6 December 1939, 700.

1910 L. Brouwer, op. cit., 141.

1911 HTK, 18 December 1928, 1151.
becoming too risky, as the Dutch staff-work on KNIL History readily admits. The reason for not using the American market was a certain degree of perfectionism in the KNIL GHQ. American weapons were considered inferior to those of the European Powers. One of the Captains of KNIL GHQ, who would become C-in-C of the KNIL in 1946 - 1949, S.H. Spoor, remarked in 1942 that GHQ had been too conservative and had realized too late the importance of the American armaments industry. Therefore, with the possible exception of the Airplane industry, the KNIL had no foothold and no commercial relationships in the fast expanding American weapons market, which was then already being fully exploited by Great Britain and France.

Further research has to be done to answer the question why the KNIL did not use the industrial potential in the Netherlands with respect to armaments. Dutch industry manufactured guns and howitzers of 105, 70 mm and 50 mm, 75 mm anti-aircraft guns with fire-control, 80 mm mortars, 47 mm antitank guns, machineguns, and advanced communications equipment. There was only one Arsenal, the Artillerie-Inrichtingen Hembrug, but thanks to the placement of Educational Orders and the acquiring of licences, Dutch private industry had strongly expanded its capacity to produce armaments since 1937. Its capacity to produce armaments for both Army and Navy was far larger than the capacity used. In order to avoid cost overruns it was forbidden, until 1939, to private industry and Al Hembrug to work in overtime on Government armament orders. In another instance, the opportunity to order 90 modern airplane motors was lost due to bureaucratic bungling.

Zwitzer has frequently used the argument that the rearmament of the KNIL started too late, and was not too well funded. Money however was no problem. An internal government loan in the NEI of f 50 million in 1936 was oversubscribed seven times! The Exceptional Export License on rubber due to the international rubber restriction brought the NEI government a windfall of f 45 million in 1934/1935, which could not be spent. At the end of 1937 the NEI Treasury had an underspent surplus of f 27 million. According to the IMT of March 1939 the defence outlays for the Dutch empire had jumped from f 120 million in 1933 to f 360 million in 1937, of which more than half was intended for the NEI. In 1937 the Dutch spent f 98 million in The Netherlands and f 235 million in the NEI. However, an amount of f 27 million remained unspent. The whole subject of pre-war defense estimates needs a thorough study, as already indicated by Blom in his

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1903 Notier, Ibid., 39, note 111.
1904 It was estimated, that about 60% (in money value) of the rearmament requirements of the Dutch Army could be covered by Dutch industry. HTK, "Rijksbegroting voor het dienstjaar 1940", 2, VIII, 27, page 21.
1905 Ibidem, page 27.
1906 Parliamentarian M.L.F. Bajetto, HTK, 8 December 1939, 743.
1908 A.W.M. van Renesse: "Ongerustheid over de Indische Defensie" Marineblad, 52 (1937), 239.
interesting study on Dutch defence preparations.1910

A problem which was of the KNIL's own making, was the standard gun calibre. The standard gun was the M-95 carbine, which was light and handy, and well adapted to the diminutive native soldier. The carbine used 6.5 mm ammunition, as did the light machine-gun employed by the KNIL. The KNIL was the only Army in the world at that time, which had standardized on 6.5 mm ammunition.1911 Its lack of a production facility for this type of ammunition in the NEI made it however extremely vulnerable on the supply side. When Holland was lost to the Germans in 1940, the only ammunition which could be ordered was the American .300 inch (7.62 mm) ammunition or the Australian/British .303 inch (7.7 mm) calibre ammunition, which meant that existing guns and machineguns all had to be re-bored to the new calibres. An order for 100,000 American rifles with corresponding ammunition was placed, but cancelled by the U.S. Government1912. In British India an order was placed for 30,000 rifles .303, 1000 Bren machineguns .303 and 60 million cartridges .303.1913 This order was also cancelled by the British War Department. Thereafter, the KNIL had to turn to Australia to buy 7.7 mm rifles, and had to acquire 8 mm Italian rifles, which the British had obtained in large quantities after the Italian surrender in Abyssinia and Libya. The result was that the KNIL went to war with a hodgepodge of rifle calibers: 6.5, 7.62, 7.7 and 8 mm.1914

A credibility problem arose from within the KNIL, when on the urging of the Minister of Colonial Affairs (Welter) a 2-page pamphlet for release to the press was sent to all the legations and consulates all over the world at the end of 1939, praising the KNIL as a "Western Army" with correspondingly high firepower1915. This information was at odds with diplomatic efforts at the same time to obtain modern weapons and equipment for the KNIL.

Directly after the invasion of Holland by the Germans, the KNIL realised it had to write off its current orders in Sweden, Switzerland, France and Germany. During a telephone conversation on 12 May 1940 between officers of the Ministry of Colonial Affairs at The Hague (with a firefight against German paratroops raging outside) and General Headquarters at Bandung the equipment to be ordered was defined1916. The same day the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a telegram to Loudon in Washington1917, asking him to order the following weapon systems: 12 coastal artillery guns 15 cm, 16 howitzers 105

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1911 Stafwerk, II, 206.

1912 Stafwerk, II, 207.


1914 Stafwerk, II, 207.

1915 Pamphlet attached to letter SG MinBuZa to Minister in London, DZKA no 704/82, 17 January 1940 in Archives MinBuZa London period, secret archives, Aa.22, inv. nr. 996.

1916 Notes on telephone conversation, 12 May 1940, in Ibid., Inv.nr. 737.

1917 Telegram Van Kleffens to Loudon, 12 May 1940, Ibid.
mm, 52 anti-aircraft guns 80 mm, 100 anti-aircraft guns 40 mm, 34 anti-aircraft guns 20 mm and 30 infantry guns 47 mm. (page 109) The telegram was backed by a letter of the KNIL General Staff to Mr. L.L.E. Ormstein (page 111) of the Dutch Royal Arsenal in NewYork dated 20 May, asking in addition for the ordering of 230 machineguns 7.7 mm Colt, 1825 carbine-machineguns of 6.5 mm and 13,600 Carbines 7.7 mm Colt. Omstein had been assigned by the Dutch Royal Arsenal in New York. After the loss of the Netherlands Loudon had asked him, on 17 May 1940, to coordinate the different Purchase Commissions.

As can be deduced from this orders list, KNIL HQ tried to increase firepower of the regiments by ordering 105 mm howitzers. These however were in very short supply, as the U.S. Army had decided to replace the 75 mm field gun by the 105 mm howitzer on June 1, 1940. Therefore the U.S. Army had a surplus of 75 mm field guns. As noted on page 64, it was a pity that the KNIL did not order surplus 75 mm guns to increase its firepower over the Japanese, who also lacked regimental and divisional firepower (Chapter 6, page 694 - 698).

To accompany the delivery of the Glenn Martin bombers ordered in the U.S.A. the KNIL-ML had stationed a small number of officers in the U.S. After much confusion about reporting lines after the occupation of the Netherlands, they formed a KNIL Purchasing Commission under Lt.-Col. A. Fischer, who was also charged with obtaining weapons in addition to war planes. The need for such a purchase commission for the KNIL was defined in a letter by the Dutch Army Commander to the G.G. In the Summer of 1940, it became obvious that there were 5 different Purchase Commissions, i.e. for the KNIL, the Dutch Navy, the Government Navy, the (Dutch) Army in England, and for civil goods destined for the NEI under the Economic Affairs Department in Batavia. All these organisations were active on a heavily constrained American market, with factories overflowing with orders. This in combination with feelings in the State Department that the Dutch Government in London was weak and vacillating, and the NEI Government unwilling to cooperate with the British and therefore liable to go the way of Indo-China, resulted in the cancellations of a number of orders placed by American manufacturers. This resulted at last in bringing together the responsible Ministers in London (of Foreign Affairs, Colonies and Defence) to formulate a common purchasing policy. In an Ordinance, signed 15 October 1940 by all responsible Ministers, a single Netherlands Purchasing Commissi-

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1918 Letter Colonel H.L. Maurer KNIL GS to Ormstein. no 417/0408/I/II-T of 20 May 1940, Ibid.

1919 In addition were ordered 75 million cartridges 7.7 mm, 60 million cartridges 6.5 mm and 2.5 cartridges 9 mm. Total worth of the order was the equivalent of f 75 million.

1920 Letter Ormstein to Minister of Defence, 12 June 1940, in Ibid., inv. nr. 738.


1922 Notes of telephone conversation between Fischer and Verniers van der Loeff, 12 June 1940. ARA Archives MvK 1940/45, accession nr. 2.10.45, inv. nr. 738.


1924 Telegram no 204 Loudon to Van Kieffens, not dated (early September 1940), Ibid.
on (NPC) was defined under the responsibility of the Legation in Washington. Managed by its very able Chairman, J. van den Broek, the NPC quickly sorted out the bureaucratic mess it had inherited and tried to save what it could of the existing orders which were as yet not cancelled. (See page 112.) Due to the bureaucratic bungling described here, the Dutch lost a valuable year in purchasing American equipment, as compared with the streamlined and efficient British Purchasing Commission set up since the end of 1939.

With the signing of the Lend-Lease agreement between The Netherlands and the USA on 9 August 1941 by Cordell Hull and Loudon in Washington, the Americans recognized, as stated in the preamble of the agreement, that "the defence of the Kingdom of the Netherlands against further aggression is vital to the defence of the USA." The last barriers against information exchange and close co-operation were thereby removed. (See also page 112 - 113).

Although less well known, Australia also contributed measurably to the re-armament of the KNIL. According to a report, the Australians exported 19.4 million cartridges .303 inch, 75 Vickers machineguns, 500.000 link belts for the Browning MG .303 Mk III, and 7.000 rifles rebored from 8.5 mm to .303 inch towards the NEI between May 1940 and 31 July 1941.

One of the less well-known success stories of the KNIL rearmament programme was the fast expansion of the Armoury at Kiarajjondong, just East of Bandoeng proper. In 1938, the Armoury employed about 3000 people, mostly Indonesians. The Armoury consisted of 4 departments: the Artillery Workshops, Heavy Ammunition foundry for producing artillery projectiles, the factory for explosives and light ammunition, and the small arms factory. During 1939 and 1940 the Armoury succeeded in producing 80 mm Stokes-Brandt mortars with ammunition, the Vickers light machineguns with ammunition, the M-95 carbine and airplane bombs between 50 and 500 kg each. In the middle of 1941 more than 30.000 people worked at three shifts at the Armoury.

Therefore, the KNIL in early 1942 was not the underequipped army which a number of Dutch authors like Zwitzer and Heshusius have tried to convey in their publications. This can be illustrated by comparing the amount of equipment of a KNIL Regiment with a Japanese Infantry regiment, a Commonwealth/British Indian Infantry regiment, and a Philippine Army regiment based on their tables of organisation. This comparison can be found in the Table 8 below. (next page).

In considering the figures in the table, it must be remembered that these figures are based on the standard organisational strength of a regiment. In the harsh world of 1941 in S.E. Asia, most regiments on both sides did not possess the number of weapons they were...
entitled to, according to the Tables of Organization & Equipment (TO & E.). The British artillery regiments in Malaya only possessed 16 field guns for example, and also the Japanese regiments were less well equipped than shown here. Poorest in equipment was the already very small Philippine Army Regiment.

There was much self-satisfaction inside the KNIL in those years. The issue of the American Life Magazine of 22 January 1940 is illuminating, as it is dedicated to the NEI and its defence. It is mentioned that Governor-General Tjarda has an American wife, and that Chief of Staff Hein ter Poorten was "a friend of Glenn Martin and keeps a model of a Martin bomber in his Bandoeng office". C-in-C KNIL-ML H. van Oyen "is building hidden little airfields all over the islands". This information was meant to be highly confidential and it was officially not even known to the local Dutch Press! The Dutch defence strategy is

Table 8.
Comparison between Western and Japanese Regiments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>KNIL 1940</th>
<th>British 1931</th>
<th>Philippines 1932</th>
<th>Japanese 1933</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manpower</td>
<td>4,938</td>
<td>3,480</td>
<td>2,270</td>
<td>3,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field guns</td>
<td>12/75 mm</td>
<td>24/87.6 mm</td>
<td>3/75 mm</td>
<td>4/75 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howitzers</td>
<td>6/47 mm</td>
<td>12/37 mm</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6/37 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At-guns</td>
<td>9/20 mm</td>
<td>12/40 mm</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA-guns</td>
<td>4/40 mm</td>
<td>12/40 mm</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Machineguns</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Machineguns</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortars</td>
<td>18/80 mm</td>
<td>6/80 mm</td>
<td>12/81 mm</td>
<td>108/5 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenade dischargers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanks</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scout cars</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

graphically described as follows: 

"When the Japanese transports tried to land troops, they would be spotted by big German Dorniers, bombed by 150 Martins, which are the backbone of

1930 Rentier op. cit., 302 afp.
1934 Life, 22 January 1940, 56."
the Indies Airforce. When the Japanese bombers headed for the Dutch airfields, they would be met by fire from a mass of such light automatic 20 mm canons. The Japanese, poor bombers, would have to fly low and that would be perfect for these guns. After the Japanese Army has landed, it will be met by the crack Indies Army of some 40,000 men, three quarters of whom are natives". Note, that fighter airplanes are not mentioned at all. Dutch propaganda officers however did their job well, but there is no denying that the Dutch civil population held similarly optimistic and somewhat racist views about Dutch and Japanese defence capabilities as described in the article.

3.7.5. Rearmament of the Army Airforce KNIL-ML.

As we have seen, the expansion of the Army Airforce was one of the highest priorities of the NEI Government. The KNIL nurtured extensive contacts with the Fokker aeroplane factory in The Netherlands, but one way or another no large orders were placed there. The Fokker D-21 of 1936 and specifically the modern G-1 fighter were designed on the basis of KNIL-ML specifications, as was the T-5 bomber of 1933. The Fokker Aircraft factory was also working on a prototype of a new bomber which could replace the Glenn Martins, based on specifications received from the ML. A prototype of this Fokker T-IX bomber, which was based on the T-5, indeed made its first successful flight on 11 September 1939. It was the intention of the KNIL-ML to order 40 of these bombers, to be delivered in 1941. In March 1940 during a landing of this prototype bomber, the landing gear malfunctioned, resulting in much damage. When the Germans overran the Netherlands, the bomber had yet not been repaired.

After the loss of The Netherlands, a crash program was initiated to get additional planes from the United States. The KNIL Commander, Lt.-Gen. Berenschot, wrote a letter to the G.G. asking for a drastic reinforcement of the airforce. His plan was to have, in addition to the existing bomber squadrons available in mid-1941, another 6 squadrons of interceptors with 12 planes per squadron, 6 squadrons of 9 dive-bombers each and 2 squadrons of 9 reconnaissance planes for artillery spotting. With a 100% material reserve this would be a total of 288 additional planes. Total purchase costs was estimated as f 70 million. No documents could be found about any discussion between the G.G. and his army commander, and it must be supposed that the G.G. approved the planned reinforcements.

Therefore, in the period between May and July 1940, the KNIL-ML succeeded in provisionally ordering by way of "Letters of Intent" 162 medium bombers, 162 dive-bombers, 172 fighters, 36 reconnaissance planes, 20 transport planes and a number of trainers. An order by the Dutch Airforce regarding 24 Curtiss Wright CW-21B Interceptors was taken over by the ML. However, the Americans quickly introduced an export licensing program for airplanes, and the NEI did not get the highest priority in those exports. The highest priority

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1936 Boer, op. cit., 47.

1937 Letter Berenschot to G.G., 20 May 1940, nr. 823/XII-3, ARA Archives MvK London period 1940/45, accession nr. 2.10.45, inv. nr. 1115.

went to orders from countries in actual combat: Great-Britain, China, Greece, and later the Soviet-Union. It was hard to swallow for the proud Dutch that the Chinese got priority over them! On specific instruction of the President, Great Britain had an even higher priority in delivery of certain types of airplanes than the American Airforce.

The enormous British demand resulted in the block reservation of the complete production capacity of whole factories for months in advance. In order to obtain planes, the KNIL-ML therefore had to deal with less reputed aircraft production companies, like the small and not too well managed Brewster Aeronautical Corporation. Nevertheless, between June 1940 and December 1941 the Netherlands Purchasing Commission fixed up orders for 264 fighters (of which 72 were Hurricanes to be built in Canada), 162 Brewster Bermuda divebombers, 162 Mitchell B-25 bombers, 20 transport planes, 61 tactical reconnaissance planes and 85 trainers. These were higher figures than originally requested by Berenschot in May 1940. Of these orders however, only 188 planes reached the NEI before Pearl Harbor, mostly Brewster Buffalo and Curtiss Interceptor fighters. The first Mitchell bombers arrived in Australia in February 1942. The Bermuda divebombers never made it.

Around October 1940, after the Battle for Britain, it was even more recognized, that air superiority was decisive. This is spelled out in a 26-page document dated 24 October 1940, signed by Berenschot, Helfrich and Götz (Director of Finances) and dealing with the investments needed for a native militia. Java was still out of reach of Japanese air bases, thus the only threat in the air would come from aircraft carriers, which would be very vulnerable to ML bombers and especially dive-bombers. The plan therefore was to have around June 1941, about 290 planes available, and the same number in reserve. That would guarantee air superiority over Java.

As has been described in a previous sub-chapter, the KNIL-ML had sent a Purchasing Commission to the United States in June 1940, headed by Lt-Colonel A. Fischer. Fischer quickly discovered that it was very difficult to place orders with the American Armarmments industry. He informed the Colonial Ministry on 13 July 1940 that "all markets for war equipment have been closed for the Netherlands, resulting in low morale in the NEI if supply of war materials impossible." Van Kleffens asked his Minister in Washington, Loudon, to intervene with the American government.

Problems arose not only with the Americans, but also with the British. The KNIL-ML had already ordered 288 planes in the U.S.A., of which 48 Brewster Bermuda divebombers would be delivered in June 1941 and 40 Glenn Martin bombers in September 1941. To power these planes 128 airplane motors type Wright Cyclone GR-2600 were needed. Because the British Purchasing Commission had ordered all motor production not destined for USAF planes, those 128 motors had to come from the British production quorum. The Dutch contacted the British Ministry of Airplane Production to obtain release of these

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1940 Document KNIL General Staff, HKGS nr 3575/GS.I-1. Appendix to letter G.G. to Welter, 5 December 1940, ARA, Archives MvK, 1940/45, accession nr 2.10.45, inv. nr. 688.


1942 Telegram Van Kleffens to Loudon, n.d. (14 or 15 July 1940), ARA Archives MvK, London 1940/45, acc. nr. 2.10.45, inv.nr. 744.
motors\textsuperscript{1943}, but Lord Beaverbrook gave them short shrift. This delayed the delivery of the planes by more than a year, as the American Government refused to give export licenses\textsuperscript{1944}. Fischer thereafter enquired what priorities the NEI Government had for delivery of warplanes. The answer of the G.G. was: first priority to fighters, second priority to divebombers, thereafter transport planes and reconnaissance planes\textsuperscript{1945}. This telegram also makes clear that in the view of the KNIL-ML Staff the Glenn Marins were still considered to be modern, and that their replacement by B-25 Mitchell bombers could be delayed to 1942. It is also a far cry from the "fighter-less" Air Force of 1939.

In a letter from the Colonial Ministry dated 15 November 1940, an overview is given of all Dutch orders for warplanes in the United States\textsuperscript{1946}.

- 54 Lockheed Hudson bombers model 1937, planned delivery June - December 1941, 9/month.
- 54 Brewster Bermuda divebombers model 340 with 70 Curtiss Wright GR 2600 airplane motors, delivery first half 1942.
- 100 Brewster Buffalo fighters model 339, delivery July/August 1941 with reconditioned G 105-A motors.
- 20 Lockheed Lodestar transport planes delivery February/April 1941 with 40 reconditioned motors from American Airlines passenger planes.
- 10 Lockheed dual motor bomber/trainers model 212 with 26 Pratt & Whitney Wasp Junior motors.

The GR 2600 Wright Cyclone Motors for the divebombers had to come from the pool of the British Purchasing Commission (BPC), as was made clear by the Colonial Office.

The refusal of the British to release the GR 2600 motors, and of the Americans to release the reconditioned American Airlines motors however resulted in a rescheduling of the delivery plans. The Americans refused orders for 45 Brewster Buffalo fighters, 108 Lockheed Hudson bombers and 100 Bell Airacobra fighters\textsuperscript{1947}. This to impress on the Dutch Government the displeasure of the American Government with respect to the Dutch attitude of aloofness towards Great Britain in the Far East and the increased oil deliveries to Japan under the Kobayashi-agreement.

The change in Dutch attitude towards the British and Australians in the Far East, and Dutch steadfastness in the talks with the Yoshizawa-mission resulted in a much more accommodating approach by the Americans. According to a letter in May 1941, the following delivery schedules had been agreed upon with the Americans\textsuperscript{1948}:

\textsuperscript{1943} Letter Verniers van der Loeff to Lord Beaverbrook, 24 July 1940. ARA MvK Archives, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1944} Telegram Welte r to G.G., cipher BPISR no 805, 25 October 1940, ARA Archives MvK, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1945} Telegram G.G. to Welte r, nr E-4 of 4 November 1940. ARA Archives MvK, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1946} Maj.-Gen. H.J.W. Verniers van der Loeff, Colonial Ministry to W.P. Hildred, Principal Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Aircraft Production UK, 15 November 1940.
\textsuperscript{1947} Letter Fischer to Colonial Ministry, 11 January 1941, ARA Archives MvK, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1948} Letter Lt-Col. W.G.R. de Jager to Verniers van der Loeff, 5 May 1941, no 9664U/UB. ARA Archives MvK, Ibid.
1. 92 Brewster Buffalo fighters, 24 delivered, 15 in May 1941, 15 in June 1941, rest in July/August 1941.

2. 25 Curtiss Falcons Interceptors, delivery December 1941.

3. 117 Brewster Bermuda divebombers, delivery schedule August 1941 1, September 3, October 6, November 10, thereafter 15 per month.

4. 45 Brewster Bermuda divebombers to be delivered in June/August 1942. (The order with Brewster was signed on 17 June 1941.)

5. 20 Lockheed Lodestar transport planes, 10 to be delivered before 20 June 1941, 10 others in September 1941.

   Another batch of 20 Lodestars would be delivered between September 1941 and February 1942.

6. 25 Ryan ST-3 training aircraft, delivery September 1941.

7. 162 Mitchell bombers model B-25/C (which had replaced the Lockheed Hudsons), to be delivered between October 1942 and January 1943. Actually, the order with plane manufacturer North American for these advanced bombers was signed on 28 June 1941.

No export licenses had yet been given for the 100 Bell Airacobra fighters, but it was expected that from September 1941 onwards 10 per month would be delivered. The Bell Airacobra was a powerful fighter, which would prove to be far superior than the Japanese Zero fighter after its delayed introduction in the Pacific at the end of 1942.

In July 1941 the delivery schedule was further modified (i.e. postponed) as follows:

162 Brewster Bermuda divebombers between October 1941 and July 1942, 25 Curtiss Falcons in October and November 1941, 25 Ryan Trainers in January/February 1942, 20 Lockheed bomber trainers October 1941 to February 1942, 100 Curtiss Tomahawk P-40s October 1941 to March 1942.

An interesting deal was proposed by the British Air Ministry, which was desperately short of air transport capacity. As the delivery of Lodestars to the NEI started in May 1941, the BPC proposed a swap of Lodestars for Bell Airacobra fighters, of which the British would receive 15 in July 1941. After some discussions the Air Ministry even proposed 2 Bell Airacobras for one Lodestar. As the Dutch would still receive 15 Lodestars after the end of May, that would mean 30 Airacobras. But the KNIL-ML needed the Lodestars in order to fly equipment to the airfields in the outer islands, in Malaya and eventually in the Philippines under the agreement reached at the last Singapore Staff Conference. Therefore the G.G. telegraphed his veto over the deal. In hindsight, it would have been

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1849 Letter J. van den Broek to Adm. Fürstner, 21 July 1941, Ibid., inv. nr. 738.


1851 Telegram G.G. to Welter, cipher MV, 31 May 1941. ARA Archives MVK, Ibid.
better to accept the British proposal, because it would have given Dutch fighter pilots a fair chance against the Zero. Possibly because of the Dutch refusal, the 100 Airacobras ordered in the U.S. were not released by the U.S. Government.  

From August 1941 onwards, the NPC tried to order 100 Hurricane-ll fighters built under license at a Canadian factory with Rolls Royce Merlin V-1650 motors, produced by Packard in the U.S. in license. The British refused to release part of the production of the Merlin motors for those Hurricanes. They offered 100 P-40D Kittyhawks in their place. The Kittyhawk (called the Tomahawk in the U.S.) was a far better plane than the Brewster, and the American General Chennault had equipped his Flying Tigers in China with P-40s which performed reasonably well against the Zero. But the Hurricane was a more powerful plane, and the Colonial Ministry refused the swap. Again, in hindsight it would have been better had the swap been agreed upon. At last, agreement was reached on delivery of 72 Canadian Hurricanes to the NEI from June 1942 onwards. That order was cancelled on 7 April 1942 after the fall of Java.

3.6.6. The manpower problem.

The occupation of The Netherlands by the Germans in 1940 had the consequence that no longer fresh Dutch manpower became available for the KNIL. This hurt most for the officers, because KNIL officers were trained at the Royal Military Academy in Breda in The Netherlands. Therefore, a Military Academy had to be started in Bandong, with officers of the GHQ as instructors. Also the supply of Dutch non-commissioned officers from the KNIL depot at Nijmegen came to a halt. The aforementioned Peoples Council Member Soetardjo had already urgently asked in 1938 for the establishment of an Officer's Training School in the NEI, but his request was denied by the NEI Government, with Lt-Gen. Boerstra declaring with aplomb, that "the future officers... have to acquire ideas, opinions and conceptions which surpass the local level". As subsequent developments would prove, this was of course a non-argument, intended to stop the discussion on this subject.

The invasion of the Netherlands by the Germans caused a wave of sympathy with the Dutch in all strata of the population, which was however of short duration. The government decided to use the expressions of attachment to the Dutch cause by installing a Commission to increase participation of NEI society in self-defence. This Weerbaarheids-Commissie (Defence Commission) consisted of 11 members drawn from all races (5 were

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1952 Letter Verniers van der Loeff to F.A. Brand, Office of the UK War Cabinet, 23 October 1941. ARA Archives MVK 1940/45, Ibid.

1953 Telegram Naval Attaché Washington to C-in-C Dutch Navy, 14 August 1941, 1500/224. ARA Archives Colonial Ministry, Ibid.

1954 Telegram Naval Attaché Washington to Verniers van der Loeff, 15 September 1941. Ibid.

1956 Stafwerk, II, 204.


1957 HV, session 1937/1938, 773.

Javanese, 1 was Chinese) and chaired by Mr. J.H.B. Kuneman, Member of the Council for the NEI. On the initiative of a KNIL Reserve-Officer, J.C. van Waveren at Batavia, the Defence Commission, on 15 July 1940, advised the establishment of a Home Guard ("Stadswacht") consisting of civilians who would exercise in their free time. Recruitment would be from all races of the population! An appendix to this proposal gives an interesting inventory of available manpower.

On the basis of the census of 1930, there were in NEI 53,220 men of Dutch stock between 18 - 45 years of age. The Army together with Dutch conscripts and reservists counted 42,764 Dutchmen, the Police employed 1,075 Dutchmen. Subtracting the two last figures from the first figure, the conclusion was an availability of 9,381 Dutch civilians between 18 and 45 years of age. In addition, there were 9,883 Dutchmen between 45 and 55 years of age, and 3,086 Dutch boys between 16 and 18 years of age. In total 22,330 men. As the municipality of Batavia itself already needed around 11,000 men for its air-raid wardens, the conclusion was that the white top-layer in the colony could in no way fill all the open positions. The recommendation was for the involvement of large numbers of white women and of natives and Chinese. The final report of the Defence Commission, dated 30 August 1940, recommended therefore a native militia by conscription.

As the population of Java at that time was around 43 million, a comprehensive native conscription would draft around 400,000 eighteen year olds per year. Therefore a selective draft was proposed. In the sub-chapter on Native Conscription, further actions in this field will be described.

One of the mistakes of the pre-war KNIL command was the failure to mobilise the indigenous manpower resources available. There was understandably hesitation about mobilizing the Javanese masses, but sources of well-educated, christianized and very loyal populations were available for conscription after 1935 in both the Minahasa (Northern Celebes) and Ambon. The People's Council Member L.L. Rehatta complained on 25 July 1938 about the lack of such a drive in the Moluccas.

History would prove that he was right.

A complicating factor was the requirement of the Dutch Government in exile to have an expeditionary force of 10,000 men ready for the eventual liberation of the Netherlands. This force would consist of 3 Independent Brigades, each with 2 battalions infantry and one battalion of 22 tanks each, with supporting artillery and troops. To avoid "adverse reactions of the Dutch population against coloured troops" the percentage of native troops would be about 20% of the total force, which would have put an enormous strain on the availability of Europeans for this force. In order to scrape together as much as possible additional manpower, the KNIL recalled retired personnel (especially officers), and

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1940 For the members of the Commission, see Executive Order G.G., 15 June 1940, in ARA Archives MvK, 1940/45, accession nr. 2.10.45, inventory nr. 688.

1940 Letter Defence Commission to G.G., 15 July 1940. Ibid.

1941 Final Report Defence Commission, in Mail Report nr 824 Geh/40. Ibid.


1943 Telegram G.G. to Welten, 19 May 1941, MinBuZa Secret Archives, London Archives, DZ/GA, B 1-10, inv.nr. 516.
delayed the retirement of those eligible.

The Dutch inhabitants of the NEI were liable for military service, as conscription for this ethnic category had been introduced in 1918. There were a total of 30,000 men spread over 26 drafts. In 1939, around 25% of these draftees were exempt however because they occupied vital functions in the civil service or economy. On 12 December 1941, the mobilization was completed, and all those called had reached their war destination.

An attempt was made to conscript young Dutchmen residing in the USA into the KNIL, starting in October 1940. The Colonial Ministry thereupon got into a row with the Ministry of Defence, which was recruiting for the "Dutch Legion" in Britain from the same pool via the Dutch legation in Ottawa, Canada. Notwithstanding close physical location in London, Dutch bureaucrats were still fighting turf battles. The recruitment drive was however a complete failure. Only 14 people volunteered for KNIL service. The reason was, that Dutch conscripts had been brought under the (American) Selective Service Act of 1940. They could refuse their draft, but in that case they could never hope to be naturalised for American citizenship in the future; a citizenship ardently desired by most Dutch draftees.

To take care of actions of fifth columnists and parachutists, a so-called stadswacht (Town Guard) was formed in 36 different conurbations in the NEI. The Stadswachten were a private initiative, based on experiences in The Hague and Rotterdam with German para's during the German coup. The Stadswachten were incorporated within the KNIL, and consisted of members of civil trade and industry, who were exempt from mobilization because of their indispensability. Also serving in the Stadswachten were non-Dutch volunteers with Chinese, Indonesian or Arabic ethnic background, who had at least finished basic education and spoke Dutch. The percentage distribution over the different ethnic groups in the Stadswachten was 50% Dutch, 25% Indonesian and 25% Chinese/Arabic. The Stadswachten varied in size between around 1000 in large cities to less than 100 men in the smaller towns.

The large western plantations in Java and Sumatra took the initiative to form so-called Landwachten of about 15 men for each plantation, recruited from local personnel. The basic idea was to cover both islands with a network of mutually supporting light troops who could maintain internal security, and thereby free troops from the KNIL to fight the external enemy.

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1064 Staafwerk, II, 82.
1066 Nortier, ibid., 42.
1067 Letter Dijxhoorn to Welter, 26 October 1940, ARA Archives MvK 1940/45, acc. nr. 2.10.45, inv. nr. 738.
1068 Letter Col. Weijerman to Welter, 22 January 1941, Ibid.
1069 For a list of towns with a Stadswacht, see Staafwerk, II, 73.
1070 Staafwerk, II, 67.
1071 Staafwerk, II, 77 afo.
To cope with the problem of lack of truck drivers, civilian drivers were pooled in the Vrijwillig Automobielkorps (abbreviated to "Vaubek") or Volunteer Driver Corps. By requisitioning private freight trucks and using Vaubek-drivers, the KNIL planned to finish the as yet incomplete motorisation of the supposedly mobile KNIL-Regiments in Java. The lack of military education made these militarised civilians very unreliable under stress, however. Starkly in contrast with that was the experience with the VAK (Vrouwelijk Automobielkorps or Female Driver Corps), which was established at the urging of the only woman in the People's Council, Mrs C.H. Razaux - Schultz. The woman drivers of ambulances and light freight trucks recruited from all races were at the ready day and night, and executed their sometimes dangerous missions with resolve, shaming their male compatriots.

The youth was also mobilised. (See page 129) This started from June 1940 with the establishment of the Oranje Jeugdgroepen (Orange Youth Corps). These consisted of boys and girls of 16 years and older, who studied at the Secondary schools in the large cities, and were mostly of Dutch origin. They were employed as assistants in the Red Cross and as Air-raid Wardens, or assisted the police.

In conclusion, it might be stated that at the outbreak of war, the Dutch population of the NEI was almost totally mobilised in one form or another. The men were drafted in the KNIL forces, or when they could not be spared, they served in Stadswachten or as air-raid wardens. Boys were employed as air-raid wardens too, their sisters were in the Red Cross or drove ambulances. White women supervised civil defence preparations at their homes and were busy in providing supporting activities for the troops. In early 1942 the white component of NEI society was thoroughly militarised, with a sizable fraction of other races and specifically Indo-Chinese joining in the common effort.

3.7.7. Native Conscription.

The NEI was one of the largest nations on Earth in terms of size, but also in terms of population (around 65 million in 1940). If conscription had been imposed, it would have been theoretically possible to raise an army of millions. Theoretically of course, because the raw recruits naturally had to meet certain basic requirements in physical stamina and in reading and writing.

The issue of native conscription had already been debated in the 19th Century, but that discussion was stopped in its tracks by the Indian Mutiny of 1859, which again brought in focus the loyalty of indigenous troops. This loyalty remained a constant worry. The G.G. at that time, Idenburg, wrote in 1906 that "The Dutch would never be able to win the sympathy of the natives. Moreover, even if the Dutch Government would take that risk, it lacked the financial resources to equip a mass army". The State Commission (Heemskerk) of 1912 had advised against native conscription, but used as an argument that the most populous group of indigenous people, the Javanese, were not soldiers by tradition and disposition.

1674 HV, session 1938/1939, 398.

1675 Stafwerk, II, 237 afp.

1676 Captain KNIL F.O.B. Musch: "Inheemsche Militie" Indisch Militair Tijdschrift, 1941, 333 afp.

1677 De Graaff, op. cit., 417.
an argument that would be frequently used in the future. The retired naval Officer Van der Sluis went against this advice, arguing for regional conscription, to be limited to the Preanger, Madoera, Bali and Lombok, regions populated by non-Javanese peoples.

The First World War however brought the subject back into discussion, resulting in a draft Conscription Law presented to the Volksraad in 1918. The militia would not be a part of the regular KNIL, would be more lightly armed, and would be called up from the yearly class of eligible young men by the draw. However, every male between 17 and 35 years would be liable to conscription. One of the selection criteria would be a rudimentary understanding of the Dutch language. The NEI Education department of course objected against such a punishment of native youngsters seeking to improve their position by an European education. The militia army on Java would consist of 4 divisions of 17,000 men each, and assorted support groups to a total of 100,000 men. For this a yearly supplement of 10,000 men each year had to be drawn from the potentially eligible conscripts. The proposal was defeated in the Volksraad on 15 January 1920, because the native representatives in the Volksraad voted against it. They wanted constitutional concessions, which the Dutch Government and the NEI Administration were not willing to offer.

The issue surfaced again in 1936 in the Volksraad. The Indonesian Nationalists, under Wirjopranoto made it clear however, that although they supported an Indonesian militia, that would only make sense if there was something of value for the young Indonesians to die for: more political freedom. And that was a price which the NEI Government was not yet ready to pay. The experience of the mutiny on the DE ZEVEN PROVINCIËN was still on every colonial's mind.

The native members of the Volksraad, Soetardjo, Gondosoebroto and Dateo Toemenggoeng asked in a petition dated 16 February 1937 for the institution of a Commission, which would advise the Government on the introduction of limited native conscription. General Boerstra, the commander of the KNIL at that time, answered on 11 August 1937 in the Volksraad that experiences in the First World War had clearly shown that a small, but well-armed and well-trained army was to be preferred to a sizable, but not so well-armed army. He considered the KNIL as it existed to be of optimal size. The petition was however approved with 24 for and 16 against. The Volksraad had no legislative power however, and the NEI Government ignored the petition, because the Government

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800 Staafwerk, II, 40.
801 HV, 1936/37, 908. Staafwerk, II, 42.
mistrusted the loyalty of the natives.

In 1938 again the People's Council Member W.H. van Helsdingen urged the NEI Government to consider the possibility of conscription for Indo-Chinese; a large group within the population, well-educated in Dutch, loyal to the Dutch and very anti-Japanese, especially after the start of Japanese aggression in China and the outbreak of the Chinese-Japanese war. This excellent suggestion was dismissed by KNIL-Commander General Boerstra with the worn-out excuse that the Indo-Chinese did not possess a martial tradition. The native member Soangkoepo declared thereupon that "it is a shortsighted policy...to be afraid that conscription of others than Europeans for the KNIL would bring certain dangers. It has become time to break with that kind of thinking" These were prophetic words indeed.

The prospects of native conscription did not meet with wide acceptance however. The loyalty of the conscripts was a source of anxiety, as expressed by Welter to the G.G.: In his answer the G.G. pointed out that if the natives were disloyal, this would also destroy the effectiveness of the Army, of which over 70% of the manpower consisted of natives. This was of course an accurate observation, but only after his visit to the NEI in April/May 1941 did Welter become convinced about limited native conscription.

Therefore it was 21 May 1941 before a new proposal reached the Volksraad. In this draft Law, the Militia Army of 1920 had disappeared, and the new militia would be incorporated within the KNIL. The plan was to introduce a limited conscription on Java and Madoera, Ambon and the Minahasa. The war strength would be 30,000 native militias on Java/Madoera and 3,000 in each of the regions mentioned. The militia would be organised in 2 "territorial" divisions, next to the 6 mechanised KNIL-Brigades. These divisions would not be as mobile, would have no tanks, but would be equipped with antitank guns 47 mm and light anti-aircraft artillery. They would still be inferior in firepower to the mechanized Brigades. The armament of the two divisions would consist in total of 165 antitank guns, 155 antitank rifles, 130 pieces of 20 mm anti-aircraft guns, 1200 heavy and 1300 light machineguns, 35,000 rifles and 710 freight cars. The large quantity of rifles necessary explains the frantic search for rifles in a number of countries, resulting in the purchase of Italian rifles captured by the British in North-Africa. In order to maintain this militia army, around 3000 young men had to be called into service yearly. Military service was to be imposed not only on the Javanese, but also on the Chinese and Indo-Chinese.

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1940 HV, 27th session, 8 August 1938, 773.
1941 Ibid, 404.
1942 Telegram Welter to G.G. 4 March 1941. In ARA Archives MvK, 1940/45, accession number 2.10.45, inv. nr. 688.
1943 Telegram G.G. to Welter, 2 April 1941, no 111. Ibid.
1944 Letter G.G. to Welter, 5 December 1940, no 379/10. ARA Archives MvK 1940/45, acc.nr. 2.10.45, inventory number 688.
1945 Figures in Report no HKGS nr 3575/G.S.1-1 with letter G.G. to Welter, 5 December 1940, ARA Archives MvK ibid.
The Volksraad accepted the draft ordinance on 11 July 1941 with 53 votes for and 4 votes against. Soetardjo voted for the ordinance, the GAPI (not represented in the Peoples Council) was against the measure. It was too late, however. With spitefulness the Dutch KNIL Staff work concludes that introduction of the Conscription could easily have taken place in or around 1937. In that case, at least in Java the equivalent of an additional two to three divisions to fight the Japanese would have been available.

3.7.8. Intelligence.

As early as 1897, it was recognized at the Dutch Ministry of Colonial Affairs that Japan could be a potential enemy in the not too distant future. The question can be posed as to whether this insight resulted in an expanded effort from the side of the Foreign Office and Colonial Office, the Koninklijke Marine, or the KNIL to gain a better understanding of the motives of the recognized enemy and its military potential? We will try to answer this question in the following pages.

The Dutch Naval Staff before the First World War, was too small to be able to collect and interpret naval intelligence. An officer of the Naval Staff, Lt-Cdr A. van Hengel, acted as a liaison with the Intelligence Section GS III of the Dutch Army GHQ Staff. In 1917 two Naval Attachés were appointed in London and Berlin, reporting to the Minister. It is remarkable that no Naval Attaché was appointed to the legation in Tokyo, although it was then already obvious that Japan posed a danger to the integrity of the NEI. In 1922, the two Naval Attachés were recalled and not replaced. When the Chief of Staff considered it again necessary to have a section on Naval Intelligence, the officer in charge found only files with newspaper clippings. Responsibility for Naval Intelligence rested on Cdr C. Moolenburgh who was appointed in December 1935. This officer developed a close personal and working relationship with the American Naval Attaché Cdr J.A. Gade, who helped him in setting up the new Office. Gradually the section was expanded, until early 1940 it counted 2 officers, and could use the facilities of the Office of Trade Protection.

After the appointment of Moolenburgh the first Naval Attaché’s since 1922 were appointed. After the recall of Captain K.F. Sluys in December 1922, the post at the legation in London was re-occupied by Lt-Cdr A. de Booy on 8 May 1936. The next appointment was at the Legation in Washington, where Capt. J.E. Meijer Rannett started on 1 April 1938. The creation of such a function at the Legation in Tokyo had been considered, but no naval officer could be found for this post. Looking at the reports of the British Naval Attaché, Captain G. Vivian RN, (See page 150) it has to be doubted whether a Dutch naval officer
could have been selected, who lacked cultural bias and therefore could have exposed Vivian's reports for what they were. Nevertheless, this was not even tried, due also to the extreme secrecy measures of the Japanese. In order to have some naval officers conversant with the Japanese language, however, one officer at a time was stationed in Tokyo for 3 years to "study the language". The first was Lt-Cdr J.A.L. Muller, appointed 21 September 1933. He was replaced in November 1936 by Lt S. den Boeft, who in his turn was replaced by Lt-Cdr H. Bos in March 1937.

Moolenburgh had been groomed for his job by the future BDZ, Vice-Admiral Furstner. Another promising officer was selected by Furstner to start a Naval Intelligence Unit in Batavia. He was Lt-Cdr J.F.W. Nuboer, who indeed set up shop in Batavia. The Dutch Navy started to intercept Japanese naval radio traffic, and successfully decoded the messages during the period 1936 - 1938. The change in naval code by the Japanese in April 1938 however resulted in a period of frantic searching to crack the new code, called JN-25, which was only partially achieved in 1941. (See page 153 - 154. Also, intelligence was gathered from 1938 onwards on Japanese merchant ship movements, as these movements could disclose Japanese preparations for a coup de main. Less well known is that the Koninklijke Marine used Enigma machines which were made in The Netherlands by the Nederlandse Seintoestellenfabriek (NSF) based on the German patents. The Enigma communication links were very secure and sometimes used by the Dutch NEI Administration for sending ultrasensitive information to the Government in London. As far as is known, the Dutch naval code was never cracked, but due to suspicions, the diplomatic line between Tokyo and Batavia was not used from June till November 1941.

Special precautions were taken during visits to NEI waters by Japanese warships. A case in point is the visit of the Japanese minelayer OKINOSHIMA in February/March 1937 under command of Rear-Admiral G. Miyata. The minelayer visited Menado, Ambon, Dōbo, Bula and Manokwari on New-Guinea. The local authorities were asked to shadow specifically two Japanese officers, who traveled on board the ship posing as civilians. They were Captain Yasuo Inouye IJN and Major Choguro Takashi IJA. Inouye turned out to be the Chief of the Nanyo-Bureau of the Japanese Navy Department. Inouye had also been on board the light cruiser YUBARI when the ship visited Borneo in early 1936. They were reported to have shown much interest in the oilfields of BPM/Royal Dutch Shell in

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1967 ARA Archives Navy Department, Chief of Naval Staff 1886 - 1942, accession nr. 2.12.18, inv. nr. 136.

1968 Henze, op. cit., II.2


1971 Kersten, Ballingschap, op.cit., 277.

1972 Report DOA no 99X/37 of 24 June 1937, in ARA Archives London Legation, MinBuZa, accession nr 2.05.44, inv. nr. 844.
The movements of the Japanese naval tanker HAYOTOMO under command of Captain UN S. Matsui during a visit to Tarakan 23 - 25 May 1937 were strange indeed. The ship arrived a day early, took depth soundings and made an unauthorized visit to a lightship. On the 23rd, Matsui paid an unplanned visit to the local military commander, Lt-Col. A. Struyvenberg. Matsui however refused to let Struyvenberg board his ship for a return visit the next day. Also courtesy calls by the commandant of the Dutch minelayer PRINS VAN ORANJE, Lt-Cdr A. Hendrickse were refused. Both officers reported the incidents to their superiors.

Reviewing the results of Dutch Naval Intelligence, one has to conclude that the Naval Staff considered this a subject of low priority up to 1936, when Vice-Admiral Furstner took over as Chief of Naval Staff. The obvious explanation would be lack of financial resources, but for a weak country reliable intelligence should have been a matter of life or death. Furstner was able to expand naval intelligence in a professional way, but he lacked time to build up information-gathering networks in critical countries in the Far East and Europe. At least he recognized real priorities and acted upon them within his limited means, where his predecessors had done nothing.

The KNIL was less successful with its Military Attaché's. We have already met Maj.-General Pabst, who started his career as a Military Attaché in Tokyo. In 1940 Colonel KNIL F.G.L. Welijerman was sent to Washington. According to Kersten, he was difficult to work with, and not a qualified success. The Military Attaché appointed to Chungking in 1942, a retired KNIL Colonel, L. Ph. van Temmen, even got involved in a brawl with his diplomatic superior C. van Breugel Douglas, and had to be relieved after a few months (See page 420).

Japanese economic penetration also brought military risks. This was evident, according to the Dutch, because the Japanese economic concessions were always in places which possessed a high strategic value. This resulted in an ordinance in 1913, to the effect that every Japanese request for concessions had to pass Central Government for approval. In the same year, a counterintelligence unit was established at the General Staff of the KNIL with the mission to trace Japanese spies. In 1916 the Politieke Inlichtingen-dienst PID (Political Intelligence Service) was established under command of the KNIL Officer W. Muurling. Moreover, a military officer of the KNIL was posted to the Dutch legation in Tokyo to report on the Japanese military between 1907 and 1922. Between 1910 and 1916, this officer was then Lt-Col. J.C. Pabst, the future Dutch envoy at Tokyo.

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2003 ARA ADK Box 493, File M 13 of 3 June 1937.
2006 G. Teitler: Anatomie, 417.
2007 De Graaff, op. cit., 262.
In the early twenties the PID was succeeded by the ARD (Algemene Recherche Dienst or General Investigation Department), which however was still unofficially named the PID. It reported to the Attorney General of the NEI, and its chiefs came from the regular police force. The mission of the ARD was internal political intelligence, specifically keeping track of the much-feared Communists. In this the service succeeded: since 1930 the Communists had to keep a low profile, until the Japanese occupation.

In addition to the PID a new office came into being in 1922, the Office of Japanese Affairs under P.A. van de Stadt. It had to report on the Japanese Press both in the NEI and in Japan. In 1932 its task was taken over by the Office for Chinese Affairs, and the whole rechristened in 1936 as the Office for East-Asian Affairs (Dienst Oost-Aziatische Zaken or DOA). Under the capable management of A.H.J. Lovink, this office would evolve into an efficient agency for tracing Japanese espionage in the Indies. Both the ARD and the DOA had frequent contacts with British counterintelligence services in Malaya. Van Kleffens, who met Lovink a number of times during his visit to the NEI in April/May 1941, was very impressed by the efficiency of the DOA.

The DOA reported on the activities of Japanese spies, one of whom was a naval officer of the Kobayashi economic mission, to the G.G. on 8 January 1941. A Japanese attack plan was obtained, with plans for two invasions in West-Java: one near Merak and in the Bay of Bantam in order to conquer Batavia, the other invasion was planned near Cheribon in order to push forward via Soemedang to Bandoeng. In effect, both plans were executed in March 1942.

As there were no Military Attaché's stationed in China and Japan in the Thirties, the KNIL commanders had only sketchy knowledge about their most probable external enemy. There was no Dutch spy network in either country, and therefore all information on the Japanese military forces had to come from outside (public) sources, most of them from the Soviet-Union! Another well-read Dutch periodical for officers, the "Orgaan der Nederlandsch-Indische Officiersvereniging", published in five issues in 1935 a translation of the Japanese manual "Elements of battle". The IMT published in 1938 an article translated from the French military journal "La France militaire", which itself had obtained its information from Russian sources. The author, an officer named A. Zaitzov, declared in the article that the Japanese Army was the best in the world. The first article of Dutch origin about the Japanese forces in the IMT was the report on a lecture of an ex-officer KNIL, J. Fabius, with observations made during his stay in China and Japan.

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202 Van Kleffens, Herinneringen, II, 70.


205 In IMT, 69:1 (1938), 81 afp.

206 In IMT, 70:11 (1939), 1039 ff.
lecture was for an audience of about 200 officers, and contained a lot of platitudes, like the prudence and lack of initiative of Japanese officers, and their methodical way of planning and execution, resulting in confusion whenever the situation changed in an unforeseen way. Coppens reinforced that image by describing the Japanese attack on German-held Tsingtau in 1914 as very cautious and hesitant.2016

In the February-issue of the IMT of 1941, two translations from Russian sources were published. One was an article from the Krasnaya Zvezda of 11 May 1939 and covered the subject of Japanese offensive tactics. The other article was translated from the Krasni Flot of 14 August 1939, covering Japanese amphibious tactics during the Yangtse-campaign of 1937/1938. At the time of publication in the IMT, the information was already out dated by four, and five years respectively. A better illustration about the general lack of information about the Japanese armed forces is hard to find.

From a civilian, a Dutch reserve-officer called Henri J.D. de Frémery, 21 reports have been received which were addressed to the Colonial Ministry in the Hague in 1938/1939.2017 Copies were sent to the KNIL Staff in Bandoeng. De Frémery described the different aspects of the Chinese-Japanese war in these reports, and tries to evaluate the performance of the Japanese forces. Although some observations are rather stereotypical, de Frémery is far more complimentary towards the Japanese than are his fellow Western observers2018. It is obvious, however, that the KNIL HQ Staff did little with the reports.

This lack of information about the potential enemy was well known outside the military, and also criticized. People's Council member Kruyne of the Vaddertandsche Club condemned already in 1938 the "striking frugality of the Army management in the area of assignments of officers to foreign countries"2019. A case in point was the assignment of a Military Attaché in Chungking in order to study Japanese tactics. The Chinese Government asked for such an appointment via the Dutch Legation in Chungking at the end of 1940. The G.G. responded negatively, out of fear of provoking Japan, but obviously the G.G. was not very interested in the arguments used to have useful information collected about Japanese tactics and weapons in their war with the Chinese.2020 After much more correspondence, it was decided on 24 July 1941 to send retired KNIL Colonel L. Ph. van Temmen as military observer for 6 months to China.2021 Van Temmen would arrive in Chungking in December 1941, and would be quickly involved in a bitter personal conflict with the new Dutch Ambassador to Free China, C. van Breugel


2017 A number of these reports have been edited by Ger Teitle and Kurt W. Radtke and published in 1999 under the title A Dutch Spy in China: Reports on the First Phase of the Sino-Japanese War (1937 - 1939), Brill, Leiden 1999.


2020 Telegram G.G. to H. Bos, 28 December 1940, ARA Archives MvK 1940/45, acc.nr. 2.10.45, inv. nr. 652.

2021 Letter Govt. Secretary to C-in-C KNIL, 24 July 1941, no 245/A/B, in ARA, Archives MvK 1940/45, Ibid.
Douglas, which conflict would hurt the careers of both.

The sizable military and naval component of the Kobayashi- and Yoshizawa "economic" missions was very worrying. Of the 23 Japanese officials of the Kobayashi-mission, 4 wore the uniform of either the Japanese Army or Navy.\(^\text{202}\) It was clear what their objectives were. Moreover, an officer of the Japanese Navy, Cdr Tatsukichi Miyô was sent to Batavia without clearance from the NEI Government, resulting in his arrest and expulsion, which caused a serious diplomatic incident.\(^\text{203}\) The episode is interesting, because the Dutch were tipped on his visit by the British, proving that both secret services were already closely cooperating at the end of 1940.

The Hachida-incident was comparable. Major Sei Hachida arrived on 16 March 1941 in Surabaya from Australia to join Colonel Harada of the Yoshizawa-mission in Batavia. Due to a tip from the Australian secret service, the Dutch found very incriminating material on him about Australian defence measures.\(^\text{204}\) The same Colonel Harada asked for permission to visit Palembang with 3 other Japanese on 9 June 1941. The request was turned down by the authorities. But the 3 Japanese were arrested anyway in Palembang on 18 June, and returned to Java at the first opportunity.\(^\text{205}\) On the same grounds 2 journalists of the Nichi-Nichi Shimbun were shipped back to Japan on 22 August 1941.

Dutch surveillance of unreported ships led to stoppage on the high seas of the freighter SUWA MARU near Ceram by HNMS BANCKERT on 6 May 1941, because the ship followed a rather erratic course. This caused a diplomatic row with the Japanese Government.\(^\text{206}\) Another incident was the shooting of the Japanese fishing vessel DAIFUKU MARU no 5 by a Dutch hydroplane in the Gaspar Straits on 6 May 1940.\(^\text{207}\) The pilot of the hydroplane proved to be a little too enthusiastic in the execution of his responsibilities and was courtmartialed.\(^\text{208}\)

Another suspected ship was the KASHIMA MARU which departed from Davao to Australia on 19 July 1941, to disappear in the Eastern Moluccas, where it took a rather erratic course around Halmahera. The ship was intercepted on 29 July, but nothing suspicious could be found.\(^\text{209}\)

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\(^{202}\) Letter Pabst to Van Kleefens, 27 August 1940, no 1350 A287, (1522 GA), MinBuZa London Archives, Secret Archives, DZ A I 4(1), file 401. In this letter the names and functions of all officials of the Kobayashi-mission are revealed.

\(^{203}\) MinBuZa, London Archives, Secret Archives, DZ/GA A I 3(4), file 371 "Miyo-Incident, 1940".

\(^{204}\) Telegram G.G. to Welter, 30 March 1941. MinBuZa London Archives, Secret Archives, A I 3(5), file 372, "Incident major Hachida, 1941".

\(^{205}\) Telegram G.G. to Welter, 3 July 1941, cypher PA/PB. MinBuZa London Archives, Political Reports Tokyo 1940, file 228.


\(^{207}\) Memorandum Foreign Minister Arita to Pabst, 14 June 1940, DBPN, C, I, doc. 106, 108.

\(^{208}\) Ibid., doc. 114, 115.

\(^{209}\) Telegram G.G. to Welter, 1 August 1941, MinBuZa London Archives, Secret Archives DZ/GA, A I 11, inv. nr. 425.
One of the most unpleasant surprises for the KNIL-ML was the performance of the Navy-0 Zero fighter. Yet that plane became operational above the Chinese fronts in the Summer of 1940. American and British observers gathered data about Zero planes shot down by the Chinese, and interviewed Chinese pilots. Brigadier-General H.B. Claggett from the American Philippine Air Department visited China in May 1941 and described the Zero rather accurately.“As far as can be ascertained, he did not inform his Dutch hosts about his findings during his subsequent visit to the NEI from 2 to 15 August 1941. However, in some way or another, news about the Zero was given to the Dutch Naval Attaché in Washington. In a telegram dated 11 July 1941 to the BDZ he gave the following information: “Do not underestimate the strength of the Japanese Naval Air. Important is the newest Japanese naval fighter type Zero, 1000 mile range, speed 330 - 340 mph, armament 2 guns 20 mm and 2 guns .30 inch.” This (correct) information was never passed to the military authorities in the NEI, however. It was the KNIL-ML liaison officer at Singapore, Lt-col. J.J. Zomer, who in mid-November 1941 reported incomplete data about the Zero to KNIL-GHQ in Bandoeng.

In conclusion, both Dutch services in the Far East lacked accurate intelligence about their future adversary, due to lack of foresight. Internal Intelligence (about the Indonesian Nationalists and Communists) however was well-organised and ruthlessly efficient.

3.7.9. Dispositions on the eve of war.

When the inevitable happened, and war was declared, the enormous archipelago was still not adequately defended, although great strides had been made in re-arming and re-equipping the KNIL. The problem was the spread of the available forces, which in itself were considerable.

Outside Java, it was of utmost importance to defend the two important oil harbors on Borneo’s East coast, Tarakan and Balikpapan. Tarakan was defended by 1 KNIL-battalion with an extra contingent of light automatic weapons. The extensive minefields in the approaches to the island were protected by a coastal battery with 4 guns of 12 cm and 7 guns of 75 mm and 2 guns of 70 mm. Anti-aircraft artillery was almost non-existent and limited to 4 pieces of 40 mm. Air cover was provided by 4 Brewster Buffalo fighters at the airfield, which were very vulnerable due to the lack of an early air-warming system, which had to be provided by just 3 Dornier flying boats. At Balikpapan was the 6th Infantry Battalion, with two mobile batteries equipped with 6 guns of 75 mm. Coastal artillery consisted of 2 guns of 12 cm and six guns of 75 mm. Anti-aircraft artillery was limited to 2 guns of 40 mm. At Samarinda was an infantry-company, and a battery with 3 pieces of 75 mm.

The other important airfields (Singkawang, Kota Waringin) at the West- and South coast of Borneo each had small detachments, as was the case with the towns of Pontianak (West coast) and Bandjermasin (South coast).

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P.C. Boer, op. cit., 227, note 16. As there was not yet a Military Attaché in Washington at that time, it is clear from the addressee that the telegram was sent by the Naval Attaché, Meijer Ranneft.

P.C. Boer, op. cit., 228.

Stafwerk, II, 214 afp.
The important harbour of Ambon in the Moluccas was covered by a KNIL battalion with two mobile batteries of in total 8 pieces of 75 mm and 4 pieces of 70 mm. Coastal artillery consisted of 4 powerful guns of 15 cm, 2 guns of 75 mm and 2 guns of 70 mm. In addition Ambon was reinforced with an Australian motorized battalion with Bren-gun-carriers, machineguns and mortars.

In Sumatra, the important oil refineries and airfields at Palembang were defended by Platoons with supporting artillery. The BPM-Refinery at Pladjoe was covered by 2 guns of 75 mm, the NKPM-Refinery at Soengei Gerong was covered by 2 guns of 75 mm. It was the intention to fire into the refineries if they fell into Japanese hands. The airfields around Palembang, Talang Betoetoe and Praboemoeilih were guarded by infantry Platoons and lacked anti-aircraft defence. The river approaches towards Palembang were protected by minefields and covered by a battery with 4 guns of 75 mm at Pradjen. The oil fields at Djambi, and the harbours of Padang and Sibolga were covered by infantry Platoons, as were the airfields of Deli and Pakanbaroe. A field artillery battery with 4 pieces of 75 mm covered Padang harbour. An infantry battalion covered the oil installations at Sumatra's East coast at Pangkal Brandan and Pangkalan Soesoe, and watched over the important Deli plantations and the towns of Deli and Belawan.

The Celebes had a garrison of battalion strength and two 75 mm guns at Macassar on the South-West side of the island, and another battalion at Menado on the North-East coast. Menado boasted also the possession of one coast artillery gun of 75 mm. The important airfield of Kendari at the South-East coast was protected by a company of infantry and two 40 mm anti-aircraft guns. At Timor the KNIL had a detachment of company strength, which was reinforced by another Australian battalion shortly after Pearl Harbor.

What strikes the casual observer is the dispersion of field artillery batteries over the islands. The KNIL field army lacked firepower, and even the firepower represented by the existing mobile field artillery batteries was being wasted by dispersing it over a number of locations outside Java. The positioning of field artillery pieces at Tarakan, Balikpapan and Ambon, in addition to the already existing coastal artillery batteries was unnecessary, and weakened the firepower of the field army in Java. The same applies to the use of field artillery batteries at Palembang and Padang. As the saying goes "defence everywhere is no defence", and that applies also for this apparent dispersion of artillery firepower. It could be that the GHQ Staff counted on Allied reinforcements for Java in case of war, and therefore had decided to add firepower to the outposts, in order to delay the Japanese invasion of Java, which would give the Allies more time to reinforce Java. This remains speculative, however. As we will see, on Java the field artillery was also dispersed over the units.

The main concentration of forces was at Java. West-Java was covered by the 1st Division with elements of the 2nd Division, totalling around 23,500 men. The (depleted) 2nd Division in Central Java counted around 9,000 men, mostly consisting of the reinforced 4th regiment and a new regiment, Group South. The 3rd Division in East-Java had around 17,300 men. The mobile units of the three divisions were the 6 Regiments, but next to those Regiments were non-motorized battalions, which are included in the manpower figures given above. Divisional Commanders doubled as Territorial Commanders, which

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204 Statwerk, II, 218.
205 J.J. Nortier a.o.: De Japanse aanval op Java, Amsterdam 1994, Table on page 305.
would seriously impair their functioning as commanders in battle, and was one of the organisational errors which contributed to the military debacle.\textsuperscript{2036} Another organisational error was that, as was the case in the outer islands, the mobile field artillery was completely dispersed over the units, decreasing available firepower even further.\textsuperscript{2037} With respect to artillery, the KNIL had available in Java 14 howitzers of 105 mm, 8 guns of 105 mm, 124 guns of 75 mm, and 31 mountain guns of 75 mm, all dispersed over the units.\textsuperscript{2038} The purpose of this dispersal seems to have been the increase of morale and local firepower, but the result was a disastrous misallocation of available firepower, resulting in no firepower at all at crucial fronts. It has to be pointed out, however, that in effect Japanese tactical doctrines also called for the direct support of infantry by guns, and at least the Japanese in the initial stages of the war did not use massed artillery fire.\textsuperscript{2039}

A list of the armament of the KNIL, as it was on 1 October 1941 is to be found in Appendix 2. The list has been obtained from Concise Report no 152 by the C-in-C KNIL, and is enclosed in the Mail report of the G.G. to the Minister of Colonial Affairs of 29 November 1941.\textsuperscript{2040}

The main conclusions of Nortier c.s. on the combat readiness of the KNIL on the eve of war seem to be appropriate. The new organisation had not yet borne fruit, the degree of familiarity with the influx of new weapons was moderate. Critical shortages of material had not been eliminated completely. The many re-assignments of professional personnel were an organisational error, as the units were therefore not the closely-knit fighting units of some years before. Staff procedures were outdated, communications were almost non-existent,\textsuperscript{2041} there was no Combat Information Service and tactical co-operation with the Army Airforce had not been practiced.\textsuperscript{2042} With the advantage of hindsight, the question can be posed whether the KNIL of 1938/1939 would not have been a better fighting force in a pure defensive role that the incomplete, offensive-oriented KNIL of early 1942.


The catastrophic Dutch defeat in the NEI in early 1942 cannot be explained by only a few factors. This defeat had structural, strategic, organisational, operational and tactical

\textsuperscript{2036} Nortier, op. cit., 52.


\textsuperscript{2038} Nortier, op. cit., Table 2 on page 294. This table shows far lower numbers for 75 mm field artillery guns and some other weapons than the Concise Report no 152 on the armament of the KNIL in Report G.G. to Weltev, 29 November 1941, which is to be found in ARA, Archives MvK 1940/1945, acc.nr. 2.10.45, inv. nr. 652. The latter report has been used here. The reason could be, that Nortier's statistics apply to Java only in March 1942, while the Concise Report no 152 has listed all artillery pieces in the N.E. Indies.


\textsuperscript{2040} ARA, Archives MvK, 1940/1945, accession number 2.05.44, inv. nr. 652.


\textsuperscript{2042} Nortier, op. cit., 52.
components. There is some resemblance between the defeat of France in May-June 1940 and the collapse of Dutch resistance in January - March 1942. Like in France, Dutch military historians have tried to explain the disaster to lack of funding of the Army in the pre-war years, which however is only part of the whole story.

First let us look into the structural, or political, components of the failure. These are strongly intertwined with political culture. For the Netherlands, a structural factor was the fact that before the First World War, aloofness was not longer a policy which benefitted the Dutch Empire as such, but was actually a harmful external policy in the long term. The Dutch were spared the experience of the First World War, and thought themselves lucky. But because of their aloofness, Dutch foreign and internal policy remained, in effect, the policy of a nineteenth-century state until 1940. And in hindsight, aloofness was not the answer to the dual and sometimes conflicting problem of security of the European part of the Empire versus the Asian part of the Empire. Zwitzer has exposed in a convincing way the naive macchiavellism of succeeding Dutch Governments in counting on English support in case of need and still remaining aloof, notwithstanding the common destinies of both seaborne empires. As we have discussed on pages 296 - 302 of this chapter, there were no alternatives to neutrality in the Europe of the interwar years, but neutrality should not have been synonymous with lack of armament. In the Twenties there still was some ground for disarmament under the umbrella of collective security as promised by the League of Nations. From 1931 onwards that became a fallacy, as the League of Nations proved itself impotent in redressing indecent States. As Dutch Premier Ruys de Beerenbrouck stated in Parliament in December 1939: "Until now we have sufficed in the NEI with the extreme minimum in armaments, which in fact comprised parasiting on the benevolence of others."

Aloofness combined with the false security of the League of Nations reinforced the strong natural tendency of the ruling conservative parties in Parliament to save on defence expenditures. There was a strong anti-militaristic current in Dutch politics in the Twenties and early Thirties, but it were the opposition parties which preached these pacifist ideas. After the rise of Hitler, even these idealists realized that a strong defence was needed against fascism. It were the ruling conservative coalition parties however which during the whole interbellum period were responsible for minimal defence spending. In the Twenties the arguments were the collective security by the League of Nations combined with the Washington Naval Disarmament Treaties and the subsequent rejection of the DFL by Dutch Parliament. It has to be added, however, that the political frugality was promoted by the internal bickering about strategy in naval circles, and the perfectionism in KNIL GHQ, which led to underspending in the critical late Thirties, when funds were flowing freely.

In the NEI itself the colonial philosophy about the benign stewardship of the Dutch over the indigenous people evolved into a policy of sheer repression. Within the British Empire, the First World War had brought fresh ideas about decolonisation, resulting in far-reaching legislation for democratisation, representation and legal equality in British India, the "jewel in the crown", and all that in the face of a strong nationalist movement headed by Gandhi.

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305 HTK, 1939/40, 757.
The United States of America was even the first colonial power to grant a colony (the Philippines) independence in the foreseeable future. Dutch colonial thinking however became more conservative in time, evolving from the liberal "ethical" policy of the early years of the century into a strong repression of all nationalistic feelings. The communist uprisings of the early Twenties tended to polarise the Dutch colonials into repression, reinforcing the downward spiral with the mutiny on the DE ZEVEN PROVINCIEEN and its aftermath. The results of this shift in colonial policy were truly catastrophic. After the rejection of the Soetardjo-petition there was nothing more in store for the indigenous population than further repression. For the natives, this resulted in apathy or, even worse, active co-operation with the enemy of the Dutch colonial government, Japan. The natives were no longer emotionally attached to the defence of their own land and became alienated to that defence, which therefore became the sole responsibility of the alleged oppressor. All this in contrast to British India and the Philippines. An Indian Army of over 2 million men would fight alongside their British masters in Europe, Africa and of course Asia, and would defeat the Japanese in Burma. The Filipinos resorted to an effective guerilla war against the Japanese.

It must be admitted, that the Dutch in the NEI took up the challenge of what was also their homeland admirably, but they were just too few in numbers. With the indigenous soldiers deserting in droves, and the indigenous population not very supportive, Dutch resistance disintegrated in face of the resolute Japanese. Dutch officials on the one hand told every foreign dignitary that the native peoples would be loyal to the Dutch in case of an external conflict, but on the other hand Dutch authorities refused to introduce indigenous conscription for fear of losing their hold on the natives. That English or American colonial policies would be impossible in the NEI because these would be too radical, as stated by Nortier c.s., is pertinently untrue however as is proved by the limited conscription introduced in 1941. A continuation of the ethical policy would have made possible a gradual autonomy of the NEI, coupled to the willingness of the natives to fight for their country on a voluntary basis. The 2 million Indian Army consisted of volunteers too!

Morale at the start of the war was high both in the Navy and in the Army. It remained high in the Navy, as is evidenced by the fact that there were almost no ship-jumpers on the eve of the battle of the Java-sea. Considerable fighting spirit notwithstanding increasing losses was shown by the Army Airforce. But the will to fight plunged in the Army after the desertion of a Company of Amboinese during the fighting at Tarakan in January 1942, became known, declining further after the fall of "invincible" Singapore and reaching rockbottom in Java in March 1942. Native troops "melted away" after first fire contact, leaving behind them bewildered European officers and non-commissioned officers. It was the direct consequence of pre-war Dutch intransigence and selfconsciousness on not allowing the natives a say in their own defence, and therefore their future.

An important consequence of the overly paternalistic Dutch colonial system was the oversight to establish a modern industrial base. The colony remained a colony because of the emphasis on high-value tropical agricultural export products for the world markets, and extractive products like tin and oil. A modern Army needs a modern industrial base, however, and that was not provided in the NEI. Therefore, the defence of the colony became highly dependent on armaments produced in countries which had to prioritise their production in order to fulfill their own needs. This was a structural bottleneck which could not be solved adequately, and which was addressed too late.

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Nortier c.s., Ibid., 257.
It has been pointed out in this treatise, that a perfectionist streak within the Dutch naval and military bureaucracy resulted in the loss of valuable time in drawing up exacting specifications for weapons and equipment to be purchased in Europe. The army bureaucracy in Bandoeng had a bad reputation in the NEI, as it was time and time again exposed in the People's Council by VC member Kruyne, who as an example pointed out that hiring a certain technical specialist by the Army took nine months, resulting in the non-availability of that specialist. He therefore strongly pleaded to "redress this bureaucratic machinery with a strong hand".\footnote{HV, session 1937/38, 16th meeting, Vol.I, 399.} The Departmental Director and KNIL Commander however dismissed his complaints.

Another complaint within the People's Council was the slow pace of promotions within the KNIL officer corps. PC Member Verboom claimed that on average it took 14 years to be promoted to Captain, 22 years before becoming a major.\footnote{HV, session 1937/1938, meeting of 12 August 1937, 890.} These slow promotions resulted in a relatively old age for officers in high command, and a general loss of initiative and vitality throughout the entire officer corps.

With regard to strategy, it can be concluded that the politics of aloofness also had a negative influence. The Defence Foundations of 1927 stipulated that the Dutch Navy and Army would fight a delaying action against the Japanese, until outside help was provided. The English "guarantee" given to Foreign Minister Van Kamebeek in 1922 had ceased to exist after 1931, but Dutch planners assumed that it still existed. Aloofness forbade the checking of this basic assumption with the British Government. However, even in September 1941, there still was no English guarantee, because Churchill considered it unwise to extend such a guarantee without backing of the United States. As we have seen in Chapter 2, the British in effect already had peacefully transferred their responsibility for the status quo in S.E. Asia to another power: the United States. The assumption that the English and/or Americans would come to the rescue in case of a Japanese attack however was popular with the politicians, because it allowed the saving of a lot of money which otherwise would have been spent on defence measures. That this assumption was self-defeating was however seen by only a few. The conviction that the Dutch in the NEI should take care of their own defense, went straight against the contemporary paradigm of unarmed aloofness until the Battlecruiser plan of 1939, which was a refreshing shift in policy caused by circumstances which had existed since 1931.

Not very helpful was the Dutch policy of continued aloofness towards the British ally in the Far East after the loss of the Netherlands. The Governor-General has to be blamed for this, as he firmly believed that such a policy was in the best interest of his country. He did not only alienate the British, but more important, also the Americans, who feared an "accomodation" of the NEI with Japan, like French Indochina. His politics actually retarded the delivery of modern American weapons and equipment, which, if those had arrived in time, would have delayed or even stopped the Japanese onslaught.

With respect to intelligence, the Dutch really did a bad job in gathering external intelligence about the potential enemy. For any weak country, good intelligence is a rather inexpensive survival factor. The war in China was not closely monitored however, while that would have been possible by assigning a couple of officers to that theatre of war. Diplomatic intelligence was of low quality due to the increasing sloppiness of the reporting by Minister
Pabst. The Dutch however were not the only ones who lacked information about Japan. They shared this in fact more or less with all Western powers in S.E. Asia, and at least their intelligence gathering was not distorted by racist views on the inherent inferiority of Asian peoples. We have seen in Chapter 2 that British Intelligence on the IJA was not deficient, but the acceptance of that Intelligence by decision makers surely was deficient.

The problem for, specifically, the Dutch Army Staff was not so much a racist underestimation of the enemy, but an overestimation of Dutch military capabilities due to self-satisfaction and complacency. For the Dutch the technological surprise about the quality of Japanese aeroplanes (e.g. the Zero fighter) and weapons (e.g. the long lance torpedo) was shared with the other Western allies. Specifically the superiority of the Zero fighter in combination with the unexpected skills of Japanese pilots was a very unpleasant technological surprise, and one of the main reasons for the ensuing defeat.

The Dutch have an international reputation for being good organisers. However, a number of organizational problems have surfaced in this study.

Perhaps the most important failure in this respect was the lack of an efficient body of communication and coordination between the Services, like the British Imperial Chiefs of General Staff, or the American General Board, in which strategies and organisations were coordinated for the three services (Navy, Army and Army Airforces). Still there were also interservice squabbles in England and the USA, but they could be decided upon in a higher Staff organ like the IGS. Instead, the whole history of NEI defence is marred by continuous conflicts between the Navy with its Imperial mission, and the KNIL, which was bound to the NEI. This lack of co-operation resulted in a considerable weakening of Dutch defence potential. It was also reflected in the long time delays as a result of constitutional consultations between the Dutch and the NEI Governments in matters concerning defence, with the loss of precious time as a consequence, as happened with the Battleship plan of the Staatscommissie of 1912, as well as with the Battlescruiser Plan of 1938. The slow bureaucracy surely was an important factor in the defeat of 1942.

Organisationally the Dutch Navy was badly commanded up to 1935. The lack of a professional Naval Staff resulted in a see-saw policy on recommendations for new ship types, which resulted in unclear political directives and a very short survival time for Naval Ministers in the Dutch Cabinets, especially directly after the First World War. The Dutch Navy at that time was no "learning organisation", but moved from crisis to crisis, until the fleet consisted of museum pieces. Perceived lack of funds resulted in high outlays to keep these museum pieces afloat, but failed to start the decline in number of personnel as well as morale of those who stayed until the mutiny of 1933. It was only after the appointment of Vice-Admiral Furstner that things started to change.

The KNIL, with its professional General Staff, was far better managed and, notwithstanding the considerable cuts in its estimates, survived the depression years without a sizable loss of its fighting edge. Like the Navy, it lacked a good Intelligence Service, and therefore lacked a realistic knowledge base on its probable enemy, Japan. However, the KNIL won the battle of the bombers against the Navy, and thereafter the KNIL-ML expanded considerably, to the detriment of the Army and especially the Navy. The KNIL-ML however was never integrated with the Army into combined arms, which proved to be one of the undoings of that organisation in battle. Organisationally too it was an error to shift officers around over the different units, whereby the fighting units never developed the team spirit needed for successful defence. After 1935, a stronger emphasis should have been placed


on recruitment of officers and non-commissioned officers, specifically from available native sources. Financially, that would have been possible at that time.\textsuperscript{549} The complacency of the KNIL commanders and GHQ with respect to the need for quick expansion has already been mentioned. After 1937, the KNIL went inexorably to its eventual defeat.

Operational factors were many. One was the dispersal of firepower in the Army by dividing up the pool of field-artillery regiments over the outer islands and Java, and in Java itself the dispersal of artillery pieces over all kinds of units. Another was the lack of drive to proceed with the mobilisation of natives after 1940. The lack of a combat information service was a serious organisational error,\textsuperscript{200} as was the lack of combined-arms training, including training together with tactical airplanes.

Tactics of the Dutch Navy proved to be well-founded. The effects of years of training in these tactics were undone however by the incorporation of most of the Dutch naval units in ABDAFLOAT, the naval side of the ABDA inter-allied Command structure. Specifically the tactically well-proven co-operation between flying boats and submarines was made almost impossible by the new command structure. Aggressive and concentrated night attacks against Japanese landings were no part of the American or British naval doctrine, and therefore did not happen, tying precious warships to convoying British troopships into doomed Singapore.

Tactically however the KNIL was most to blame. It never did exploit the inherent defensive opportunities of the Javanese landscape. European tactical doctrines based on an offensively oriented strategy did not fit well with the situation of early 1942. Japanese columns could have been held up and devastated on the small mountain and sawah roads, as Indonesian guerillas proved against the Dutch in their war of independence. This tactical shortcoming has not been addressed by Nortier in his book. The lack of training in nightfighting was another tactical error.

Summarizing, one has to agree however with Nortier’s final conclusion,\textsuperscript{201} that even within existing financial and political limits, but with better organisation and intelligence the Dutch would have been able, together with their allies, to hold on long enough until the arrival of reinforcements, which were being rushed to Java at that time.\textsuperscript{202} Delaying the Japanese for just one more month would have been possible, which would have resulted in desperate sea, air and land battles in, around and above Sumatra and Borneo. Those battles now took place in Melanesia and around New-Guinea, where fighting conditions were far worse for both sides than would have been the case in the NEI. The KNIL however lacked the requisite stopping power, and the Dutch lost their empire by a hair’s breadth.

As the official historian of the (British) War against Japan noted however, “the battle for the Netherlands East Indies is a melancholy chapter in the history of the war, but not one of which the Allies need be ashamed. They fought on against heavy odds until hardly a ship or an aircraft

\textsuperscript{549} Nortier, op. cit., 256.

\textsuperscript{200} Nortier, op. cit., 255.

\textsuperscript{201} Nortier, op. cit., 258.

\textsuperscript{202} On their way to Java were the 6th and 7th Australian Division, the (British) 44th Independent Armoured Brigade, and American planes, tanks and artillery with crews destined for the Philippines.
remained, and it was only when Java was overrun and their military forces were surrounded and without hope of reinforcements that they laid down their arms. This statement is a fitting epilogue for the men who did the actual fighting, and closes this chapter on realistic alternatives which were not chosen, and missed opportunities which really existed, but were not seen.
