Decolonization and the Military: the Case of the Netherlands

* A Study in Political Reaction

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I Introduction

When taken together, title and subtitle of this paper may seem to suggest, but certainly are not meant to implicate, that only military circles are apt to engage in right-wing political activism. On the contrary, this paper tries to indicate what specific groups within the armed forces of the Netherlands had an interest in opposing Indonesian independence, and what strategic alliances they engaged in with right-wing civilian circles. In that sense, the subject of the paper is rather “underground” civil-military relations, as they exist alongside the level of institutionalized civil-military relations.

Our analysis starts from a systematic theoretical perspective which, on the one hand, is intended to specify our expectations as to what interest groups within and without the military tended to align in opposing Indonesian independence and, on the other hand, to broadly characterize the options open to such coalitions for influencing the course of events either in the Netherlands or in the Dutch East Indies.

II The theoretical perspective

In two separate papers a process model of conflict and radicalism has been developed and further specified to serve as a basis for the study of military intervention in domestic politics. The model, although social-psychological in its emphasis on the

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I have greatly profited by their inside experience and expert knowledge. Further, I want to thank the Partij van de Arbeid for admitting me to its archives on the Indonesian crisis. This research has been greatly furthered by the cooperation of the Section on Military History and the Stamboek Officieren K.N.I.L. of the Ministry of Defense.

I want to thank Dra. Schmüller of A.N.P. (General Netherlands Press Bureau) for giving me access to its archives. Finally, J. M. Pluvier has been most helpful by lending me his chronological collection of newspaper reports and comments from the period 1945 - 1950.


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pivotal importance of the actor’s definition of a situation, is structural in a dual sense. It uses variables of stratification and variables of normative integration (or institutionalization) of conflict arenas.

As to the stratification aspects, three general objects of social competition are introduced: status, class position, and power. Theoretically, whatever the social context, two broad opposing alliances can be discerned: the have and the have-nots. The behavior of intermediate groups we suppose to be of primary importance.

Depending on the criteria on the basis of which shares are acquired and defended — criteria of ascription versus those of achievement — groups with large ascriptive shares will tend to align themselves with the over-all have, the more forcefully so, it is assumed, the smaller their achieved shares. On the other hand, those in possession of large achieved shares who are denied equivalent shares of goods that are subject to ascriptive distribution, will tend to displace their aspirations and seek an alliance with over-all have-nots. The most general way to describe the strategy of fending off an impending groundswell of social mobility is the attempt of the have at (re-)activating ascriptive criteria of social distribution and at broadening the areas of competition that are subject to them. In order for this strategy to succeed, a whole array of strategies, or tactics, can be imagined, some of which this paper intends to illustrate. The attempt at revamping the distributive structure of society in terms of criterion, evident through either action or ideology, shall be termed right-radicalist or reactionary. In this paper we focus on the performance of this upper-dog team and only deal with the opponent in so far as its actions and options are necessary for understanding the context of action of the upper-dogs.

Secondly, with regard to the structure of institutionalization prevalent in conflict arenas, differences can be thought to exist of the degree in which a balance of power between the rival parties prevails or in which the competition is subject to rules — a condition which need not presuppose the first.

Taking a suggestion, put forward by Huntington, arenas can be thought to range from praetorianism where neither of these conditions prevail, to a civic state where either one or both do exist. A separate dimension which Huntington mentions, is the degree of political participation. An increase in the level of participation, especially of a cataclysmic nature, tends to upset an existing balance of power or institutionalized set of rules.

III Analysis of the arena

The struggle for decolonization cannot be considered an instance of, what game theorists would call pure conflict. During the period under study — 1945 to early 1950 — persistent elements of coordination did occur which caused the simple dividing line between the Dutch and the Indonesians to be cross-cut by lines of potential or actual alliances. After all, the final outcome was not surrender on either part on the basis of military defeat, but a solution reached through political negotiation and mediation. External pressure, exerted primarily by the U.S. government upon both parties, surely was one of the forces that worked towards coordination. But internally as well, recurrent attempts were made by both contending parties to find allies within the sphere of influence of the opponent. In fact, to mention just one example, one of
the prime goals in the use of military means by both parties was to win over the bulk of the Indonesian population to their side. However, whereas the shifting balance of coordination versus opposition tended to blur the dividing lines between the contending parties, each participated in the “game” under a fairly distinct set of rules and in a fairly distinct institutional setting. This fact, rather than the basic fact of the confrontation between Dutch imperialism and Indonesian nationalism, allows us to divide the arena into three, rather distinct segments. One is the context of the emerging Indonesian Republic, another the domestic scene in the Netherlands, whereas finally Dutch colonial society in the East Indies can be discerned as a third context of action. Let us first try and describe the inner structure of the emergent Indonesian Republic.

III a The period of Japanese rule in the archipelago had had a strong mobilizing impact 3), resulting in a novel sense of national identity; it meant shaking-off the traditional self-effacing, submissive attitude toward the colonial elite. A crucial factor for this emergent nationalist-revolutionary sense to take root, was the factual power vacuum following Japanese surrender. In several ways, this so-called bersiap-period showed all the signs of a collapse of civil order. There were rampage, pillage and murder, devoid of political content. Yet, there were also clear signs of an emergent revolutionary order in both military and civilian spheres. The array of military and para-military organizations, created by the Japanese regime 4), gave birth to a wide variety of independent revolutionary bands, summarily described as pemudas (youths), which operated in the vacuum. Their structure was reminiscent of the prototype of the revolutionary council or soviet. It was forcefully anti-hierarchical as illustrated by the fact that they appointed their own officers. 5)

Only at a much later stage they consented to their incorporation into an all-embracing Republican Army — the T.N.I. 6) Within the Republican camp this constellation of forces proved a permanent praetorianizing condition, most strikingly illustrated by the kidnapping of Sukarno and Hatta, when pemudas forced them into issuing the declaration of independence and, some time later, the abduction of prime-minister Sharir, in what amounted to an abortive communist coup. 7) That the unwieldy, and politically hazardous aspects of this revolutionary potential were clearly perceived within the Republican camp, is illustrated, for instance, by Nasution. 8)

The entire process, as described here, can be considered as an instance of a sudden

5) Van Doorn and Hendrix, op. cit., p. 35.
7) J. de Kadt, De Indonesische Tragedie, Amsterdam, G. A. van Oorschot, 1949, p. 137.
increase, unstructured and non-incremental, of the degree of political participation. Related developments could be mentioned, such as the fact that under the Japanese regime, Indonesians had penetrated into the command structures of the economy and the polity to an extent that would have been unthinkable under colonial rule. It is here that analytic labels, such as mobility and mobilization, interlock. Where the latter has special reference to the impact of societal processes of change on a political system, this impact tends to be all the more radicalizing (or mobilizing), once gains in mobility risk to be impaired by the return of a reactionary regime. At this point left-radical alliances are apt to occur. Time and again, the array of built-in praetorian tendencies, as outlined here, would serve as a check within the Republican camp on reaching an agreement with the Dutch. 9)

III b The domestic scene in the Netherlands

Following the break-down of German rule in the Netherlands, a system of military governance was established to bridge the time till due democratic processes would have been reinstated. It lasted from September 14, 1944, to March 4, 1946. Under this cloak a process of political reorientation and regrouping went on in an attempt to overcome pre-war parliamentary fragmentation due to party divisions along lines of religious denominations as well as class lines in various shades of ideology. The integrative forces were rallied in the Netherlands' Popular Movement (Nederlandse Volksbeweging). Based mainly on this movement the first post-war cabinet was formed. Of rather strong socialist leanings, it was, according to Dutch standards, ideologically remarkably homogeneous. It lacked, however, an electoral mandate. This should be considered a serious check on its capacity for swift action and substantial decision.

In the hope that forces of integration might crystallize, elections were postponed until May 17, 1946. Contrary to expectation forces of restoration had proven stronger than those of innovation, as evidenced by the fact that ten parties participated in the electoral contest. Five were denominational, one was socialist, another communist, still another liberal-conservative. The hopes of a progressive break-through, embodied in the newly formed Dutch Labor Party (Partij van de Arbeid), were frustrated earlier as evidenced by several consecutive opinion polls which showed a rapid decline in support. 10) A coalition cabinet was formed based on the support of Catholics and Labor. It would last until the elections of July 6, 1948, when the impending Indonesian independence necessitated amendment of the Constitution. 11) Finally, with the aim of rallying as much support as possible for liquidating the issue of decolonization, a cabinet was formed, based on four parties: Catholics, Labor, one

9) For a brief outline, see Van Doorn and Hendrix, op. cit., p. 89 ff. Also: Smit, op. cit., p. 110 and passim.


11) Amendment of the Constitution, according to Dutch constitutional law, requires both general elections and a qualified majority of two thirds of the votes of members present in both houses of Parliament. Especially this second condition should be borne in mind as a serious check on the room for manoeuvring of a Dutch cabinet in matters that require constitutional amendment.
of the two main Calvinist parties and the liberals. The other Calvinist party, of old
to the Anti-Revolutionary Party, kept aloof from participation in government
all through these years. In this party some of the most vocal opponents of any kind of
agreement with the Republic of Indonesia at Jogjakarta were assembled, although
leadership of its parliamentary party was in the hands of strict constitutionalists.
Let us now set about the task of analyzing the leeway offered by this arena of praetorian tendencies. The strongest challenge to democratic rules of the political game on
the part of the military has occurred during the period of military rule. Both in
London, the war-time refuge of the Dutch cabinet and of the Dutch titular head of
state Queen Wilhelmina, and in Eindhoven, administrative center of the liberated
southern provinces, there had been thoughts of a post-war political system of strong
autocratic leanings with a more outspoken role of the Queen.12) Similar thoughts
seemed to underlie the way military rule set about the task of reconstructing the administrative apparatus. The approach seemed to bypass civil politicians to such an extent that, for instance, the socialist minister J. W. Burger left the war cabinet headed by P. S. Gerbrandy and a revamping of the cabinet was necessary. These tendencies, however, were short-lived; a return to constitutional procedures was
apparent in the first post-war cabinet Schermerhorn-Drees. The lack of a parliamentary mandate and the postponement of the election date, have proven praetorianizing factors in their own right. The first round in the attempts at reaching an agreement
with the Republican government in Indonesia which culminated in the Hoge Veluwe
conference shortly before the election date, set off an outcry from extra-parliamentary
organizations. Although the rules of the game were thus under heavy pressure, the balance of power was such that no independent role of the military was conceivable. Shortly after the German occupation the Dutch military was lacking in both men and materiel.
The entire period up to the general election contained praetorian trends in a more
general way. Where no political party had a clear sense of its electoral support, the
first signs were apparent of a regrouping of conservative forces that would prove an increasingly formidable check on a rapid „sell-out“ to the Republic. The relative obscurity of the balance of political forces in this period paralyzed the progressive
forces in the government while giving the forces of reaction the opportunity to firmly entrench themselves. An effective weapon in this period of rallying support
to one’s own cause was the strong link between political leadership and media of mass
communication such as the press and the radio14), a sure sign of a return to verzuiling
as the main principle of organization of political life. For all practical purposes, the
general uncertainty as to the strength of the rival parties actually may have served

12) See e.g. L. de Jong, Koningin Wilhelmina in Londen. 1940-1945, Mededelingen der
13) Though there was no regularly elected parliament at the time, there was a provisional
parliament which derived its mandate from the last pre-war elections of 1937. Its ranks were
further filled by persons that had deserved well in war-time resistance movements.
14) This point is most strongly proven by the combination of positions of editor-in-chief of a Catholic newspaper and head of the Catholic Parliamentary Party in the person of C. P. M. Romme. Similar links, both at the political left and at the right, did exist, although these were not as tight.
as a substitute for an effective balance of power.
The socialists, we should add, clung to government all through the period under study, against a rising tide of political reaction and against diminishing electoral returns. This leads to the related point of the influence of the level of participation. From the start in 1945, it was understood that mass participation in politics, reflected in a democratic political process, would be maintained. The new feature, however, was participation in government by the socialists.

Certain socialist circles\(^{15}\) considered the penetration to the center of the political process — for the first time in history — such an important attainment, that even though the party became divided against itself during the later stages of the Indonesian crisis, it was loath to give up government responsibility.\(^{16}\) The entire period up to 1950 can be considered as an instance of, what Lijphart has called, consociational democracy at work.\(^{17}\)

Gradually, as the Indonesian crisis grew more acute, political parties closed ranks; the basis of the governing coalition was extended with the result that, increasingly, opponents of an agreement with the Indonesians were incorporated in government affairs. Thus, a counter-constitutional alliance of the radical right was prevented from building up steam. In such matters, however, it is always problematical who exactly is encapsulating whom.

The argument may be summarized as follows.

\[\text{Intensity of right-radical opposition} \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \quad \text{praetorian}\]

\[\text{right to organize} \quad \text{representation in parliament} \quad \text{access to leadership parliamentary party} \quad \text{access to government}\]

\[\text{Differences in access to political center}\]

\(^{15}\) Most outspokenly in the party leader K. Vorrink.

\(^{16}\) Other prominent socialist leaders, such as prime-minister W. Drees, had different, though related motives for maintaining the coalition. Socialist participation was considered a necessary check on the political right in the painful process of decolonization. See also Part VI of this paper.


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When we plot the intensity of right-radical opposition against the dimension of differences in access to the institutionalized political process, we see that increasingly a measure of right-wing influence is incorporated in government; we see that more outspoken opposition was represented in parliament in the one, Calvinist party that stayed aloof from government throughout the period under study; we see furthermore that still more radical views are heard in parliament from either politicians who were on the ideological fringe of the Calvinist opposition party or from splinter parties; the most outspoken opposition, finally, was extra-parliamentary but enjoyed the freedom to organize itself. Although, at any particular point of time, we find that where political temper is rising, it finds itself at an increasing distance from the political center, there was a definite trend for any measure of right-wing sentiment to get nearer the political center through these years.

The image of communicating vessels may be appropriate in this connection. It would seem that, once right radicalism entrenched itself in the established political system, it acquired a stake in the preservation of the system and in counter-acting transgressive tendencies on the part of the extra-parliamentary, right-wing opposition. This may have been evident, for instance, in the fact that Gerbrandy, head of the National Committee for the Maintenance of the Unity of the Empire (Nationale Comité Handhaving Rijkseensheid, hereafter referred to as N.C.H.R.) was banned from the radio in September 1947.\footnote{Cf. footnote 48.}

In conclusion we may say that the analysis serves to illustrate the careful manoeuvring, intent on preserving political continuity which is so typical of consociational democracy.

III c Between the extremes of the civic nature of the Dutch domestic scene and the praetorian trends within the Republic, each with checks and blockings of its own, the re-emerging colonial regime entered as a third party to the conflict with its own interests and freedom of action.

Here, the crucial fact was the incapacity of the Allied Forces for any decisive action immediately upon the capitulation of Japan. Most of the pre-war colonial elite, both civilians and military, were interned in concentration camps. By a change of command shortly before the Japanese surrender, the archipelago fell under the South East Asian Command of Admiral Mountbatten who did not have sufficient troops for quickly occupying the area. Whereas in the Eastern part of the archipelago Australian forces through swift actions managed to disarm the Japanese forces enabling the Dutch to take charge of administration of the area as of January 1946, on the main islands of Java and Sumatra only a few strongholds were taken by British troops. General Christison, in factual recognition of the Republican regime, requested that it maintain law and order in its sphere of influence, while refusing to let Dutch troops enter the island. It lasted more than one year before the Dutch could take over, on December 1, 1946. In the meantime, many Japanese arms
had been passed on to the Indonesian forces while an unknown number of Japanese troops had deserted to them.\(^{19}\)

It is a widely held view that the confrontation with the Republic was territorially confined to Java and Sumatra. This view is unwarranted. At the time of the arrival of Australian troops on islands such as Borneo and Celebes, there too a Republican administration was being set up. Here, a policy of roll-back of the Republic with military means started as early as October 1945.\(^{20}\) Toward the end of 1945 total Dutch forces numbered 20,000 troops, mainly in the Eastern part of the archipelago\(^{21}\), whereas shipment of troops on a large scale from the Netherlands brought the total number of forces up to 91,200 by November 30, 1946, of which 55,650 in the small corridor on Western Java stretching from Batavia (now: Jacarta) to Bandung. They would reach a maximum of over 100,000 at the time of the first expedition against the Republic — July 1947.\(^{22}\) In that period too, internees on Java and Sumatra had flocked to these small strongholds, thereby exerting a tremendous pressure on available means of existence. While the Republic maintained a blockade against these strongholds, the Dutch navy countered by a blockade of Republican territory in order to prevent the Republic from buying arms and selling the large stocks of Indonesian staple products.\(^{23}\)

In this context two main policy objectives were pursued by the Dutch government and the Dutch colonial administration. The Dutch government clearly had the initiative in renewed efforts to reach an agreement with the Republic through a fully authorized delegation — the Commission General, whereas the colonial administration, headed by Van Mook, led the way in setting up regional entities in those areas where Dutch authority had been restored with an eye to a future federal structure as envisaged by the Dutch. By the time an agreement with the Republic was reached (March 1947) — an agreement that would prove illusory about four months later — two federal bodies had taken shape, so that the Republic would have been outnumbered by two to one.

What civic channels in this context were open to the military to air its views and have its problems and goals understood? First of all, the highest civil authority in the Dutch East Indies, Van Mook, was commander-in-chief of the entire military apparatus in the archipelago. Another link between civil and military authority was the fact that the Army Commander, *qualitate qua*, was head of the Department of War. A smooth functioning of these interlocking positions was, for instance, evident

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19\) See Van Doorn and Hendrix, *op. cit.*, p. 70, where the authors refer to several thousand troops.

20\) Personal communication by Prof. S. van der Wal, based on his government-authorized research of source material. Also: *Vrij Nederland*, 5 July 1947, where reference is made to a petition, signed by 450 radjahs, *adat*-heads and leaders of several spheres of life as well as civil servants, that was handed to the Australian commander on 4 January 1946. In the petition that should have been forwarded to the United Nations, but never has been, it was requested that freedom to join the Republic be granted.


22\) Van Doorn and Hendrix, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

23\) Through Japanese archives the Dutch were perfectly informed of where these stocks were concentrated. See e.g. *Het Economisch Weekblad voor Indonesië*, 1946, 1947, where E. de Vries published several reports on the location of stocks.
in the preparations of the first military expedition\(^{24}\), whereas, on the other hand, the formal separation of responsibility, especially where Van Mook was concerned, created the possibility of using separate channels of information and control.\(^{25}\)

So, from the point of view of rules of the game and institutionalized ways of access to centers of decision-making, it would appear that the military in the Dutch East Indies by and large worked in a framework of civilian political primacy. From a balance-of-power point of view, however, the situation appears in a somewhat different light. Van Doorn and Hendrix, in their excellent study\(^{26}\), have convincingly shown the harmony of interests between the business and commercial groups and the military, constituting a formidable praetorianizing potential that was only defused by the growing conviction in political circles that military action could no longer be avoided.\(^{27}\)

IV  Interests, alliances and strategies

IV a  Interests. As both Messrs. P. J. Koets and J. A. Jonkman\(^{28}\) pointed out in personal communications, an overriding concern among opponents of appeasement with the Republic, was a desire for decolonization along orderly, constitutional lines.\(^{29}\) To them, the Republic of Indonesia, self-righteously proclaimed in revolutionary turmoil, headed by Hatta and Sukarno who had openly collaborated with the Japanese, was a party unworthy of acknowledgement, not to be negotiated with. Such a strong ideological (almost religious) factor might resist efforts at an analysis in terms of interests such as status, class and power. Mr. Jonkman himself, however, pointed to a curious ambiguity in the Dutch penchant for abiding by the writ, caused by an equally tenacious penchant for binding opponents to one’s own inter-

\(^{24}\) Personal information of J. Ozinga in a letter of July 14, 1970.
\(^{25}\) As, for instance, at the time of an unauthorized action on the eve of the signing of the Linggadjati agreement, when Van Mook insisted on having a report through civilian channels. Personal information of P. J. Koets, at the time head of the cabinet of the Governor-General.
\(^{26}\) Van Doorn and Hendrix, op. cit.
\(^{27}\) There might, however, be an element of contamination in the argument of Van Doorn and Hendrix. The strongholds where the Dutch military found itself confined after the departure of the British troops, were the main urban, commercial centers along the coasts, where the density of concentration camps was largest (the relief of internees being one of the express commissions of the British forces). At the same time, however, concentrations of European colonists meant concentrations of industrial and plantation interests (mining, oil, sugar, tobacco, rubber etc.). Whenever the military undertook actions across the confines of the strongholds, it might seem a foregone conclusion that the area it entered, was of high commercial interest. The empirical correlation need not warrant the conclusion that the military acted mainly in protection of those interests. This fact was pointed out to me in a personal conversation with R. de Bruin.
\(^{28}\) Minister of Overseas Territories in the second post-war cabinet.
\(^{29}\) As Dr. Jonkman pointed out, ever since 1795 the subject of the colonies had been incorporated in the Dutch constitution, thus causing a subject of essentially foreign-policy nature to be subject to procedures of amending strictly Dutch constitutional law. This juridical fiction has never been accepted by the United Nations that, from the start, in its deliberations acknowledged two parties to the conflict: the Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia, while excluding representatives of the two federal structures!
This shift from writ to interpretation offers plenty of leeway for an intrusion of interests. Even so, alongside covert influences of this sort, we encounter arguments that openly refer to interests. The list of brochures and pamphlets that were published under the auspices of the N.C.H.R. state such arguments like the following: Holland could not survive a severing of ties with the colonies (a class argument), the honor of the Nation and the Army were at stake (a status argument), internationally Holland would be reduced to the rank of a small, powerless nation (a power argument). The membership of the Committee in itself was a vivid illustration of the importance of interests; many members had clear links with interests as embodied in the administration, economy or army of the colonial empire. In the Dutch East Indies the case for an analysis in terms of interests is more clear cut. There we find a colonial society of some 250,000 people who, besides making the colonial area a field of exploitation, gave it the character of a settlement. Many had been born there (in 1930 about 70%), many others had gone there to stay. Their privileged position in terms of class, status and power was about to be wiped away. The threat would dramatically affect the Eurasians who, through the accident of birth, felt superior to the Indonesians and were accorded ample opportunity in the colonial system of dominance to live up to their claims. Their entire self-image, based so predominantly on social status, was dependent on the colonial system.

An illustration may be in order, based on data pertaining to the Royal Colonial Army (the K.N.I.L.). On a total of 150 commanding officers, from the Army Commander down to the level of lieutenant-colonel who were in active duty during the period under study, 58 were born in the East Indies. Of these, 27 were sons of professional soldiers and had been upwardly mobile compared with their fathers. The same holds good for the other 23 whose intergenerational mobility we have been able to trace. Most of their fathers’ occupations should be classified as middle or even lower-middle: three were teachers on elementary schools, seven were employed by the State Railways, either in white-collar positions or as supervisors, one was controller in the government bureaucracy, another employed by the Mail and Telegraph Service.

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30) As evidenced most dramatically by the attempt at binding the Republic to the Dutch interpretation of the Linggadjati agreement and, most hilariously, by Gerbrandy who, on the eve of the Round Table Conference that would bring an end to the Indonesian crisis, accused the Government of infraction of the Constitution and threatened that, in the face of this infraction, a minority of the Dutch people might take the law in its own hands. (Handelingen Tweede Kamer, 16 August 1949, Avondvergadering; vel 482, p. 1840 ff.)


33) Idem, p. 41.

34) Data gathered in *Stamboek Officieren K.N.I.L.* at the Ministry of Defense at The Hague as well as in addressbooks of the Dutch East Indies.

35) All but three of them were Europeans.
(P.T.T.), ten were employed by sugar mills or plantations in supervising or administra-
tive positions. As to those who were born in the Netherlands, we have been unable to
find similar data. What little information we did find on place of birth and length of
residence in the East Indies, may serve to supplement the picture. On a total of 92,
62 came from small towns and villages outside the urban concentration in the prov-
ince of Holland, most probably allured by the prospect of a successful career; of the
remaining thirty fourteen came from The Hague, the traditional crossroads of colonial
and domestic society — a city that used to be strongly oriented on the East Indies as
a source of social mobility. By far the greater part (61) had arrived in the East Indies
during the years 1919 to 1924. The over-all picture of this group of high-ranking
officers is one of a group that has staked its life on the opportunity structure of a
colonial society.

Just as this group mirrors the situation of the European elite in general, the rank-
and-file dramatically reflects the plight of intermediate groups who for their positions
of relative social elevation were completely dependent on the colonial structure.
As a general rule, their ratio was inversely related to rank. The lower ranks of non-
commissioned officers and rank-and-file in particular, were mostly filled by Eurasians
or Indonesians. Most prominent among the latter were members of Christianized
minorities such as the Amboinese and the Menadonese. They clearly epitomized a
general strategy under colonial rule where parts of the indigenous population used
be admitted to the exercise of dominance; the price for partial incorporation into
the elite hierarchy, was a separation of one's ethnic home base, a separation that
was either territorial, or religious (e.g. only about half the population of Amboina
was Christian), or both. We will return later to this strategic device of using the
ethnic and social diversity of this large area for the manipulation of tension and
conflict.

IV b Alliances and strategies. As was summarily stated in Part II of this paper, the
most general indication of the strategies deployed by an elite whose shares of social
goods are being attacked, is a reactivation of ascriptive criteria of distribution. We
expect this pattern to show most patently and fervently formulated, where the ratio
of achieved success to ascriptive success is lowest, in the case under study among
members of the intermediate layer of colonial society, consisting of Eurasians and
indigenous forces that had been encapsulated.36) In support of this hypothesis, we
find evidence37) that this reservoir of ideological reaction actually did exist and
was military "mobilized", or tapped, by using officers and noncoms of the K.N.I.L.
to give general instruction about "Land and People" of Indonesia to Dutch troops
before these were sent overseas. Themes occurred such as the total, innate incapacity
of the indigenous population to ever rule itself, only willing to obey harsh rule and
strong will. We ran across this theme more often, as, for instance, in the Memoirs

36) Apart from groups that we already referred to, such as the indigenous rank-and-file of
the Colonial Army, we should think of elite members of the pre-colonial feodal structures
that had been upheld by encapsulation in the colonial system of rule.
37) Van Doorn and Hendrix, op cit., p. 129.
of Admiral Helfrich, himself of Eurasian descent. It fits in beautifully, moreover, with another recurrent theme that Van Doorn and Hendrix call the centrally justifying argument for the Dutch military presence, the theme of a large cooperative majority of the population being terrorized by a tiny minority of "evil elements". In somewhat more civilized disguise, the theme is central to the arguments of those in the vanguard of political reaction; here the unsophisticated factor of "innate incapacity to rule" is replaced with "insufficient level of maturity", an argument that smoothly shaded over into the arguments of that vast array of proponents of prolonged, beneficial, paternalistic rule by the Dutch, possibly in cooperation with a Westernized Indonesian elite. This later version ran strongly through the dominant ideology among government officials and civil servants in Indonesia and was apparent in the policy of setting up federal bodies, resting heavily on Dutch administrative expertise and indigenous feudal elites, especially in those stages of federalization following the first military expedition.

Thus far, these strategic answers of a threatened elite are well within the range of normalcy of a civic arena. As was stated earlier, however, transgressive tendencies were strong during the months immediately preceding the first military expedition. Both in Holland and in Indonesia there were rumors of an impending military putsch, either in the metropolis or in the colony. Thus far, however, I have not been able to substantiate the charges leveled by Mr. Slotemaker de Bruine, about a year ago, at Gerbrandy. In Indonesia, Van Mook was informed of putschist plans in which the Chief Army Chaplain who had ties with the N.C.H.R., was said to be involved. Van Mook even requested that the Minister of Overseas Territories fire the Army Chaplain. As several informants assured me, these traces of conspiracy never were a serious threat.

One informant confidentially told me that praetorian tendencies were strongest among a group of reserve officers who had been engaged in the right-wing nationalist-Calvinist resistance movement N.J.V. (Nationaal Jongeren Verbond) during the German occupation. Other than the career officers who, for the most part, were deeply imbued with the doctrine of political primacy, this group may have been particularly liable to an intrusion of political orientations of non-military, societal reference groups into their functioning as military men. In a sense, being reserve officers, they were closer to the conflicts and divisions of civilian society than the professional military. As former members of resistance movements, moreover, they may have been less given to civic procedures.

39) Van Doorn and Hendrix, op. cit., p. 73, 74.
40) Personal communication by Dr. Koets.
41) G. H. Slotemaker de Bruine was interviewed in De Volkskrant, 28 June 1969. According to him, a meeting was convened of alarmed socialist leaders which he attended. He was unable to remember what was discussed at the meeting. As W. Drees informed me, he could not find an entry in his agenda referring to this meeting, nor could he remember anything relating to it.
42) Confidential information.
Apart from the coup as the most forceful means of military intervention in politics, other devices were used that imply a transgression of the normatively prescribed role of the military. At the time when a political solution of the conflict was sought on the basis of the Linggadjati-agreement and the swelling ranks of the army were still confined within the strongholds, there was a clear pattern of military violation of the cease-fire, partly in response to Republican infractions, possibly in response to commercial interests, some of them unauthorized by Van Mook — all of them, however, a definite contribution to the destruction of what mutual trust did exist.

In this period too, there is the first large-scale use of a device which might paradoxically be labeled: transgression institutionalized, namely the use of the Special Forces formula in counterinsurgency on Celebes from December 1946 to February 1947. The forces were mostly Amboinese troops and European cadre. The competition for popular support went on with such atrocity as would resound in Dutch Parliament as late as 1969.  

Starting with the first military expedition, itself a compromise of military and political objectives, new opportunities were open to the military to obstruct political precepts. Circles as high as the Army Commander and the Commander of the Naval Forces exerted strong pressure to extend the scope of the action so as to include Jogjakarta and, bypassing constitutional ways, addressed telegrams to the Queen; Van Mook even had to remind the Army Commander of his oath of loyalty to keep him from unauthorized action. Prime-minister Beel, on the other hand, would not have kept Van Mook from unauthorized action. Gerbrandy, member of parliament for the Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party, and head of the N.C.H.R., was banned from the radio upon inciting Van Mook toward unauthorized action in a speech broadcasted August 14, 1947. By and large, however, military commanders clung to established procedure; even when wanting to continue military action after the order to end hostilities had been issued, they sent telegrams to Van Mook, requesting authorization of such action. A second high tide in pressures toward unauthorized action came in the wake of the Van Royen-Rum agreement in May 1949, when some military commanders wanted to continue antiguerilla actions.

Another system of military obstruction of the political process can be discerned. From the start, the Dutch initiative of federalizing the emergent structure of an independent Indonesia, offered a possibility as well as a rationale for transgressive military manoeuvring.

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47) Smit, Liquidatie, p. 91.
49) J. Ozinga in a letter of 14 July 1970, refers to telegrams sent by general De Bruine and colonel Mollinger, asking for authorization to continue action in Madura and near Palembang.
50) As is apparent, e.g. from letters sent by the socialist lieutenant Van Gorcum to the chairman of the Dutch Labor Party. Source: Archive Partij van de Arbeid.
As early as May 1947, on the eve of the first military expedition, high-ranking Dutch officers as well as colonial civil servants had been instrumental in an abortive coup aiming at a secession from the Republic of the Pasundan. 51) Later, when the Pasundan had acquired statehood under the cloak of the Dutch military occupation of Western Java, General Engles arrested some members of the Pasundan Parliament when, on the occasion of the second military expedition, they took a pro-Republican stand, and he threatened to take stronger measures. 52) After the final cease-fire which would lead to the solution of the Indonesian issue, and most strongly after independence was formally granted, this strategy of playing the card of territorially based resistance to the power of the Republic, took on desperate features.

This strategy was most dramatically evident in the abortive coups in the Pasundan (this one in January 1950, the so-called Westerling putsch), and on Celebes (the coup by company commander of the K.N.I.L. Abdul Azis), as well as in the short-lived secession of the Republic of the South Moluccas.

The Westerling putsch had links with the local nationalist-conservative Darul Islam guerillas 53) and, as some of my informants asserted 54), with General Engles, territorial commander of the Dutch troops, that still remained in Western Java, commander of the 7-December-division that was confined to barracks in Bandung, waiting for repatriation. He, certainly, has not kept Amboinese K.N.I.L.-forces under his command, special forces formerly under the command of captain Westerling, from deserting to the Westerling forces. One informant was convinced that General Engles has been instrumental in the escape of Westerling. 55) Another source, navy lieutenant A. J. Schouwenaar, states that the aim of the Westerling putsch was to replace the Republican Minister of Defense with the Sultan of Pontianak, head of the state of West Borneo, colonel of the K.N.I.L., and thus to assure that in stead of the Republican Army, the T.N.I., the former K.N.I.L. would be the backbone of the new Indonesian army. 56) According to Schouwenaar, vice-admiral Kist must also have known of Westerling's intentions. 57)

In Makassar, Celebes, upon the arrival of troops of the new national army, consisting of former Republican T.N.I.-forces, an attempted coup was staged by K.N.I.L. company commander, Abdul Azis, in the name of defending the state of East Indonesia.

51) M. van Blankenstein in the Dutch weekly De Stem van Nederland, 5 July 1947. The Pasundan was to include most of Western Java.
52) Van Doorn and Hendrix, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
53) One of the few examples of a right-radical movement availing itself of guerilla tactics. As colonel Wierda wrote in a letter 19 August 1950 (Archive Partij van de Arbeid), it was beyond doubt that Dutch troops had been providing the Darul Islam with arms.
54) Confidential communication.
55) Confidential communication. See also Westerling's own account in his *Mijn Memoires*. Amsterdam, P. Vink, 1952. Also: a letter by Navy lieutenant A. J. Schouwenaar of 13 April 1950 (Archive Partij van de Arbeid).
56) Consonant with this interpretation is the ultimatum, sent by Westerling to the governments of both the state of Pasundan and the United States of Indonesia in which he demanded that a private army he had formed (estimations of its strength ran from 4000 up to 30,000) be recognized as the official forces of the State of Pasundan (ANETA, 9 January 1950; ANP-arcbive).
against the drive toward the unitary state, as promoted by the Federal Government.\textsuperscript{58)}

He was provided with open support of Amboinese K.N.I.L.-forces and, as captain Pielage who was in Makassar at the time and lieutenant Van Gorcum, intelligence officer, have written, secretly spurred by Dutch officers with promises of forthcoming Dutch support to bolster the states in their struggle against centralizing tendencies. Silent support is traced as high as the undersecretaries of the navy and of the army at The Hague.\textsuperscript{59)}

The short-lived attempt at secession of the Republic of the South Moluccas, one of the most dramatic stages of the breakdown of the Dutch-sponsored federal structure, followed the same general pattern. Amboinese K.N.I.L.-forces sent back to the isle of Amboina for demobilization, but left in full possession of their arms, started a virtual terror which failed to be forcefully countered by Dutch officers present at the time: the action was silently condoned by those circles. As captain Pielage reports, the administrative head of the province was forced into the act of secession by the mutinous troops.

The only instance, to my knowledge, of indigenous K.N.I.L.-forces choosing the side of the local population and the cause of the unitary state against their own officer corps, occurred in Menado on Northern Celebes. Menadonese soldiers disarmed their officers and fraternized with local pro-Republican forces.\textsuperscript{60)}

\section*{V A note on rank-and-file dissent}

Although the theoretical model from which we started, allows us to systematically deal with left radical tendencies, especially among the rank-and-file, we have not been able to find evidence of “G.I. radicalism” to any noticeable extent. A large collection of letters, written by Dutch soldiers, which are kept at the archive of the Partij van de Arbeid, center on such day-to-day problems as the quality of the cigarettes and uncertainty as to the date of demobilization. There were instances of draft evasion and conscientious objection, although only a minority, coming from anarchist circles, patently referred to feelings of affiliation with the Indonesian revolution; there were abortive longshoremen strikes when large-scale shipment of troops started. However, no clear pattern emerges of politicization of the rank-and-file, of disobedience movements, of a military-civilian oppositional alliance on the political left.

A comparison with the present situation of the U.S. army in Vietnam where such stirrings do occur, may suggest the following explanation. Whereas among soldiers in Vietnam a feeling is spreading of risking their lives in what, strategically and politically, is a situation of dead-lock, such a feeling did not have time to take root among Dutch soldiers in 1949. Here, a similar military situation was brought to an end by the Van Royen-Rum agreement.

\textsuperscript{58)} The reality of this drive cannot be denied. As early as 12 January 1950 the federal government drafted a law to disband the states of East Java and the Pasundan (ANETA, 12 January 1950; ANP-archive).


\textsuperscript{60)} A. P. N. Pielage, Letter of 21 June 1950.
VI Conclusion

In the total context of actions taken on the part of Dutch interest groups in their confrontation with the Republic, the part played by praetorianism appears marginal. The most patent instances of the military resorting to praetorianism occurred at a time when the course of events most directly affected the K.N.I.L., especially its indigenous rank-and-file.

When the K.N.I.L. as a military structure was disbanded, 26 July, 1950 they had no foreign country to repatriate to and were offered such equally uncertain options as joining the national Indonesian army or joining the Royal Netherlands Army with the risk of a reduction in salary and/or rank.61)

The heavy investment of Dutch national chauvinism, and politico-economic interests in the cause of federalism in Indonesia, made the Netherlands appear a safe ally in praetorian ventures. When no actual support was forthcoming, the days of federalism were counted. On August 17, 1950, the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia was officially proclaimed.

The heyday of K.N.I.L. power saw no such policy of desperation. What formidable power the K.N.I.L., however small in comparison with the influx of the Royal Netherlands Army, managed to acquire through actually monopolizing the military command structure, intelligence and special forces62), is acquired along orderly lines without recourse to praetorianism. The harmony of interests in colonial society, the willingness of political circles to increasingly rely on military means and the gradual incorporation of forces of reaction into the political process in the metropolis, all these factors combined in offering leeway to the K.N.I.L. for accumulating power. The height in this development was reached with the replacement of Van Mook with Beel, high representative of the Crown, who, contrary to Van Mook, was no match for the military.63)

It will always remain a matter of speculation why no upsurge of praetorianism occurred at the height of anti-guerilla warfare when the military seemed in full sway but attempts at solving the problem with political means began to prevail.

As a final note, however, we would venture to suggest that a main factor in keeping the military within civic bounds was the united front and relative continuity of rule Dutch politicians managed to maintain in the metropolis.64)

61) At the time the Organization on Non-Commissioned Officers of the K.N.I.L. filed a petition with the members of the Dutch parliament (13 February 1950) not to allow any such reductions (Archive Partij van de Arbeid).

62) Van Doorn and Hendrix, op. cit., p. 127.

63) This was most clearly evident on the eve of the second military expedition when, after the socialist ministers had actually turned in their resignation, they were prevailed upon to stay on on the condition that the authorization for military action be postponed and a three-day ultimatum be posed to the Republic. In Batavia Beel, influenced by military advisers that, for purely military reasons, no delay of action longer than 24 hours could be afforded, self-righteously cut back the ultimatum to less than 24 hours. (Confidential information).

64) Despite indications to the contrary (Smit, Liquidatie, p. 159). In Catholic political circles forces were at work toward a complete break with the socialists, which would have meant a cabinet crisis that might have provoked a military-civilian praetorian coup. Cf. the development in Algeria; P. M. de la Gorce, The French Army, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963; chapter 17 through 20.