Indonesian Revolution Conflict

Overview
After the surrender of Imperial Japan and the end of World War Two, the Netherlands has tried to regain control of its' former colony known to the locals as Indonesia. Newly appointed President Sukarno declared Indonesia’s independence from Dutch and Japanese authority two days after the Japanese’s surrender. However, this has not been accepted by both of the island republic’s former colonizers. Fighting has broken out between the Indonesian Republicans, the Pemudas who joined them, and the Dutch and the Japanese both trying to retake the newly declared independent nation. This has led to three years of violence across the islands. Japanese military members who abandoned their posts following Japan’s surrender have been supplying weaponry to pro-Republican movements in Indonesia, with some even joining the fighting. There were still Dutch prisoners of war being held by the Japanese at the end of the war and once they were free, violence began between the supporters of the Dutch and those who wanted a Republic of Indonesia. Japanese forces fall on both sides of this conflict as well as the Allies such as the United Kingdom, who had originally shown its’ support for the Netherlands by sending troops to help in the recapturing process.

After the Netherlands’ launched a major military offensive known as “police action” they regained control of all deep-water ports in Java and natural resources in Sumatra, Medan, Palembang, and Padang. The hostile takeover may have been successful but caused backlash from The United States and the United Kingdom, stopping the Dutch from a complete conquest. Most recently this has spurred the creation of the UN Good Offices Committee with American and Belgian representatives in an effort to settle negotiations for a ceasefire. As of the end of 1947, no ceasefire has been agreed to.

Historical Context/ Background
The struggle for Indonesian independence predates the end of World War Two by nearly thirty-five years. Indonesia, formerly known as The Dutch East Indies, was established as a Dutch colony in 1819 after the bankruptcy of the Dutch East India Company. Prior to Dutch occupation, the people who would be brought together under Dutch authority had not previously shared a unified political identity. The Dutch were seeking wealth and by the beginning of the twentieth century had established the borders for its’ colony that would become the basic borders

1 Panscasila Youth- Indonesian Far Right Paramilitary, 100% freedom for Indonesia supporters
anesia after World War Two. From 1901 until the Japanese occupation of Indonesia, the
lands’ official policy for the dictation of The Dutch East Indies was known as the Dutch
Ethical Policy. This was the acknowledgment of Dutch royalty that they had responsibility for
the welfare of its’ subjects in the colonies and changed the colony from a purely money making
operation into a developing colony. Mainly the Dutch used the educational purposes of the
Ethical Policy to create an educated, elite, upper class in the colony. This class would be the
benefactors of Western teachings and would therefor, hopefully, be more loyal to the Dutch as
they were the ones who gave them these opportunities. Unfortunately for the Dutch, this plan
backfired and gave the Indonesians the tools they needed to begin what is known as the
Indonesian National Awakening.

The Indonesian National Awakening was the true beginning of Indonesia’s struggle for
independence. Several factors gave rise to a nationalist consciousness: the indigenous print
media, urbanization, communism, Islam, education, mass entertainment (such as film), and
suffering under Dutch apartheid. However, the education offered to the Indonesian natives by the
Dutch did spur on the development of the first political parties. In May of 1908 the Indonesian
independence movement began and is commemorated as the “Day of National Awakening.” This
movement included many of the newly developed political parties such as Budi Utomo, the
Indonesian National Party (PNI), Sarekat Islam, and Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).
All of these parties grew rapidly during the early years of the National Awakening. Some were
interested in finding a way to cooperate with the Dutch and hoped that they would be granted
self-rule. The Budi Utomo and Sarekat Islam parties were most notable for joining in the
Volksraad, or People’s Council that was organized by the Dutch for cooperation. The Volksraad
met for the first time in 1918 and was a parliament comprised of thirty-nine members. Fifteen of
these members were native Indonesians and they argued for the eventual self-governing of
Indonesia, which the Dutch did agree to, but never followed through on. The other major parties
saw this as a placating gesture and decided to take the strategy of non-cooperation in order to
demand the freedom of self-governing from the Dutch East Indies colony. Two of the notable
leaders that rose from these developments were Sukarno and Mohammed Hatta. These two
would later go on to become the President and Vice President after declaring Indonesia’s
independence a few years ago but at this time were no more than students and nationalistic
leaders who were beneficiaries of the Dutch’s education protocols in the colony.

In the time between the beginning of the National Awakening and the invasion by Imperial Japan
there was more development in the parties and in 1926 the six-year-old Communist Party of
Indonesia attempted the first revolution against the Dutch. Starting in Java they led small revolts
before the Dutch began to panic. This
panic led to the arrest of Sukarno in 1929
and the ban that was placed on the PNI.
The Great Depression kept the
Netherlands from repressing the
nationalistic movements in Indonesia
throughout the 1930’s but fortunately for
ch no real moves towards independence came out of the time period. This all changed

**Imperial Japan** invaded in **World War Two**.

When World War Two began in 1939 and the Netherlands was occupied the next year, this seemed to be the moment that the Indonesian Revolutionaries needed. The Dutch rulers were in a weak position to enforce their reign over the colony but the colonial government was determined to continue. Indonesia was in a stalemate of sorts where their rulers were preoccupied by their own foreign rulers and then the Japanese army invaded. Imperial Japan had already influenced the Dutch colony, spreading its’ ideology of “Asia for the Asians” and bolstering the Indonesian nationalists. Japan faced some push back from **Chinese Indonesians** who enjoyed their privileges under the Dutch rule. While the Japanese’s presence in Indonesia did worry the Dutch enough to use intelligence services to monitor them before World War Two, it became clear that their invasion meant the end of Dutch rule in the East Indies. In 1941, an Indonesian organization of religious, political, and trade union groups requested the right from the Dutch East Indies Government to mobilize the Indonesian people if they faced a way threat. The memorandum was refused, the Government decided that the Madijis Rakjat did not accurately represent the people’s desires. This left them open to invasion and four short months later, the Japanese almost completely occupied the colony.

The Netherlands declared war on Japan on December 8th, 1941, shortly before the invasion actually began. In January, a month into the Japanese Invasion, the **American-British-Dutch-Australian Command** was formed in an effort to coordinate Allied forces in South-East Asia. Australia would become a safe haven for the Dutch government officials and elite who fled the island colony as the Japanese forces began to take over. The power vacuum created by the fleeing Dutch government and the invading Japanese led to conflicts between rival Indonesian groups. It is important to remember that many of the groups that came to comprise the Dutch East Indies had never been brought together before and this led to people being killed, kidnapped or forced into hiding. The Japanese were swift in overtaking the colony in search of the rich oil resources they needed. Forcing the Dutch out of the region was an added bonus to the natural resources that Indonesia could offer their war efforts. The Japanese occupation was initially greeted with optimistic enthusiasm, some saw Japan as the older brother to Indonesia. Others saw the invasion as an opportunity to kill massive amounts of the remaining Europeans on the island. Many of the Dutch who remained had wrongfully assumed that the Japanese would leave them in power; however, the Japanese troops sent them to concentration camps and replaced them in power. Nearly 100,000 Europeans and some Chinese were interned, in addition to 80,000 Dutch, Australian, and US Allied troops that went to prisoner-of –war camps. The death rates in these camps were 13-30 percent.

With the Indonesians co-operating, Japan prepared for retaliation from the Allies, namely **Australia** and by allowing the Indonesian ruling class to remain in power, gave them more
sovereignty than they had ever had before under Dutch rule. Life under the occupation became better for everyone living on the island. Some were tortured, forced into slavery, and became forced laborers on Japanese military projects. Tens of thousands of Indonesians faced starvation and were forced from their homes all in the name of the Japanese invasion. A few years later in the National Revolution that followed the end of World War Two, thousands more would die fighting against the Japanese. The United Nations estimates that four million people died in Indonesia during the Japanese occupation of which 30,000 were European civilians. All the while, the Japanese were also creating new Indonesian institutions and backing the nationalist movements and its’ leaders like Sukarno. Despite their support, the Japanese did not allow the Indonesians to refer to themselves as such, or even use the word “Indonesia” and referred to it as the Southern Territories. Japan had wanted to claim the island as its own territory until late in 1944 when the Japanese were facing defeat. Japan had never seriously supported Indonesian independence it just wanted the European influences out of Asia.

The Japanese did mobilize the Indonesian population twice during the occupation, the first was to drum up support against the West. This is known as Putera and it took place on April 16th 1943. They would try again on March 1st 1944 under the name Jawa Hokokai. Most of the people who did turn up to support were sent into forced labor for the military. The Japanese military also provided Indonesian youth with military training, weapons, and formed the volunteer army known as PETA (Defenders of the Homeland.) While the training was originally intended to support the collapsing power as Japan was facing defeat in World War Two, it really became a significant backbone for the Republic of Indonesia as it fights for its’ independence. This training is what led to the development of the Indonesian National Armed Forces in 1945. By the time the end of the occupation came about, the Indonesians had learned a lot about political sovereignty and economy, all the while the Japanese deconstructed the Dutch colonial state. Two days after the Japanese surrender, Sukarno declared Indonesian Independence and the fight for this independence is still raging. In 1944 General MacArthur of the United States had wanted to liberate Java and begin to liberate the island nation; however, President Roosevelt ordered him not to. Internment camps have been liberated at this time although the liberation did take longer than hoped. Red Cross supplies have finally been made available in Indonesia and the Allies had forced the Japanese to send the more cruel of the occupiers back to Japan.

Nearly 1000 Japanese soldiers deserted their units that were under allied command and became a part of the local communities. They joined military organizations and many have died in the fighting so far in the Indonesian Conflict. In a last ditch effort by the Japanese, in October of 1945 they tried to reclaim power in the towns and cities that they had given up to the Indonesians. After this attempt was thwarted, the self-proclaimed pemudas started to get
impatient with the slowness of the revolution. They began what is referred to as the **Bersiap**, a period from August 1945 until December where the “ethnic out-groups” such as the Dutch, Eurasian, Ambonese, and Chinese were considered spies and were then intimidated, kidnapped, robbed, and murdered in organized massacres. These kinds of killings have been common the entire revolution but were most often occurring during the Bersiap.

The Republican government in Indonesia has been established since August of 1946. Before this time, the Republic was just a fledgling attempt at establishing a central government over Indonesia. Because it lacked full support from the people of Indonesia, it struggled greatly to prepare for the reentry of Dutch troops. The Netherlands actually wrote the new Republican government off as a product of Japanese fascism and the Allies began to engage the struggling government. Indonesia was comprised of many different groups of people and the new Republic was struggling to keep them all supporting it. The first Allied occupation began in eastern Indonesia by the Australians, then the British and Indian troops landed in Jakarta in late September 1945. At this time the Dutch were already swiftly reoccupying eastern Indonesia with the aid of the Australians. In September and October of 1945 the occupation brought about the largest battle of the revolution to date, the **Battle of Surabaya**. Pemuda groups in Surabaya took up arms that they had gathered from the Japanese and set up a foothold in the city. They also had developed the **Indonesia National Committee, and the People’s Security Council**. This battle resulted in the first attempt at negotiations for a ceasefire between the British troops and the rebellion. This has led to the British questioning their alliance with the Dutch as the realization that the Republic is in fact a well-organized resistance with popular support. This was shown in the battle and the months that followed.

**Current Situation/ Recent Developments**

In the early months of 1946 with British assistance, the Dutch brought the **Netherlands Indies Civil Administration** forces to key cities in Indonesia. The most important being Jakarta, where the Republican leadership was still developing their government; even though the Republicans could not hold the city they were able to get the leadership out of the city before it was taken over. This has been a common theme of the occupation process, the Dutch have been able to retake larger cities but have not been able to subdue the countryside.

The **Linggadjati Agreement** was brokered by the British and by November 1946 declared that the Netherlands did recognize the Republic as the de facto authority over Java, Madura, and Sumatra. Both parties agreed to the later establishment of a semi-autonomous federal state in Indonesia with the Netherlands’ monarch at the head. In February of 1947 the Central National Committee of Indonesia did ratify the agreement but the Dutch nor the Republic are pleased with the agreement. There have been many accusations on both sides of violations of the agreement.

On July 20th 1947, the Dutch began **Operation Product**, a major military offensive referred to as police actions in an attempt to restore law and order. Dutch forces drove Republican troops out of parts of Sumatra, and Java. This action however has caused a negative response by the
Forces. **Australia and newly independent India** both became active supporters of the Republic. The Soviet Union and the United States have also begun to support the Republic. Currently Australia has a blockade that is boycotting Dutch ships from entering the Republic. The United Nations Security Council has become involved at this time, calling for a ceasefire with **UNSC Resolution 27**. They also established the **Good Offices Committee** to further negotiations and is putting pressure on the Dutch.

**UN Resolutions Concerning The Indonesian Conflict**

- **S/RES/27 The Indonesian Question**
  - Calls for a cease-fire due to concerns about the progress of hostility between the armed forces of the Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia. Also invited the representative of the Republic of Indonesia to participate, without a vote, in the discussion of the Indonesian Question.

- **S/RES/30 The Indonesian Question**
  - Invites both the representatives from the Netherlands and India to participate in the discussion, without vote, on the Indonesian Question

- **S/RES/31 The Indonesian Question**
  - The proposal of a committee being sent by the Security Council to help foster a settlement between the two parties (the Republic and the Netherlands). This created the Committee of Good Offices was established with Australia (Selected by the Republic), Belgium (Selected by the Netherlands), and the United States of America (Selected by Australia and Belgium)

- **S/RES/32 The Indonesian Question**
  - Reminds the Government of the Netherlands and the Government of The Republic of Indonesia of Resolution 27 concerning the ceasefire. Also calls upon the governments to adhere strictly to Resolution 27.

- **S/RES/35 The Indonesian Question**
  - Resolves that the Secretary-General act as the convener of the Committee (of Good Offices) and arrange the organization of its work.

- **S/RES/36 The Indonesian Question**
  - Realizing that the ceasefire has not been fully effective, calls upon the concerned parties to employ means to find a ceasefire resolution.
Questions to Consider

This topic guide serves as a base for your overall understanding of the situation. This should not be your only research, and do remember that in a Historic Security Council set in 1948, all of your research must have come from before 1948. Any developments that occur in or after 1948 have not yet happened in this simulation and will be found not germane in debate. These questions are meant to help you when you are researching your own country and developing your ideas.

1. Moving forward, how can the Security Council take a more active role in ending the violence in the region? Is the Committee enough or does more need to be done?
2. What is your country’s view on the Netherlands’ attempt at reclaiming the former colony? Likewise, what is your country’s view on the former colony attempting to become its own nation? Look into your country’s history and think about how this may affect their opinions and motivations in this matter.
3. Is there a resolution possible for both parties to be happy with the outcome? What would each side have to give up in order for this to happen and what do you think their responses will be to these ideas?
4. What would your country’s main goal be in the beginning? Ending the violence as quickly as possible or coming to a diplomatic solution that would end the violence and the turmoil, but will take longer to enact? This can effect how position papers will be considered. Consider your own country’s past and what you, as the representative of that country, would want to see.

Further Research

As you may have noticed, throughout the Topic Guide there are several bolded words. Below I have listed some sources for you to do further reading on some of these topics as they are important to the discussion but could not be summarized in a way that would give you full understanding of it.

- The International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE)
  - [http://libguides.law.uga.edu/c.php?g=177176&p=1164581](http://libguides.law.uga.edu/c.php?g=177176&p=1164581)
- The Linggadjati Agreement
  - [http://www.houseofdavid.ca/linggadjati.htm](http://www.houseofdavid.ca/linggadjati.htm)
- The Battle of Surabaya
  - [http://www.nusantara.com/heritage/surabaya.html](http://www.nusantara.com/heritage/surabaya.html)
- Bersiap
  - [https://www.indischekamparchieven.nl/en](https://www.indischekamparchieven.nl/en)
Timeline of Events Until 1948

1819
- The Netherlands create the colony of The Dutch East Indies

1901-1942
- The Dutch Ethical Policy Period

1908
- Budi Utomo is founded

May 1908
- Day of National Awakening

1912
- Inische Partij and Sarekat Islam are founded

1918
- First meeting of the Volksraad

1920
- Communist Party of Indonesia is formed

1925
- Dutch Education in Indonesia Increases

1926
- First revolution attempt by communist party

1927
- Indonesian National Party (PNI) is founded by Sukarno

1929
- Dutch arrest Sukarno and ban PNI

1939
- World War Two begins

May 1940
- Germany occupies the Netherlands

1942
- Imperial Japan invades the Dutch East Indies

16 April 1943
- Japan tries to rally the Indonesian people against the West (Putera)

1 March 1944
- Jawa Hokokai replaces Putera as Japan tries once again

7 September 1944
- Japanese Prime Minister Koiso promises independence for Indonesia eventually

1945
- Formation of the Indonesian National Armed Forces

29 April 1945
- Lt. Gen. Kumakichi Harada establishes the Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Independence

15 August 1945
- Imperial Japan surrenders

17 August 1945
- Sakarno declares Indonesian Independence

September 1945
- News of independence spread and revolution overtook the country
- Republican Pemudas have overtaken major infrastructures

October 1945
- Japan tries to re-establish authority in Indonesian towns
- Fighting breaks out between Republic supporters and freed Dutch prisoners/ British reinforcements
-December 1945
  - Bersiap Period

November 1945
  - The Battle of Surabaya reaches its’ peak

August 1946
  - The Republican government is created

20 July 1947
  - Dutch launch "police action, causing Australian, Indian, and American representatives in the UN to raise awareness to the independence's cause

4 August 1947
  - The Dutch and Sukarno order a UN-demanded ceasefire

October 1947
  - The UN Good Offices Committee with American, Australian, and Belgian representatives work for Dutch-Republican negotiations for a new ceasefire

November 1947
  - The Dutch create the State of East Java

December 1947
  - The Dutch create the State of East Sumatra

Sources

- Bidien, Charles (5 December 1945). "Independence the Issue". Far Eastern
- "Indonesian War of Independence". Global Security. Archived from the original on 10 December 2006.


- Klemen, L. "The Netherlands East Indies 1941-1942"

