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Jakarta, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945

Sir Philip Christison, Bart.  
C.in.C. Allied Forces in Indonesia,  
Jakarta.

Sir,

Every time you want to put us in the wrong, you produce your pet argument that Indonesians do not possess a stable government and, as proof of your contention, you point to the fact that shootings and lootings have taken place in this or that area. Having done that, you dissociate yourself from all responsibility for occurrences directly attributable to the ill-conceived policy you have all along been following. The march of events should by now have served to convince you of the gross immorality of trying to foist the Dutch on an unwilling people; but it would appear that the ethics of the case have been ignored in view of your “moral obligations to an ally” who (in the words of a SEAC commentator) “played a major part in winning the war for the United Nations”. In view of Dutch claims that their heroic stand in Holland and Indonesia saved Britain and Australia respectively—and now officially recognized by SEAC radio—we realize how difficult it is for you to take a firm line with the one people who saved Britain from German occupation. However that may be, the United Nations mandate from which you derive your title to set as the Allied Army of Occupation in Indonesia makes it incumbent on you to give some measure of fair play to the people of this country.

It is but just to point out to you that your policy of trying to put the Dutch back in the saddle has resulted in your turning a blind eye to criminal and provocative Dutch actions nicely calculated to render difficult Indonesian attempts to maintain law and order in an exceedingly trying and confused situation. Every so often we have had occasion to draw your attention to the manner in which Dutch soldiery under your over-all command keep on harassing the local population, evidently to prod Indonesians into taking retaliatory measures. We were led into believing that Jakarta had been placed outside the sphere of such Dutch activity, yet hardly a day goes by without reports of Dutch excesses within the confines of the municipal area. To specify every single substantiated not would serve no useful purpose, but I recount one instance which took place at 1830 hours on 7/11/45. There trucks laden with Dutch troops, moving

outwards from inside Jakarta, suddenly and for no rhyme or reason, opened fire on the police post and barracks at Sectie 7 Djatinegara, killing one policeman named Kromowiriyo.

Dutch soldiers shopping in the Tjikini Pasar have been so high-handed in their behavior that stall-holders there cannot be induced into keeping their booths open. Today the Pasar is entirely shut. A contributory factor has been the lack of market produce, the train service to Bogor having been disrupted for the last three days due to fighting between Dutch and Indonesian elements at Kalibata. Polonia is another area in which clashes have been taking place between Dutch soldiers and Indonesians. Some of them still resort to holding up Indonesians, while others break into Indonesian homes. Perhaps the worst offenders are those who molest Indonesian women passing on the streets.

The position then is this: the Allied Command in Jakarta cannot—or will not—maintain control over some elements of the comparatively small number of soldiers under its charge in this city. And, if a military organization run on strict lines finds itself unable to restrain the activities of soldiers trained to a life of obedience and submission to orders, is it any surprise if illiterate undisciplined peasants resort to looting? This is all the more true when the Allied Army of Occupation, through its motions, makes a mockery attempts to create a stable government for this country.

As I repeatedly pointed out to you, Dutch provocation inevitably results in unsettled conditions. Then you have the British issuing orders to the Japanese in various parts of Java—as at Semarang and Bandung, to mention two instances—to recover arms supposedly in the possession of Indonesians. As a natural consequence fighting breaks out, often lasting for days, and during and subsequent to this period of hostilities the whole countryside is turmoil. Who is to blame for the rioting and looting that are the natural concomitants of any cessation of orderly government? Witness the past trouble in Surabaya and the present tension reported there. For some days after the landing of British troops in that port, the general atmosphere was one of friendliness. Then came the leaflets calling on Indonesians to surrender their arms. Brigadier-General Mallaby, the then local commander, knew nothing of their origin and admitted as much. When General Hawthorn went to Surabaya after the outbreak of fighting, he made it clear that the offending pamphlet was to be ignored. Subsequent to the regrettable incidents there, the British said that they wanted to occupy only the harbour area and the vicinity of the internment camp at Darmo.

Now the British want to occupy all of Surabaya, and want to disarm the Indonesians. If there was no reason for occupying the whole of Surabaya a few days ago, there is much less show of reason now because most of the internees have already been evacuated. As for the

Japanese, they were disarmed long before the British landed in Surabaya. Indonesians claim that the British are guilty of dissimulation, and of breaking pledges given by them. Add to all this General Christison's original and emphatic statement that he would occupy only Jakarta and Surabaya. Since then the British have occupied other places in Java and, if the latest report from Surabaya is true, intend to occupy yet more areas. What purpose can the British have except the build up bridge-heads for the Dutch?

The mere presence of the Dutch in any part of Java immediately results in disorders. Fully knowing this, the British yet persist in creating the very conditions that makes for trouble, and then put the blame on the Indonesians. In spite of the fact that the British have been in Singapore for some time, gun-fights and kidnappings are an every day occurrence on that island. Alleged collaborators are shot and killed by self-appointed judges. Dacoity is assuming threatening proportions in Central Burma. Seventy-five Jews have just fallen victim to Arabs in British-controlled Tripolitania. When the blitz was in full swing the British Government had to take special measures against looters in London. If British arguments maintain that Indonesia has no stable government, the British should also freely confess that such conditions are equally true in Singapore, Burma and Tripolitania, and were even true of Britain. By the same argument, China, almost the whole of South America and a goodly part of Europe are devoid of stable governments. Why then pick on the Indonesian Government which, in its attempts to bring about settled conditions, finds that it is up against the British, the Dutch and the Japanese, all equally determined to make stable government impossible?

British intelligence reports before and during the war were able to gauge the strength and intensity of the national movement in Indonesia with more accuracy than the Dutch, who pooh-poohed British advice and suggestions given them on that point. If, as originally planned, the British had landed here alone, with just a few brigades of soldiers for purely RAPWI purposes, everything would have gone on well. The unfortunate decision to include the Dutch ally, because of the major part he played in winning the war for the United Nations, has been the cause of all the trouble. Here again the British were led up the garden path by Dutch intelligence reports which claimed that the N.I.C.A. would be given a right royal welcome as soon as it landed in Indonesia. Thus the British were sold a second time. Does Britain's heavy moral obligation to a gallant ally who saved the British people from German occupation necessitate being continually deceived and played for a sucker? We should think not, and for a very good reason. The mass of Indonesians do not entertain anything but friendly feelings for the British. Nevertheless, the further the British get involved in local politics, the more will they have to side the Dutch openly, and ultimately fight for them. Is Britain bent on

throwing away the good will and friendship of seventy million people who have never done her harm and are earnest in their desire to see amicable relations maintained between Britain and Indonesia? We are trying hard to understand you, to co-operate with you, and get on well with you, but you seem determined not to give us a chance.

Yours faithfully,

(Mohammad Hatta)