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**Review of Kemperman, J.; Keizer, E.; Berge, T. van den (2022) Diplomatie en geweld: de internationale context van de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949**

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Jeroen Kemperman, Emma Keizer and Tom van den Berge (eds.), *Diplomatie en geweld: De internationale context van de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945–1949*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022, 207 pp. ISBN: 9789463720588, price: EUR 24.99 (paperback).

Although wars typically involve complex situations and numerous parties, in the course of fighting they often simplify merely to winners and losers. The Indonesian independence war was not a battle between the Netherlands and Indonesia as the only conflicting parties. While this theme has been a subject of research by many historians, the editors of the present book, Jeroen Kemperman, Emma Keizer and Tom van den Berge, offer a broader approach that speaks to scholars of various disciplines, especially those of international relations and strategic studies. Indeed, the international political context of the Indonesian revolutionary war between 1945–1949 provides rich insights into the choices and challenges international actors had, not only from the perspectives of the United States and the United Kingdom, but also the United Nations, as a new political platform for mediating territorial conflicts. In some cases, authors compare the revolutionary wars of Indonesia and Vietnam in order to understand the process of diplomatic negotiations and the inseparable nature of violent operations and peaceful attempts to build stable international security.

After the introduction, the first chapter provides historical insights into the diplomatic maneuvers from 1945–1949. Complexity arises as the negotiation process for Indonesia's independence involved multiple interests not only from its former colonizer, but also the UK, the US, Japan, China, Russia, as well as Australia, which had their own interests in Southeast Asia. The sentiment and political stance of the UK and the US are the focus of the author of this chapter, Jeroen Kemperman, who observes the significance of those interests to the ways interventions at the level of the UN Security Council were deemed to be necessary. As for the Indonesians, it became more obvious that the following struggle for their independence was taking place in the international fora. While peace and stability were desired, all actors involved had different views of what peace and stability should entail in terms of who should have the right to implement these goals. It was hard to imagine that the young Indonesian government was not voluntarily willing to consent to the territorial settlements made by different political agreements. The Indonesian intransigence was seen as a provocation which legitimated violence, although no consensus in that regard was visible from the personal statements of a number of diplomatic actors.

The second chapter discusses how the regional politics of decolonization intertwined with how European powers attempted to arrogate their former colonies. By comparing the cases of revolutionary struggles in Indonesia and Vietnam, Tom van den Berge reveals a rectangular story of how the support to the former colonial powers had negative ramifications on the nationalist movements in Indonesia and Vietnam. A struggle between which ideologies these two new nations would adopt in their new states extended the clash to the international level. As a result, an enabling environment for networks flourished, not only between Indonesia and Vietnamese nationalists but also with other Asian nationalists. Nevertheless, actors in these new networks continued to find themselves in vulnerable positions, as they often failed to find sufficient support needed to defend their new nations. The Dutch and the French managed to make communist uprising, or at least the threat of rebellion, into a political opportunity to garner support from the international community. Although relying on support also meant anticipating criticisms from other international actors, it certainly did not dissuade them. To some, their persistent arrogation was not a threat to international peace and security but a source of fire that could disturb the balance of power in Southeast Asia. Against this background, transfers of material sources to support Dutch military operations could be seen as weak alliances between the major powers, whose intentions were mostly to save face.

In Chapter 3, Emma Keizer considers the flow and movement of war materials, which stood in conflict with actors' interests in maintaining Indonesian peace and stability. Again, inconsistent diplomatic positions were observable. The arms embargo imposed by the US and the UK to limit Dutch ambitions was considered necessary to reflect neutrality. Nevertheless, it failed to not only satisfy the public opinion especially in the UK, whose people feared the same incidents in Singapore, but also, to defend UK's reputation in their former colony. Doubts on notions about lethal and non-lethal materials proved to serve as convenient loopholes for the execution of the Kraai Operation (known in Indonesia as the Second Military Aggression). The Dutch also received a rather similar assistance from the US. Despite their reluctance to keep US military assistance to the Netherlands in Northern Europe, surplus weaponry materials were transferred to Indonesia. Keizer observes pragmatism in how the US dealt with their surplus of weaponry. The US saw what happened on the ground in Indonesia and at the international arena as a split in which they found themselves in. On the one side, they saw no benefits of getting involved, but on the other hand they were not so keen to have their military surplus returned to their country, and therefore much more willing to help the Netherlands as their ally.

The last chapter, Chapter 4, addresses international mediation. This chapter shifts the analysis of war diplomacy and considers the movements of the actors. The author, Jeroen Kamperman, separates political certainties from military ones, which helps him to focus on violence and reservations. As many have reported before, cases of violence, for example in Rawagede, cannot be separated from the failure of agreements facilitated by international actors. Despite any intention and recognition that conflicts must be solved at the table, bitter memories and allegations of recrimination continue to fuel mistrust. What happened in Rawagede is obviously only one of the many cases where purification—“to clean up” Rawagede—turned the motivation to regain order into a genocidal activity. Kemperman further argues that the inability of the international community to properly address violence also reflects the incompetence to control actors committed to the atrocities. The author critically considers it as a lack of will from the international actors to research the scope of structural violence. No specific task was mandated by the Commission of Good Will to register violent practices. For these reasons, sanctions and more robust international measures to contain the military acts of violence were short, leading to increased tensions that made negotiations even more difficult.

The edited volume provides readers with a host of insights that are refreshing in their subtlety and details on the movements of international actors' ideas, perceptions, and practices during war diplomacies. Earlier diplomatic experiments show attempts to hold on to the ideals of peace and security. Aware of the stubborn reluctance of the former colonial power to willingly accept Indonesian nationalism and commitment to independence has led the major global powers to navigate between political agreements, diplomatic lip service, and supporting their Western allies. At the same time, wars and negotiations became two separate realities that were increasingly difficult to bridge over time. Political experiments through a set of agreements were inevitable, although not desirable. But as with many early experiments, success is rare.

One of the most significant achievements of this volume is the reconstruction of negotiation processes in response to what the Dutch decided to commit or not. The editors problematize the inconsistencies of major powers despite persistent condemnation to their acts of reclaiming power over Indonesia and Vietnam. The volume also reveals that the network between new nations during decolonization struggles depended a lot on the nature of their relationship with their former colonizers. Notably, the fate of an independent Indonesia depended in part on the commitment of Indonesian representatives to participate in the international negotiations, as well as their convictions about the validity of the Indonesian proclamation. The second point is somewhat underexamined in the book's analysis. Although it is an oversimplification to argue

that this attitude was key to the success of the negotiation process in Indonesia, another factor certainly was that Dutch support and alliances eroded over time. Pragmatic efforts that led to weak alliances reveal the hypocrisy of diplomatic maneuvers promoted as being beneficial to one's allies.

The volume is a timely contribution to the emerging discourse on Indonesian revolutionary wars in the Netherlands, which has received new impetus as a result of the recent publications, exhibitions, and documentaries on the subject, despite taking different perspectives on the ground, namely victims and veterans. Especially valuable is the exploration of the dialectic contradiction between material and immaterial resources for war under the disguised attempt to achieve peace and security. Moreover, the book is also useful for those who are interested in the analysis of the use of force as an instrument to arrogate control, as well as the double standards pertaining to the question who should rule and why, at times where nations decided to change the course of their future.

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