

THE POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY OF DUTCH NEW GUINEA:

EXTERNAL ASPECTS

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By

Vincent K. Shaudys, B.A.
ink bndk

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Approved by:

John R. Randall

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Regional Characteristics of Southeast Asia and the East Indian Archipelago

The lands between China, India, and Australia constitute the sub-region of the continent of Asia known as Southeast Asia. This region is one of great contrasts, but contrasts are not a satisfactory basis for regional differentiation. The essence of regionalism is found in the unifying attributes a region possesses. Southeast Asia does possess several which are worthy of the attention of the political geographer.

Similarity is often disguised under a veneer of apparent contradiction. Southeast Asia, like a portion of Southeast Europe, is a splintered area not only in its physical aspects but in its political composition as well. This region has repeatedly been referred to as the Asiatic Balkans. The configuration of lowlands separated by highlands and the extensiveness of the East Indian Archipelago tends to promote isolation, the guardian and promoter of diversity. In the modern world instances where diversity is incorporated into the social structure in such a manner that it becomes a source of strength are more rare than where it is conducive to pyramiding social tension. Unless local experience

is able to evolve a frame of reference powerful enough to overcome the handicaps inherent in the characteristic small and non-self-sufficient units, political tensions may be expected under these conditions to intensify rather than to subside or disappear.

The political pattern of Southeast Asia has been imposed almost in entirety by an alien culture. This situation is in part the natural result of political weakness so characteristic of fragmented areas. They become the pawns in the repeated struggles between their more powerful neighbors. The institution of colonialism was not the unique introduction of the European imperialistic states since previously the area had been a part of the colonial realms of the Chinese, Hindus, and Moslems. European colonial rule tended to increase the existing contrasts between the segments. Under each colonial power the distinction between economic, political, and military activities became less evident. The impact of the European institutional structure on Southeast Asia resulted in a pronounced modification of the indigenous social structure. The subsequent removal of wealth and the contrasts in alien and native living standards accelerated the processes of social evolution. The removal of European influence by Japan's expansion from 1941 to 1945 provided an opportunity for the proponents of Asian nationalism to express themselves more effectively. Southeast Asia may be characterized as a colonial area which

is at present struggling to emerge from foreign rule. This national emergence is marked by its anti-western and anti-imperialistic character.

One could say as a truism that any area which lies between other areas probably will function as a transition zone. This attribute is so characteristic of Southeast Asia and the East Indian Archipelago that it deserves special mention. In the past, cultural influence has penetrated from the northwest, the north, and the south. The result of this penetration is that the area contains a disproportionately large number of plural societies. The ethnic pattern is complex. Important numbers of Chinese, Indians, Indonesians, Negritos, Melanesians, and Europeans are present. Language and religious patterns are, as would be expected, equally complex.

Today this area functions as a bridge between the potentially powerful states of the Asiatic mainland and Australia. Here is one of the areas where wilfully or not "East" meets "West" and where perhaps the respective representatives hope that the bridge will not function as a bridge.

Southeast Asia and the East Indian Archipelago are of interest to commercial nations. The area lies across the most convenient route from the Pacific to the Indian ocean which is equivalent to saying that the area controls the water route from Europe to the Far East. Sea lanes and air lanes converge

and are required to utilize select focal channels. Location confers strategic significance which the local configuration and degree of development bring into critical focus.

The Strait of Malacca which Singapore commands is considered one of the three most strategic passages in the world. Other important confined bodies of water in this part of the world are Makassar Strait, Torres Strait, Dampier Strait, and the Mulacca Passage. The East Indian Archipelago is often referred to as the Great Islands of the Shallow Seas. The pattern of the islands is such that bodies of water classified as seas follow one another in close succession. The more important of these seas are the Coral, Banda, Flores, Java, Celebes, Timor, and Aurefura.

The area is of importance to commercial nations for a second reason; here originate a disproportionately large number of strategic raw materials, few of which are industrially basic. Consequently the area is unlikely to become the base for any strong power considering present technology, but simultaneously the area is of great importance to powerful states located elsewhere and which suffer particular raw material deficiencies. The problem of security is especially hazardous in such an area.

The Problem of the External Political Geography of Dutch New Guinea

Dutch New Guinea is today a problem area. The sovereign states of the Netherlands and The United States of Indonesia

are both claiming jurisdiction, and regardless of the opinions of these two, Australia insists that she is vitally concerned with the future of the area and that a disposition shall not be made which is contrary to her best interests. The problem of Dutch New Guinea is not of recent origin, but has been present in one form or another ever since the area was settled by Europeans. There is some justification for the proposition that the basis of Dutch New Guinea's problem is in part a reflection of the area's geographical attributes. In relation to present technology and economy its resources are very difficult to utilize, yet Dutch New Guinea occupies a strategic location.

If one accepts the thesis that the significance of a politically delimited area in political geography is to be found in the realm of its functions, then one is immediately confronted with the problem of those functions of an internal and external nature. This investigation is an attempt to discover what influence the geographical composition of Dutch New Guinea has had on its external relations. First, however, something of the character of Dutch New Guinea must be considered, for what is contained within an area is important in respect to any course of action the government may attempt in respect to its dealings with other politically delimited units.

The Character of Dutch New Guinea

Few people find their way to Dutch New Guinea. As part of the second largest island in the world, located in the north-western portion of that group of islands in the Pacific known as Melanesia, it offers little of consequence to the businessman. Excepting polar regions, New Guinea probably contains some of the largest unexplored areas in the world.¹ The Dutch part of the island occupies all of the island west of the 141st meridian East longitude. This meridian divides the island of New Guinea into two parts of approximately equal area. The area of Dutch New Guinea is roughly 416,000 square kilometers or 160,576 square miles. The length from east to west is more than 750 miles and its width from north to south more than 435 miles. Its shape is essentially that of the profile of the fore half of a guinea hen.

Dutch New Guinea is bordered on the north by the Pacific Ocean; to the East is Australian New Guinea; to the west, across the Serang and Banda Seas, are the Moluccas, the most important group of islands in eastern Indonesia; to the south is the shallow Aurafura Sea which, at its eastern end, terminates in the Torres Strait, a narrow bit of water separating Australia from New Guinea.

¹ H. Daniel, Islands of the Pacific, New York, 1943, p. 185

The natural features of Dutch New Guinea present great contrasts (Fig.1). Through the center of the country from east to west and forming an impressive backbone, lies a range of snowcapped mountains. These mountains known as the Nassau and Orange range rise in places to heights of more than 15,000 feet. Along the north coast, and at places terminating at the edge of the sea, are several smaller mountain ranges. Between these northern mountains and the great central range is an extensive lowland which in the past was a lake bottom. The Dutch refer to this area as the Meervlakte. A narrow coastal plain is also present along a considerable portion of the northern coast. It is absent in the Vogelkop peninsula and immediately west of Hollandia. The southern coastal plains are extensive and large areas are covered by swamps. Plateau areas in Dutch New Guinea are limited to portions of the Vogelkop and Bombarai peninsulas.

Several impressive rivers carry away the heavy rainfall of the uplands. Emptying into the sea on the north coast at Cape D'Urville is the largest river, the Mamberamo. Its two tributaries, the Idenburg and the Van der Willigen rivers drain the central lowland, which is approximately one hundred feet above sea level and is swampy or readily subject to flooding. The most important rivers of the southern coast are the Digoel and the Eiland. The breadth of the coastal plain on the south

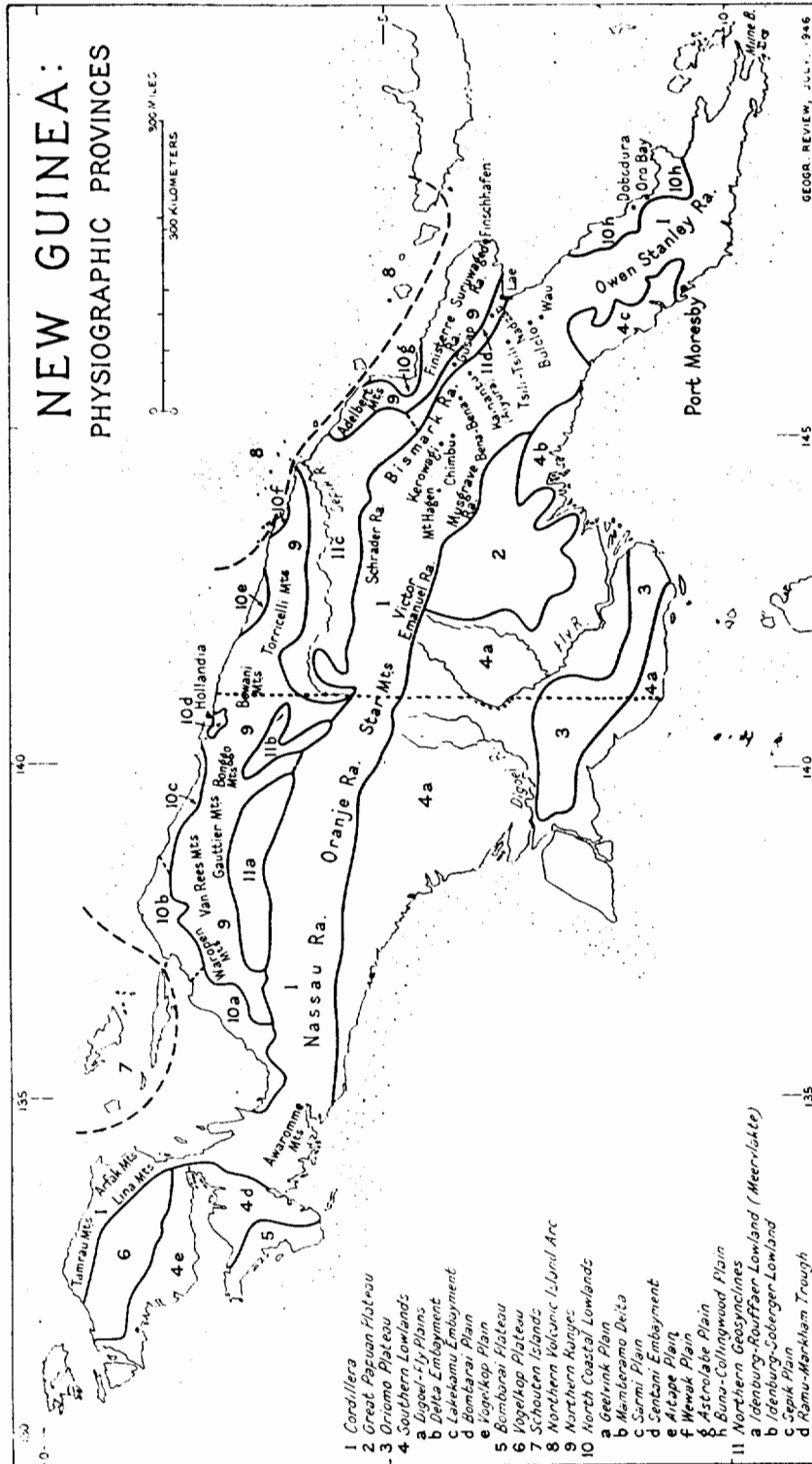


Fig. I

permits boats to navigate up the rivers for hundreds of miles without encountering obstacles. Navigation on the northern rivers is usually broken by rapids near the coast where the rivers pass through the gorges of the northern mountains.

Numerous bays suitable for anchorage are present along the north coast and around the Vogelkop peninsula. One of the best is Humboldt Bay, the site of Hollandia. The southern coast is not so blessed. Here the immediate offshore waters are shallow. The single good anchorage in this section is up the Merauke River at the town of Merauke.

Detailed climatic data for Dutch New Guinea are inadequate. Records have been kept for only a few stations almost all of which are coastal and for only a relatively short period of time.² The proximity of the country to the equator would lead one to expect a climate of a tropical nature which is hot, with heavy rainfall and high humidity. This is the typical climate of coastal New Guinea where one author has described the climate as steamy.³

The sun rises and sets with great uniformity throughout the year. The daily temperature range (72°F to 92°F at sea level) exceeds the annual, and the air does not approach a condition which may

² Data for a number of stations are found in E.C.J. Mohr, The Soils of Equatorial Regions With Special Reference to the Netherlands East Indies, Translated from the Nederlandsch by R.L. Pendleton, Ann Arbor, 1944, p. 281.

³ G.L. Wood and P.R. McBride, The Pacific Basin, Melbourne, 1946, p. 104.

be described as comfortable for white men under an elevation of 3,000 feet. Temperature decreases with altitude until perpetual snow fields are found on the highest mountains.

Precipitation varies widely, but almost all of Dutch New Guinea may be described as continuously wet. Eastern slopes in general receive more than western slopes. Topography is responsible for local dry belts. The rainfall is characterized by its great intensity, short duration, and frequent accompaniment of thunder. Omitting extreme conditions, the annual precipitation varies from 30" to 130". Monsoon characteristics are well developed in Western New Guinea lying as it does between Asia and Australia. The area is too close to the equator to be affected by typhoons, and strong winds of any kind are uncommon.⁴

The southeast, around Merauke, is the only area which experiences months which may be characterized as dry; in the rest of the territory all twelve months are wet. The dry section, which remains so for four or five months, is explained by the dry outblowing Australian monsoon.

The lack of a cool season, no dry period, and the monotonous uniformity of weather are typical of the greater part of Dutch New Guinea which is known to Europeans. These conditions

⁴ P.Honig and F.Verdoorn, Science and Scientists in the Netherlands Indies, New York, 1945, pp. 18-19.

are usually combined with such high humidity that even in the shade of the rainforest white men perspire continuously.⁵

The main vegetational types are rainforest, swampforest, and savanna.⁶ Native fauna is thought to be a combination of Australian and Asian types with an infusion of indigenous types.

Trees grow on mountain slopes up to 10,000 feet above which even the pines cannot survive. Tropical vegetation is characteristic of areas below 5,000 feet. The snowline is reached between 11,000 and 12,000 feet. Savanna areas may be accounted for by the alignment of mountain ranges, except in the southeast where the annual dry season is responsible for the absence of trees. Land deforested by native or commercial agriculture usually does not return upon abandonment to forest but rather produces a tall luxuriant grass.⁷

No systematic survey of the soils of Dutch New Guinea has been made. What is known has been deduced from descriptive accounts of individuals who have traveled in the area. The northern and southern coastal plains and the central lake plain are alluvial. The parent materials are to be found in the mountains, but the materials in the plain are almost entirely weathered. The mountains are believed to have crystalline

⁵ C. Crockett, The House in the Rainforest, Boston, 1942, p. 270.

⁶ O. W. Freeman, Geography of the Pacific, New York, 1951, p. 159.

⁷ L. E. Cheesman, "The Island of New Guinea," Nature, Vol. 152, 1943, pp. 41-43.

schist cores, flanked by sedimentary rocks most of which are calcareous. Recent volcanic activity is either extremely limited or entirely absent. Most soils are approaching senility except on the steep slopes where erosion is rapid and where if the area is cleared, erosion becomes a serious problem. Most of the forest lacks a dense undergrowth, a sign of poor tropical soil according to Mohr. Even less is known about the swampsoils than about the forest soils, but they are presumed to be accumulating peat.⁸

New Guinea is extremely poor in resources that could be exploited as a basis of profitable economic activity. Petroleum recently brought into production, is considered the most important. Prior to World War II a company held a concession for the mining of gold and has made a considerable investment although as yet no gold has been produced. Coal has been picked up in some of the river beds of the Vogelkop.⁹ Traces of copper have also been found. The only other items which may be exploited are plant or animal products such as timber, crocodile skins, pearls and shell, and formerly, birds of paradise.

Because of the unexplored areas no accurate census of Dutch New Guinea is possible. Previous estimates of one half

⁸E.C.J.Mohr, The Soils of Equatorial Regions With Special Reference to the Netherlands East Indies, Translated from the Nederlandsch by R.E. Pendelton, Ann Arbor, 1944, pp. 282-295.

⁹Freeman, op. cit., p. 163.

million have now been revised upward to one million from data collected by air reconnaissance. If one million is an accurate estimate then a little more than one third of the area's population is under effective administration. The most recent estimate (1951) of population gives the following figures:¹⁰

Papuans	316,878
Indonesians	10,013
Europeans	9,869
Other Asians	<u>3,027</u>
Total	339,787

The number of Christians was estimated at 160,000 and Moslems at 15,000. The rest of the population adheres to some form of primitive religion.

A majority of the natives are still in a stone age culture.¹¹ Each village is usually a unit unto itself, and often has a language of its own. The language barrier is one of the serious problems of New Guinea, for the area is a virtual babel of tongues. Any particular language seldom has a radius of over twenty miles.¹² Groups are restricted in size because of the low productivity of the rainforest in palatable flora and fauna. Malay is used to overcome the language difficulty where trade, education or administrative activity is undertaken.

¹⁰ Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations General Assembly, Seventh session, General bulletin A/2132, August 22, 1952, p. 3.

¹¹ M.W. Stirling, The Native Peoples of New Guinea, Smithsonian Institution War Background Studies Number Nine, Washington D.C., 1943, p. 7.

¹² Ibid., p. 10.

The native peoples of Dutch New Guinea are divided into three groups. The first, the Negritos, are distributed through an area which follows the main central range. They are a mountain people who raise bananas, sugar cane, taro, and sweet potatoes. Despite linguistic difficulties a uniform culture prevails throughout their characteristically small villages. By New Guinea standards the health of the Negritos is good. Their culture is extremely primitive, but their temperament is friendly, calm, and quiet compared to the Papuans of the lake plain from whom they are separated by a belt of rough jungle covered mountains.¹³

The Papuans, the second group, occupy most of the interior portions which are not highlands, and all of the western and southern coastal regions. Agriculture is of less importance than among the Negritos. Many of the Papuans are nomadic jungle dwellers among whom hunting and fishing assume a greater importance. They are a warlike people, and their hostility in the past was a factor which delayed exploration. Their culture has condoned headhunting and cannibalism. Stamping out these practices caused the Dutch to expend a major portion of their administrative energies in Dutch New Guinea.¹⁴

The area occupied by the Melanesians in Dutch New Guinea is limited to the coastal portion between the Australian New

¹³ Ibid., pp. 12-17.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 17-20.

Guinea boundary and Geelvink Bay. They are a seafaring people with a culture more advanced than that of the Papuans and Negritos.¹⁵

Whereas the interior of the country is a living museum for the anthropologist, the coastal areas which are the only parts effectively administered have had imposed upon them an Asian, an Indonesian, and an European influence. Most of the Asians are Chinese traders whereas the majority of the Indonesians and Europeans are engaged in administrative and economic development.

Governance is confined to the coastal portions since to date man's curiosity has been the strongest motivating force causing him to penetrate the interior. Movement in the interior is extremely difficult except by air. Man is the only available beast of burden and most Papuans are reluctant to act as such.¹⁶ They act as porters only to obtain enough to pay the head tax imposed by the Dutch on able bodied men.¹⁷

Rivers and jungle trails are the sole surface means by which one may travel in the interior. Both are slow and expensive.

There are no cities. Most settlements are mere villages. A few may be classed as towns. Sorong, the oil city is the

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 20-23.

¹⁶Crockett, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

¹⁷L.E. Chessman, The Land of the Red Bird, London, 1938, p. 56.

largest single settlement (Fig. 2). Since World War II it has been a "boom" town and now has a population of around 8,000. The administrative capital at Hollandia is little more than a village. Fak Fak, Manokwari, and Merauke serve as trading posts and fishing villages. In most other parts of the world they would be inconspicuous settlements.¹⁸

Dutch New Guinea is virtually undeveloped. Lack of planning is not responsible for this condition since in 1935 the Netherlands government undertook an intensive development campaign. Progress was slow and disappointing, and the advances that were made were lost during the Japanese occupation of World War II.

Development possibilities on a competitive world basis are definitely limited. Native activity is at the subsistence level. Attempts to utilize natives for commercial plantation agriculture are disappointing because of the small numbers of natives and their reluctance to work.

Production of a surplus of any commodity which is of value elsewhere is difficult or prohibitively expensive. Investment opportunities have always been more lucrative in other parts of the Netherland East Indies. One reflection of this condition is the unfavorable trade balance. In 1951 imports had a value

¹⁸ W.C.K., "The Future of Dutch New Guinea; "A Dutch View," The World Today, Vol 7, 1951, pp. 124-136.

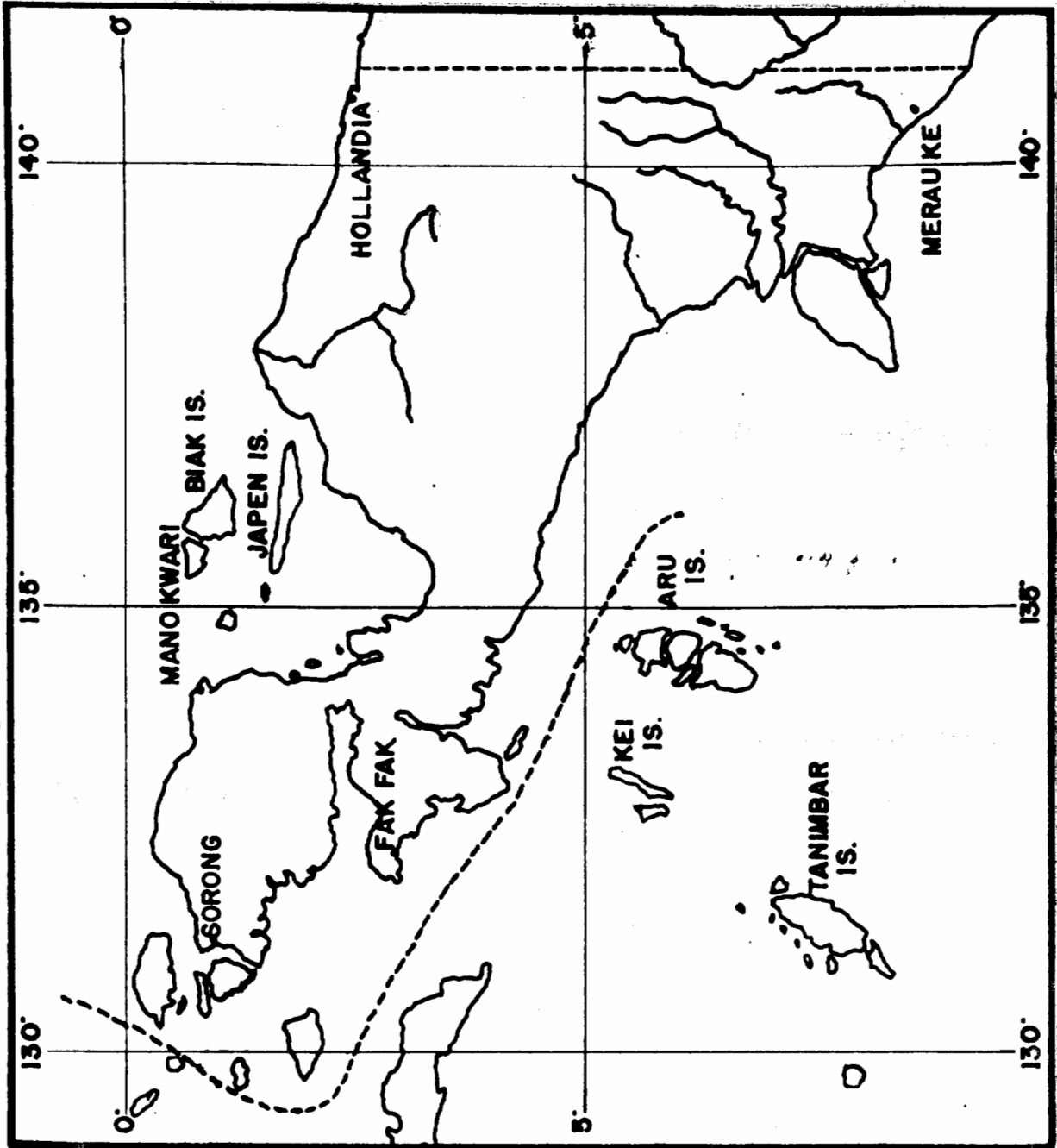


Fig. II

of over three times that of exports. Another reflection of this condition is seen in the total area occupied by non-indigenes - 97,738 acres. The only important industry is oil production. Small industries are virtually non-existent except for those which the government operates as service facilities. Existing roads have a total length of about 220 miles. Other developments include six airfields, plus one emergency landing strip, twenty postoffices, fourteen telegraph offices, thirteen radio-stations, four telephone exchanges, and a number of power boats on the rivers. The area is a drain on the Netherlands government. In 1950 and 1951 budgetary expenditures were approximately double the revenues. This deficit had to be made up by the Netherlands government.¹⁹

Dutch New Guinea is politically immature. National feeling among the natives is entirely absent. Their allegiance is to the culture group rather than to the political unit. The Dutch administrative staff and the Indonesians consider themselves to be Dutch subjects. A few of the Indonesians have agitated for The United States of Indonesia to take over Dutch New Guinea.

Such political-geographical concepts as core area and ecumene are hardly applicable to this colonial area where perhaps only one fiftieth of the population has any concept of nationalism.

¹⁹ Report of the Secretary-General, op. cit., p. 18.

Territorial Relations

One of the consequences of the expansion of European states overseas was the transportation of their institutional structures to those regions where their energies were directed. In the field of political administration the methods and practices made familiar to soldiers, missionaries, and traders from Europe were applied to the problems as they arose abroad because they were what was most readily understood.

National sovereignty, delimited by actual boundaries, was a matter of primary importance in a well developed area such as Northwestern Europe. European states realized that jurisdiction over land and people was one of the bases of power. Unclaimed parts of the earth, in which no strong or stable administrative machinery existed, were important in so far as any such particular area was able to contribute to the power of the possessory state. If a small or even a minor contribution was made available by a particular area, such an area was still important if it could enhance the relative position of an important rival. For these reasons vast areas of the earth were marked off as the exclusive property of states, either for any immediate contributions they might make, or as cushions

against the eventualities which result from a revaluation of those items which are the bases of power.

Spanish and Portuguese navigators knew of New Guinea before any Dutchman or Englishman. Territorial jurisdiction may be acquired through fact of discovery, but such jurisdiction does not present a very strong case in international affairs unless implemented by a formal proclamation and actual occupation of territory. New Guinea appeared utterly inhospitable to those early explorers, and since there was little of value which could be carried away they ventured elsewhere.

The Dutch claim to territorial jurisdiction came about in a circuitous manner, for they like the others could find little of value after a superficial investigation. The Dutch however obtained a monopoly of the spice trade in those areas immediately to the west of New Guinea. What was of particular importance for the Dutch was their effective control over the Sultan of Tidore and Ternate who was the original overlord of this area.¹ This indirect form of control remained in effect from the early part of the seventeenth century when Lemaine and Schouten landed in New Guinea, until 1899 when the Sultan was pensioned off and direct control was assumed.² This capitalizing on the existing political structure was fortunate for the Dutch because it enabled them to extend their jurisdiction eastward as a buffer against competition in the spice islands.

¹ I. Bunbury, "The Story of Dutch New Guinea," Asiatic Review, Vol. 42, 1946, p. 251.

² Loc. cit.

To strengthen further their claim to West New Guinea the Dutch on August 24, 1828 claimed possession of the island east as far as the 141st meridian on the south coast and along the north coast as far as Humboldt Bay. Simultaneously they established a colony known as Fort Dubus on Triton Bay.³

Within seven years this colony had failed. In order to give some basis for their claim of jurisdiction by fact of occupation the Dutch erected at landing places ironwood posts on which were attached plates bearing the Royal Arms of Holland. An annual visit of inspection was made to these posts by a government officer stationed in the Moluccas.⁴ The first permanent settlement of any consequence was established in 1898 at Manokwari on the north coast.

The eastern half of New Guinea which was not claimed by the Dutch became a bone of contention between the British and Germans. This development took place after 1880, a date before which no real territorial relations in the island could be said to have existed since no state other than the Netherlands had made any serious proclamation of sovereignty or showed any intention of enforcing any interest.

The British interest came about somewhat belatedly considering their other interests in the area. Every politically

³ R.W. Robson, The Pacific Islands Handbook 1944, North American Edition, New York, 1945, p. 340.

⁴ Bunbury, op.cit., p. 256.

organized unit is concerned with the kind, number, and proximity of its neighbors. In the colony of Queensland this concern was so intense in the year 1883 that she on her own authority raised the British flag in the Queen's name after several unsuccessful attempts to call to London's attention the increase of German activity in the Pacific.⁵ London looked upon this act as one of insubordination and immediately repudiated it.⁶

In the following year, Germany realized that British interest was aroused and since there were Germans in the area, under the cover of a trading mission, they occupied the northeast coast and proclaimed a protectorate.⁷ The British becoming aware of their shortsightedness immediately claimed the southeast coast which was thereafter known as Papua.

By 1885 knotty problems could be expected to arise on this island which was divided among Great Britain, Germany, and the Netherlands. Development of any kind was almost non-existent. For all practical purposes there was no agreement as to the delimitation or the demarcation of the boundaries.

In April 1885 the boundary between Dutch New Guinea and German New Guinea was fixed as running along the 141st meridian. This boundary like that between Dutch New Guinea and British

⁵ The Australian Federation did not come into being until 1900.

⁶ Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

New Guinea had neither been demarcated nor the subject of a formal treaty between the respective states.

Within the next few years a series of incidents occurred which necessitated the definite location of the boundary between Dutch and British New Guinea. The Tugeri, a warlike tribe residing in Dutch territory and noted as raiders, were periodically reducing the tribes in the adjoining British territory to a state of chaos.⁸ In order to stop these marauding natives and to remove any conditions existing that might lead to difficulties between the respective claimant states, a joint commission was arranged to settle boundary problems. In 1893 this commission met on board the Dutch warship Java, on the south coast in the vicinity of the 141st meridian.⁹

The members of this commission possessed not only some practical experience in affairs of administration and boundary demarcation, but also a degree of foresight necessary to determine a boundary that would ease future problems by functioning well.

The following statement throws some light on the ability of the men of this boundary commission in this matter.

⁸ J.H.P. Murry, Papua or British New Guinea, New York, 1912, p. 83.

⁹ Ibid., p. 85.

"There was a small creek now called Java creek in close proximity to the boundary, but the coast was swampy and a landing place unsuitable. A short distance to the east on the British side was found a large freshwater river which received the name Bensbach after the Dutch Resident of Ternate. The middle of the stream calculated to be $141^{\circ} 15' 48''$ E. Longitude and $9^{\circ} 7' 35''$ S. Latitude, was fixed as the commencement of the boundary which was to run north until it met the Fly and then following the course of that river which turned into Dutch territory, until its return into British, when again the line runs due north to the point of junction of British, Dutch, and the former German boundaries on the fifth degree of south latitude. This arrangement gave a narrow strip of British territory to the Netherlands, but placed the whole course of the Fly within the boundaries of the colony. On the coast there was no mistaking this point of demarcation. The mouth of the Bensbach is about 150 yards wide, and the river itself was regarded as uninhabited and passing through poor mangrove country." ¹⁰

This agreement was subsequently ratified by treaty in 1885.

Except for the Fly River deviation and the fact that the boundary begins at the mouth of the Bensbach River, the basis for this boundary is not physical in character. When the boundary was agreed upon little was known about the area. Straight line or astronomical boundaries have proved very useful in such instances where problems of political jurisdiction are so pressing that agreement must be reached before a survey of the area can be carried out.

In New Guinea the boundaries as originally drawn have proved satisfactory. The powers concerned have not engaged in disputes over their location or function. In 1920 when German New Guinea was awarded to Australia as a mandate by the League

¹⁰ W. N. Beaver, Unexplored New Guinea, Philadelphia, 1920, p. 113-114.

of Nations the existing boundaries were considered satisfactory and no renegotiation took place.

The northern, western, and southern boundaries of Dutch New Guinea are sea coasts and as such, political jurisdiction is limited to the three mile limit recognized under international law.

Problems pertaining to the jurisdiction of the air above territory have not been settled in any final manner, but the behavior of the vast majority of states favors sovereignty on a national rather than on an international level. One can only infer that such will be the case in the future of New Guinea.

When the territorial status of Dutch New Guinea is viewed from an external vantage point the existing boundaries appear suitable. The relationships and the conditions in respect to the boundaries are essentially the same as they were when the boundaries were first agreed upon. The area through which the boundary passes is still devoid of development. The locations most favorable for settlement are not close to the boundary so one may expect that the boundaries will continue to perform their function of separation effectively.

New Guinea would tend to support the thesis that political areas in their early stages of development are characterized by stable boundaries. The boundaries might acquire unstable characteristics if development in one part of New Guinea progressed rapidly beyond that of the other parts. The discovery of minerals

of value astride the boundary would have the same result.

Ideally an island should be under a single political jurisdiction. In such a situation there is no possibility of malfunction of the territorial relationship. With a single political unit the costs of administration may be reduced by the elimination of duplicate functions. Australia has come to appreciate this as true. In order to facilitate her development of the Trusteeship and of Papua she asked for, and received from the United Nations Organization, permission to organize the two areas under her control into a single administration. If the island were a single unit perhaps a further increase in the efficiency of the island's administration could be realized. New Guinea is another example of man's imaginary lines not being conducive to the most effective utilization of the earth's resources.

Economic Relations

Detailed knowledge of Dutch New Guinea's resources is very inadequate, but from what is known resources appear to be negligible. There is apparently a fundamental poverty of resources of economic value. Native economic development has not advanced beyond the subsistence level. Commercial plantation agriculture is hindered by the lack of a market and, until recently, by lack of energy resources.

The standard of living of an area is determined by the resources an area can obtain and utilize. The meagerness of production in New Guinea does not provide a surplus which may be exchanged for the purpose of acquiring revenue for further development. Private sources of economic development almost completely avoids the area, and makes its investments in areas which give more promise. If economic development is to be achieved in New Guinea, where the international trade balance and the resource endowment are so unfavorable, it must be paternal in character. The Netherlands government has had to give their section of New Guinea financial aid so that the necessities of life might be imported and the already low standard of living would not be further lowered.

The unfavorable character of international trade is shown by the following table in which the figures are in thousands of Netherlands New Guinea guilders:¹

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>2</u>
Imports	10,861	43,973	
Exports	11,799	14,257	

The principal items imported were:

Food and beverages	3,525	5,265
Rice	2,533	4,327
Textiles	2,429	362

The principal items exported were:

Petroleum	9,006	8,562
Copra	1,625	2,581
Crocodile skins	723	443

Petroleum, which constitutes the principal 'item' of export and is the one bright spot in Dutch New Guinea's economic picture, came into production only at the close of World War II.

The character of the principal imports and exports indicates that Dutch New Guinea does not approach self-sufficiency. Basic necessities of life must be imported and the exports are not sufficient to pay for these necessities.

Where trade is small in amount the maintenance of adequate facilities for transportation and exchange of commodities is impossible or excessively expensive. The physical features of

¹ The value of a Netherlands New Guinea guilder is \$US 0.26½.

² Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations General Assembly, Seventh session, General bulletin A/2132, August 22, 1952, p. 19.

Dutch New Guinea hinder rather than invite the development of exchange facilities. Internal communication between the north and the south is not feasible because of the high continuous central mountain range. East-west communication is hindered by dense jungle, deep ravines and the north-south river system.

The inland waterways provided by the rivers are the most important means of interior penetration and communication.

The navigable rivers include the Momberamo, the Sebjar, the Ketero, the Digoel, the Kasteel, the Lorentz, and the Odammon.³

Land transportation is confined to several small networks of roads whose total combined length is about 220 miles.⁴

Elsewhere man is the only mobile unit and is his own beast of burden.

As in many undeveloped areas the airplane has been the first practical means of penetration into the interior. Much of the oil and mineral survey work was done with the aid of planes. The six airfields and the one emergency landing field provide bases for the maintenance of local air services and for the regular flights to and from the Netherlands.⁵

The lack of developed ports and the scarcity of good anchoring places along many parts of the coast increase the

³ R.W. Robson, The Pacific Islands Handbook 1944, North American Edition, New York, 1945, p. 340.

⁴ Report of the Secretary-General, op. cit., p. 18.

⁵ Loc. cit.

difficulty of the exchange of such items that are exportable. Coastwise communication by small craft is an important means of collection and distribution utilized by the natives as well as by the Europeans.

The remoteness of Dutch New Guinea has not discouraged the Chinese middleman. He occupies an important place in the exchange structure of the area. Wherever possible one has settled in the area near a village and somehow makes a living trading rice and kerosene for the few agricultural and animal products the native is able to collect.⁶

The items which enter into international trade from Dutch New Guinea have the common characteristic of being exploitive. Man removes what is of value to him from those items with which nature has endowed the region, and seldom does he make any provision for their continued production or renewal. One reason for this situation is the lack of interest in Dutch New Guinea as a permanent home. Most Europeans have as a goal the acquiring of a substantial sum of money and retiring somewhere else where conditions are more hospitable.

The foreign investments in Dutch New Guinea other than those of the Netherlands government and of Dutch citizens are very small. A German company acquired a timber concession in

⁶ L.E.Cheesman, The Land of the Red Bird, London, 1938, p.20-24.

the Geelvink Bay area but failed and sold out to the Japanese South Seas Development Company in 1932.⁷ This ~~same~~ Japanese company obtained a concession of 2,000 acres near Inokwari and experimented with the production of copra, ~~coffee~~, cocoa, hemp, kapok, rubber, palm oil, and cotton. All ~~were~~ produced with some degree of success except cotton, the ~~one~~ item that Japan could have utilized most effectively. The costs of production were high due to the necessity of an abnormally large amount of care. Despite this limited success the Japanese sought in 1937 to obtain a perpetual lease of Dutch New Guinea for their interests but were promptly rebuffed by the Netherlands.⁸ Foreign economic penetration too easily leads to political domination.

Prior to World War II notable investments were made in the search for petroleum and gold. This work was completely halted during World War II. With peace, the exploration of, drilling for, and the successful export of petroleum took place for the first time.

This successful feat was carried out by the Nederlandsche Nieuw Guinea Petroleum Maatschappij, a corporation which is owned 40 percent by the Royal Dutch Shell, 40 percent by Standard Vacuum Petroleum Maatschappij, and 20 percent by the Far Eastern

⁷ J. Shepard, "Dutch Activity in New Guinea Intensified," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. 8, 1938, pp. 262-263.

⁸ H. Grattan, "The Enigma of New Guinea," Asia, Vol. 41, 1941, p. 252.

Investments, Inc. Production began in 1948 in the Klamono area about thirty miles inland from Sorong which, as a result, has grown to a sizeable town of 8,000. A thirty mile road and an eight inch pipeline were constructed through virgin jungle to make the oilfield accessible.⁹ In 1951 this corporation had seventeen wells which produced 262,432 tons, a figure which is about the same as that for production in 1949. The exploration of the Cyclop Mountains was to take place in 1952 in an effort to find new sources.¹⁰

Coconut palms for the production of copra occupy about 24,700 acres of land. The export of 4,200 tons of copra in 1951 made it the second most important item entering into international trade. The only other agricultueal items of importance for export were nutmeg and mace. In 1951 nutmeg trees occupied about 5,000 acres of land, and the nutmegs and mace had a combined value of 336,000 New Guinea guilders.¹¹

Items of collection such as gums, pearls and shell, and crocodile skins are of limited importance for export. Bird of Paradise skins were a very important source of revenue before the birds were decimated and public sentiment was aroused. A small amount of timber is exported, and the Dutch plan to greatly increase production.

⁹ W.E.Pratt and D.Good, World Geography of Petroleum, Princeton, N. J., 1950, pp. 280-283.

¹⁰ Report of the Secretary-General, op. cit., p. 17.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 14.

Dutch New Guinea is capable of producing much more than at present if care is taken to select favorable locations, to acquire experienced supervisors, sufficient labor and capital, machinery and seeds, fertilizers, insecticides, and fungicides. The disheartening fact is that except for petroleum there is only a limited market for its produce. Those products the area is best suited to produce are already produced in surplus amounts elsewhere and more economically. The world's demand for such items as copra, coffee, cacao, and hemp would not justify the subsidies necessary to make production successful. When the physical factors of production are evaluated, they are found to be permissive but only when encouraged with extra investment and precautions.

Dutch New Guinea was not as favorably endowed physically as were many other tropical islands. Indeed it was not even as favored as the Australian half of New Guinea.

Dutch New Guinea is far from being a self-sufficient or a profitable colony. If the non-indigenous inhabitants had to rely for their livelihood on what is included within Dutch New Guinea's boundaries, their standard of living would be much lower than at present. The complete absence of industry, an inadequate modern agriculture and few minerals suitable for export would require that the inhabitants live at a level close to that of the natives. Some believe that much of the hostility between native groups arises from the control of the sources of food and is a reflection of the fundamental poverty of the jungle.

Dutch New Guinea is definitely a drain on the Netherlands government. The report on public finance shows a current expenditure of double the income. The following figures are in millions of Netherlands New Guinea guilders.

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1951</u>
Revenue	24	42
Expenditures	47	83

These annual deficits must be made up by the Netherlands government.¹²

Attempts of the colonial government to foster economic development will have to be financed through aid from the Netherlands. This fact is taken for granted in the formulation of development plans.¹³ The present existing political tension and the general unrest in this part of the world tends to discourage private investment. Subsidization to increase economic productivity is necessary to break the vicious circle of low taxability which provides only small amounts of revenue for bettering health and education. The poor health conditions and low educational level in turn accounts for the low productivity which perpetuates low taxability.

¹² Report of the Secretary-General, op. cit., p. 18.

¹³ For details of an up-to-date proposed colonization scheme see F. M. Earle, "Eurasians-Dutch or Indonesians", Far Eastern Survey, Vol. 17, 1948, pp. 288-290.

The Dutch have reason to feel the pressure of the necessity of economic development to help ease external political tensions. So called "have not" states or "overpopulated" states demand the opportunity to utilize undeveloped regions in an attempt to solve their problems. The act of successfully trying to develop an unexploited region would be an important step toward winning the support of world public opinion if a dispute arose which involved the ethics of ownership of undeveloped colonial areas. Such an accomplishment is important in a world of states which feel that they have as much right to the raw materials which they need for their continued development as any other state. The increased economic activity by the Dutch after 1935 was prompted as much by foresight of Japan's intentions as by pressure for development from the Netherlands. Some degree of this same feeling is present in the dispute between The United States of Indonesia and the Netherlands over the jurisdiction of Dutch New Guinea. One of the most frequently uttered arguments for Indonesian control is the supposed Dutch failure to better the economic status of the indigenous population.

Political Relations

The present political status of Dutch New Guinea is that of a colony or, as the phraseology has evolved to describe the condition of such a dependent area, a non-self-governing territory. Dependent areas do not normally carry on direct external political relations with other states. The possessory state usually reserves as its right the conduct or direction of the dependent area's foreign affairs.

The political relationship between the Netherlands and Dutch New Guinea is not that of an external political relation in the strict sense of the word, but since this topic is being investigated with Dutch New Guinea as the center of interest there is justification for discussing the relationship between the two.

Before the creation of The United States of Indonesia in December 1949, New Guinea was administered from Batavia via the Government of the Great East at Makassar. Responsibility next lay on the Presidency of the Moluccas located at Ambon. Monakwari was the chief administrative center in New Guinea proper.¹ In December 1949 when the rest of the Dutch East Indies became self-governing, new governmental machinery had to be created for New Guinea. The territory is now administered

¹ M.M. Keesing, Pacific Islands in War and Peace, Institute of Pacific Relations Pamphlet No. 14, New York, 1944, p. 30.

by a Governor who resides at Hollandia. He is the representative of the Queen and a Crown appointee. He is assisted by Departments of general administration which are four in number: the Department of Internal Administration, the Department of Finance, the Department of Public Health, Social, and Cultural Affairs, and the Department of Economic and Technical Affairs. The Heads of these Departments plus the Commanding Officers of the Army and Navy, the Crown Attorney, and the Director of Reconstruction compose the Council of Heads of Departments which is a consulting body for the Governor.²

Stability of government is essential if continued development is to be made. This government is one which has been imposed from abroad. It is based on a European political philosophy, and imposed on a people who are just emerging from a stone age culture. The Dutch have made provisions for increased native representation in the enabling legislation creating the government of New Guinea. The Dutch maintain that this aspect of government cannot be created at present because of the lack of any real understanding and education on the part of a sufficient number of natives. Other Asians and especially the Indonesians are agitating for increased self-government or even independence for New Guinea.

² Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations General Assembly, Seventh session, General bulletin A/2132, August 22, 1952, pp. 5-8.

The most important political problem concerning Dutch New Guinea is a dispute between The United States of Indonesia and the Netherlands over the legal ownership of the Territory. On December 27, 1949, at the conclusion of a Netherlands-Indonesian Round Table Conference held at the Hague, The United States of Indonesia was granted sovereignty within the Dutch-Indonesian Union and with, at least from the Dutch point of view, a tacit understanding that a federal form of government would be maintained. The United States of Indonesia as it was organized consisted of six Negaras.³ The Dutch favored this form of government for the avowed reason that it offered the various peoples of the former Dutch East Indies an opportunity for self-determination.

Dutch New Guinea although it was a part of the Netherlands East Indies was not made a Negara and was not incorporated in The United States of Indonesia. At the Hague in December of 1949, the Indonesian delegation was reluctant to leave before they obtained possession of Dutch New Guinea, but the Dutch put them off with the argument that such sovereignty could not be granted without risking Parliament's rejection of the entire Netherlands--Indonesian Round Table Conference Agreement. In lieu of settlement it was agreed to maintain the status quo for

³ A political sub-division which existed as long as The United States of Indonesia maintained a federal form of government.

one year during which various possibilities could be examined.

The Dutch desire to keep New Guinea developed soon after the Indonesian Declaration of Independence in 1945. The subsequent conflict further convinced the Europeans in the Dutch East Indies that they ought to have a haven to which they could migrate that would still be controlled by Europeans in case the Indonesian Government reneged on its promise to respect foreign interests.⁴ The resident Indies Dutch and pro-Dutch Indonesians wanted a degree of security if their holdings were nationalized and they were forced to resettle. What area would be more logical than the least developed and, therefore, the one in which native opposition would be at a minimum? Governments have a way of wringing compliance slowly step by step from minority groups, and the Dutch did not relish the idea of being a minority group where they had previously been the governors.

Internally the functions of a state are to construct or maintain itself as a single organized unit. To do this a state must keep the institutional structure balanced within reasonable limits. For those interested in constitutional government the balance, maintained between restraints on power and the maintenance of a sufficient concentration of power

⁴ L. Metzemaekers, "The Western New Guinea Problem," Pacific Affairs, Vol. 24, 1951, p. 134.

for effective functioning, is a delicate one. Ardent Indonesian nationalists objected to the federal form of government simply because of its Dutch connections. Their intransigent attitude made the establishment of law and order difficult and, as a consequence, The Republic of Indonesia gradually absorbed the other six Negaras early in 1950. The establishment of this republican form of government was looked upon by the Dutch as a denial of the right of self-determination to the various peoples of the Indies. The Dutch have used this act to substantiate their position that they can not let a similar fate befall the non-Indonesian population of New Guinea. There is some justification for the Dutch viewpoint because, while the formation of a unitary form of government placated ardent nationalists, it caused revolts in other areas which had to be put down by armed force, especially in the Moluccas.

Dutch-Indonesian relations deteriorated during the first six months of Indonesian sovereignty. In August of 1950 a committee which had been established the preceeding March in Jakarta for the purpose of determining New Guinea's future reported that the three Dutch and the three Indonesian members had arrived at diametrically opposed conclusions. Thereafter Indonesian agitation for annexation took on a new vigor sparked by a series of fiery speeches by President Soekarno. In December, at the end of the agreed upon year, the Second

Netherlands-Indonesian Round Table Conference took place. Held at the Hague, it failed to reach any agreement as to New Guinea's future. Anything short of outright and unconditional annexation was unacceptable to the Indonesians who not only rejected a number of Dutch proposals for compromise, but also rejected the idea of United Nations intervention. Dutch sovereignty and administration continued, however, with the Indonesian government assuming the position that the Dutch control was illegal. All subsequent attempts to break this deadlock have failed.

The Dutch argument for their continued control may be summed up as follows: the maintenance of Dutch sovereignty is in the interest of both the Netherlands and the people of New Guinea; the Indonesians have no claim to New Guinea on any geographic, social, economic or ethnic basis; Indonesia lacks the capital and the personnel to develop the area in a way which will benefit the population of New Guinea; and Indonesia betrayed the Netherlands when she switched from a federal to a republican form of government.⁵

The Indonesians maintain that arguments concerning ethnic or cultural uniformity are irrelevant. New Guinea is considered an intrinsic part of Indonesia simply because New Guinea was formerly a part of the Dutch East Indies from which The Republic of Indonesia was formed. The Indonesians feel that

⁵ Metzemaekers, op. cit., p. 135.

they cannot tolerate any Dutch colony in the vicinity, and for them to do so would be a confirmation of an inferior status, and that the presence of a Dutch colony so near Indonesia encourages separatists elements in Indonesia.⁶

A large prestige factor is present in this dispute. The Dutch are reluctant to surrender the last remnant of a former great empire in the Far East. They also have good economic reasons for retaining New Guinea. Under the Dutch-Indonesian Union, Dutch interests in Indonesia were granted considerable economic favors and their control of New Guinea affords a bargaining point to assure the continued existence of such advantages.⁷

The Dutch-Indonesian Union called for the two states to be partners in defense, foreign affairs, and economic affairs, but the intensity of feeling between the two has lowered such hopes to hollow phrases. Indonesia looks upon the Union as a treaty between equally sovereign states. She now desires to withdraw from the Union. The Dutch look upon the Union as something less than a treaty and more in the nature of a grant of increased participation in government for a people who have politically matured. They desire to keep the Union as strong as possible.

⁶ Loc. cit.

⁷ L.S. Finkelstein, "Irian in Indonesian Politics," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. 20, 1951, p. 80.

Although Australia was not a party to the Netherlands-Indonesian Round Table Conferences she has voiced the opinion that she has vital interests in the area and must be a party to any decision about Western New Guinea. The Australians are strongly in favor of continued Dutch control or as an alternative, Australian Trusteeship. The Australians feel that there is a good possibility that Indonesia might prove to be a hostile and aggressive neighbor and that Indonesian nationalists would stimulate subversive activities in the Australian half of New Guinea. The Australians fear an ultimate communist attack from the Far East and, realizing that the fragmented nature of Southeast Asia makes coordinated defense difficult, they favor personal control or control which they feel will be friendly. The experiences of World War II are still too fresh in the minds of Australians to do much compromising on this point.⁸

Australia's isolation makes it imperative to remain on friendly terms with her neighbors. She is reluctant to alienate the Indonesians or the Dutch in New Guinea. Problems in international politics are rarely simple and clear cut and that is true for this problem. Social factors which generate profound emotional feeling are present. If Indonesia controlled Western New Guinea, Australia would consider that one more

⁸ J.M. McAuley, "Defense and Development in Australian New Guinea," Pacific Affairs, Vol. 23, 1950, p. 373.

prop had been removed from the safeguards erected around their White Australian policy. Australia prohibits the settlement of non-Papuan or non-European people in Australian New Guinea, and they do not desire to see the way opened for a large influx of Asians into Western New Guinea.⁹

Periodically the Dutch have had to settle political disputes with their neighbors which are of an administrative nature. In the past marauding natives have had to be controlled, fishing and pearling rights negotiated, and the hunting of birds of paradise controlled. This type of political problem has been successfully handled with a minimum of friction.

The shrinking of the world as a result of technical progress has reached a stage now where political conflict anywhere in the world can easily become of interest to the so-called big powers. This fact is especially true in a location such as Southeast Asia where so many colonial powers and states fronting on the Pacific have interests. The political unrest in Dutch New Guinea might easily become magnified because of the interest of states which are engaged in a struggle for power.

Some Dutchmen have been apprehensive lest the United States would put pressure on the Netherlands to cede Dutch New Guinea

⁹ C. Gamba, "West New Guinea and Australia," The Colonial Review, Vol. 6, 1950, p. 212.

to Indonesia as part of an overall policy of expediency.¹⁰

Since the end of World War II there have been many proposals that an organization in the nature of a regional union or commission for Southeast Asia be established as a mechanism for solving the problems of the area. If such an organization were created one of the first problems it would face would be the settlement of the status of Dutch New Guinea. The Dutch in New Guinea would have no choice but to take a notable interest in such an organization.

At one point in the negotiations between The Netherlands and The United States of Indonesia the Dutch proposed that the dispute be submitted to the United Nations Organization for settlement. The United States of Indonesia would not agree, but the possibility still exists that the United Nations will interject its influence or that it will be asked to aid in the settlement.

¹⁰ "Who'll Get New Guinea," U. S. News, Vol 32, 1952, p. 45.

Strategic Relations

The level of development in Dutch New Guinea is such that its possession contributes very little to the Netherland's ability to maintain the physical strength characteristic of influential modern powers. No area, however, can escape the significance of its location. Dutch New Guinea commands the waterways which are the approaches to more highly developed areas such as eastern and southern Australia and the Moluccas. Thus while strategic interest may not be in utilizing Dutch New Guinea as a base it may be in the assurance that New Guinea shall not be utilized as such by an unfriendly power. States which are interested in Dutch New Guinea or its immediate environs are vitally concerned with who is capable of exerting any pressure upon or from Dutch New Guinea.

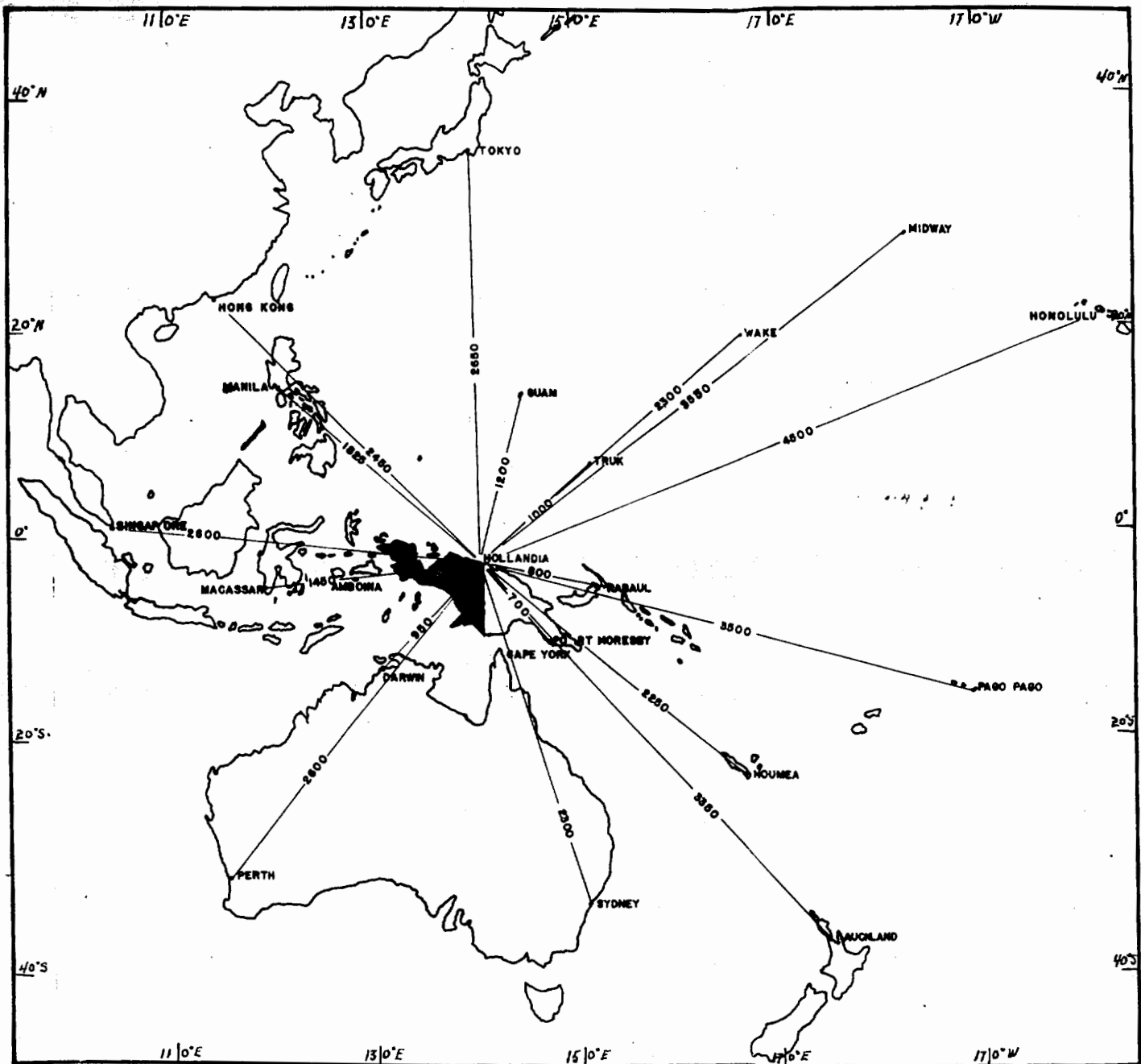
A discussion of power implies the actual or planned utilization of military might. An evaluation of the physical potential of a state and that of its neighbors is of importance in determining the degree or extent of measures that will be taken to insure future prosperity. The one legitimate function of military power is to insure continued existence. Somewhat of a dilemma exists at this level between the strategists and the politicians. The strategists in order to plan adequately want to know the exact objectives and the power available to their state and, if possible, these same items in respect to

other states. They are afraid of vague generalities and obligations in which politicians and diplomats often indulge on the belief that it is more advisable to disguise a problem rather than face it directly and risk more serious consequences.

Any discussion of strategic relationships of Dutch New Guinea will have to consider those powers having sufficient potential to exert an influence in the area. In the immediate frame of reference of the Indian and Western Pacific oceans such states as Australia, Indonesia, Japan, and possibly India and China are or soon will be capable of such influence(Fig. 3). In a larger frame of reference or on a global scale the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom, possess sufficient potential to apply influence in New Guinea. This ability of states which are not primarily Pacific-orientated to exert influence in the Pacific complicates the strategic relationships.¹

Granted that the lack of development, the absence of national feeling, and of a core area in Dutch New Guinea prohibit the creation of indigenous forces capable of foreign aggression; the harbors, bases, and airfields and the sea, land and airforces which are in a position to utilize these facilities are of strategic importance. Dutch New Guinea possesses

¹ T. Buesst, W.M.Ball, and G. Packer, Security Problems in the Pacific Region, Melbourne, 1949, p. 9.



several good natural harbors which could readily be developed into naval stations. Humboldt Bay, Tanahmerah Bay, Walkenaer Bay, Wandamon Bay, and MacCluer Gulf are possible locations for such development. The Dutch Navy in the Far East did not maintain a naval base in New Guinea. Hollandia, the most developed harbor, is considered only a naval station and not a base. In 1950 the Netherlands Naval forces were withdrawn from the Far East and relocated in Europe; therefore it is not likely that new naval installations will be constructed.²

Bases for land forces constructed during World War II were either removed with the forces as they withdrew or have since deteriorated to the extent that any sizeable force stationed in Dutch New Guinea will have to import or construct new facilities. Airfields do not submit to such mobile treatment as do bases therefore those constructed in World War II still remain. There are at present six airfields and one emergency landing strip in Dutch New Guinea.³ These airfields render service in the process of economic development and consequently some degree of maintenance can be expected.

The strategic interest of the Netherlands in New Guinea is limited to the maintenance of a base now that the rest of their East Indian possessions have been granted sovereignty. Any

² "Who'll Get New Guinea," U.S. News, Vol. 32, 1952, p. 43.

³ Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations General Assembly, Seventh session, General bulletin A/2132, August 22, 1952, p. 18.

function that Dutch New Guinea might have rendered as a buffer against penetration into the more developed parts of their former empire has now ceased.

One of the reasons Indonesia desires to obtain Dutch New Guinea is for the buffer function its possession formerly furnished the Dutch. Indonesia fears that internal unrest may be increased by agitation from the mere presence of the Dutch in New Guinea. The population of the neighboring Muluccas is pro-Dutch, and their reaction over being administered from Jarkata became so vehement in 1950 that Indonesian troops had to be dispatched to control a rebellion. Indonesia feels that if the Dutch were not present as neighbors their problems of internal administration would be lessened.⁴

The nation which has voiced the greatest immediate concern over the control of Dutch New Guinea is Australia. World War II convinced Australians that their country is a Pacific power. Nothing that Australia can do will alter the fact that she is a nation of white people isolated from the main centers of power dominated by whites. She cannot escape the predominately Asian community of states which surround her. British and Dutch naval power stationed in their colonies in the Far East formerly served as a protective shield. This shield has been

⁴ C.W.Ritter, "Dutch New Guinea," The Contemporary Review, Vol. 179, 1951, p. 224.

critically weakened through the repudiation of European colonialism by the Asian states. Australians now are more aware than ever before of the realism of these developments.

New Guinea lies between Australia and Asia. The Torres Strait which commands the approaches from the west and north to the most developed parts of Australia, is under control of New Guinea. To be cut off from those who are capable of rendering her aid is a very serious matter. The importance of defense in depth makes it advisable for Australia to assure herself that those islands that lie to the north, east, and west may be utilized for defense and denied to others for attack upon her.

World War II saw for the first time the invasion of Australian territory by hostile forces. As one of the lasting results of this experience Australia refers to those islands which lie directly to her north as her "Near North," a term which implies recognition of the importance of this area to her.⁵

Australia is especially interested in what happens in Dutch New Guinea because of her administration of the eastern half of New Guinea. Asian control of Dutch New Guinea is viewed as a threat to Australia's continued control of Eastern New Guinea.

⁵ C.P. Fitzgerald, "Australia and Asia," The Spectator, Vol. 186, 1951, p. 515.

New Guinea has always been of strategic concern to the Australians. One must remember that it was a fear of hostile occupation which prompted Queensland in 1883 to raise the British flag in New Guinea. Before World War II New Guinea was included in Australian plans for building a 3,000 mile long defense system in the outer islands.⁶

In 1944 Australia and New Zealand concluded the Canberra Agreement which was designed to aid the two states in attempting to solve Pacific problems. One of the proposals of this agreement was the construction of a regional defense zone in the arc of islands north of Australia and eastward to Somoa and the Cook Islands.⁷ Now that the Netherlands East Indies, with the exception of New Guinea, have been incorporated into The United States of Indonesia, New Guinea would have to be the western anchor of any such defense zone. This is one of the reasons that Australia will not guarantee that she will follow a passive role if Dutch control of New Guinea is terminated.

Australian strategists are divided as to whether a more developed New Guinea would be more effective for her defense that the relatively empty buffer New Guinea now is.

⁶ H. Grattan, "The Enigma of New Guinea," Asia, Vol. 41, 1941, p. 253.

⁷ M. M. Keesing, Pacific Islands in War and Peace, Institute of Pacific Relations Pamphlet No., 14, New York, 1944, p. 12.

The question as to whether developing New Guinea into a base of operations or letting it remain an empty buffer would prove more beneficial to the future of Australia is still a matter of conjecture.⁸

⁸ J. F. Boyer, "Australia's Stake in World Organization," Pacific Affairs, Vol. 17, 1944, p. 378.

Conclusions

A consideration of the external aspects of the political geography of Dutch New Guinea leaves one with the impression that today the strategic factor is of far more importance than the territorial, the economic, or the political factors. The territorial relations of Dutch New Guinea not only appear to be stable at present but have been so for over half a century. The boundaries function as effective dividers. The economic contributions of Dutch New Guinea to the world economy are as yet insignificant. Unfortunately for the Territory, economic production has not advanced nor perhaps is it capable of advancing to a point where Dutch New Guinea will be able to produce enough to pay its own way. The one aspect of the political relations in which there is a strong infusion of strategic considerations, and which is presently active, is the dispute over its legal status.

The recognized importance of the strategic significance of Dutch New Guinea has been more enduring. Strategic importance has been recognized at least from the early part of the nineteenth century. The periodic reassertion of strategic considerations indicates that there exist important relationships between the location of Dutch New Guinea and the surrounding areas. The present strategic significance must be

considered in the framework of the emergence of open United States-Soviet Union rivalry, the accelerated growth of Asian nationalism, and the decline of Western European power in Southeast Asia.

The possibility of Dutch New Guinea becoming a sovereign political unit in the near future results in a negative conclusion. The low cultural status of the population retards the establishment of any government which possesses a broad base. This same low cultural status prevents a high level of economic production or a widely diversified type of production. A report which utilizes information furnished by the Netherlands government has the following to say about New Guinea:

"In many respects Netherlands New Guinea is one of the most underdeveloped Territories. It is in general not a fertile country; moreover, its potentialities for development are handicapped by an unhealthy climate, a degree of inaccessibility, and a lack of labor. Scientific investigations of the soil, however, though still in their first stages have already revealed the presence of areas suitable for modern agricultural industries. It is expected that continued exploration will disclose greater possibilities. Copra is the main commercial crop, and the most readily available wealth is the timber of the vast forested areas; preparations are being made for rational forest exploitation. In the meantime, it is the extraction of mineral oil on which emphasis is laid for economic development; through only of a limited extent, in 1951 it represented 80 percent of the value of exports. The potential of hydroelectric power is also being studied.

"For further development the opening of the interior is essential. Since the terrain and the shortage of labor make the building of roads extremely difficult, the possibilities of improving transport by water and air are being examined." ¹

¹ Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations General Assembly, Seventh session, General bulletin A/2132, August 22, 1952, p. 2.

Captain C. A. W. Monckton has made the statement that it would take a man like Cecil Rhodes to develop New Guinea.² Even Rhodes did not have to overcome all the handicaps which one geographer considers must be dealt with in order to make possible white settlement in New Guinea where white economic life is based on plantation agriculture, mining, and trading rather than on a more diversified agriculture. Native labor is hard to obtain and is inefficient. Crops which may be grown are more cheaply produced elsewhere. The medical facilities are poor, and mosquitoes, flies, leeches, fleas, and rats exist in abundant numbers. Little effort has been made to develop the highlands which, though limited in extent, possess a climate which is more conducive to white activity. The most important problem retarding development is the matter of morale or human spirit. Most individuals who go to New Guinea arrive with the idea that their stay is only temporary. Such an attitude is not conducive to the permanent development of the territory.³

This same geographer is of the opinion that most of Dutch New Guinea is unsuited for agricultural colonization

² C.A.W. Monckton, Last Days in New Guinea, Dodd, Mead, and Co., New York, 1922, p. 262.

³ R.G. Bowman, "Land Settlement in New Guinea," The New Zealand Geographer, Vol. 4, 1948, p. 33.

by whites; and that the Javanese wet rice subsistence farmer has a far better chance.⁴

What is the logical future role of Dutch New Guinea when one takes into consideration Dutch sentiment and the avowed purpose of protecting native interests, Indonesian pride, and Australian preoccupation with security? Dutch New Guinea has been described as a place of contact of European and Asian culture. Whether subsequent development will evolve in such a manner that the physical base will act as a bridge or as a hostile frontier between the two depends in part on many items which are non-geographic. This especially true in respect to the prevailing mental attitudes.

The Indonesians as well as the Dutch claim to be the more capable of protecting the native interests, advancing economic development, and fostering self-government. Both are sincere without doubt, but those involved in struggles where emotion runs high cannot escape prejudicial bias. One proposal to ease the present tension has been the creation of a Dutch Indonesian Condominium until sufficient maturity is achieved for self-government. This proposal overlooks the fact that two states which can hardly tolerate each other as neighbors would hardly be able to teach the natives self-government. Concern for native welfare would be neglected in the competitive struggle of each to achieve its own ends.

⁴ Ibid., p. 37.

Any proposal to return the area to the natives cannot seriously be considered in a world so conscious of strategic vacuums. Some political unit will have to carry out a paternalistic program in a world of competing states.

One of the most seriously considered roles for Dutch New Guinea has been the development of the area as a home for the dissatisfied Eurasians in Indonesia. Unfortunately these Eurasians are dissatisfied as a result of their displacement in the economic and political structure resulting from the transfer of Dutch sovereignty to Indonesia. Most of them are white collar workers who do not possess the know how, the capital, or the inclination to face the physical hardships of pioneering in the adversities of Dutch New Guinea.

The Territory's close proximity to Indonesia suggests that if the Indonesians should be successful with problems of internal consolidation they could accumulate sufficient physical strength and thereby place enough pressure upon the Dutch to make their continued presence an intolerable burden, or possibly they might attempt to overrun Dutch New Guinea by physical force.

The least disturbing solution for all concerned, except the Indonesians, is to continue the status quo while attempting to derive sufficient revenue from the exploitable resources to

sponsor development which cannot prove profitable without initial subsidization. This is the policy that the Netherlands government is following at present.

The possibility exists that the Indonesians would grant the Dutch additional economic advantages in Indonesia in exchange for the transfer of New Guinea's sovereignty. Such a development would, however, probably be opposed by Australia, who has already threatened to occupy the area rather than tolerate Asian neighbors in New Guinea.

The intervention of the United Nations is also a possibility. If, as a result of such intervention, Dutch New Guinea were to be organized as a trusteeship, strategic or otherwise, under the control of a single state, little would have been accomplished in eliminating existing animosity. Direct control by an international organization would seem preferable.

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