


The independence of the Dutch East Indies

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URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/the_independence_of_the_dutch_east_indies-en-a07dfad3-df35-46d2-b4a5-fbaabd5af19c.html

Last updated: 10/11/2021



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After the Second World War, the Netherlands tried to reconquer their former colony, which they had been forced to abandon to the Japanese in 1942. But Indonesian nationalists claimed independence for the archipelago.

When Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945, the Indonesian leader, Sukarno, proclaimed the independence of Indonesia. Between 1947 and 1948, the Netherlands launched two major military interventions, but the nationalists held firm, and the Dutch, under pressure from the United Nations and the United States, had to yield.

In December 1949, after four years of military and diplomatic confrontation with the Netherlands, the Dutch Government finally recognised the independence of the Dutch East Indies, which became the Republic of the United States of Indonesia.