

## Telegram from the British Foreign Office to the new Ambassador in Indonesia (24 January 1946)

**Caption:** In a telegram dated 24 January 1946, the British Foreign Secretary informs Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, United Kingdom Special Envoy to Indonesia, of his new mission, which particularly involves examining the possibilities for an agreement between the people of Indonesia and the Netherlands Government.

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**Last updated:** 01/03/2017

# OUTWARD TELEGRAM

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[CYPHER]

## CABINET DISTRIBUTION

### FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO MOSCOW

No. 266

24th January 1946

D. 3.35 a.m. 24th January 1946

Repeated to The Hague No. 70  
Washington No. 854  
Batavia (marked DEDIP PERSONAL) No. 60.  
for Mr. Dening)  
: : :

IMMEDIATE

DEDIP

SECRET

Following personal for Ambassador.

Following is final text of directive which is being issued to you in regard to your mission to Batavia.

[Begins]

1. You are appointed as special Ambassador to proceed on a temporary mission to Batavia. Your mission will be to keep His Majesty's Government informed of political developments in the Netherlands East Indies and to assist in every way possible towards a solution of the present political difficulties between the Netherlands Government and the Indonesian nationalists.
2. British forces are in the Netherlands East Indies under Allied arrangements made at the time of the Japanese surrender, with the specific tasks of disarming, concentrating and evacuating the Japanese forces and rescuing and evacuating Allied prisoners of war and internees. In an agreement embodied in an exchange of notes between His Majesty's Government and the Netherlands Government on August 24th 1945 it was provided that the Netherlands Indies Government would resume as rapidly as practicable full responsibility for the civil administration of Netherlands Indies territory.

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3. Political difficulties have, however, created a situation far different from that which was at first contemplated and have involved the British forces in responsibilities for the maintenance of law and order without which their primary tasks could not be accomplished.

4. The result has been a heavy and unexpected military commitment which has undesirable consequences both on the manpower situation in this country and, insofar as Indian troops form a large proportion of the British forces in the Netherlands East Indies, on the Indian political situation.

5. It is not the desire of His Majesty's Government to concern themselves with constitutional issues between the Netherlands Government and the people of the Netherlands East Indies, but they are vitally concerned with the consequences of a continued failure to reach a settlement of these political issues, and in particular with the lawless conditions arising therefrom which are causing a mounting toll of lives both among the British forces and among the peaceful inhabitants of the Netherlands East Indies.

6. A speedy solution is of the greatest importance both to the fulfilment of the military tasks laid upon His Majesty's Government and for the peace and welfare of the Netherlands East Indies and of South East Asia in general. It is with the object of working towards such a solution that His Majesty's Government have decided to entrust you with your present mission. While the constitutional issues at stake are matters for direct agreement between the Netherlands Government and the Indonesian nationalist leaders, you should seek every opportunity to encourage and facilitate such an agreement. Your good offices should be constantly available for this purpose and you need not hesitate to take the chair, if desired, at meetings between..

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between the Netherlands authorities and the Indonesian leaders. You have been furnished with copies of the constitutional proposals of the Netherlands Government for the Netherlands East Indies contained in the broadcast made by Her Majesty the Queen of the Netherlands on December 6th 1942, in Dr. van Mook's statement of November 6th 1945 and in the programme communicated to His Majesty's Government at the Chequers meeting of December 27th 1945. His Majesty's Government consider that these proposals are very liberal and that they ought to offer a fair and reasonable basis of settlement. You may therefore urge the Indonesian leaders to give them the most earnest and favourable consideration.

7. You will be responsible to, and will in all matters communicate with, me.

8. Military and administrative authority in the Netherlands East Indies is vested in the Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia and through him in the local Force Commander. The Force Commander is being instructed to comply with such advice on political matters affecting the Netherlands East Indies as you may tender to him, unless on purely military grounds he feels it necessary to refer to the Supreme Commander.

9. In all your activities you will bear in mind that, as stated by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons, the Netherlands are recognised by His Majesty's Government as the sovereign power in the Netherlands East Indies. Arrangements are being worked out to set up as soon as possible joint British-Dutch staff machinery with a view to ensuring that agreement should be reached locally so far as possible in reports and recommendations to the two Governments and on directives issued to the local commanders.

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10. In fulfilment of the general policy set out in paragraph 6 you will of course be accessible to responsible Indonesian elements, and will cultivate as wide contacts as possible among the different sections of the communities in the Netherlands East Indies.

[Ends].

Above text has been concurred in by the Chiefs of Staff and is being telegraphed by them to Admiral Mountbatten. Copies will be given in strict confidence to the Netherlands Government and to the United States Government.

O.T.P.