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LETTER DATED 2 MARCH 1949 FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS  
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL CONCERNING THE  
COUNCIL'S RESOLUTION OF 28 JANUARY 1949 ON  
THE INDONESIAN QUESTION

March 2, 1949

Sir,

The Netherlands Government has in the past weeks given thorough consideration to the resolution of the Security Council of January 28, 1949 and to the question how the Netherlands could best contribute towards the achievement of the aims set forth in that resolution. In doing so the Netherlands Government has been deeply conscious of its responsibility on the one hand as a member of the United Nations and on the other hand as the nation which has for over three centuries guided the fate of Indonesia, and which until the transfer of sovereignty to the U.S.I. still bears that responsibility.

The Netherlands Government has been happy to note and wishes to stress at the outset, that there exists complete identity between the aims of the Security Council and those of the Netherlands Government with regard to Indonesia, that is, the speediest possible creation of an independent U.S.I. under conditions of law and order which are a necessary requirement for the achievement of this aim. There can, therefore, be only differences of opinion about the procedure which is best suited to lead to the desired result, and to bridge the relatively short period of time which this will require.

The Netherlands Government must as a result of its serious consideration maintain the fundamental objections to the Council's resolution which were formulated by the Netherlands representative in the Security Council on January 28, 1949. The Netherlands Government

His Excellency

Dr. Alberto Inccente Alvarez,  
President of the Security Council,  
Lake Success.

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at the same time confirms its attitude to the resolution as formulated by Dr. van Roijen that same day when he said:

"My Government will carry out this resolution to the extent to which it is compatible with the responsibility of the Netherlands for the maintenance of real freedom and order in Indonesia, a responsibility which, at this moment, no one else can take over from us."

The Netherlands Government has therefore striven to find a way by which the aims common to the Security Council and to all interested parties in the Indonesian question can best be achieved without resorting to measures which in the firm conviction of the Netherlands Government would only have the most harmful consequences for Indonesia. After consultations with Dr. Beel, the High Representative of the Crown in Indonesia, who for this purpose flew to The Hague, the Netherlands Government has decided upon the following course of action as being most likely to lead with the fewest possible difficulties to the speediest possible realization of the independence of Indonesia.

The Netherlands Government will cooperate with the UNCI in the same way as it has cooperated with the Committee of Good Offices in the past, to promote discussions to attain as quickly as possible the goal which is common to all parties.

The Netherlands Government has reached the conclusion that the best solution of the pending problem is to be found in an accelerated transfer of its sovereignty over Indonesia to an Indonesian Federal Government, which will be fully representative of the whole of Indonesia. In order to achieve this aim it is obviously desirable that all parties concerned should resume discussions with the determination to make sincere and strenuous efforts to reach a prompt solution. The common purpose which all parties have in view should justify the confidence that they will show such readiness.

In order to carry into effect the wish repeatedly expressed by the Security Council on the subject and in order to render possible a prompt beginning of the discussions, the Netherlands Government has lifted the remaining restrictions on the liberty of movement of the Republican leaders, which means that they remain subject only to the general regulations applicable to everyone in the matter of travel and residence which for military reasons are at this time still in force in certain parts of Indonesia. The restoration of their full freedom (subject to the above-mentioned limitations applicable to everyone) is not dependent upon their acceptance of the invitation, to be mentioned hereafter, to

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participate in common conversations.

In order to carry into effect the aims set out above the Netherlands Government has extended invitations to all interested parties to take part in a round-table conference to be held at The Hague at the earliest possible date, preferably on March 12, 1949. The task of this conference should be to devise arrangements for an accelerated transfer of sovereignty over Indonesia, for the simultaneous establishment of the Netherlands-Indonesian Union, to draft the financial, economic and military agreements pertaining thereto, and to make arrangements for the interim period, which would include the institution of a Federal Interim Government.

Invitations to this conference have been extended to all interested parties, notably among others to the President of the Republic of Indonesia, and to the Chairman of the Assembly for Federal Consultation. The United Nations Commission for Indonesia has equally been invited to attend the conference, so that it may render its valuable assistance to achieve positive results.

The text of the invitations addressed to these three organs are added as appendices to this document.

The invited Indonesian parties are entirely free to decide on the size and composition of their delegations. No rules have been laid down for voting, since the Netherlands Government is convinced that no settlement can be carried into effect which is not freely accepted by all parties present.

The Netherlands Government will, together with the other parties, consider on its merits any solution which might be put before the conference and will determine in how far it is compatible with its responsibility. It is not the intention of the Netherlands Government, therefore, to put forward any plan which should have to be either accepted or rejected in its entirety. The same applies to the Netherlands Indonesian Union, the terms of which should be formulated in common consultation, in order that both partners in the Union should find their interests and purposes reflected in it. The only limitation which the Netherlands have to observe, lies in the provisions which were incorporated in the Netherlands constitution last autumn as a result of earlier consultations.

It will be necessary to form a Federal Government for the whole of Indonesia which will command sufficient authority to take over sovereignty from the Netherlands and to bind Indonesia to the execution of agreements entered into. This is all the more necessary as the transfer of

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sovereignty will under the plan take place before the holding of elections, in the same way as happened in several other Asiatic countries.

It will be up to Indonesia itself to decide how this federal government will be constituted, taking due account of the relative importance of the different groups of the population. In this connection a reasonable basis of negotiations may be found in the oral note of the United States Member of the Committee of Good Offices submitted informally to the Netherlands Delegation on September 10, 1948, providing for a representation of the Republican territories by one-third and of the Federal territories by two-thirds of the total number. Furthermore the principal minority groups in Indonesia should be appropriately represented.

It is impossible for the Netherlands Government to fix unilaterally a date for the transfer of sovereignty over Indonesia, since this depends also upon the wishes of the other parties concerned. The Netherlands Government trusts, however, that if the present plan is adopted, it should be possible by a determined effort to reach an agreement by May 1, 1949, after which, as far as the Netherlands are concerned, a period of about six weeks would still be needed for the ratification in accordance with the provisions of their constitution.

It may not be possible to reach complete agreement at the conference on all details before the transfer of sovereignty, but as long as it is achieved on the principal points no unsurmountable difficulties need arise, as any other specific outstanding points might well temporarily be covered by transitional arrangements, to remain in force with mutual consent for a short period after the transfer of sovereignty.

It is pointed out that since the transfer of sovereignty is designed to take place at such an early date, the provisions for the establishment of a federal interim government will be in existence for only a temporary period and to the extent that transfer of sovereignty can be accelerated these provisions will be of only a temporary significance. This seems a great advantage in view of the fact that in the past agreement between the parties about this period has proved particularly difficult to obtain.

It follows from the foregoing that the result of the plan outlined will be to transfer sovereignty over Indonesia more than one year earlier than foreseen in the Security Council's resolution. The Netherlands Government's plan therefore goes even further towards meeting the desire of Indonesian nationalism for independence than the Security Council's resolution.

Furthermore, in leaving it to Indonesia itself to organize its  
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political life after the transfer of sovereignty, the Netherlands Government is making an important contribution towards diminishing the possibility of further controversy; as long as the Netherlands remain responsible for the course of events in Indonesia, which they will until the transfer of sovereignty takes place, they must inevitably continue to dispose of wide powers; this intermediary period would, however, be limited to a few months if the present plan is adopted by the Indonesians, thus reducing to a minimum the danger of friction.

It is not the intention of the Netherlands Government to divest itself prematurely of its responsibility in Indonesia. Hence it will be prepared to assist the new state for a limited period after the transfer of sovereignty, but only if the U.S.I. takes the initiative to request such assistance, which will therefore in no way be thrust upon it; the future relationship between the two countries should be based upon the real and voluntarily recognized common interests of both parties.

The Netherlands Government is fully aware of the seriousness of the Indonesian question and of its responsibility in that respect. In the plan outlined above it is making a bold new approach to the whole problem, which should result in a considerably accelerated achievement of its aim with regard to Indonesia, which, it cannot be repeated too often, is the same as that of the Security Council and of the Indonesians. It therefore appeals to the Council to further the realization of this plan, which in the present circumstances offers the quickest and most effective way of the establishing a democratic U.S.I. and a durable and voluntary cooperation between the Netherlands and Indonesia.

I should be grateful if you would have this paper circulated among the Members of the Security Council.

I avail myself of this opportunity to present to Your Excellency the assurances of my highest consideration.

/s/ J. Snouck Hurgronje.

J.W.M. Snouck Hurgronje  
Permanent Representative of the  
Netherlands to the United Nations.

APPENDIX I

TEXT OF INVITATION TO UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR INDONESIA

The Netherlands Government has decided to take the initiative to convene as soon as possible a Round-Table Conference, which should start on March 12th 1949 at The Hague.

To this Conference all parties concerned with the Indonesian question will be invited. It is the intention of the Government to consider at the Conference in particular the conditions and the modalities by which an accelerated transfer of sovereignty over Indonesia by the Netherlands to a representative Federal Indonesian Government will take place. As a consequence of this proposed transfer of sovereignty consultations will be necessary concerning the provisions for the interim period including the institution of a Federal Interim Government.

The Netherlands Government has been guided by the conception that a lasting solution of the pending problems cannot be arrived at until sovereignty has actually been transferred. Experience has shown that the arrangements for a rather prolonged interim period lead to insoluble differences of opinion.

Therefore the Netherlands Government have invited the President of the Republic and the Chairman of the B.F.O. to appoint delegations for this Conference. Your commission will find enclosed copies of these invitations to which I beg to refer.

Moreover, it is intended that also representatives of the Provisional Federal Government and of minorities of the population will take part in this Conference.

The Netherlands Government have requested me to inform Your Commission that they will highly appreciate it if Your Commission would attend this Conference, so that it can render assistance to achieve positive results.

APPENDIX II

TEXT OF INVITATION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF INDONESIA

Prompted by the conviction that the highest interests of Indonesia demand that all concerned should contribute to the fullest measure of their ability, to a speedy and complete solution of the pending problems the Netherlands Government has again considered the way in which this goal can be soonest attained.

It is of the opinion that a situation should be created as soon as possible, in which the conflicts and mistrust of to-day give way to mutual co-operation and appreciation. Such a state of affairs would, in the opinion of the Netherlands Government, not fully be reached until sovereignty has been transferred by the Netherlands to a federal Government representative of the whole of Indonesia.

The Netherlands Government is convinced that this situation which the resolution of the Security Council of January 28th 1949 has set as a goal to be reached by 1st July 1950 at the latest, can be created at a considerably earlier moment by the sincere and energetic co-operation of all interested parties.

In view of this the Netherlands Government has conceived the idea to take the initiative for a Round-Table Conference of all parties concerned in the Indonesian question, which could commence at The Hague as soon as possible - preferably on March 12th 1949. At the conference the conditions and modalities will have to be discussed under which the aforementioned accelerated transfer of sovereignty can be effected as well as provisions for the intermediary period, including the institution of a federal interim government.

The Netherlands Government is prepared to examine on its merits every proposed solution submitted by one of the parties in free consultation with these parties, and to examine to what extent these proposed solutions are compatible with its responsibility.

Consequently I have the honour on behalf of the Government of the Netherlands to invite Your Excellency to appoint a delegation to participate in this conference.

I wish to add that a similar invitation has been sent to the Chairman of the Assembly of Federal Consultation requesting his co-operation for the appointment of the delegations for the territories affiliated to the B.F.O.

Furthermore the Netherlands Government will invite to the conference

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representatives of the Provisional Federal Government and of the minorities.

Finally I inform Your Excellency that the UNCI has been invited to attend the conference, in order to assist the parties.



APPENDIX III

TEXT OF INVITATION TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSEMBLY  
FOR FEDERAL CONSULTATION

Prompted by the conviction that the highest interests of Indonesia demand that all concerned should contribute to the fullest measure of their ability, to a speedy and complete solution of the pending problems the Netherlands Government has again considered the way in which this goal can be soonest attained.

It is of the opinion that a situation should be created as soon as possible, in which the conflicts and mistrust of to-day give way to mutual co-operation and appreciation. Such a state of affairs would, in the opinion of the Netherlands Government, not fully be reached until sovereignty has been transferred by the Netherlands to a federal Government representative of the whole of Indonesia.

The Netherlands Government is convinced that this situation which the resolution of the Security Council of January 28th 1949 has set as a goal to be reached by 1st July 1950 at the latest, can be created at a considerably earlier moment by the sincere and energetic co-operation of all interested parties.

In view of this the Netherlands Government has conceived the idea to take the initiative for a Round-Table Conference of all parties concerned in the Indonesian question, which could commence at The Hague as soon as possible - preferably on March 12th 1949. At the conference the conditions and modalities will have to be discussed under which the aforementioned accelerated transfer of sovereignty can be effected as well as provisions for the intermediary period, including the institution of a federal interim government.

The Netherlands Government is prepared to examine on its merits every proposed solution submitted by one of the parties in free consultation with these parties, and to examine to what extent these proposed solutions are compatible with its responsibility.

In view of the above I have the honour at the request of the Netherlands Government to invite Your Highness to make the necessary arrangements so that through the intermediary of the B.F.O., the member states represented in this body send delegations to the abovementioned Conference.

I may further point out that the President of the Republic has also been invited to appoint a delegation. The Netherlands Government

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will also invite representatives of the Provisional Federal Government and of the minorities to attend the Conference.

In conclusion I may inform Your Highness that the UNCI also has been invited to attend the Conference to assist parties.

