

Telegram from George Henry Hall to Henry Monck-Mason Moore on British policy in Indonesia (19 November 1945)

Caption: On 19 November 1945, following the adoption of a motion in the State Council of Ceylon stating the admiration of the people of Ceylon for the bold fight being waged by the people of Indonesia and Indochina against Dutch and French imperialism, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, George Henry Hall, sends a telegram to the Governor of Ceylon, Sir Henry Monck-Mason Moore, in which he analyses the position that the British Government should adopt concerning the recent events in Indonesia. He deplores the violence of the nationalist movements and notes the promise made by the Queen of the Netherlands in 1942 to grant more autonomy to the Dutch colonies. He also emphasises that the United Kingdom, while it supports its Dutch allies, does not wish to be involved in the administrative and political affairs of non-British territories and plans to withdraw its forces from Indonesia as soon as possible.

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OUTWARD TELEGRAM

13083/45 Part III

Cypher (O.T.P.)

TO CEYLON (Sir H. Moore)

FROM S. OF S., COLONIES.

Sent 19th November, 1945. 13.45 hrs.

MOST IMMEDIATE

Following Secret and Personal 19th November for Governor from Secretary of State.

Your telegram No. 2121.

State Council resolution on Indonesia and Indo-China. Best general line to take is as follows:-

British troops both in the Netherlands East Indies and in Indo China are fulfilling an Allied commitment to wind up the war with Japan in the area allocated to SACSEA under General MacArthur's General Order No. 1. Admiral Mountbatten clearly cannot tolerate conditions which prejudice the completion of this task and has consequently had to use force to meet violence by the extremists. While there has undoubtedly been a genuine independence movement both in the Netherlands East Indies and Indo China for many years, the present activity is very largely the result of inspiration by the Japanese who in violation of the terms of surrender have in many cases handed over arms to the nationalists with the sole object of creating trouble for the Allied forces.

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To speak of the bold fight which the nationalists are putting up against the Dutch and French imperialisms reveals a misconception of the situation. In both countries there is a diversity of races and it is the Dutch and the French who before the war brought unity order and economic welfare and development. The Queen of the Netherlands in her broadcast of December, 1942, promised a large degree of self-government to all Dutch overseas territories and Dr. van Mook, the Lieutenant Governor General of the Netherlands East Indies, has been authorised to discuss with the local Indonesian leaders how it is intended to apply these promised reforms in the case of Java. Similarly the French Government in a declaration of policy issued on the 24th March last, promised a wide measure of autonomy to Indo China. If the welfare and happiness of the inhabitants of the Netherlands East Indies and Indo China is not to be prejudiced, the ultimate aim of independence must be sought through a gradual and progressive evolution towards self-government which clearly demands the fullest possible co-operation between the local inhabitants and the Dutch and French Governments. Everyone who has the best interests of those inhabitants at heart must hope that the present period of disorders and violence will as soon as possible make way for an era of stable and peaceful conditions without which the Netherlands East Indies and Indo China cannot attain prosperity for themselves or make a valuable contribution to the re-habilitation of the world.

Copies of answers by Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in House of Commons on 17th October and 24th October have already been despatched to you by fast air mail. Following is extract from Prime Minister's reply to questions on 17th October. Begins.

I need hardly say that His Majesty's Government do not desire to be unnecessarily involved in the administration or in the political affairs of non-British territories and their object is to withdraw British troops as soon as circumstances permit. Meanwhile not only have we a strong moral obligation towards our Dutch Allies as the sovereign Power until they are in a position to resume control but also the maintenance of law and order is essential to the fulfilment of the military tasks which arise out of the

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