

Chapter II Situation of the Dutch East Indies

(See Illustrations No. 2 and No. 3)

The situation of the Dutch East Indies was in outline as follows:⁽²¹⁾

Topography

Ranging from latitude 6° north to 11° south, and from longitude 95° to 141° east, the Dutch East Indies consisted of many islands extending into both the northern and the southern hemispheres with the equator virtually in the middle. The northwestern part of Borneo, however, was British territory and the eastern part and a small enclave on the northern coast of [western] Timor were Portuguese.

The total area of the Dutch East Indies covered 1.9 million km² and its total population amounted to over sixty million. The size of the area was about fifty-eight times that of the Dutch homeland, and about three times that of the total area of Japan at the time, including Korea, Taiwan and Sakhalin. Its length stretching from east to west was approximately 2,700 miles, which was about the same as the distance from Taiwan to Sakhalin.

The population density per square kilometer was 316 for Java (including Madura), 175 for the islands of Bali and Lombok, 26 for the island of Timor, 22 for Celebes, 17 for Sumatra, 4 for Borneo and 2 for the Moluccas. New Guinea was such a primitive place that no survey had [yet] been possible.

The general situation of each island was as follows:⁽²¹⁾

1. Sumatra and Java

Sumatra and Java respectively take up about 470,000 km² and 130,000 km². From west to east and close to the south coast [of both islands], a mountain range runs like a spinal column as far as the Lesser Sunda Islands. This mountain range is a volcanic chain with many cone-shaped mountains. Whereas the southern coastal areas are steeply inclined, the northern coasts are gently sloped, and have many plains and plateaus. The rivers of Java generally flow along the bottom of V-shaped valleys; their water levels vary greatly depending on the rainfall. The rivers of Sumatra are generally big; some even allow steamship navigation. The lower reaches of the rivers are large wetlands. Entire areas of Palembang and Medan on Sumatra are made up of oil fields.

Although Java occupies no more than one-fourteenth of the total area of the Dutch East Indies, it was crowded with approximately forty million people, two-thirds of the total Dutch East Indies population. Including Batavia (Jakarta), which was the seat of the Dutch East Indies Government-General, with a population of about 600,000 and Surabaya with about 400,000, Java had up to seven cities with a population of 100,000 or more. In Java, the mountains and fields had been developed, as had been the transport facilities

(both railways and motor roads). Batavia and Surabaya, along with Cilacap on the south coast, constituted strategic military ports as well as commercial ports. Surabaya served as the base of the Dutch East Indies fleet, and had been provided with a stronghold. West of Surabaya were the oil fields of Cepu.

2. Celebes

Celebes is 190,000 km² in area (more than twice the size of Hokkaidō) with many mountain ranges and gorges. Celebes produced nickel and also had large reserves of iron ore. Key locations on this island were Menado, Makassar and Kendari.

3. Borneo

The island of Borneo is the third largest island in the world with an area of more than 750,000 km², of which the Dutch territory occupied approximately 540,000 km². Its border with British Borneo consists of a mountain system. From its centre, mountain ranges branch out to the east, the southeast and the southwest. In between these ranges there are plains and large rivers. With an exceedingly sparse population and many regions yet untrodden by man, most of the island consisted of thick jungle and swamp. The island of Tarakan and the Sanga-Sanga area in Dutch Borneo, along with the area of Miri in British Borneo, were oil-producing locations. The oil gained at Tarakan, being of particularly good quality, was highly valued by the Japanese Navy. The oil of the Sanga-Sanga area was transported by an oil pipeline to Balikpapan, where it was shipped off.

4. Timor

The island of Timor is about the same size as Kyūshū. The eastern part and a small enclave on the northern coast of western Timor were Portuguese territory. It was about the same size as Shikoku. In Dutch Timor was the city of Kupang.

Note: Portuguese Timor had a Portuguese colonial government with a civilian governor-general residing in Dili.

5. The Moluccas

Also called the Spice Islands. The city of Ambon on Ambon Island, which had developed of old as a spice trade center, served as the region's center. In the area of Bula in eastern Ceram there was an oil field. The Moluccas had many unexploited places.

6. New Guinea

Being the world's second largest island, it covered an area a little over 800,000 km², of which the Dutch territory extended from longitude 141° east onward to the west, occupying an area of a little more than 390,000 km², which was almost equal to the total area of the main islands of Japan. A central (snow-capped) mountain range like a spinal column linked a series of mountains of 4,000 meters or higher and covered in snow the whole year round. The island had many areas never set foot on by man and consisted of many vast wetlands and dense jungles.

Resources and Industry were in outline as follows:⁽²¹⁾

1. The annual production of oil for 1939 was approximately eight million tons (about twenty times that of Japan). The annual quantity needed by Japan at the time was about five million tons, but Japan was not self-sufficient as regards even 10 percent of that amount. The quantities that the Dutch East Indies had been exporting to Japan as well as the quantities

requested by the Japanese were as previously described. Below is an overview of the production at each location in the Dutch East Indies.

Sumatra	Palembang and surrounding area	3 million tons
	North Aceh area	1 million tons
Borneo	Sanga-Sanga area	1 million tons
	Tarakan	0.7 million tons
Java	Cepu area	1 million tons
Ceram	Bula area	0.1 million tons
New Guinea and others		some amount

The Dutch East Indies oil business was for the most part controlled by American or British capital and there also lay the primary cause which complicated the oil issues.

2. Iron ore was undeveloped [at that time] however, it was said that there were deposits of approximately one billion tons in southeastern Borneo and Celebes.
3. Tin was produced on Bangka, Belitung and Singkep, three islands off the coast of Sumatra. Their annual production was between 30,000 and 40,000 tons. This put them into third place in the world.
4. Bauxite was produced on the island of Bintan with an annual production of approximately 400,000 tons.
5. Nickel was mainly produced in Celebes.
6. Manganese was produced in the neighborhoods of Cilacap and Semarang on Java, in Bengkulu on Sumatra, and the islands of Bintan, Bangka and Belitung. The annual production of these areas together reached 12,000 tons.
7. Other than that, coal (with an annual production of 1.5 million tons), sulfur and tungsten were produced.
8. With an annual production of about 450,000 tons, rubber accounted for about one-third of the total annual world production, making the Dutch East Indies the world number two [rubber producer] after Malaya.
9. The production of quinine, a specific medicine for malaria, accounted for 93 percent of the total world production, and the production of kapok amounted to 78 percent of the total world production. It was also said that the Dutch East Indies was one of the world's three biggest producers of sugar.

As many of these resources were indispensable for the self-sufficiency of Japan, in May 1940, Japan requested from the Dutch a firm commitment to the export to Japan of thirteen items, which consisted of the following products (and their quantities):⁽¹²⁾

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| - oil (1 million tons or more) | - bauxite (200,000 tons or more) |
| - rubber (20,000 tons or more) | - tin (ore as well, 3,000 tons or more) |
| - manganese ore | - nickel ore |
| - wolfram ore | - scrap iron |
| - chromium pig iron | - industrial salt |
| - castor oil | - cinchona bark |
| - molybdenum | |

Administration and Inhabitants

After the Japanese troops had landed in the Dutch East Indies, the operation progressed with striking ease through the spontaneous cooperation of the local inhabitants, and the tenor of the administration of the occupied areas turned out to be different from that in the Philippines and Malaya. The [previous] administration of the Dutch East Indies and its inhabitants, however, was in outline as follows:⁽²¹⁾

In 1602, the Dutch established the East India Company as a chartered company with Ambon serving as its base. In 1618, the East India Company moved to Jakarta and renamed this [city] Batavia. In 1798, the Dutch government disbanded the East India Company and took direct control over the East Indies.

The Dutch East Indies Government-General had its seat in Batavia and consisted of eight departments. Although the director of each department was appointed by the Governor-General, the chiefs of the army and the navy departments were appointed by the Monarch.

Regional administration was divided into Java (including Madura and called the inner territory) and the outer territories, consisting of the remaining areas. Then further division into residencies was undertaken, resulting in Java being divided into seventeen residencies with the exception of the principalities of Solo and Yogyakarta, Sumatra being divided into ten residencies, etc. Each residency was then further divided into sub-residencies [regencies], and a Dutch official was posted at either level.

In the principalities of Solo (capital Surakarta) and Yogya (capital Yogyakarta) the ruler enjoyed a large measure of self-rule. Living in a royal palace and maintaining a private army, he preserved the old traditions and customs from the feudal age; however, concerning matters of administration, the [native] ruler was supposed to accept the advice and supervision of the Dutch resident.

The Dutch government neglected the education of the indigenous population and avoided the appointment of natives [to colonial government service]. After the Russo-Japanese War, movements for independence arose among the indigenous population, but the Dutch Government-General suppressed them.

According to the national population census of 1930, the total population of the Dutch East Indies was approximately 60,730,000, which could be broken down into an indigenous population of approx. 59,140,000, and about 1,230,000 Chinese, 210,000 Dutch, 7,400 Germans, 7,200 Japanese, 2,400 British, 800 Swiss, 600 Americans, and other nationalities.

While the overseas Chinese used their talents as merchants, the Dutch, the British and the Americans were engaged in the large-scale production of agricultural and forestry products for export, as well as in the exploitation of mineral products. As for the indigenous population, most of them were engaged in a feudal type of subsistence farming. Literate indigenous inhabitants formed only five percent of their population.

The Dutch East Indies Military Preparations

Holland essentially was a naval power. As previously explained, its homeland was occupied by Germany in May 1940. The land power of the Dutch East Indies was not very great and, after the occupation of the homeland, it was forced to rely on local reinforcements to strengthen its war potential and on reinforcements from the Americans and the British (Australia) to build up its military preparations.

The intelligence that the [Imperial Japanese] Army General Staff Office had gained by 10 September 1941 was as follows:⁽²³⁾

Strength of the Dutch East Indies Army

Before WW II, its force consisted of an inner territory army of 19,300 men (fifteen infantry battalions, two artillery regiments and others, Europeans accounting for thirty percent), and an outer territory army of 12,000 men (fourteen infantry battalions and others, Europeans accounting for fifteen percent), making a total of 31,300 men. However, at present the inner territory army amounts to 50,000 men (two divisions as its core), the outer territory army 20,000 men (fifteen infantry battalions as its core), reaching a total of 70,000 men, which is a 2.2-times increase in size. At present, preparations are ongoing to consolidate the force, setting 100,000 men [in total] as a goal, however it is very unlikely that this goal will be achieved in this year.
Their disposition is as shown in *Illustration No. 3*.

Strength of the Dutch East Indies Navy

	Cruisers	Destroyers	Submarines	Others
Before the war	2	8	12	21
At present	5	8	12	56

Strength of the Dutch East Indies Air Force

The total number of the aircraft of the army and the navy before the war was about 320 (of which about 150 were front-line aircraft).
However, at present they have about 500 aircraft (of which 300 are front-line aircraft) at their disposal, which means the numbers have approximately been doubled.
Furthermore, there will apparently be another increase of about 150 aircraft in the future.

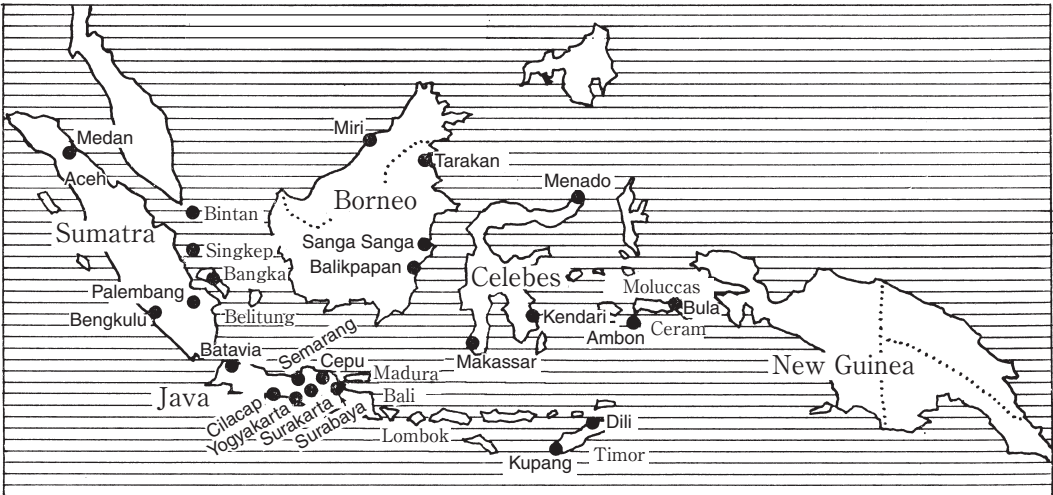


Illustration No. 2 – Topographical Map

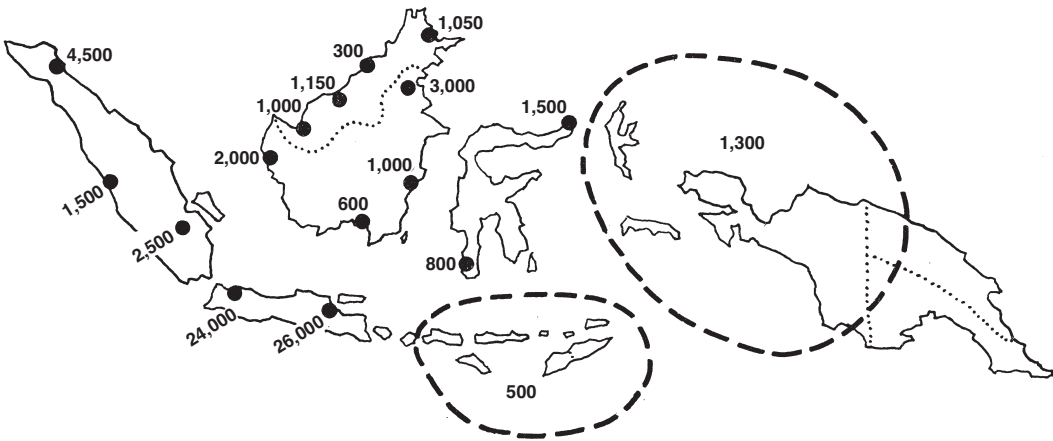


Illustration No. 3—Disposition of the Dutch East Indies Army Strength (Including British Forces in British Borneo). Survey as of 10 September 1941