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THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR INDONESIA (UNCI) IN RESOLUTION OF THE INDONESIA-NETHERLANDS CONFLICT OF 1947-1949

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ABSTRACT

Following the 1945 proclamation of Indonesian independence, unresolved conflict with the Netherlands prompted United Nations Security Council intervention through the Committee of Good Offices and its successor, the United Nations Commission for Indonesia (UNCI). This study examines UNCI's role in resolving the Indonesia-Netherlands conflict (1947-1949) and its impact on the recognition of Indonesian sovereignty, using the multidimensional approach pioneered by Sartono Kartodirdjo. Unlike prior studies treating UNCI as mere chronological backdrop to the Linggarjati, Renville, and Roem-Royen negotiations, this study analyzes UNCI as an institutional actor operating simultaneously across legal, political-diplomatic, security, economic, and social dimensions. The study applies the critical historical method, comprising heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography, drawing on primary sources such as UN Security Council resolutions and contemporary press alongside relevant secondary literature. Findings show that UNCI's effectiveness in facilitating the Roem-Royen Statements and the Round Table Conference resulted not from diplomacy alone but from the convergence of international legal pressure, Cold War political calculation, the Netherlands' postwar economic constraints, and international public opinion. The study concludes that a multidimensional approach offers a more comprehensive and balanced understanding of Indonesia's path to sovereignty than a conventional chronological-narrative approach.

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INTRODUCTION

The proclamation of Indonesian independence on August 17, 1945, was not immediately followed by recognition by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which sought to revive its colonial rule over the former Dutch East Indies after the end of the Japanese occupation (Anthony, 1974). Tensions between the two sides escalated into an armed conflict and diplomatic struggle that historians call the Indonesian National Revolution(Kahin, 1952;

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Reybrouck, 2017). When bilateral negotiations failed to resolve the conflict, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) intervened through the establishment of the Committee of Good Offices or the Three Nations Commission (KTN) on August 25, 1947, with Australia (selected by Indonesia), Belgium (selected by the Netherlands), and the United States as co-mediating members (United Nations, n.d.). The KTN then facilitated the Renville Negotiations, signed on January 17, 1948, but this agreement actually narrowed the effective territory of the Republic of Indonesia through the Van Mook demarcation line (Anthony, 1974).

The Republican leadership that would later negotiate with the Dutch and UNCI including Sutan Sjahrir, Mohammad Hatta, and Mohammad Roem did not emerge from a vacuum, but rather were the product of a longer social transformation, namely the emergence of an indigenous educated class as a result of the Ethical Policy education policy since the early 20th century (Nurhakim et al., 2025). This educated class later became the backbone of the national movement and, in the 1940s, filled key positions in Indonesian independence diplomacy.

The situation worsened after the Dutch launched their Second Military Aggression in December 1948, occupying the capital Yogyakarta and detaining Republican leaders including Sukarno and Hatta (United Nations Security Council, 1949). The KTN was deemed to have failed to prevent the aggression, so the UN Security Council issued Resolution 67 on January 28, 1949, transforming the KTN into the United Nations Commission for Indonesia (UNCI) with a much broader mandate: recommending a cessation of military operations, urging the release of political prisoners, overseeing the return of the Republican government to Yogyakarta, and pushing for a comprehensive settlement leading to the transfer of sovereignty (United Nations Security Council, 1949)

Numerous studies have been conducted on Indonesia's diplomatic struggles during this period, but most focus on specific negotiation events in a narrative-chronological manner, such as the Linggarjati Negotiations (Susilo & Wulansari, 2021), the Renville Negotiations (Ervani et al., 2019), or the roles of diplomatic figures such as Sutan Sjahrir, Mohammad Hatta, and Agus Salim in international forums. In these studies, UNCI is generally presented as a static institutional setting merely a marker of time between events rather than as an object of analysis structurally dissected from various scholarly perspectives. However, as a UN body with members representing conflicting national interests (the United States with Cold War geopolitical interests, Belgium tending to side with the Netherlands, and Australia supporting decolonization), UNCI was an arena for the intersection of many dimensions of interests that were far more complex than simply a single diplomatic mediator.

This gap is what this research attempts to fill by applying a multidimensional approach to historical writing, as pioneered by Sartono Kartodirdjo since his dissertation on the 1888 Banten Peasant Rebellion and later elaborated in his works Thought and Development of Indonesian Historiography (Kartodirdjo, 1982) and Social Science Approaches in Historical Methodology (Kartodirdjo, 1992). This approach emphasizes that historical events should not be reconstructed from only one dimension—usually the political dimension—but must be explored from various dimensions of society simultaneously: politics, law, economics, social, and culture, with the help of concepts and theories from various branches of the social sciences (Kartodirdjo, 1992; Djono, Joebagio, & Abidin, 2020). With this kind of synchronic thinking, historical studies can be more structural, in-depth, and comprehensive than descriptive-narrative historical writing that merely sequences events chronologically.

Based on this description, this study formulates three main problems: first, what is the background to the formation of UNCI as a continuation of KTN; second, what is the role of UNCI in resolving the Indonesia-Netherlands conflict when viewed from various dimensions simultaneously; and third, how does this role impact the process of recognizing Indonesian sovereignty. This study aims to produce a historical reconstruction that not only explains what happened, but also why and through what cross-dimensional mechanisms the conflict was resolved.

METHOD

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This research uses Kuntowijoyo (2018) critical history method: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. In the heuristic stage, the primary sources collected include the UN Security Council resolution on the establishment of the Committee of Good Offices and UNCI, as well as contemporary newspapers traced through https://www.delpher.nl/ and https://trove.nla.gov.au/, namely Blijk op de Hoogte (1949), Canberra Times (1948), Morning Bulletin (1949), and Sydney Morning Herald (1949). Secondary sources include Reid (1974), Kahin (2003), Van Reybrouck (2024), George (1986), Ervani (2019), and Susilo (2021). External criticism ensures the authenticity of documents through official UN databases and the US Office of the Historian, while internal criticism assesses the bias of each source including special caution regarding Blijk op de Hoogte, which, while valuable for understanding how the Netherlands monitored international opinion, remains a military intelligence document, not a neutral report. In the interpretation stage, facts that have passed source criticism are analyzed using a multidimensional approach Kartodirdjo (1992) from five dimensions simultaneously: international law, political-diplomatic, security, economic, and social. These five dimensions are then synthesized in the historiography stage into a coherent analytical narrative about the role of the UNCI, while maintaining objectivity and the traceability of each claim to its source.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Background to the Establishment of UNCI: Convergence of International Legal and Political Pressures

a. Precursor Mechanisms: The Committee of Good Offices and Its Institutional Limits

The formation of the UNCI cannot be understood as a single event, but rather as the culmination of a series of failed previous conflict resolution mechanisms. The Committee of Good Offices established by the UN Security Council on August 25, 1947, initially succeeded in encouraging the birth of the Renville Negotiations (January 17, 1948), but the agreement politically weakened the position of the Republic of Indonesia because it narrowed its de facto sovereign territory through the Van Mook demarcation line (Anthony, 1974). From an international legal dimension, the fundamental weakness of the KTN lies in the limited authority of the institution, which essentially only functions as a mediator (good offices) without the authority to oversee binding implementation.

These findings differ from Anthony (1974) predominantly territorial reading of the Renville Agreement, which frames the settlement's cost mainly as the loss of de facto sovereign territory behind the Van Mook line. The evidence assembled here suggests that the more consequential legacy was institutional rather than territorial: it was the KTN's narrow good-offices mandate, not the lost ground itself, that later justified expanding UNCI's authority under Resolution 67 to include binding oversight of implementation.

b. The Second Dutch Military Aggression and the Path to Resolution 67

The Second Dutch Military Aggression in December 1948, accompanied by the occupation of Yogyakarta and the detention of Republican leaders, significantly changed international political calculations. From a global political perspective, this action occurred at a sensitive moment in the Cold War, when the United States was building an image as a supporter of anti-colonial movements in Asia to contain communist influence (Kahin, 1952). The strong reaction of the international community to this aggression prompted the UN Security Council to issue Resolution 67 on January 28, 1949, which formally changed the institutional status of the KTN to UNCI with much broader authority: recommending the cessation of all military operations, urging the release of political prisoners and the return of Republican officials to Yogyakarta, and overseeing the course of negotiations towards the transfer of sovereignty no later than July 1, 1950 (United Nations Security Council, 1949).

The details of this event are clearly recorded in contemporary news reports. The aggression began at midnight Indonesian time on December 19, 1948, shortly after the Dutch government had issued a Royal

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Decree establishing an Interim Federal Government without the involvement of the Republic; Dutch paratroopers then seized Maguwo airfield and occupied Yogyakarta that afternoon (Canberra Times, December 20, 1948). Sukarno, Hatta, and Sutan Sjahrir were arrested the following day and placed under arrest, while the Committee of Good Offices staff at Kaliurang including representatives of Australia and the United States received special security guarantees from the Dutch (Canberra Times, December 20, 1948). The UN Security Council met in Paris that same day, and Australian Prime Minister Ben Chifley expressed regret at the resumption of fighting after efforts to reach a peaceful settlement (Canberra Times, December 20, 1948). Interestingly, the mechanism that would eventually give rise to the UNCI was not new: press reports for Dutch officers themselves noted that the assignment of the consular corps in Batavia to compile a situation report a prerequisite for the formation of the UNCI replicated the August 1947 precedent, when a similar assignment to consuls gave rise to the Committee of Good Offices (Blijf op de Hoogte, January 8, 1949). This recurring pattern suggests that UN involvement in the Indonesian-Dutch conflict operated through tried-and-tested institutional channels, not emergency improvisation.

c. UNCI's Institutional Composition and the Politics of Member-State Interests

From an institutional perspective, UNCI membership retained the KTN composition Australia, Belgium, and the United States but with the authority to oversee the implementation of binding resolutions (United Nations, n.d.). This composition is important to observe because each member state brought different interests: Australia, which consistently supported the decolonization of Indonesia as part of its foreign policy in the region, the United States, which had a strategic interest in containing the influence of communism in Southeast Asia, and Belgium, which was historically and economically closer to the interests of the Netherlands as a fellow European colonial power. This configuration of conflicting interests made UNCI not merely a neutral instrument of the UN, but an arena where various dimensions of international interests met and mutually influenced the final outcome.

Australia's stance as a member of the UNCI was not passive. Australian Foreign Minister H.V. Evatt openly stated that Dutch military actions were contrary to the UN Charter and the constitution of the Committee of Good Offices, while the Australian delegate to the UN, Colonel W.R. Hodgson, even compared Dutch actions in Java to Hitler's actions in the Netherlands a statement that sparked debate within Australia itself. The Philippine delegate, Carlos Romulo, also praised Australia's stance as the only country that had no hidden interests in the Indonesian issue (The Sydney Morning Herald, January 19, 1949). This firm stance demonstrates that the political-diplomatic dimension of the UNCI cannot be separated from the personality and foreign policy orientation of each member state, not merely the formal mandate of the Security Council.

d. Internal Indonesian Political Dynamics

This complexity stems not only from international parties, but also from the internal political dynamics of the Republic of Indonesia itself. The Republic's position in the UNCI-facilitated negotiations was never entirely unified, as there was ideological tension between the group pursuing diplomacy represented by Sjahrir, Hatta, and Roem and the radical current that rejected compromise with the former colonizers, as reflected in the concept of the Republic formulated by Tan Malaka since 1925 in Naar de Republiek Indonesia, which emphasized popular sovereignty and a struggle without cooperation with colonial powers (Dagang & Birsyada, 2025). This tension was not merely an abstract concept: contemporary reports noted that by the end of December 1948 a de facto dualism of leadership emerged within the remaining Republicans, between the Emergency Government of the Republic of Indonesia in Sumatra led by Sjafroedin Prawiranegara and Tan Malaka's own claim to leadership both of which demanded the full release of Republican leaders and the total withdrawal of Dutch troops without being

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willing to accept the scheme of an interim government under temporary Dutch sovereignty, as the official Republicans had accepted (Blijf op de Hoogte, 8 January, 1949). This domestic political dimension of tension also shaped the Indonesian negotiators' room for maneuver before the UNCI, as any concessions made in the negotiations risked being criticized by non-cooperating groups as a betrayal of the ideals of the revolution.

This finding extends Dagang & Birsyada (2025) account of the ideological tension between the diplomatic and non-cooperating currents within the Republic. Beyond documenting the existence of that tension, the evidence here traces its practical consequence for the negotiations themselves: because any concession UNCI's Indonesian counterparts made could be portrayed by non-cooperating groups as a betrayal of the revolution, the internal political rift functioned as a genuine constraint on the Republic's bargaining room, not merely as a background ideological dispute.

2. The Role of UNCI in Conflict Resolution: A Cross-Dimensional Analysis

a. Political Dimension

The existence of the UNCI provided formal legitimacy for international pressure on the Netherlands. Resolution 67 became the legal basis that forced the Netherlands to cease military operations and paved the way for the return of the Republican government to Yogyakarta (United Nations Security Council, 1949). This legal pressure was reinforced through bilateral diplomatic channels, including a firm stance by the United States, which threatened to cut off Marshall Plan aid to the Netherlands if the aggression continued.

UNCI's most prominent role was seen in facilitating the Roem-Royen Negotiations (April-May 1949) between Mohammad Roem representing the Republic of Indonesia and J.H. van Roijen representing the Netherlands, with Merle Cochran a UNCI member from the United States serving as the primary mediator. The negotiations, which initially reached a deadlock due to sharp differences over ending the guerrilla war, ultimately resulted in an agreement that the Netherlands would return the Republican government to Yogyakarta and release the detained leaders, while the Republic agreed to cease guerrilla activities and participate in the Round Table Conference. This personal mediation role demonstrates that UNCI's effectiveness stemmed not solely from its institutional authority, but also from the capacity of its individual members to bridge diplomatic deadlocks.

In addition to UNCI's role as the official UN channel, diplomatic pressure also emerged from parallel channels of Asian regional solidarity. On January 2023, 1949, the Asia Conference in New Delhi, initiated by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and attended by fifteen countries with full voting rights including Australia recommended to the Security Council that the Netherlands transfer all authority over Indonesia to the United States of Indonesia by January 1, 1950, along with demands for the immediate release of the Republic's leaders, the withdrawal of Dutch troops to the December 18, 1948, line by March 15, 1949, and the establishment of an interim government (The Morning Bulletin, January 24, 1949). The conference resolution explicitly called the Dutch military action a flagrant violation of the UN Charter The Morning Bulletin, January 24, 1949 although this more stringent deadline was ultimately not fully adopted, as Resolution 67 set a more lenient deadline of July 1, 1950. Notably, just six days after the New Delhi recommendation was submitted, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 67, establishing the UNCI with a mandate substantially in line with the conference's demands. This proximity indicates that the formation of the UNCI was not merely the result of internal dynamics within the Security Council, but also a convergence with the pressures of regional solidarity among newly independent Asian states a dimension rarely addressed in conventional studies of the resolution of the Indonesian-Dutch conflict.

Taken together, these episodes extend Kahin (1952) classic account of the United Nations' intervention in the Indonesian revolution. Kahin (1952) treats that intervention chiefly as a single political-

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diplomatic process unfolding through the Security Council. The evidence reviewed in this section shows that the political dimension itself was not monolithic: formal Security Council pressure, bilateral United States leverage over Marshall Plan aid, personal mediation by an individual UNCI member, and parallel regional diplomacy through the Asia Conference operated as distinct, only loosely coordinated channels that happened to converge on the same outcome. Disaggregating the political dimension in this way offers a more fine-grained picture than a single-channel diplomatic narrative can provide.

b. Security Dimension

At the operational level, the UNCI played a direct role in overseeing the implementation of the ceasefire on the ground. The evacuation of Yogyakarta by Dutch troops, which began on June 2, 1949, took place under the direct supervision of the UNCI, ensuring that the withdrawal did not involve provocations that could derail the peace process. This security oversight function continued until the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in early August 1949, which was also carried out under UNCI supervision. The significance of this security dimension is clearly evident in the case of Fort Vredeburg in Yogyakarta, which during the Second Dutch Military Aggression served as the headquarters of the Informatie Voor Geheimen the Dutch military intelligence service and became one of the main targets of the General Offensive of March 1, 1949, before finally being returned to the Indonesian Armed Forces following the withdrawal of Dutch troops from Yogyakarta following the Roem-Royen agreement (Azriel Satria Mukti & Muhammad Iqbal Birsyada, 2024). This case demonstrates that UNCI's security supervision at the policy level was closely intertwined with the reality of the struggle for defense points on the ground.

This finding extends Azriel Satria Mukti & Muhammad Iqbal Birsyada (2024) case study of Fort Vredeburg by linking a single defense point's wartime and post-war history to the broader institutional oversight function of UNCI. Read together, the two levels of evidence indicate that UNCI's security-monitoring role was not confined to abstract policy oversight: it was anchored in, and validated by, the concrete transfer of specific defended sites on the ground.

c. Economic Dimension

Although UNCI did not act as a direct negotiator on economic issues, the comprehensive framework it promoted paved the way for crucial economic negotiations at the Round Table Conference, particularly regarding debt transfer. The Indonesian delegation, led by Mohammad Hatta, had to negotiate the Dutch demands, which initially required the recognition of substantial foreign and domestic debts, before finally agreeing to a lower figure than the Dutch initial demand. This economic dimension demonstrates that the resolution of the political-military conflict could not be separated from the long-term fiscal consequences for the newly independent nation.

This fiscal settlement was already contested well before it took its final form, and Indonesia's pursuit of economic standing extended beyond the bilateral relationship with the Netherlands. As early as December 1948, before the Second Dutch Military Aggression, Indonesia and Vietnam applied for associate membership of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East at a conference in Lapstone, New South Wales; the Netherlands delegate moved to postpone debate on the Indonesian application, and delegates expected it to be deferred again pending objections from the Soviet delegation (Daily Mirror, December 1, 1948). This early, UNCI-independent bid for recognition in a UN economic body suggests that Indonesia's international economic diplomacy was a parallel track rather than solely a by-product of UNCI's mediation. The debt settlement itself also drew scrutiny within the Netherlands: in its preliminary report on the 1949 Bill for Credit Provision to Indonesia, the Dutch Tweede Kamer objected that the Indonesian guilder was pegged at the same nominal value as the Dutch guilder even though its purchasing power was three to four times lower, calling the exchange rate "fictitious" and warning that

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remitting funds from Indonesia to the Netherlands at face value made normal payment transactions unsustainable; the same report also asked the government to disclose a separate tin agreement concluded with Indonesia and to provide a full accounting of the country's domestic and foreign state debt (Trouw, November 12, 1949). This scrutiny indicates that the economic dimension UNCI helped set in motion was contested in Dutch domestic politics on terms that went beyond what the RTC negotiations alone determined.

Australian press coverage corroborates the RTC's perceived economic significance for parties beyond the negotiating table. The Cairns Post's editorial on the settlement predicted that "Australia should benefit considerably as the result of the agreement," citing the prospect of reopened trade and regional political stability, and suggested that a stable Indonesian administration could turn "these rich island areas into an important producing country, capable of contributing much to the benefit of world trade" (The Cairns Post, November 7, 1949). The same editorial, however, immediately qualified this optimism: trade relations between the two countries remained "conditioned only by very general principles and promises," and Indonesian nationalism, if left unchecked, was framed as a potential future threat to Australia rather than only an opportunity. This ambivalence indicates that Australia's economic stake in UNCI's outcomes was not confined to the labor solidarity documented in the social dimension below; it also shaped official and editorial calculations of trade and regional stability, calculations that remained hedged rather than unreservedly favorable.

The fiscal settlement's downstream consequences are documented concretely in the Indonesian press four years after the RTC. In September 1953, the Medan-based Nieuwsblad voor Sumatra reported that Indonesia's foreign exchange reserves had fallen from Rp 6,126 million at the end of 1951 to Rp 2,699 million by July 1953, prompting senior Dutch officials to travel to Djakarta to discuss the RTC's financial-economic agreement, which entitled Indonesia to restrict transfer possibilities for Dutch nationals and companies if its foreign exchange position deteriorated, on condition that this be first discussed between representatives of both governments (Het Nieuwsblad voor Sumatra, September 10, 1953). The same report noted that foreign enterprises still generated more than half of Indonesia's export earnings, leaving the Indonesian government caught in what the paper called a dilemma: restricting transfers risked driving out the foreign capital sustaining the state's foreign exchange position, while leaving transfers unrestricted preserved the colonial-era investment arrangements that domestic critics wanted reversed. This 1953 evidence substantiates, with a concrete case, the claim developed in Section 3 that UNCI's economic settlement continued to shape Indonesia's fiscal policy choices well beyond the formal transfer of sovereignty.

d. Social Dimension

The conflict resolution process was also influenced by the pressure of international public opinion, which operated outside official diplomatic channels. The solidarity of Australian dockworkers who refused to load ships bound for Indonesia from 1945 to 1949 strengthened Indonesia's bargaining position in the UN forum and influenced the official stance of the Australian government as a member of the UNCI (George, 1986). This threat of boycott was not just talk: as soon as the Second Military Aggression broke out, the Executive Board of the Federal Waterside Workers' Federation in Sydney immediately scheduled a meeting to discuss the possibility of a further boycott of Dutch ships (Canberra Times, December 20, 1948), and by the end of December 1948 the press in Singapore reported that Australian dockworkers had indeed refused to work on Dutch ships or any other vessels bound for Indonesian ports (Blijf op de Hoogte, January 8, 1949). This pressure of public opinion also resonated far beyond Australia: the press in India, Malaya, China, and even the United States which was itself compiled and closely monitored by the Dutch

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military information service for KNIL/KL officers carried widespread condemnation of the military aggression as a violation of the UN Charter and the Dutch promise to the Committee of Good Offices (Blijf op de Hoogte, January 8, 1949). The fact that the Dutch military itself felt the need to gather and scrutinize such a torrent of international opinion is a strong indication of how significant the socio-public opinion dimension was in the calculations of policymakers at that time.

In addition to external pressure, the social dimension also operated domestically: in Yogyakarta, Muhammadiyah clerics, along with clerics from NU and MIAI, formed Islamic militias such as Hisbullah, Sabilillah, and Askar Perang Sabil (APS), which provided physical, ideological, and spiritual training to fighters in defense of independence (Birsyada, 2022). This kind of socio-religious mobilization ran parallel to the diplomatic process facilitated by UNCI, demonstrating that conflict resolution is not solely the result of roundtable negotiations, but is also underpinned by social resilience at the grassroots level. This social dimension is often overlooked in studies that focus solely on the formal political-diplomatic dimension, even though it empirically contributes to shaping the context in which UNCI operates.

These findings corroborate and extend George (1986) account of Australian labor solidarity with the Indonesian revolution. Where George (1986) documents the existence of dockworker sympathy for Indonesian independence, the contemporary press evidence assembled here the Federal Waterside Workers' Federation's emergency meeting on the very day the aggression began, and Singapore press reports of an operative boycott by the end of December 1948 establishes a more precise operational timeline linking Dutch military action to Australian labor response. Similarly, this finding extends Birsyada (2022) account of Muhammadiyah, NU, and MIAI clerics' role in forming Hisbullah, Sabilillah, and APS by situating that grassroots religious mobilization within the same social dimension as international dockworker solidarity, showing that domestic and international social pressure operated as complementary, not separate, forces on the trajectory of the conflict.

3. The Impact of UNCI's Role on the Recognition of Indonesian Sovereignty

The series of processes facilitated by UNCI culminated in the Round Table Conference (RTC) in The Hague from August 23 to November 2, 1949. It was attended by delegates from the Republic of Indonesia, the Netherlands, and the Federal Overleg (BFO), representing the federal states formed by the Netherlands. The RTC agreed to transfer sovereignty from the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United States of Indonesia (RIS), which was officially implemented on December 27, 1949. From an international legal perspective, this moment marked the de jure recognition of Indonesian sovereignty by the Netherlands, while also formally ending Dutch colonial claims over the former Dutch East Indies except for the territory of West Irian, whose settlement was postponed.

From the domestic political dimension, the recognition of sovereignty initially took the form of the RIS federal state consisting of sixteen states, before finally these states rejoined into the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) on August 17, 1950. This dynamic shows that the impact of UNCI's role did not stop at the transfer of sovereignty alone, but also influenced the form and structure of the Indonesian state system in the early years of its independence. From the international relations dimension, the recognition of sovereignty also paved the way for Indonesia's acceptance as the 60th member of the UN in 1950, which further strengthened Indonesia's diplomatic position on the international stage.

From an economic perspective, the Round Table Conference (RTC) agreement left a fiscal burden in the form of the transfer of a portion of the Dutch colonial debt to Indonesia, a consequence that burdened the state budget in the following decades and would later become a source of tension in post-independence relations between Indonesia and the Netherlands. From a social perspective, the release of previously

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detained Republican leaders and their return to the seat of government restored the socio-political legitimacy of the national leadership in the eyes of the Indonesian people and the international community.

By placing these findings side by side, it becomes clear that the UNCI's success in pushing for recognition of Indonesian sovereignty was not the result of a one-dimensional diplomatic exercise alone, but rather the convergence of binding international legal pressures, Cold War political calculations favorable to Indonesia, postwar Dutch domestic economic and political constraints, pressures from international public opinion, and the personal mediation capacities of actors within the commission itself. A multidimensional approach thus provides a more complete explanation than conventional narratives that tend to simplify the process as a series of diplomatic negotiations.

This finding extends Kahin (1952) predominantly political-diplomatic narrative of the revolution's conclusion by foregrounding the structural and fiscal legacies that narrative leaves largely in the background: the transformation of the unitary Republic into the sixteen-state RIS federation and its subsequent reconsolidation into the NKRI by August 1950, and the transfer of a portion of the Dutch colonial debt that would burden Indonesia's state budget for decades. These downstream consequences indicate that UNCI's impact did not end with the formal transfer of sovereignty in December 1949, but continued to shape Indonesia's state-building trajectory well beyond that date.

4. Theoretical Implications: UNCI through the Lenses of Mediation, Peacebuilding, and International Institutions

The empirical findings presented above are not only a chronological record; they also speak to three strands of international-relations theory that are rarely brought together in historiographical studies of the Indonesian-Dutch conflict: mediation theory, peacebuilding theory, and the theory of international institutions. Reading UNCI's role through these three lenses helps explain why a body with such limited formal enforcement power was nevertheless able to produce a binding outcome, and it strengthens the theoretical, rather than purely narrative, contribution of the present analysis.

a. UNCI as International Mediator: A Mediation-Theory Reading

Mediation theory offers a useful vocabulary for distinguishing the different roles UNCI played across the episodes examined above. Touval and Zartman (1985) and Bercovitch (2009) distinguish three broad mediator strategies along a continuum of intervention: communication-facilitation, in which a mediator merely opens and maintains channels between parties; formulation, in which the mediator actively shapes the agenda and proposes settlement terms; and manipulation, or directive mediation, in which the mediator uses its own leverage incentives or the threat of costs to move the parties toward agreement. UNCI's routine oversight of the Yogyakarta evacuation and the ceasefire corresponds to the lighter, formulation end of this continuum: the commission structured the process and monitored compliance without altering the parties' underlying incentives. Merle Cochran's mediation of the Roem-Royen negotiations, by contrast, moved toward the directive end of the spectrum: Cochran was not simply a channel for communication but a broker whose intervention was backed by the credible threat that the United States would suspend Marshall Plan assistance to the Netherlands. This escalation from facilitation to manipulation across the episode helps explain why the Roem-Royen talks succeeded where the more purely facilitative KTN mandate had earlier failed to produce a durable settlement.

b. Eacebuilding through Multiple Tracks: Situating UNCI within Multi-Track Diplomacy

The cross-dimensional analysis in Section 2 also maps onto the multi-track diplomacy framework developed by Diamond and McDonald (1996) and formalized in Lederach's (1997) peacebuilding pyramid, which distinguishes Track I diplomacy conducted by official, top-level actors from Track II activity by non-

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governmental and professional intermediaries, and Track III grassroots mobilization by ordinary communities. UNCI's Security Council mandate and its formal oversight of the Roem-Royen negotiations and the Round Table Conference constitute textbook Track I diplomacy. The Asia Conference convened by Nehru in New Delhi occupied an intermediate position: official in form, since it issued a resolution addressed directly to the Security Council, yet operating outside UNCI's own institutional channel illustrating how a Track I process can be reinforced by a parallel, quasi-official track running alongside it. The Australian dockworkers' boycott and the wider current of international public opinion correspond to Track II activity: non-state pressure that nonetheless shaped an official government's negotiating position within UNCI. The domestic mobilization of Islamic militias in Yogyakarta, finally, represents Track III activity in Lederach's (1997) sense: grassroots mobilization that sustained the conditions for negotiation without itself appearing at the negotiating table. Viewed this way, the multidimensionality that is this study's central empirical claim is not merely descriptive richness; it is evidence that the resolution of the Indonesian-Dutch conflict depended on the interaction of all three tracks simultaneously, not on Track I diplomacy alone.

c. UNCI as International Institution: A Neoliberal-Institutionalist Reading

Finally, the institutional trajectory traced in Section 1 from the KTN's narrow good-offices mandate to UNCI's binding oversight authority under Resolution 67 is best explained by neoliberal institutionalist theory. Krasner (1983) defines international regimes as the principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge, and Keohane (1984) argues that such institutions matter because they reduce transaction costs, supply information, and, critically, make commitments more credible by allowing third parties to monitor compliance. The KTN's good-offices function could facilitate communication but could not credibly monitor Dutch compliance with any settlement, which helps explain why the Renville Agreement's territorial concessions proved so fragile. UNCI's expanded mandate directly addressed this institutional gap: its supervision of the Yogyakarta evacuation and the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement functioned as a monitoring mechanism in the Keohanean sense, raising the reputational cost of Dutch non-compliance and thereby making the eventual transfer of sovereignty a more credible commitment than anything the KTN could have secured. Institutionalist theory therefore supplies a structural explanation for a pattern the narrative evidence already suggests: that the decisive factor separating UNCI's success from the KTN's earlier failure was not primarily a shift in the underlying balance of political power, but a change in institutional design.

Taken together, these three theoretical lenses do more than redescribe the empirical findings in academic language: they indicate that UNCI's effectiveness rested on a specific combination of directive mediation capacity, multi-track reinforcement, and credible institutional monitoring, a combination that conventional narrative-only accounts of the Indonesian-Dutch conflict have not fully theorized. This conceptual reading is what allows the present study's multidimensional empirical analysis to travel beyond the Indonesian case, offering a template for examining other UN-supervised transitions from colonial or contested sovereignty.

CONCLUSION

This study's cross-dimensional analysis shows that UNCI's effectiveness in resolving the IndonesianDutch conflict rested on the convergence of institutional, political, security, economic, and social pressures rather than on diplomacy alone. Institutionally, UNCI's binding oversight authority under Resolution 67 corrected the KTN's earlier good-offices weakness. Politically, formal Security Council pressure combined with bilateral U.S. leverage, Cochran's personal mediation, and parallel Asian regional diplomacy through the New Delhi Asia Conference. At the security

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level, UNCI's direct oversight of the Yogyakarta evacuation and ceasefire was anchored in concrete cases such as Fort Vredeburg. Economically, the debt settlement UNCI enabled proved contested in both Dutch and Indonesian domestic politics and carried fiscal consequences that persisted, as 1953 evidence shows, well beyond the formal transfer of sovereignty. Socially, international public opinion and Indonesian grassroots religious mobilization operated as forces complementary to, not separate from, formal negotiation.

The principal contribution of this study is twofold. Empirically, it disaggregates what earlier historiography (e.g., Kahin, 1952) treats as a single political-diplomatic process into distinct, only loosely coordinated channels, supported by primary press sources drawn from Australian, Dutch, and Indonesian archives that have rarely been triangulated in prior accounts of UNCI. Theoretically, the study moves beyond narrative description by reading these empirical patterns through three established international-relations frameworks mediation theory, multi-track peacebuilding, and neoliberal institutionalism showing that UNCI's success depended on a specific combination of directive mediation capacity, multi-track reinforcement, and credible institutional monitoring that conventional accounts of the Indonesian-Dutch conflict have not fully theorized.

These findings carry implications beyond the Indonesian case. Theoretically, the three-lens framework developed here offers a template for analyzing other UN-supervised transitions from colonial or contested sovereignty, where formally weak international bodies nonetheless produce binding outcomes. Empirically, the study demonstrates the value of triangulating multi-country press archives (Trove, Delpher) with existing historiography to recover the social and economic dimensions of diplomatic processes that conventional politicalmilitary narratives tend to overlook. Practically, the analysis suggests that contemporary international mediation efforts facing similarly asymmetric enforcement conditions may benefit from deliberately combining directive leverage, multi-track engagement with non-state actors, and credible monitoring mechanisms, rather than relying on formal diplomatic authority alone. Future research could extend this framework comparatively to other cases of UN-supervised decolonization.

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