

Strategic Diplomacy in the 1960 Karel Doorman Incident: How Economic and Reputational Concerns Shaped Japan's Choices

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Abstract:

Although Japan initially declared neutrality in the West Irian dispute between the Netherlands and Indonesia, it was inadvertently drawn into the conflict when the Dutch government requested permission for the Karel Doorman aircraft carrier, carrying military personnel to West Irian, to stop in Yokohama in 1960 to refuel and celebrate friendly relations between Japan and the Netherlands. Japan initially granted permission but later revoked it. This shift in policy was likely due to what this study refers to as the “Indonesia Factor,” referring to pressures exerted by Indonesia, including the potential economic consequences Japan would face if its trade relationship with Indonesia deteriorated. However, this study argues that the economic dimension alone does not fully explain Japan's decision. Using historical research methods and a process-tracing approach, this study demonstrates that diplomatic and reputational concerns among Asian and African nations also played a significant role in shaping the outcomes. Internal deliberations within Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs reflected growing concerns that Indonesia's vocal anti-colonial stance could influence the perceptions of other postcolonial states, thereby damaging Japan's international image and that of its Western allies amid Cold War tensions. Furthermore, this diplomatic consideration aligned with the broader Cold War strategy of the United States, which sought to prevent Indonesia from moving closer to the communist bloc by encouraging Japan to fill the diplomatic and economic void left by the departing Dutch.

Keywords: *West Irian conflict, Karel Doorman aircraft carrier, Japan-Indonesia relations, Japan-Netherlands relations, the Cold War, decolonization*

1. Introduction

(1) Background of the Karel Doorman Incident: West Irian Dispute

Indonesia proclaimed its independence from Dutch colonization in August 1945. The independence declaration of Indonesia was basically carried out during the brief period of Japanese

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military administration by taking advantage of the defeat of Japan in the Second World War and the vacancy of the Dutch colonial government in Indonesia, which had previously been defeated by Japan during the Pacific War. As a result, the Netherlands did not acknowledge Indonesia's declaration of independence or its sovereignty. Thus, from 1945 to 1949, the Netherlands continued its attempts to reclaim Indonesian territory by launching military aggressions. Due to international pressure and the UN's mediation, as well as the internal economic and military crisis that it had to face, the Netherlands finally agreed to acknowledge Indonesia's sovereignty in 1949 by signing the Dutch-Indonesian Roundtable Conference Agreement on November 2, 1949, and establishing the Netherlands-Indonesian Union to resolve the situation.

Although the Netherlands finally acknowledged Indonesia's sovereignty over most of its territory during the Roundtable Conference, it had no intention of allowing the newly established Indonesian government to take control over West Irian.¹ Nonetheless, during the same conference in 1949, the Netherlands committed to deciding the fate of West Irian, including the "acknowledgement" of its sovereignty within one year. However, the Netherlands' follow-up regarding the status of West Irian never happened. In many Indonesian historical narrations,² the Netherlands, which obviously expected that West Irian would become a part of its sovereign territory, was often considered as having no intention of fulfilling the commitment and wanted to claim the area for itself, while Indonesia wanted the area to be a part of its territory. As a result, the conflict between the two countries over West Irian was prolonged until around 1963.³

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- 1 In this research, "West Irian" refers to today's (2025) six Indonesian provinces located in the easternmost area of the country, namely Papua Province, Papua Barat Province, Papua Tengah Province, Papua Pegunungan Province, Papua Selatan Province, and Papua Barat Daya Province. Apart from its complex history, the naming of the area was also historically complicated. During the Dutch colonial era, the area was called "Dutch New Guinea" or "Netherlands New Guinea." During the conflict with Indonesia from 1949 to 1969, the Netherlands still used the term "Dutch New Guinea" while Indonesia used "Irian Barat" or translated it as "West Irian." The term "Irian Barat" lasted until the Suharto administration changed the official name to "Irian Jaya Province." During the reformation era, President Abdurrahman Wahid changed it to "Papua Province" in January 2000 (Siswanto 2020, xi). According to the current government of Indonesia, due to the vastness of the area and the need to accelerate development, improve public services, and enhance the welfare of the community, the province was expanded into six provinces as it is today. Moreover, it is also important to note that "Papua" itself also refers to an island with a total area of approximately 786,000 square kilometers. The part that is within the territory of Indonesia is 418,707.7 square kilometers in the west, while the remaining eastern territory belongs to Papua New Guinea (Teniwut 2023).
 - 2 For example, Siswanto (2020, 22) argued that "[...] from a pragmatic standpoint, the Round Table Conference of 1949 was manipulated by the Netherlands to obtain tangible benefits. The Netherlands set the surrender of West Irian as the price Indonesia had to pay for that sovereignty transfer." Please see other similar Indonesian narrations in Lopa (1962), Hadinoto et al. (1986), and Subandrio (2001).
 - 3 The resolution of this conflict began when the United States transitioned from the Eisenhower administration—which maintained a passive neutral stance—to the Kennedy administration, which actively mediated between Indonesia and the Netherlands. During the West Irian conflict, Sukarno actively sought assistance from the communist bloc, particularly for arms supplies. In short, the shift in US policy under Kennedy was mainly driven by concerns that communist influence would spread if the West Irian conflict were allowed to drag on (Siswanto 2020, 12, 64). The aftermath of the West Irian conflict saw the territory placed under United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) from October 1962 to May 1963, marking the first time the UN directly administered a territory. Following this period, West Irian was officially transferred to Indonesia under the terms of the New York Agreement of 1962, with a promise of a future referendum on self-determination, which was

The Japanese government had declared its neutrality regarding this West Irian conflict (Nishihara 1976, 158). We can see Japan's neutral stance in some examples. First, Japan implied its neutrality during the 12th session of the UN General Assembly in 1957 when its representative refrained from co-signing the memorandum with the words "West Irian"⁴ because that would imply legal recognition of Indonesia's sovereignty over the region and would be unacceptable to the Netherlands.⁵ Second, Vice-Minister Ryūji Takeuchi told the press on February 19, 1962, that the "Japanese Government took a neutral stand on the Dutch-Indonesian dispute over West Irian." (The Japan Times 1962). However, in reality, this was not the case at all since Japan was inadvertently pulled into a whirlpool of a clash between two countries, namely the Karel Doorman and KLM incidents from 1960 to 1962, forcing the country to navigate between supporting Indonesia or the Netherlands.

In particular, this study focuses only on the pivotal Karel Doorman incident of 1960. The Karel Doorman issue was rooted in the prolonged and unresolved West Irian conflict, which can be explained as follows: In the year following the Roundtable Agreement, from March to April 1950, the Indonesian and Dutch governments agreed to follow up on the issue by establishing the Committee of New Guinea. However, the Netherlands was reluctant to acknowledge West Irian's sovereignty and refused to cede it as Indonesian territory. Nevertheless, Indonesia insisted on acquiring West Irian. No agreement was reached during this negotiation (Hadinoto et al. 1986, 85). In December of the same year, another Indonesian delegation was deployed to The Hague to discuss the issue. The Netherlands proposed that West Irian be transferred to the Netherlands-Indonesian Union with de facto control, as well as insisting that the administration of the territory remained in the hands of the Netherlands. However, talks at The Hague failed to resolve the question of Dutch New Guinea's final status as Indonesia refused the Dutch proposal (Saltford 2003, xvi). The refusal from Indonesia was seemingly based on the *uti possidetis* principle, which asserts that the territorial boundaries of a newly independent state must follow the boundaries that existed at the time as part of a previously occupied colony or territory. In this context, West Irian was one of the Dutch-occupied colonies that should supposedly be "returned" to Indonesia, just like other Dutch Indies' territories.

In January 1952, the Netherlands decided to amend its constitution and include Dutch New Guinea as a part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Two years later, the Netherlands declared its unwillingness to negotiate the West Irian dispute with Indonesia any further. Following these futile negotiations, starting from 1954, Indonesia began to shift its strategy from bilateral talks with the Netherlands to multilateral diplomacy by bringing the conflict to the United Nations General Assembly in the hope that the dispute could be resolved (Siswanto 2020, 2). It is noted that there were four annual General Assemblies⁶ undertaken by Indonesia from 1954 to 1957 to acquire international support from the international community; however, these diplomatic attempts through the United Nations were also fruitless. From 1957, Indonesia stopped advocating for the West Irian issue through the UN.

eventually conducted in 1969 as the "Act of Free Choice."

4 During the conflict, the name "West Irian" was used by Indonesia, while "Dutch New Guinea" was used by the Netherlands to refer to the region.

5 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Japanese Diplomatic Bluebook 1958.

6 The UN General Assembly sessions that were utilized by Indonesia as a platform to seek international support included the 9th Session in 1954, the 10th Session in 1955, the 11th Session in 1956, and the 12th Session in 1957. Indonesia failed to acquire international support because the voting at the United Nations never reached the required quorum, even though a draft resolution could become a UN resolution if supported by the majority vote of three-quarters of the UN member states present and voting (Siswanto 2020, 36).

Seeing that attempts through bilateral and multilateral diplomacy had failed, the Indonesian government decided to take more aggressive measures. In 1956, Indonesia canceled the Roundtable Conference Agreement and unilaterally dissolved the Netherlands-Indonesia Union (Hadinoto et al. 1986, 94). Subsequently, President Sukarno began seeking support from other countries by approaching the United States, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Egypt. Sukarno continued his aggressive measures by gradually taking over and nationalizing the Netherlands' assets in Indonesia from 1957 to 1959 (Siswanto 2020, 34–35). As a result, relations between the two countries deteriorated further, and tensions between them unavoidably increased.

In response, the Netherlands approached its allies seeking support. However, it was becoming acutely worried, particularly as allied military support, especially from the United States, was by no means guaranteed (Penders 2002, 330).⁷ Thus, as an answer to Sukarno's offensive measures, as well as to strengthen the defense of West Irian during the conflict, on March 25, 1960, the Dutch Government announced the dispatch of the aircraft carrier Karel Doorman to West Irian. The Karel Doorman, the Netherlands' 18,000-ton aircraft carrier, was escorted by two destroyers and a merchant tanker.⁸

The deployment of the Karel Doorman marks the beginning of Japan's entanglement in the conflict between the two nations. This was because, on June 3, 1960, the Netherlands sent an official note to the Japanese Foreign Minister, Aichirō Fujiyama, and later to Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi regarding their request for the aircraft carrier Karel Doorman to visit Yokohama for refueling and “on a goodwill mission,” which was to celebrate the 350 years of friendship between Japan and the Netherlands (Shimizu 1960). This request posed a dilemma for neutral Japan as the “friendly” visit would happen during the fleet's West Irian mission, which inadvertently brought Japan into the West Irian dispute. For Japan, granting permission risked offending Indonesia, but there was no justifiable reason for refusing the Dutch request. However, after long consideration among decision-makers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on August 8, 1960, Japan eventually approved the Karel Doorman's visit.

Following Japan's approval of the Karel Doorman's visit, Indonesia's protests grew exponentially, which the author calls the “Indonesia Factor.” To define it precisely, the term is used to describe a series of actions taken by Indonesia to prevent the Karel Doorman aircraft carrier from visiting Yokohama Port, Japan. These actions included both governmental diplomatic initiatives and widespread non-governmental protests. Most of these actions took place after August 8, 1960, when the Japanese government initially permitted the visit of the Karel Doorman, which was scheduled to

7 As noted by Robert McMahon (1981, 306–307) in Yashiro (2020, 48), the United States viewed colonialism as an obstacle to free trade, which not only harmed American commercial interests but also threatened the liberal international order. Consequently, the United States sought to prevent the spread of communism by promoting decolonization and enhancing Indonesia's economic independence while maintaining the influence of the Western bloc in Southeast Asia. The United States pressured the Netherlands to accept Indonesian independence and hoped that the decolonization process would proceed gradually. Although it aimed to maintain relations with the Netherlands as a fellow member of the Western bloc, the United States tended to align itself with the logic of the Southeast Asian Cold War in its dealings with Indonesia.

8 The aircraft carrier set off, accompanied by 2 destroyers and a tanker from the Netherlands to Biak Island in West Irian on May 31, 1960. *The Japan Times* reported that the Netherlands' only aircraft carrier had left on a seven-month “flag-showing trip” to the Far East, and the warships were expected to arrive at the Dutch New Guinea port of Hollandia (now Jayapura) after passing through the Australian port of Fremantle (The Japan Times 1960a).

visit Yokohama from September 8 to 12, 1960. Following the “Indonesia Factor,” Japan revoked its decision and cancelled permission for the visit on September 3. This final decision of Japan prevented the Karel Doorman from visiting Yokohama and appeared to grant “victory” to the Indonesians.

In fact, *The Japan Times*, for instance, reports that Japan decided to revoke its approval for the Dutch warship’s visit due to concerns that its arrival might trigger a crisis with Indonesia, potentially leading to a breakdown in diplomatic relations. In a different article, the newspaper states that according to informed sources, the Japanese Government had decided to revoke its earlier permission for the Karel Doorman to visit Yokohama and asked the Netherlands to “postpone” it until an unspecified time, presumably in view of the unexpectedly strong objections raised by Indonesia, the “Indonesia Factor.” Furthermore, at a press conference, Japan’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zentarō Kosaka, said that the “postponement” of the Dutch visit is inevitable. He further stated that Japan “couldn’t bear to lose an Asian friend, Indonesia, in exchange for the visit of an aircraft carrier.” After the meeting, Kosaka informed the press that the decision was made in response to the Indonesian government’s reaction. The decision, which was finalized after discussions with top Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials and approved by Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda, was communicated to Indonesian Ambassador Bambang Sugeng by Yūjirō Iseki of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ Asian Affairs Bureau.⁹ Whether the “Indonesia Factor” alone was strong enough to influence Japan’s decision, in the absence of underlying issues, remains open to scrutiny.

(2) Previous Studies and Research Gap

The West Irian conflict has been a topic of discussion in various academic circles. In Indonesia, the issue of the West Irian conflict is one of the major subjects taught in Indonesian history education in middle and high school, demonstrating its importance in Indonesia’s history. Although presumably there might be missing generations who did not learn West Irian history at school due to several shifts in new curricula during the mid-2010s, most Indonesians are aware of the West Irian conflict between Indonesia and the Netherlands. As a school subject, the history of the West Irian conflict is often depicted as the “struggle for the liberation of West Irian” or the “struggle to seize West Irian.”

Various studies and researches about the West Irian conflict were also conducted by numerous scholars encompassing a wide range of themes. Studies portraying the conflict from Indonesia’s perspective can be found in studies by Lopa (1962), Hadinoto et al. (1986 and 1988), Subandrio (2001), Siswanto (2020), Mulyadi and Risman (2020), Marshanda (2024), and Nurhikmi et al. (2020). It is not surprising that these studies highlight topics such as Indonesia’s patriotic attempts, both at the diplomatic table and on the battlefield, as well as its promotion of Indonesia’s point of view at each stage of the conflict, such as its strong nationalism in opposition to Dutch colonialism. In contrast, non-Indonesian researchers tend to discuss much broader themes from a non-Indonesian perspective. A common topic that is widely discussed is peace lobbies and attempts to finally settle the conflict. For example, studies by Bone (1958) and Penders (2002) elaborate on the US and UN/UNTEA mediation during the last stage of conflict settlement in 1963–1964. We can also find studies from other perspectives which emphasize the aspiration of West Irian’s people, as described by Webster (2013) and Kluge (2019).

9 In the *Asahi Shimbun*, the Japanese government specifically called pressure from Indonesia “*Shin-jitai*,” which is literally translated as “new situations.” For further details, please also refer to *The Japan Times* (1960e) and *Asahi Shimbun* (1960b).

Despite numerous studies on the conflict being conducted, research on Japan's entanglement in the West Irian conflict remains exceedingly rare. At present, there are only four studies that specifically address Japan's entanglement in the Karel Doorman incident during the West Irian conflict in 1960. First, in his book "The Japanese and Sukarno's Indonesia: Tokyo-Jakarta Relations 1951–1966," Nishihara (1976) elaborates on the relationship between Japan and Indonesia during the period from 1951 to 1966, including a brief sub-chapter on the Karel Doorman incident. In this pioneering study on the issue, Nishihara delivers the chronological details of the incident with adequate clarity. One of the most important points is that Japan tried to maintain a neutral and fair position when giving permission for the Karel Doorman's visit, but the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Embassy of Indonesia in Tokyo and the Indonesian Student Association in Tokyo, which Nishihara names the "Sukarnoists," intimidated Japan by organizing demonstrations, mobilizing support, and threatening to break off economic ties. As a result, Japan was caught between its European and Asian friends. However, Nishihara argues that Japan chose to side with Indonesia, which presumably held greater economic importance for Japan (Nishihara 1976, 161). Furthermore, Nishihara provides other important information related to the issue, such as the involvement of the Japanese Communist Party and the Japan-Indonesia Association as local organizations that assisted Indonesia's diplomatic lobbies towards the Japanese government (Nishihara 1976, 162). This research is the first significant research examining the Karel Doorman issue in the West Irian conflict. As the research was conducted in the late 1960s to mid-1970s, its historical sources are strong, especially the oral sources from surviving actors, such as party members, politicians, and Indonesian students in Tokyo. Unlike other Japanese researchers who study the issue, which will be further elaborated below, Nishihara makes observations from Indonesia's point of view in examining the issue, particularly in his bold argument that "Japan eventually took sides with Indonesia." However, Nishihara's study is not mainly about Japan and the Karel Doorman as the issue is only described in a few pages in a chapter of the book, so that the information clarified in the study is limited. Furthermore, while Nishihara (1976, 161) argues that "Japan was intimidated by Indonesia's demonstrations, mobilization of support, and threats to break off economic ties [...]," he does not provide any contextual explanation nor archival evidence to support this claim, because in the case of studies of historical issues which are conducted directly after the events take place, it is generally difficult to extract official archives sources from any conflicting parties due to historical archive privacy regulations. Moreover, the study also mentions that there were "losses resulting from the tensions between Japan and Indonesia in Japan's relations with other Asian and African countries," but it lacks detailed context regarding the logic and reasons behind their emergence, and how they influenced Japan's final decision.

The second significant study of the Karel Doorman issue was elaborated by Ikeda (2013), nearly four decades after Nishihara's study. As a relatively recent study, Ikeda uses the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan's archives as its primary historical data. The article discusses the diplomatic issues that arose among Japanese policy makers due to the Dutch government's 1960 request to schedule a fleet visit, including the aircraft carrier "Karel Doorman," to the port of Yokohama. Generally, we can summarize the diplomatic issues that were faced by Japan as: 1) Confusion arose within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the Dutch request (Ikeda 2013, 122)¹⁰; 2) Japan's dilemma in the

10 In internal meeting notes, there were two recorded views: On the one hand, Japan hoped the Netherlands would voluntarily refrain from sending the warship to West Irian, and on the other hand, the view that there was no basis to prohibit a friendly nation's warship from docking during peacetime.

diplomatic lobbying between the Netherlands and Indonesia, each pushing its own interests onto the Japanese government¹¹; 3) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' concern about the potential for strong protests from the Indonesian authorities triggered by a Dutch warship's visit to Japan (Ikeda 2013, 122) which could stimulate Indonesian public opinion and strengthen anti-Japanese propaganda from the communists as well as negatively impact Japan's relations with the Asia-Africa countries supporting Indonesia's claims (Ikeda 2013, 124–125)¹²; 4) Left-wing groups within Japan would have an opportunity to criticize the government (Ikeda 2013, 127). This article adequately explains the Japanese government's stance and difficulties regarding the Karel Doorman issue and serves as a valuable addition in terms of the chronological explanation of internal diplomacy among the three countries, in greater detail than Nishihara (1976). However, although Ikeda mentions the considerations taken by the Japanese government in making its decision, such as the potential negative impact on Japan's relations with Asia-Africa countries supporting Indonesia's claim, it appears that this statement was directly cited from the Japanese government's archives without further contextual explanation and background analysis. For instance, while Ikeda acknowledges that Japan was concerned about damaging its relations with Asian and African nations, the study does not elaborate on why these relations were crucial for Japan at the time, nor does it explain how Japan's post-war foreign policy goals in Asia and Africa might have influenced its decision-making process. Moreover, since the archives used are sourced from Japanese entities and written by a Japanese author, the article presents a very strong Japanese perspective. If the Indonesian or Asian-African perspectives are required to narrate the Karel Doorman issue, new research is absolutely necessary.

The next study was conducted by Yashiro (2022a), who chooses an intriguing aspect from the Karel Doorman issue to discuss. He examines Japan's Indonesian diplomacy at the beginning of the Ikeda administration using the Karel Doorman incident that occurred in 1960 as an example. This paper points out that it is difficult to find out from historical sources that Ikeda made all the Karel Doorman-related decisions independently. Rather, it cannot be denied that Ikeda was passively accepting information from Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials such as Kosaka, Ōda, and Miyazaki,¹³ who were busy making adjustments, as this coincided with the political schedule of formulating a new economic plan after the inauguration of Ikeda's cabinet (Yashiro 2022a, 62). Moreover, Yashiro argues that the Karel Doorman incident during the first Ikeda administration prompted the formation of Ikeda's recognition of Sukarno, and this was subsequently projected into the emphasis on Indonesia in later diplomatic policy (Yashiro 2022a, 46), although he does not elaborate any further. In this study, Yashiro adds several important elements regarding the Karel Doorman issues such as a brief explanation of some of Indonesia's attempts to cancel the aircraft carriers' visit to Japan, the perspective of the Netherlands towards the issue, and the US's stance on the issue, not only utilizing Japan's archives but also the US's archives which adds novelty to his study. This study is a shorter version of Yashiro (2020), which focuses on the history of Japan's companies' economic expansion in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) after the war during Kishi and Ikeda's administrations. However, due to the different focus taken by this study, there is no detailed discussion of the factors that

11 Throughout his writing, Ikeda provides a detailed account of the diplomatic lobbying tug-of-war among the three countries (Japan, Indonesia, and the Netherlands), illustrating how Japan was caught in this arduous situation.

12 According to analysis from the Southeast Asia Department and the Asian Economic Department.

13 Zentarō Kosaka (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Takio Ōda (Japan's Ambassador to Indonesia), Akira Miyazaki (Japan's Ambassador to the Netherlands).

influenced Japan in revoking the visit permit for the Karel Doorman aircraft carrier.

The last significant study was also conducted by the same author (Yashiro 2022b). The main objective of this research is to elaborate on the similarities and differences between Japan's and Indonesia's diplomatic principles during the West Irian conflict (Yashiro 2022b, 21–22), by focusing on Kishi's three principles and the diplomacy of Sukarno's government. More than half of this article is taken up with explaining Indonesia's attempts to acquire West Irian sovereignty from the Netherlands, including both its bilateral and multilateral attempts in the UN, which have also been elaborated in many studies about the West Irian conflict. The study explains the background to the West Irian conflict as well as Indonesia's attempts in detail, but it barely touches on Japan's efforts or examples of Japanese diplomacy related to Kishi's diplomatic principles, such as his United Nations-centeredness, cooperation with the free world, and maintaining Japan's position as a member of Asia. Despite the lack of explanation regarding Japan's diplomatic efforts, the study concludes that Japan's and Indonesia's diplomacies share similar principles, such as their UN-centeredness and Asian identity, although differences can be spotted in their practices.¹⁴ The study provides a few new insights, focusing only on the West Irian conflict and Indonesia's efforts to claim it. The suggested arguments of similarities in diplomatic principles between Kishi and Sukarno seem to be forced, as Sukarno's engagement with the UN was a result of failed bilateral negotiations rather than a core diplomatic strategy. Additionally, the notion of "Asian identity" is interpreted differently by Indonesia and Japan,¹⁵ questioning the validity of the claimed "similarities." However, similar to Yashiro's previous study, due to the different focus taken by this study, there is no discussion of the factors that influenced Japan's decision to revoke the visit permit for the Karel Doorman aircraft carrier.

In sum, the existing studies about Japan during the West Irian conflict demonstrate the following limitations: 1) Most of them were carried out by Japanese scholars from Japan's point of view; 2) Their lack of use of Indonesian sources has led to the under-exploration of Indonesia's perspective; 3) Their focus is predominantly on Japanese diplomacy, with insufficient attention given to Indonesia's actions and/or Asian-African's point of view at that time in detail; 4) There has yet to be any specific elaboration focusing on the "Indonesia Factor" in Japan's decision to revoke the visit permit of the Karel Doorman aircraft carrier to Yokohama—such as its specific forms, timeline, and impact—making the narrative produced by existing studies seemingly skip an essential step in explaining and analyzing the overall story of the Karel Doorman incident; 5) Although several previous studies to some extent have touched upon Indonesian pressure and potential economic-diplomatic losses as reasons for canceling the visit permit, they primarily emphasize Indonesian pressure in a broader context without examining deeper into the underlying issues and logic that might exist within these

14 Both countries used the UN to support their positions, with Indonesia leveraging it to gain international support for its claim to West Irian, while Japan sought solutions through the UN as a member. Additionally, both emphasized their Asian identity, with Indonesia focusing on anticolonialism to garner support and Japan affirming its role in the Asian community. In contrast, the study explains the differences such as: Indonesia strongly advocated anti-colonialism, particularly regarding its claim on West Irian, while Japan had a more complex stance, balancing its sympathy for anticolonialism with its Cold War alignment with the United States. Indonesia used its non-alignment to maneuver between East and West blocs, whereas Japan, despite aiming for relative independence, aligned more closely with Western policies (Yashiro 2022b, 39–41).

15 Indonesia perceived Asian identity in the context of decolonization, which was based on the Bandung Conference agreement that all Asian nations should be freed from the West's colonization. On the other hand, Japan took an active role as an Asian member based on its purpose of economic expansion.

factors, and how they could have influenced Japan's decision-making process, such as Japan's reputational concerns among Asian and African countries.

Therefore, by incorporating Indonesia's and/or Asian-African newly-independent countries' perspectives into the analysis of Japan's diplomatic decisions, this study aims to go further by: 1) providing a clearer understanding of the Karel Doorman incident by detailing the overlooked historical aspects of the pressures and protests initiated by Indonesia; 2) systematically organizing Indonesia's protests in chronological order, quantifying the number of protests lodged against Japan to assess their scale, and uncovering additional protest actors that have not been identified in prior research to demonstrate that this issue affected a wide range of parties; 3) reinforcing the arguments presented in previous studies by offering precise archival evidence that may shed light on how these factors potentially influenced Japan's decisions; 4) clearly elaborating other significant issues that have never been thoroughly examined associated with the "Indonesia Factor" that might have shaped Japanese decision-making, particularly about Japan's interests in its diplomatic relations with Indonesia and/or Asian-African countries. The objective of this study is encapsulated in one primary research question: How did the economic, diplomatic and reputational issues brought about by the "Indonesia Factor" cause Japan to prioritize its relationship with Indonesia over the Netherlands during the Karel Doorman incident?

The research method integrates historical research methods (Kuntowijoyo 1995) with a process-tracing approach (Beach and Pedersen 2016; Ricks and Liu 2018). Relying on primary sources such as diplomatic archives from Japan and Indonesia, printed media, official decrees, note verbales, diplomatic bluebooks, and meeting records, the study begins with a comprehensive chronological reconstruction of the Karel Doorman incident, identifying key events, contexts, and indications crucial for establishing historical facts. Given the lack of reliable secondary sources, this reconstruction provides a clear understanding of the incident's progression and generates historical facts. Historical facts derived from the timeline are further analyzed to explore how the "Indonesia Factor" influenced Japan's decision-making. This involves examining causal relationships, assessing primary data within its historical context, and cross-checking archives with media sources to ensure accuracy and avoid biases.

The deployment of the Dutch aircraft carrier Karel Doorman, along with two escort destroyers and a tanker, into the Dutch-occupied West Irian base at Hollandia was a significant historical event as it served as the catalyst for the severance of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and the Netherlands on August 17, 1960 (Nogami 1961, 6).¹⁶ Furthermore, the Karel Doorman incident occurred during the most unstable domestic conditions in Japan due to massive protests against the Japan-US Security Treaty (refer to Kapur 2018 for further details), as well as during the most vulnerable period of Japan-Indonesia relations normalization after the Second World War, and could have lasting implications for Japan-Indonesian relations and a strong influence on the following diplomatic interactions. More importantly, the study on the incident will open up numerous possibilities for interpreting the distinctive characteristics of Japanese diplomacy in situations where they are compelled to take sides amid complex geopolitical pressures and its relevance to today's geopolitical situation, which will be further wrapped up in the conclusion.

16 This was also reported in *Berita Indonesia* (1960c) and confirmed in the first session of the Indonesian House of Representatives on August 31, 1960 (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Gotong Rojong 1960).

2. Forced to Choose: Indonesia Factor and Japan's Struggle for Diplomatic Balance

The aircraft carrier Karel Doorman departed from the Netherlands for West Irian on May 31, 1960 (The Japan Times 1960a).¹⁷ However, even before its departure, the Indonesian public was already aware of its planned stopover in Japan. Since then, both Indonesia and the Netherlands continued to negotiate to influence Japan according to their respective interests. This section will outline how intensive diplomatic outreach conducted by Indonesia and the Netherlands from May to early September 1960 created significant tension among the three countries, as well as the diplomatic struggle of Japan to overcome Indonesian pressure and to convey understanding to the Netherlands until Japan ultimately decided to revoke the port clearance for the Karel Doorman. This section will also highlight the massive impact of the "Indonesia Factor," not only in terms of the number and diversity of protesters but also in the range of issues and pressures they raised in their protests, reconstructed with a close reading approach using the archives and periodical publications.

Notably, the diplomatic actors involved from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan included Yūjirō Iseki (Director General of the Asian Affairs Bureau), Masahide Kanayama (Director General of the European and Asian Bureau), Akira Miyazaki (Ambassador of Japan to the Netherlands), Takio Ōda (Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Indonesia), Vice Minister Hisanari Yamada, Ministers of Foreign Affairs Aiichiro Fujiyama and Zentarō Kosaka, and Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda. The diplomatic actors involved from Indonesia included Bambang Sugeng (Ambassador of Indonesia to Japan), Subandrio (Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs), and President Sukarno. The diplomatic actors involved from the Netherlands included N.A.J. de Voogd (Ambassador of the Netherlands to Japan) and Joseph Luns (Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs). The chart in Figure 1 shows the flow of negotiations, illustrating the outreach between Japan and Indonesia and Japan and the Netherlands.

The diplomatic outreach began on May 19, 1960, when the Dutch Ambassador De Voogd visited Kanayama, the Director-General of the European and Asian Bureau at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and conveyed the initial message that the Dutch Navy planned to celebrate 350 years of Japan-Netherlands diplomatic relations. On the same day, the Indonesian Ambassador to Japan, Sugeng, visited the Director-General of Asian Affairs, Iseki, to emphasize that if the Netherlands request any visit, Japan should reject it. Iseki, while understanding Indonesia's position, could not provide an immediate answer, stating that the Japanese ministry had its own considerations (Yashiro 2022a, 50–51). It was further known on May 28 that another purpose of the Karel Doorman's visit to Japan was for fuel supply, using the tanker *Mijdrecht*, which was also part of the squadron, amounting to 20,200 tons.¹⁸ On June 3, 1960, the Embassy of the Netherlands sent an official note to the Japanese government requesting permission for the Karel Doorman and two destroyers, Groningen and Limburg, to dock in Yokohama from September 8 to 12, 1960.¹⁹

Indonesia continued to maintain its stance when on June 10, 1960, Sugeng visited Iseki again to

17 This has been confirmed in the archives: MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C'2.4.0.2-5-1, Note from Ambassador Miyazaki to Minister of Foreign Affairs Fujiyama, Shōwa 35 [1960] May 28, No. 374.

18 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C'2.4.0.2-5-1, Note from Ambassador Miyazaki to Minister of Foreign Affairs Fujiyama, Shōwa 35 [1960] May 28, No. 374.

19 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C'2.4.0.2-5-1, Note Verbale from the Embassy of the Netherlands to Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, No. 1920.

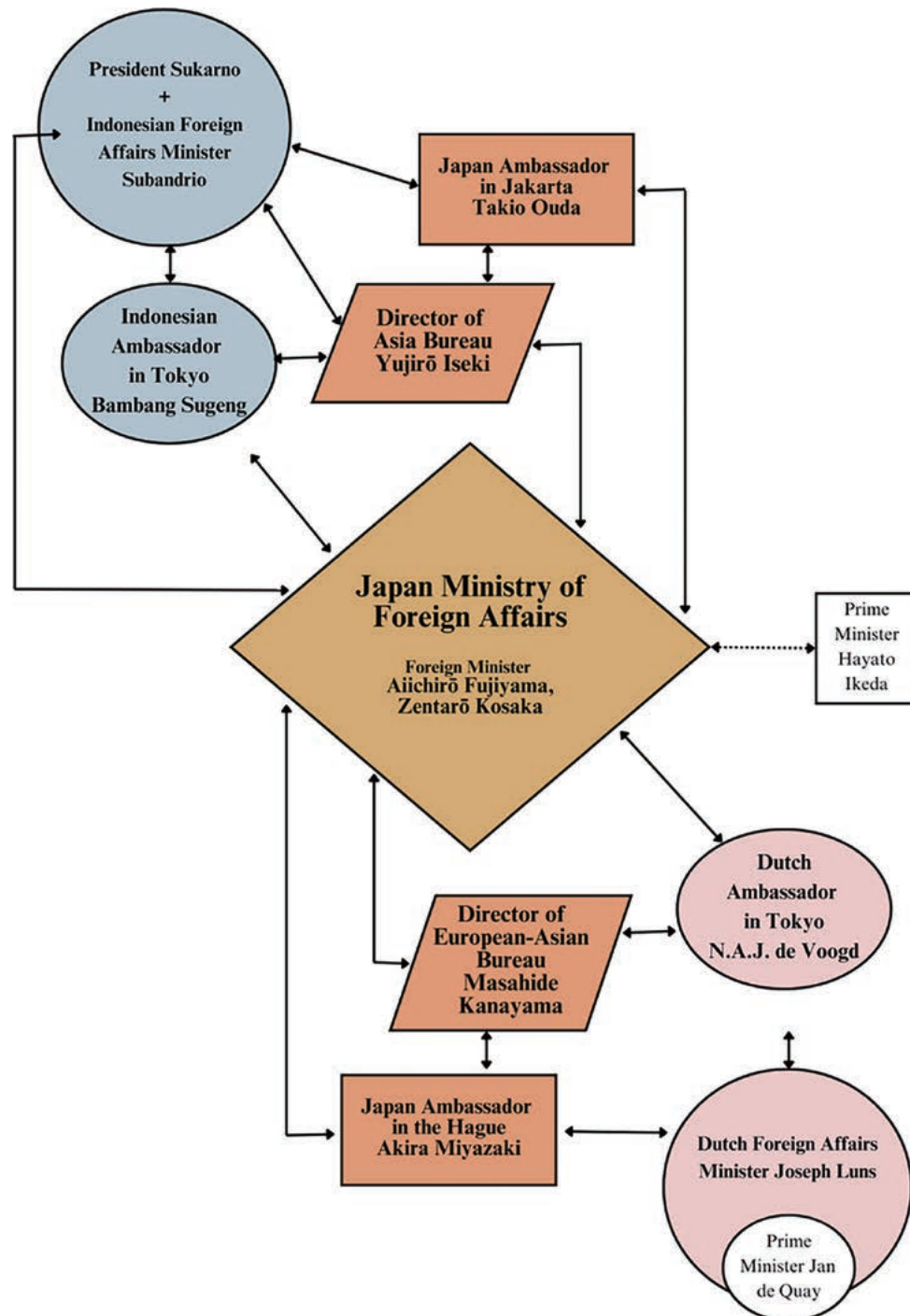


Figure 1. Flow chart of negotiations between Japan-Indonesia and Japan-Netherlands
Source: Author

emphasize that Japan should reject the visit. However, Iseki acknowledged the difficulty in rejecting the request of a friendly nation, the Netherlands.²⁰ On June 16, 1960, in an informal conversation between Kanayama and De Voogd, Kanayama revealed that as a new country, Indonesia had a strong emotional side that could not be explained by logic, and therefore Japan had to consider the protests

20 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C'2.4.0.2-5-1, Note from the Western European Division, Shōwa 35 [1960] July 7.

that might be raised by Indonesia. De Voogd explained that the purpose of sending the Karel Doorman was only to strengthen the defense of West Irian and to replace old aircraft. The Karel Doorman's visit to Japan was planned after the mission in West Irian was completed. De Voogd asserted that rejecting the Karel Doorman visit would hurt the Netherlands, especially if the rejection were solely based on Indonesia's request, which was considered unreasonable.²¹

Tensions escalated when, on June 22, 1960, the Indonesian Embassy in Tokyo submitted a "Pro Mémotre" stating that the deployment of the Karel Doorman had caused outrage in Indonesia. Indonesia requested that Japan not comply with the Dutch request, as West Irian was still a disputed territory, but Iseki emphasized the difficulty in rejecting the request based on customary international law and practices.²² Japan began to be caught deeper between two interests when, in a meeting between Kanayama and the Embassy of the Netherlands' representative, McLain Pont, on July 7, 1960, the Netherlands asserted that if Japan denied the request for the Karel Doorman's visit, the Netherlands would feel hurt. Kanayama responded that Japan had to consider the protests from Indonesia and did not want to provoke Asian countries.²³ Moreover, on August 5, 1960, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Luns invited Japanese Ambassador Miyazaki to The Hague to discuss the request for the Karel Doorman visit. Luns responded to Japan's statement about Indonesia being a new country by emphasizing that the Netherlands also had feelings and could not accept requests deemed unreasonable.²⁴ Japan had indeed kept the Netherlands waiting for two months, as reported in *Asahi Shimbun* on June 4, 1960 (*Asahi Shimbun* 1960b). He warned that if Japan were to surrender to Indonesia's request, public opinion in the Netherlands would be outraged.²⁵

In making this decision, Japan also consulted with the United States through the American embassies in Jakarta and Tokyo. However, approximately a year earlier, the United States itself had declared its neutrality in the West Irian conflict.²⁶ Responding to Japan, the United States sent a telegram through the Department of State to its embassies in Jakarta and Tokyo on August 27, 1960.

21 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C'2.4.0.2-5-1, Meeting records between Kanayama and De Voogd, Shōwa 35 [1960] June 14.

22 When the Japanese government received the request from the Dutch in May, they were fully aware that this would cause them problems. In order not to make any mistakes, they promptly examined whether there were previous examples of the refusal of a military visit from friendly nations during peacetime, as well as checking whether a rejection was permissible under international customary law. The Japanese government came to the conclusion that there was no basis in international customary law, and the rejection was only a matter of political stance (MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C'2.4.0.2-5-1, Pro Memoire from the Embassy of Indonesia to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan on Shōwa 35 [1960] June 22).

23 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 and Vol. 3 C'2.4.0.2-5-1, Measures Taken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Regarding the Japanese Port Call of the Dutch Aircraft Carrier Karel Doorman, Asian Bureau, Shōwa 35 [1960] August 27.

24 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C'2.4.0.2-5-1, Telegram from Ambassador Miyazaki to Minister Kosaka No. 86.

25 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C'2.4.0.2-5-1, Aide Mémotre from the Netherlands to Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 7, 1960.

26 Regarding the West New Guinea dispute and the United States' interests: "Present American policy toward the West New Guinea dispute—that of recognizing the existence of the dispute while neither taking sides nor making positive efforts to effect a solution—has in all probability best served the interests of the United States in the past" (United States Department of State, FRUS, Document 202: Dispatch from the Embassy in Indonesia to the Department of State).

The telegram explicitly instructed the American embassies to convey the following message to Japan: “[...] We concur completely with Embassy [of the United States] in Tokyo judgment that we should avoid intervening directly in this problem and particularly having the Japanese Government shift responsibility for the decision to us. Accordingly, in response to any inquiries from the Japanese Government, you [the US Ambassadors] should make clear our view that the decision regarding the Karel Doorman’s visit is one for the Japanese Government itself to make.”²⁷ This telegram clearly shows that the final decision made by Japan was ultimately an independent deliberation by the policymakers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.²⁸

Considering that there was no legal basis to refuse the Netherlands, on August 8, 1960, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan made a final decision stating that they had no objections to the visit of the Karel Doorman and were awaiting an official request from the Netherlands (The Japan Times 1960b). Despite Japan’s approval of the visit, it is important to note that during negotiations with the Netherlands, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan had repeatedly asked the Netherlands to voluntarily withdraw its request. This was presumably done to avoid further clashes with Indonesia or to avoid hurting the Netherlands by rejecting its request without any legal basis, yet the Netherlands rejected Japan’s appeal and insisted on visiting Japan at any cost.

Even though protests from the non-governmental parties in Indonesia had already been taking place before the departure of the Karel Doorman,²⁹ the Japanese government’s approval of the aircraft carrier’s visit further impacted the frequency of lobbying efforts by Indonesia toward Japan. While the Netherlands’ lobbying toward Japan drastically decreased due to its satisfaction with Japan’s approval,

27 United States Department of State, FRUS, Document 277: Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Japan.

28 In 1957, the United States was concerned about which power would take over Indonesia after the Dutch were ousted, particularly fearing that communist forces might gain influence. In December 1957, US Ambassador to Japan Douglas MacArthur told Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Aichirō Fujiyama that the situation was deeply troubling. He acknowledged Indonesia’s importance to Japan, especially in economic and trade matters, but warned Japan against taking actions that could be interpreted as helping to dislodge the Dutch. Fujiyama emphasized that Japan was willing to “play a constructive role in preventing Communists from filling the void in Indonesia.” The United States appeared to be frustrated by Japan’s claim of a noble “anti-Communism” mission, while in reality, Japan was taking advantage of the situation to replace the Dutch economically. However, under the circumstances, the US had no choice but to accept Japan’s actions (Miyagi 2018, 44). The author observes that the United States had limited options. It followed a Cold War logic and strategy aimed at preventing the spread of communism into Southeast Asia, one of which was by encouraging Japan to enter the region and take over the role previously held by the Netherlands. However, at the same time, the US did not want to appear too openly supportive of Japan, which was clearly pursuing its own economic interests, especially if doing so would come at the expense of the Netherlands, a fellow Western ally. Therefore, the United States “allowed” Japan to handle the Karel Doorman issue on its own.

29 For example: 1) on May 6, 1960, hundreds of Indonesian students opposed the increase of Dutch military forces in West Papua by storming the main Dutch diplomatic office in Jakarta and lowering the Dutch flag (Mainichi Shimbun 1960a); 2) Deputy Secretary General of the FNPIB (National Front for the Liberation of West Irian), Lt. Col. Djuhartono, stated that the government had taken significant steps in the border areas by conducting various training exercises across the country that all citizens were required to participate in as a precaution against the deployment of the Karel Doorman by the Netherlands (Berita Indonesia 1960a); 3) on July 12, 1960, when the Karel Doorman reached Fremantle, Australia, Time Magazine and a left-wing newspaper Akahata reported that local fishermen also showed their sympathy towards Indonesia and refused to allow the ship to dock (Time Magazine 1960; Akahata 1960a).

Indonesia's diplomatic lobbying and protests, the "Indonesia Factor," grew significantly. This "Indonesia Factor" is presumed to be an act that Japan did not expect, and it prompted Japan to revoke Karel Doorman's visitor permit as well as to improve its approach to avoid the escalation of conflict. Table 1 lists the stages in the escalation of the "Indonesia Factor" after Japan's approval of the Karel Doorman's visit.

Table 1. Growing "Indonesia Factor" after Japan's approval of the Karel Doorman's visit

Date	Number of "Indonesia Factor"	Govt.	Non- govt.	Actions
Aug. 10	1	✓		The Embassy of Indonesia's representative, Marjunani, spoke with Japan-Indonesia Association Chairman Masayuki Tani, discussing the worst-case scenario if Japan permitted the visit: Indonesia might close its embassy in Japan and replace it with a consulate general, recall scholarship students, and halt economic cooperation (Nishihara 1976, 159). ³⁰
Aug. 11	2	✓		Ambassador Sugeng submitted a protest letter to Minister Kosaka emphasizing the potential negative impact of the visit permit on Indonesia-Japan relations. ³¹
Aug. 16	3-4		✓	The Indonesian delegation at the World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs held in Tokyo stated that relations between Japan and Indonesia would be threatened if the Japanese government approved the visit of the aircraft carrier (The Japan Times 1960c). One of the members of the Indonesian parliament, E.A. Martolegawa, later held a press conference at the Japanese House of Representatives in Tokyo to explain that the West Irian issue was a highly sensitive matter, easily triggering the national sentiment of the Indonesian people and capable of stirring their spirit of unity and struggle. ³²
Aug. 17	5	✓		Ambassador Sugeng met Prime Minister Ikeda in person to congratulate him on his election and request the cancellation of the Karel Doorman's visit. ³³
Aug. 18	6	✓		Ambassador Sugeng officially conveyed a letter, stating that Japan did not fully understand the situation surrounding the Karel Doorman's visit and emphasized the potential negative consequences of allowing the Dutch aircraft carrier to dock, particularly in light of President Sukarno's speech severing diplomatic relations with the Netherlands the day before due to rising tensions over West Irian. ³⁴
Aug. 22	7		✓	The Indonesia-Japan Friendship Association in Jakarta urged the Japanese government to cancel its decision of the ship's visit permit (The Japan Times 1960d).
Aug. 23	8	✓		President Sukarno summoned Ambassador Ouda in Jakarta, stating that the Indonesian people would feel insulted if Japan allowed the Karel Doorman to stop in Yokohama, warning that such a decision could seriously impact goodwill between Japan and Indonesia. ³⁵

30 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C'2.4.0.2-5-1.

31 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C'2.4.0.2-5-1.

32 Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Gotong Rojong 1960, 27.

33 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C'2.4.0.2-5-1 Note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan's Archives; MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 2 C'2.4.0.2-5-1 Measures Taken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Regarding the Japanese Port Call of the Dutch Aircraft Carrier Karel Doorman Asian Bureau, Shōwa 35 [1960] August 27, p.10.

34 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 2 C'2.4.0.2-5-1 Measures Taken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Regarding the Japanese Port Call of the Dutch Aircraft Carrier Karel Doorman Asian Bureau, Shōwa 35 [1960] August 27, pp.11–12.

35 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 2 C'2.4.0.2-5-1 Measures Taken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Regarding the Japanese Port Call of the Dutch Aircraft Carrier Karel Doorman Asian Bureau, Shōwa 35 [1960] August 27, pp.14–15.

Date	Number of “Indonesia Factor”	Govt.	Non- govt.	Actions
Aug. 25–26	9, 10, 11		✓	Ambassador Sugeng and Director Suska informed the Japanese government that the presence of the Dutch aircraft carrier had forced Indonesia to consider severing diplomatic relations. ³⁶ Two other rumors emerged: (1) Pemuda Rakjat and Indonesian students in Tokyo have sent a request to Japan leftists students association (<i>Zengakuren</i>) to join in a protest against the arrival of the Karel Doorman (Berita Indonesia 1960e); (2) Japanese port workers (<i>Zenkōwan</i>) stated that they would use force to prevent the Karel Doorman from entering Japanese ports (Baba 1960).
Aug. 28	12		✓	The Kansai Japan-Indonesia Association in Kobe urged the Ikeda cabinet to consider the aspirations of its people and the global community. ³⁷
Aug. 29	13, 14		✓	(1) The Central Joint Struggle Council of Harbor Workers Unions condemned the Japanese government's decision regarding the Karel Doorman's entry (Akahata 1960c) ³⁸ ; (2) Representatives from the Textile Export Division of the Ministry of Trade and Industry and representatives from the Tokyo branch of the Japan-Indonesia Trade Association visited the Asian Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to express the concerns of traders in Osaka regarding Indonesia's hardline stance on the Karel Doorman's visit to Japan. ³⁹
Aug. 31	15, 16	✓		(1) Indonesian Parliament (DPR-GR) issued a strong resolution suggesting the Indonesian government should take firm diplomatic and economic actions against Japan, which could lead to the severance of diplomatic and economic relations ⁴⁰ ; (2) The Indonesian Students Association branch in Tokyo sent a letter of protest to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. The action of sending the Karel Doorman aircraft carrier by the Netherlands was considered a threat to world peace and sparked anger among the Indonesian people. ⁴¹
Sept. 1	17, 18, 19, 20		✓	Various protests against the aircraft carrier permit visit came from: (1) The Kanagawa Council for the Abolition of Security Treaty and the Yokohama Port Workers Union Council, (2) Ten representatives from various groups, including the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, (3) Fifteen representatives from various Japanese women's organizations (Akahata 1960e; 1960d; Mainichi Shimbun 1960c), and (4) The Kyoto Indonesia-Japan Friendship Association. ⁴²
Sept. 2	21, 22		✓	(1) The Embassy of the Netherlands in Japan received a protest letter from the Japan-Indonesia Association. ⁴³ (2) The Japanese Consul General in Surabaya received a protest letter from Pemuda Rakjat Surabaya. ⁴⁴

36 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C'2.4.0.2-5-1 Aide Mémoire from European Bureau No. 54, Shōwa 35 [1960] August 26.

37 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C'2.4.0.2-5-1 Letter of Appeal from The Kansai Japan-Indonesia Association in Kobe.

38 Their letter of appeal is stored in MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C'2.4.0.2-5-1.

39 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C'2.4.0.2-5-1 Note of Asian Bureau Southeast Asia Division, Shōwa 35 [1960] June 30.

40 Berita Indonesia 1960f; MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 2 C'2.4.0.2-5-1 Statement of the People's Representative Council of the Cooperative Republic of Indonesia Regarding the Visit of the Dutch Aircraft Carrier “Karel Doorman” to Japan; Dewan Perwakilan Rakjat Gotong Rojong 1960, 22.

41 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C'2.4.0.2-5-1 Letter of Appeal from Indonesian Students Association in Tokyo.

42 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 2 C'2.4.0.2-5-1 Letter of Appeal from Kyoto Indonesia-Japan Friendship Association to Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

43 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 2 C'2.4.0.2-5-1 Letter of Appeal from Japan-Indonesia Association to the Embassy of the Netherlands in Tokyo.

44 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 2 C'2.4.0.2-5-1 Letter of Appeal from Pemuda Rakjat to Japanese Consulate in Surabaya.

Date	Number of “Indonesia Factor”	Govt.	Non- govt.	Actions
Sept. 3	23, 24, 25		✓	(1) The Kansai Indonesian Student Association sent an open resolution to Osaka governor Gisen Satō protesting the visit of the Karel Doorman (Mainichi Shimbun 1960d); (2) The Niigata Prefectural Council for Peace and Democracy sent a protest letter to the Japanese government ⁴⁵ ; (3) The Asia-Africa Economic Research Association sent a letter of protest, highlighting the potential losses in economic relations with Indonesia if the docking permit was not canceled, and urging the Japanese government to reconsider its decision in order to maintain friendship with Indonesia. ⁴⁶

From Table 1, we can see that after Japan approved the visit, the number of protests against it increased exponentially from around only three episodes of governmental lobbying to at least twenty-five governmental diplomatic initiatives alongside widespread non-governmental protests. From all the episodes of the “Indonesia Factor,” this research highlights several actions of the Indonesian government that presumably had the most significant impact on Japan’s final decision. These actions include: 1) Ambassador Sugeng warned Japanese Foreign Ministry four times about the negative impact of Japan’s permission for the Karel Doorman’s visit, causing it to be considered very seriously by the Japanese side; 2) Sukarno warned Ambassador Ōda in person about the negative impact of Japan’s permission for the Karel Doorman’s visit, making the meeting significant as it was a direct communication concerning national interests from a president⁴⁷; and 3) The Indonesian parliament passed resolutions so that the Indonesian government could proceed to cut diplomatic, economic ties and trading cooperation with Japan.

This paragraph complements Table 1 by illustrating the breadth and diversity of civil society groups engaged in the protests. In addition to organizations such as the Indonesian Students’ Association, Japan-Indonesia Association, the Federation of Economic Organizations of Japan (*Keidanren*), the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Japan-Indonesia Trade Association, as well as groups directed by the Japanese Communist or Socialist parties, such as the Yokohama Port Workers’ Union, Japanese port workers, and other groups (Nishihara 1976, 161), there were also other organizations and parties involved, including the Indonesian Delegation at the World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs who conveyed their protests during the conference, the Kansai Japan-Indonesia Association in Kobe which unpredictably sent protest through Osaka Governor Gisen Satō, Pemuda Rakjat which sent protest letter to Japanese Consulate in Surabaya, various Japanese Women’s Organizations which had a direct negotiation with the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Kyoto Indonesia-Japan Friendship Association, the Asia-Africa Economic Research Association, and the Niigata Prefectural Council for Peace and Democracy. This not only illustrates the massive scale of protests faced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, but also reveals that there might have been various interests beyond just economic ones⁴⁸ being advocated

45 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 2 C’2.4.0.2-5-1 Letter of Appeal from The Niigata Prefectural Council for Peace and Democracy to Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

46 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 2 C’2.4.0.2-5-1 Letter of Appeal from The Asia-Africa Economic Research Association to Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

47 Due to the significance of Sukarno’s summoning of Ambassador Ōda, it was even reported by various newspapers in both Japan and Indonesia. To understand each media’s point of view, refer to Akahata 1960b; Asahi Shimbun 1960c; Berita Indonesia 1960d; Gekkan Indonesia 1960; Mainichi Shimbun 1960b; Suara Rakjat Merdeka 1960.

48 The Indonesian Consulate in Kobe stated that if the aircraft carrier were allowed to dock, economic relations

by each of the protestors. On the other hand, the only party that supported the Netherlands was the Japanese Patriotic Party (*Dai Nippon Aikokutō*), which asserted that Japan should make an independent decision and continue to welcome the visit of the Doorman, ignoring criticism from Indonesia or radical domestic elements.⁴⁹

During this intense period of the “Indonesia Factor,” on August 15, 1960, Iseki visited the Dutch Embassy to urge the Netherlands to withdraw the visit and explained that Japan was facing difficulties in deciding the issue of the Karel Doorman due to repeated requests from Indonesia. However, the Dutch refused, stating that the visit was part of the celebration of bilateral relations and had nothing to do with the political situation in West Irian. The Netherlands said that as permission had already been granted for the aircraft carrier’s visit, it could not be revoked, so instead, Japan should try to minimize activities during the visit and promote it internally.⁵⁰ On September 3, the Japanese government still attempted to ask the Netherlands to voluntarily withdraw the visit. Nevertheless, the Dutch Ambassador insisted that this visit was not related to West Irian, and it was impossible for the Netherlands to cancel it. This study assesses that the actor most likely to have played the most significant role in pushing for the cancellation of the visit was Japan’s ambassador to Indonesia, Takio Ōda. Ōda was an actor who repeatedly requested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan to take action, even making appeals at the last minute on the morning of September 3. In Telegram No. 341 dated September 3, 1960, he stated: “The publication in the newspaper on the 2nd [September] has further complicated the situation regarding the visit of the Karel Doorman to Japan. If this visit materializes, there is a high risk of repercussions, ranging from the severance of economic relations to the termination of diplomatic relations. [...] the situation will become extremely difficult to manage if it reaches that point. Therefore, as I have suggested [...] if the Dutch side does not voluntarily cancel the visit, we must decide to reject it [...] Given the rising emotions surrounding this issue, I urge that a decision be announced immediately. Rejecting the visit of the Karel Doorman after the ship approaches could lead to technical impossibilities and escalate resentment from the Dutch side. Therefore, I hope that a decision will be made promptly.”⁵¹ Some media reports mentioned a suspected meeting between Kosaka and Ikeda on the evening of this date concerning the cancellation of the Karel Doorman’s visit, suggesting that Prime Minister Ikeda, as well as other government and coalition party leaders, had given their approval for the decision to cancel the visit of the aircraft

between Japan and Indonesia would significantly worsen, and Indonesia might have to refrain from importing goods from Japan. Representatives from the state trading company CTC, Usindo, and the National Industrial Bank based in Tokyo also expressed similar views, causing traders to worry about the potential deterioration of the situation. Traders in Osaka estimated that exports of thread and cotton fabrics to Indonesia would reach approximately 70 billion yen by the end of that year. However, if the visit of the Karel Doorman aircraft carrier led to contract cancellations by Indonesia, the impact would be substantial. Moreover, recently, the opening of letters of credit and other matters by Indonesia had faced delays, which, although not directly related to the visit of the aircraft carrier, remained a significant concern for traders. Traders urged the Japanese government to take measures to resolve the situation in a way that was not embarrassing and to show appropriate gestures to the Indonesian side.

49 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 2 C’2.4.0.2-5-1, Petition from Japanese Patriotic Party, September 3, 1960.

50 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C’2.4.0.2-5-1, Meeting record between Iseki and the Dutch Ambassador, 1960.

51 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 2 C’2.4.0.2-5-1, Telegram No. 341 from Ambassador Ouda to Minister Kosaka, September 3, 1960.

carrier (Mainichi Shimbun 1960d). Ōda was also an actor who appeared to make considerable efforts to neutralize Japan's relations with Indonesia, particularly to prevent Indonesia from reacting impulsively. On August 31, Ōda apologized and attempted to explain to Minister of Foreign Affairs Subandrio in a three-quarter-hour meeting that, despite his best efforts, he had been unable to prevent the visit of the Dutch aircraft carrier Karel Doorman to Yokohama Port (Berita Indonesia 1960g).

Having no other choice but to avoid further clashes with Indonesia, the Japanese government finally revoked permission for the Karel Doorman visit on night of September 3, around 5 days before the official date of the arrival of the fleet in Yokohama, by stating that “the visit will be postponed until an unspecified time.”⁵² Although the word “postpone” was used, in reality, the visit was never rescheduled, and the Karel Doorman ultimately did not visit Yokohama.

3. Beyond Economics: Japan's Strategic Concerns in Diplomatic Relations with Indonesia and the Afro-Asian Bloc

What were the underlying issues brought about by the “Indonesia Factor” that influenced Japan's decision to cancel the Karel Doorman visit? Nishihara (1976, 161) emphasized that strong intimidation from Indonesia, as well as the threats to sever economic and trade relations, were significant factors influencing Japan's policy change. This argument is certainly undeniable, as evidenced in the previous section, where the Japanese government faced at least twenty five massive instances of the “Indonesia Factor,” including the perpetual threat of severing economic ties. This section aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Japan-Indonesia relationship during this period by exploring not only Japan's diplomatic principles but also the influence of American interests that cannot be overlooked. Sequentially, this section will demonstrate that while economic factors undeniably played a significant role in Japan's decision to align with Indonesia, the findings of this study reveal another crucial element: reputational pressure; and prove how Japan's concern over maintaining its image and credibility in the region, especially among Asian and African countries, became an additional and important factor that influenced its decision-making process.

According to Nishihara (1976, 19), postwar Indonesia showed little interest in Japan's foreign policy. This was due to lingering hostility among Indonesians towards Japan because of Japan's past imperialism. Indonesia's lack of interest in Japan's foreign policy was evident at the Bandung Conference in 1955. Firstly, when deciding which countries to invite to the Bandung Conference, Pakistan and India were the two countries that were enthusiastic about discussing whether Japan should be invited or not, whereas Indonesia had almost no say in the discussions about whether Japan should be invited or not (Miyagi 2018, 12–13). Secondly, in the general speeches by Indonesian leaders as hosts during the conference, there was more emphasis on Indonesia's support for newly independent Asian and African countries, with no mention of Japan (Nishihara 1976, 19), which indicates Indonesia's lack of interest in Japan.

On the other hand, lacking access to gaining benefit from China, Japan began shifting its focus toward other potential regions, one of which was Southeast Asia, which was seen as “the second Manchuria.”⁵³ Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida's speech at the National Press Club in Washington in

52 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 2 C'2.4.0.2-5-1, Note Verbale No. 56/EUW from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan to the Netherlands.

53 See Yashiro (2020, 64-66) for more detailed context.

November 1954 stated that, “Normal traditional trade relations with the Asiatic mainland [China] are not now available to us [...] in order to be self-supporting, Japan must develop its trade with Southeast Asia” (Llewelyn 2014, 88). This situation was further supported by the United States’ Cold War interests, which recognized a power vacuum in Indonesia following the expulsion of the Dutch and harbored concerns about the spread of communism in the region. Postwar Japan, with its critical mission of securing oil resources, and the United States, driven by the Cold War ideological interests as well as the desire to secure alternative oil sources outside the Middle East,⁵⁴ formed a complementary combination in their approach toward Indonesia. To achieve this objective, the United States established key policy guidelines, one of which was to encourage its allies, including Japan, to develop closer ties with Indonesia.⁵⁵ Based on these interests, the war reparations negotiations were a strategic first step for Japan to re-establish economic and industrial cooperation with Indonesia. Thus, in early 1951, the Japanese government began discussing the necessary steps as an initial move to establish economic relations and industrial cooperation with Indonesia, which was followed by the first talks on war reparations in December 1951 in accordance with the provisions of the San Francisco Treaty.

Unlike other Southeast Asian countries, Indonesia was the most difficult country for Japan to reach a war reparations agreement with. Negotiations on reparations began in 1951 but faced disagreements regarding the definition of war damage, the amount of reparations, and the payment method. After lengthy and complicated eight years of negotiations, Japan and Indonesia eventually signed a bilateral peace treaty and a reparations agreement in January 1958, in which Japan agreed to pay \$223 million over a period of twelve years. All reparations from Japan were in the form of goods and services. The Japanese government ordered products and services from domestic companies, amounting to the total reparations cost, and provided them to the recipient countries. Thus, Japan’s reparations to Southeast Asia not only fulfilled its obligations but also played a role in promoting its own economic recovery by stimulating domestic production and exports through government support (Iokibe 2011, 67), which was Japan’s intention from the beginning.

Let us examine from both the Japanese and Indonesian perspectives to understand why they were finally able to reach an agreement in these negotiations. Since the transition from the occupation government, Japan began to establish its diplomatic activities with greater independence, one notable example being the drafting of the Diplomatic Bluebook in 1957. Through this Bluebook, Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi sought to break away from complete American dictate while maintaining a strategic balance in relations with the United States and expanding ties with other countries, particularly Asian nations. From this diplomatic independence emerged Kishi’s three main pillars, which became the core principles of Japan’s postwar foreign policy: 1) UN-centrism, which demonstrated Japan’s commitment to international norms upheld by the United Nations; 2) Cooperation with the Free World, which emphasized cooperation with democratic and capitalist countries while reflecting Japan’s orientation toward the Western bloc during the Cold War; and 3) Asian Diplomacy, which highlighted Japan’s efforts to return to Asia and strengthen relations with

54 Amid the rise of Arab nationalism in the Middle East and the expanding influence of the Soviet Union, the United States had been seeking to secure alternative oil fields since the 1950s in case Middle Eastern oil fields fell into communist hands. Secretary of State George C. Marshall also acknowledged that Indonesia was endowed with abundant natural resources, posed a low risk of falling into unfriendly relations with the United States, and occupied a strategically important geopolitical position in the conduct of the Cold War (Yashiro 2020, 67–68).

55 United States Department of State, FRUS, Document 177: NSC 5901.

Asian countries, particularly in the context of economic cooperation.⁵⁶ Based on these principles, the Japanese government prioritized “enhancing Japan’s role as part of Asia” as a key diplomatic asset. This principle had made the Kishi administration focused on reinforcing Japan’s identity “as a member of Asia” in Southeast Asia and aimed to make full use of this diplomatic strategy (Iokibe 2011, 65). Kishi stated that, in an era when nationalism was on the rise in Asian countries, “what is most needed now is for young nations to work toward national economic development in order to complete their independence” (Yashiro 2020, 98–99). Therefore, the Kishi administration made significant efforts to position Japan as an integral part of Asia, particularly in Southeast Asia, by fulfilling the war reparation obligations outlined in the San Francisco Peace Treaty. This move aligned with the interests of both the US and Japanese governments, who sought to link Japan’s economy with Southeast Asia and contribute to regional stability. Both governments saw Southeast Asia as a crucial market and a vital resource base for Japan, especially after Japan lost its trading relationship with mainland China. It is accurate to say that the economic development of Southeast Asia became a key focus for Japan’s diplomatic strategy, allowing Japan to play an active role as a “member of Asia” while adhering to its policy of “cooperation with the free world” (Iokibe 2011, 68). In these senses, Kishi’s government also took more serious steps regarding the issue of war reparations compared to the previous administration and apparently succeeded in reaching an agreement with Indonesia (Nishihara 1976, 63). On the other hand, Indonesia’s economy was drained by numerous separatist movements occurring on various islands outside Java in the 1950s. For example, anti-Sukarno uprisings in Sumatra and Sulawesi emerged in 1957, protesting Sukarno’s neglect of the people’s welfare and his “lenient” stance toward the Communist Party (Nishihara 1976, 19–20). Furthermore, Indonesia was experiencing a management vacuum after nationalizing many Dutch assets and companies, with stagnant economic growth and declining foreign reserves. As a result, Japanese capital, which was considered “not too Western colonial” and brought much new hope, could enter and be more easily accepted by Sukarno (Yashiro 2020, 109–110). It was against this backdrop that Sukarno accepted Prime Minister Kishi’s visit in November 1957, and they resolved the long-standing issue of war reparations. For Sukarno, this was a way to save his country from economic decline and strengthen his political position.

At the time of the Karel Doorman turmoil, Japan and Indonesia were engaged in three major economic projects: the North Sumatra Oil Development Cooperation (NOSODECO), the Sulawesi Nickel Development (SUNIDECO), and the Kalimantan Forest Development (FDC). These three projects were significant in Japan’s economic advancement in Indonesia (Yashiro 2020, 148–150) and, naturally, also contributed to Japan’s own economic development. In fact, economic pressure was the main tool used by the Indonesian government to influence Japan to cancel the visit of the Karel Doorman. The potential for diplomatic and economic losses became significant when the Indonesian government, through Ambassador Sugeng and President Sukarno, warned Japan about this, and they were further supported by a resolution from the Indonesian parliament backing this stance. The severance of diplomatic and economic relations would lead to other negative consequences, such as the threat of halting the three projects mentioned above, as well as a number of strategic projects planned under the 1958 war reparation agreement. Moreover, many organizations and companies in Japan felt threatened by potential economic losses, which is why the “Indonesia Factor” took advantage of this situation and prominently featured economic pressure in many protest letters sent to Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

56 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Japanese Diplomatic Bluebook of 1957.

To what extent did these economic concerns affect Japan's considerations during the Karel Doorman dilemma? In fact, in this dilemma, Japan apparently "chose" Indonesia, which had rebuilt its economic relations over the 15 years since the end of the war (Irie 2009, 64–67 in Yashiro 2020, 162). At the press conference held on September 5, 1960, following the revocation of the Karel Doorman's port-call permission, Minister of Foreign Affairs Kosaka stated: "Japan finally cancelled the permission it had reluctantly given to the Netherlands to send the ship here because of growing Indonesian objections over the fact that the carrier was fresh from staging a show of force in waters disputed by the Netherlands and Indonesia." Kosaka continued his statement: "Indonesia had threatened to break economic relations with Japan or to withdraw its ambassador from Tokyo if the 18,000-ton flattop made its scheduled 'goodwill' visit here after the recent Dutch show of naval force in waters off the land disputed by Indonesia and the Netherlands. Under such threats from Indonesia, Kosaka added, the warship's call would inevitably bring about results which would be contrary to the aim of the goodwill visit. Therefore, it became doubtful whether a welcome befitting the goodwill visit of the warship of a friendly nation could be extended." This statement illustrates Japan's diplomatic stance of not wanting to seek trouble or become further involved in the West Irian conflict, which could potentially harm Japan both economically and diplomatically (The Japan Times 1960f). The assessment results show consistency between Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs public statements in the media and their statements in the archival documents regarding the significance of the "economic loss." In the meeting between the Dutch Ambassador and Ambassador Miyazaki on September 3, Japan stated: "In light of the situation—the complexities of the Karel Doorman's visit permission, Japan has set several conditions to minimize negative impacts on Indonesia and to achieve the goals of the goodwill visit, and the Dutch side has accepted and understood these conditions, which Japan appreciates. However, this situation has become far more serious than anticipated. If Indonesia ultimately decides to sever economic and diplomatic relations with Japan, as a result, it will undoubtedly shock Japanese public opinion, and the visit intended to strengthen Japan-Netherlands friendship will instead leave an unwanted scar in Japan-Netherlands diplomatic relations."⁵⁷ In addition, the same bureau record stated, "We [Japan] have made every effort to address the irrational stance of the Indonesian side, but they remain unwilling to listen, which could ultimately lead to the severance of economic and diplomatic relations. In such a situation, the Karel Doorman's visit to Japan will not only fail to achieve its primary objective of enhancing Japan-Netherlands friendship but is also feared to have adverse effects on Japan-Indonesia relations. Therefore, we have decided to 'postpone' the visit with deep regret." As mentioned repeatedly in both press conferences and official archives, the author concludes that economic pressure from the Indonesian government had played a significant role in Japan's decision-makers' deliberations regarding the revocation of the visitor permit for the aircraft carrier.

However, this study suggests that there were other equally important underlying concerns, which have not been widely discussed, that were also taken into consideration by Japanese decision-makers, referred to here as "reputational pressure." Specifically, beyond the economic implications, Japan was concerned about potential damage to its carefully cultivated reputation among the member countries of the anti-colonial solidarity movement, which could ultimately lead to a deterioration in relations with other Asian-African nations and even the possibility that they would turn towards the communist bloc.

57 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 2 C'2.4.0.2-5-1, Notes of European Bureau No. 18745, Shōwa 35 [September 3–5, 1960].

From the minimal contact following the war to the arduous war reparations negotiations described above, it is evident that during this period, the bilateral relationship between Indonesia and Japan remained in a nascent stage. Amid this early phase of their relationship, the Karel Doorman incident emerged, seemingly exacerbating tensions. Japan's gradually improving image once again suffered a setback in the eyes of the Indonesian government and public during the height of their nationalist sentiment, because Japan was perceived as "aligning" with Dutch colonialism by permitting the Karel Doorman to dock in Yokohama. According to Iokibe (2011, 100), among Southeast Asian countries, Indonesia was indeed the most sensitive to its colonial past; thus, even the slightest provocation could evoke strong memories and concerns. Notably, none of the Asian and African countries supporting Indonesia issued direct protests against Japan; nevertheless, the Japanese government harbored concerns that its reputation might suffer to some degree if it failed to demonstrate "solidarity."

The Netherlands, which still sought to control West Irian, was seen by Indonesians as continuing its classical colonial practices. By allowing the Karel Doorman to dock, Japan was also perceived as still supporting imperialism. In his speech, E.A. Martalogawa, a member of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR-GR), stated that Indonesia was currently facing "two types of Japan": the "Imperialist Japan" represented by the Kishi and Ikeda administrations, and the "People's Japan," composed of various groups of Japanese citizens showing solidarity in the great struggle against imperialism and colonialism.⁵⁸ This conviction was held not only by the Indonesian government but also by the general public. For example, in an extreme manner, Indonesian media often labeled Japan as a supporter of Dutch imperialism. One example is *Berita Indonesia*, a leftist print media, which in an article stated: "What can Japan actually hope to gain from the Dutch colonialists? Is there a hidden agenda behind supporting Dutch exploitation efforts in West Irian? Indeed, the exploitation of West Irian requires technology, a large workforce, and pioneering leadership. Perhaps this is what Japan hopes to gain from the Netherlands, in line with its failed expansionist policy during the Second World War. Japan's expansionist policy, by riding the 'colonial boat' of the Netherlands in West Irian, will ultimately isolate Japan from the Asian-African community. It will be opposed by Asian African countries and perceived by them as a 'colonialist class' nation, no different from other Western colonial powers" (*Berita Indonesia* 1960b). In fact, this typical idea about Japan spread widely throughout Indonesia and was accepted by almost all Indonesians at that time, both at the governmental level and at the local community level.

From the Japanese Foreign Ministry side, we can find statements such as: "If we ask, 'Why does Indonesia take such a stance?' There is a possibility that Japan or the Netherlands might respond with answers like: '[...] as a new nation, Indonesia has a strong emotional side that cannot be explained by logic[...].'⁵⁹ or "Indonesia is a young and emotional country"⁶⁰; or "We have made every effort to deal with Indonesia's irrational attitude [...]"⁶¹ Nevertheless, the situation was not as black and white as it may appear when viewed from Indonesia's perspective, and possibly that of many other Asian-African

58 Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Gotong Rojong 1960, 27.

59 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C'.2.4.0.2-5-1, Statement made by Kanayama on June 16, 1960, during an informal discussion with Ambassador de Voogt.

60 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol 2 C'.2.4.0.2-5-1, Statement made by Vice Minister Yamada on August 25, 1960, during a meeting with Ambassador de Voogdt.

61 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol 2 C'.2.4.0.2-5-1, Statement made by Ambassador Miyazaki on September 5, 1960, during a meeting with Prime Minister de Quai.

countries which are survivors of colonialism and imperialism. We have to understand that the trauma left by colonialism and imperialism is not easily forgotten. As stated by Commission I of the DPR-GR during the announcement of the resolution supporting the severance of diplomatic and economic relations with Japan: “The Commission I of the DPR-GR strongly condemns such an attitude [Japan’s], as it could bring unfavorable consequences to the relations between the two countries. This is because the relatively recent historical factors inevitably revive the memories of the bitter and distressing experiences suffered by the Indonesian people during the years 1942 to 1945.”⁶² Those traumatic memories were manifested as a collective resistance movement (Bhandari 2022, 92–99), which was even legalized during Sukarno’s administration in his Political Manifesto. Due to the importance and principle behind this issue, in his speech at the DPR-GR session, Minister of Foreign Affairs Subandrio declared: “[...] Therefore, we only ask our friends in Japan not to misunderstand that the Government of Indonesia or the DPR-GR has taken a stance or passed a resolution merely to pressure them to change their position. That is absolutely not the case. This meeting was held solely to discuss the issue of the Karel Doorman. For us, this meeting is an opportunity to clarify with Japan the basis of our relationship, whether we truly oppose imperialism and colonialism, especially if Indonesia or Japan is colonized by another country. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, this is indeed a fundamental principle for our nation, a foundation that is now a necessity for us to follow.”⁶³

Japan could not deny the fact that during the massive “Indonesia Factor,” both Indonesian governmental and non-governmental parties brought these sentiments of colonialist and imperialist concerns to their protests to put further pressure on Japan. In a confidential letter sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan on August 11, the Indonesian government clearly stated that “The West Irian question does not merely occupy an important part of the policy of the present Government of the Republic of Indonesia, but has from the beginning been a national issue since its solution would mean ‘the complete elimination of colonialism in Indonesia’ and be a contribution to the decrease of international tension which is a point of agreement subscribed to by all attending the Bandung Conference, including Japan.”⁶⁴ The Indonesian government’s claim was also strengthened by non-government actors’ protests such as: 1) The Kansai Japan-Indonesia Association in Kobe emphasized that “celebrating friendship with the Netherlands is not a bad thing, but it can be done with a banquet and should not be done using an aircraft carrier fleet, which is a symbol of imperialism and militarism”⁶⁵; 2) The Indonesian Students Association in Tokyo emphasized that “the Indonesian people, for the sake of friendship with Japan, are trying to forget the bitter experiences of the Second World War; however, the Japanese government’s actions in supporting Dutch imperialism make it seem as though their efforts are in vain.”⁶⁶

The situation became more complicated when the “Indonesia Factor” conflated the “Bandung Conference” in their protests. When the Bandung Conference was held in April 1955, Japan was one of its participants.⁶⁷ The conference, attended by many newly independent Asian and African

62 Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Gotong Rojong 1960, 21.

63 Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Gotong Rojong 1960, 23.

64 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C’2.4.0.2-5-1, Confidential Letter No. 2038.

65 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C’2.4.0.2-5-1, Letter of Appeal from the Kansai Japan-Indonesia Association in Kobe.

66 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C’2.4.0.2-5-1, Letter of Appeal from the Indonesian Students Association in Tokyo.

67 According to Miyagi (2018, 12–13), at that time, Japan—considered a pro-Western country—was invited at the

countries, was intended to promote anti-colonialism, global peace, diplomatic independence, and economic, social, and cultural cooperation among Asian and African countries, and resulted in the “Ten Principles of Bandung,” which affirmed principles of respect for human rights, sovereignty, non-interference, and peaceful resolution of disputes. Based on its participation in the conferences, Japan, from the view of the Indonesian government and many non-governmental protesters, was considered as an Asian nation that should, somehow, have deeper “sympathy” towards the struggles of other Asian nations, in this case, Indonesia. In his speech, E.A. Martalogawa, a member of the DPR-GR, stated that “We must remind them that they are also signatories of the Bandung Conference, that their place is in Asia, not in the West or across the Pacific Ocean. However, if they do not respect us, become hostile toward the Indonesian people, and support Dutch imperialism, then a firm stance is the only appropriate response in dealing with them. Especially a firm stance in economic and trade cooperation, which is the main incentive for them to establish relations with us.”⁶⁸

Indonesia’s threats escalated when the Embassy of Indonesia appeared to engage in diplomatic efforts by contacting a member of the Japanese House of Representatives, Tokonami Tokuji, on August 12, 1960, to remind Japan of Indonesia’s dissatisfaction with the decision. At this point, the Indonesian government began “involving” other Asian-African countries in its pressure on Japan as the Embassy of Indonesia expressed disappointment for relying on Japan’s goodwill and conveyed concerns that “Japan might distance itself further from Asian-African countries,” especially since Indonesia claimed to have broad support from them.⁶⁹ The Indonesian government then confronted Japan again with the “Asian solidarity” pressure tactic in a protest letter written by Minister of Foreign Affairs Subandrio, which was conveyed during the meeting between Ambassador Sugeng, the Indonesian Embassy representative Suska, and the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs. The protest letter emphasized that “as one of the participating countries in the Bandung Conference, Japan is urged to reconsider the decision in order to maintain peace in Southeast Asia.”⁷⁰ In addition to official diplomacy, various non-governmental actors, including student groups and civil society organizations, began framing their protests within the broader ideological context of Asian-African unity and anti-colonialism. For example, in a letter of appeal from the Indonesian Students Association in Tokyo on August 31, 1960, it is stated that Japan should uphold the “spirit of the Bandung Conference” and revoke the aircraft carrier’s visit permit accordingly. They also claimed that other Asian countries, such as the Arab League nations, India, Pakistan, Burma, etc., were also participating in boycotting the Karel Doorman.⁷¹ Protests from Japan’s non-governmental side also voiced similar sentiments. On September 3, a protest letter sent by the Asia-Africa Economic Research Association and the Niigata Prefectural Council for Peace and Democracy stated that “the Ikeda government, as part of the United States government’s global policy, supports the colonial policy and military suppression actions carried out by the Dutch government through NATO against Asian countries, particularly the

request of Pakistan, which wanted to balance India’s invitation to China—a communist country. On the other hand, Indonesia had almost no say in the discussions about whether Japan should be invited or not.

68 Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Gotong Rojong 1960, 27.

69 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C’2.4.0.2-5-1, Information concerning the response to the approval of the Karel Doorman’s visit to Japan, August 12, 1960.

70 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C’2.4.0.2-5-1, Aide Mémoire from European Bureau No. 54, August 26, 1960.

71 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C’2.4.0.2-5-1, Letter of Appeal from Indonesian Students Association in Tokyo.

Indonesian people. This is a challenge to the power of the Japanese people who oppose the Security Treaty. At present, countries around the world, especially in Asia and the Arab world, are rising against the colonial policies of imperialism and are striving for self-determination, continuously achieving independence. Meanwhile, only the Japanese government chooses to submit to the declining American imperialists, making Japan an ‘orphan’ in Asia.”⁷²

Although Indonesia’s claim that Japan should show more solidarity based on a “mere” fellow Asian nation relationship may seem emotional and illogical, the demand might serve as an effective strategy if we consider Japan’s diplomatic conditions and needs at that time. As previously elaborated, the Kishi administration aimed to strengthen Japan’s position as a “member of Asia.” The Japanese government prioritized “enhancing Japan’s role as part of Asia” as a key diplomatic asset. The Kishi administration, which lasted from February 1957 to July 1960, especially focused on reinforcing Japan’s identity “as a member of Asia” in Southeast Asia and aimed to make full use of this diplomatic strategy. The Kishi cabinet, which was also following the United States’ Asian Policy of the Cold War, maintained its image in any case so that the Western bloc would not be perceived by Asian and African countries as a bloc opposing their independence, which would open up the possibility of Asian and African countries turning towards the communist bloc. One concrete example of this was Japan’s response to the rise of Arab nationalism following the nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956. The Kishi administration sought to persuade Egypt to adopt an independent diplomatic stance as an Asian member. This initiative aimed to prevent the spread of Soviet influence in the Middle East, protect Western interests as an intermediary between the Middle East and Western countries, and ensure a stable supply of oil essential for the development of Western industries (Kwon 2008, 185 in Yashiro 2020, 100). Furthermore, at the UN General Assembly, Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Mamoru Shigemitsu gave a speech describing Japanese politics, economics, and culture as having been born from a fusion of West and East, and thus he believed that Japan could be “a bridge between East and West” (Iokibe 2011, 65–66). In fact, the Bandung Conference during the Hatoyama administration was the first international conference attended by Japan, which sought greater “autonomy” and “independent diplomacy” from the United States, after the war. Being invited to the conference was a significant opportunity for Japan to “return” to Asia, as it was the first time after WWII that Japan directly faced the newly emerging Asia (Miyagi 2018, 3–5). Knowing the significance of Asia to Japan, it is assumed that Indonesia utilized this “Asian identity” concern to exert pressure on Japan’s decisions.

To what extent did these “reputational” concerns affect Japan’s deliberation in revoking the Karel Doorman visit permit? Actually, before Indonesia launched massive reputational pressure on Japan, Japan had already used this issue to negotiate with the Netherlands. During a meeting on July 7, 1960, when Dutch Ambassador McLain Pont emphasized that the Netherlands would feel hurt if Japan rejected the request for the Karel Doorman visit, Kanayama responded that Japan also had to consider protests from Indonesia and did not want to provoke Asian countries.⁷³ Furthermore, in the initial internal discussions held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, particularly between Southeast

72 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 2 C’2.4.0.2-5-1, Appeal Letter from the Asia-Africa Economic Research Association and the Niigata Prefectural Council for Peace and Democracy, September 3, 1960.

73 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C’2.4.0.2-5-1, Measures Taken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Regarding the Japanese Port Call of the Dutch Aircraft Carrier Karel Doorman, Asian Bureau, Shōwa 35 [1960] August 27.

Asian Division and Asian Economic Division, it was indicated that there were concerns about the potential deterioration of their image, as the internal discussion note points out that: “The ‘sentiment’ towards Japan, which has improved since the signing of the peace treaty, will worsen, and there are concerns that Indonesia will engage in various forms of disruption against us [...]”⁷⁴ In addition, Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs internal discussion records around August 12, 1960, clearly states that: “[...] additionally, since several member countries of Asia and Africa support Indonesia’s claim, this will also negatively impact Japan’s position among the nations in this group.”⁷⁵

In fact, these concerns were not only discussed among decision makers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but also in the meeting sessions of the 35th National Diet, House of Representatives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Committee held from August 31 to September 1, 1960. In the meeting sessions, several Diet members raised questions related to the Karel Doorman issue to Minister Kosaka, who attended the session. On the first day of the session, two members from the Japan Socialist Party, Kei Hoashi and Satoko Tokano, emphasized to Minister Kosaka that 17 newly independent countries had just joined the UN, many of which were Asian and African nations that had long suffered from colonial policies and struggled for independence. They pointed out that Japan had declared itself part of the Asia-Africa group at the Bandung Conference, but on the other hand, had signed a new security treaty and strengthened its military alliance solely with the United States while still harboring remnants of imperialist policies, as evidenced by allowing the Karel Doorman to dock. Hoashi stressed the importance for Japan to consider solutions that better supported Asia and Africa, and Tokano inquired about Japan’s position at the UN regarding this matter. In response, Kosaka answered diplomatically, stating that they were in talks with the Netherlands and Indonesia, as well as their ambassadors, and could not provide any conclusions yet. In the session on the following day, another Diet member, Tokonami Tokuji, reiterated to Kosaka the importance of ensuring that both the Netherlands and Indonesia understand Japan’s intentions in this matter, and that communication between all parties should be well-maintained to preserve friendly relations between Japan, the Netherlands, and Indonesia without misunderstandings.⁷⁶

From Japan’s negotiations with the Netherlands, internal discussions within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and concerns raised by Diet members, it is clear that the reputational considerations played a crucial role in Japan’s decision to cancel the Karel Doorman visit. While the economic risks of upsetting Indonesia were significant, archival evidence reveals that Japan’s decision-makers were equally, if not more, concerned about the reputational consequences of their actions. They feared that allowing the visit would damage Japan’s image not only in Indonesia but also across other Asian and African nations, many of whom viewed Japan through the lens of anticolonial solidarity. Such damage risked causing these countries to withdraw sympathy from the Western bloc and instead align with the Eastern bloc, which actively supported their independence movements. This reputational pressure was a central issue, discussed extensively at multiple levels of decision-making, from diplomatic

74 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 2 C’2.4.0.2-5-1, Notes of the Southeast Asian Division and the Asian Economic Division regarding the issue of ‘Karel Doorman visit to Japan, what are the expected effects if Indonesia takes a hardline stance against Japan?’, August 12, 1960.

75 MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 1 C’2.4.0.2-5-1, Notes of the Southeast Asian Division and the Asian Economic Division regarding the issue of the Karel Doorman’s visit to Japan. “What are the expected effects if Indonesia takes a hardline stance against Japan?” August 12, 1960.

76 National Diet Library, 1960a–1960b.

negotiations to internal government debates. The findings underscore that reputational considerations were a deliberate and significant factor shaping Japan's final decision in the Karel Doorman incident.

There was actually another concern that may have influenced the Japanese government's decision: the "potential threats to Japan's national security." This concern was initially stirred up by left-wing organizations opposing the ratification of the Security Treaty, which was then sensationalized in Japanese media reports. Whether this concern ultimately impacted the Japanese government's final decision remains unclear. Nevertheless, the author considers it important to discuss and examine this issue because it was a historical fact that happened during the Karel Doorman incident. The Karel Doorman incident occurred alongside the massive campaign against the Japan-US Security Treaty in May-June 1960, which was said to have been the largest social protest movement in post-war Japan.⁷⁷ The protests eventually led to the ratification of the treaty on June 19, 1960, but they significantly weakened Kishi's administration and contributed to his eventual resignation in July 1960. Thus, by the middle of 1960, the domestic situation in Japan was experiencing instability. This instability was further exacerbated by the surprising demands from the Netherlands and Indonesia during the Karel Doorman incident, which added extra difficulties for policymakers in Japan.

Beyond ideological expressions of solidarity, some protest groups were reported to have planned direct action, raising the possibility of physical confrontation and heightening the sense of domestic insecurity. A newspaper in Indonesia, for instance, published an article stating that the Indonesian youth organization, *Pemuda Rakjat*, in Tokyo had sent a request to *Zengakuren*, a Japanese leftist student association, which was also involved in many protests against the Japan-US Security Treaty, inviting that organization to join them in protesting against the arrival of the Karel Doorman (Berita Indonesia 1960e). The situation was further aggravated when *The Japan Times* reported that the Japanese Dockworkers' Union (*Zenkōwan*) stated they would use force to prevent the Dutch aircraft carrier Karel Doorman from entering Japanese ports. *Zenkōwan* planned to use a "Port Arthur" strategy, which involved a blockade where its members would block the mouth of Yokohama Port between the red and white lighthouses by lining up five or six ferry boats. If a Maritime Defense Force ship came to assist in pulling the "Doorman," the thick ropes would be cut with a "battle axe" when they were taut. If the Dutch carrier attempted to push through the lined-up ferry boats into the port, they would try to block it again with a zig-zag maneuver. *Zenkōwan*'s members' tugboats would harass the carrier by dragging three or four ferry boats in the Dutchmen's path. Moreover, water and food supplies would be denied to the carrier, and a picket line would aim to prevent Dutch sailors from

77 The Japan-US Security Treaty, originally signed in 1951, allowed for the presence of US military bases in Japan and committed Japan to support US military actions. The treaty was set to be renewed in 1960, leading to a surge in public concern and dissent. Many Japanese citizens believed that the treaty compromised Japan's sovereignty by allowing the United States to maintain military bases on Japanese soil. There was also a growing sentiment that Japan was not fully independent and that the presence of US troops undermined Japan's autonomy in foreign affairs. The opposition was also influenced by broader cultural and ideological currents, including pacifism and anti-militarism, which were particularly strong in Japan after the trauma of the war. Many citizens also felt that aligning too closely with the US military contradicted Japan's post-war identity as a peaceful nation. The Kishi administration, which was perceived as overly pro-American and authoritarian, faced opposition from various political factions, including leftist groups, labor unions, and student organizations. These groups saw the treaty as a continuation of Japan's post-war alignment with US interests, rather than a reflection of Japan's own national interests. One of the most notable incidents during this period was the violent clashes between protesters and police, particularly during a significant protest on June 15, 1960. For further details, please refer to Gatu (2024).

disembarking (Baba 1960). Moreover, on September 1, 1960, the Port Workers' Union Cooperation Council visited the Deputy Mayor of Yokohama to prevent the Karel Doorman from docking. In Yokohama, Kanagawa Prefecture, the Kanagawa Citizens' Council for the Abolition of Anpo and the Yokohama Port Workers' Union Council, comprising 18 unions with a total of 20,000 members, issued a statement demanding that the government not allow the Dutch warship carrying a mission of classic colonialism to dock in Yokohama. They firmly declared that they would refuse to engage in unloading, mooring, or water supply services if the ship docked. The Kanagawa Citizens' Council also supported the protest by mobilizing the masses (Akahata 1960e). Although these strategies were not carried out due to the visit's revocation, and there was no direct connection between the Karel Doorman and the Security Treaty ratification, it would have definitely become something that would have embarrassed the Japanese government if it had actually been implemented.

In the same article, the writer Baba stated that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs "feared" that if such a plan [*Zenkōwan's* "Port Arthur" strategy] were realized, it could be "worse" than the Hagerty incident. In another article, *The Japan Times* quoted a statement from *Algemeen Dagblad*, a Dutch daily newspaper based in Rotterdam, which claimed that the Japanese government made its decision not solely because of Indonesia's stance but rather due to concerns over domestic reactions. The article also drew a parallel with the Hagerty incident and the visit of President Eisenhower.⁷⁸ But is this really the case? Based on a thorough examination of the available archives, the author did not find any concrete evidence that this concern directly influenced the Japanese government. Instead, at a press conference, Minister Kosaka denied claims that Japan canceled the visit due to yielding to leftist pressure; instead, he emphasized that the decision "stemmed solely from its diplomatic considerations" (*The Japan Times* 1960f).⁷⁹ Moreover, no clear archival evidence has been found to indicate that this threat played a role in Japan's decision-making deliberations, making it difficult to determine whether this concern had any influence on Japan's final decision. Nevertheless, it is also worth questioning whether this was genuinely the case, or whether the Japanese government deliberately downplayed the influence of leftist pressure to avoid a decline in its popularity or a loss of public trust.

4. Conclusion

The "Indonesia Factor," with its associated issues and pressures, after a comprehensive analysis, was in fact not merely a series of isolated protests and threats but rather a carefully orchestrated model

78 James Hagerty, a White House Press Secretary, was involved in a significant diplomatic issue between the United States and Japan. On June 10, he arrived at Tokyo's Haneda Airport to prepare for a visit from President Eisenhower later that month. After arriving, Hagerty was picked up by the US Ambassador to Japan, Douglas MacArthur II. However, as they left the airport, their car was surrounded by 6,000 Japanese protesters who were against the changes to the US-Japan Security Treaty, part of the larger 1960 protests. The protesters shook the car for over an hour, broke its windows, smashed the taillights, climbed on the roof, and yelled anti-American slogans and protest songs. Eventually, MacArthur and Hagerty had to be rescued by a US Marine helicopter, which created lasting images of what became known as the "Hagerty Incident." This event shocked many people in Japan because it was seen as a serious insult to a foreign visitor and led to the cancellation of Eisenhower's visit due to safety concerns. It also resulted in the forced resignation of Japanese Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi shortly afterward (*The Japan Times* 1960g; please also refer to Kapur 2018, 27–33, for further details).

79 This has been confirmed in the MOFA archive: *Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 3 C'2.4.0.2-5-1*, Opening Remarks of Foreign Minister Kosaka at the Foreign Press conference on September 5, 1960.

of diplomatic pressure under the aggressive leadership of President Sukarno. Unlike traditional diplomatic approaches, this strategy was characterized by Indonesia's assertive use of diplomatic, economic, and reputational leverage to influence the decisions of other nations. Sukarno's Indonesia effectively harnessed anti-colonial sentiment, both domestically and internationally, as a strategic tool to galvanize support and apply pressure.⁸⁰ The nation's firm opposition to colonialism was not just a rhetorical position but a fundamental aspect of its foreign policy identity, deeply rooted in the historical struggle for independence. This ideological stance granted Indonesia significant influence, enabling it to rally support from other Asian and African countries that had experienced colonial rule. As demonstrated in the Karel Doorman incident, Indonesia's diplomatic strategy was effective in compelling Japan to reconsider its stance, highlighting that such assertive tactics were not irrational but a brave and, to some extent, calculated effort to protect and advance Indonesia's national interests on the global stage.

To address the main research question: "How did the economic and diplomatic issues brought by the 'Indonesia Factor' influence Japan's prioritization of its relationship with Indonesia over the Netherlands during the Karel Doorman incident?" This study reveals an explanation. Indonesia's explicit threats to sever diplomatic and economic ties, backed by its parliament and reinforced by the potential suspension of major Japanese-led projects such as NOSODECO, SUNIDECO, and the Kalimantan Forest Development, posed substantial risks to Japan's postwar economic gains in Southeast Asia. These projects, many tied to the 1958 war reparations agreement, were to some extent central to Japan's strategy of integrating itself into the region's economy and securing vital resources after losing access to China. Facing the prospect of major economic losses and long-term damage to its strategic foothold in Indonesia, Japanese leaders concluded that allowing the Dutch warship's visit would undermine economic cooperation with Jakarta, prompting the decision to revoke the port-call permission despite its cost to Japan-Netherlands relations.

Beyond economic considerations, this study highlights the diplomatic dimension, particularly the reputational pressure exerted by Asian and African countries, which also played a pivotal role in influencing Japan's decision-making. The Japanese government's concerns extended beyond its bilateral relations with Indonesia to encompass broader implications for its diplomatic standing among newly independent nations. Japan's reluctance to appear unsupportive of anticolonial movements was not merely a matter of preserving its image; it was a strategic consideration shaped by Cold War dynamics. The United States and other Western bloc nations, driven by their own geopolitical objectives, sought to maintain influence in Asia and Africa, where the Soviet Union and its allies actively supported anticolonial struggles, including through the provision of military aid. For Japan, which aspired to act as a "bridge" between the West and the decolonizing world, maintaining solidarity with Asian and African nations was crucial. Allowing the Karel Doorman to dock in Yokohama risked being interpreted as a gesture of support for Dutch colonialism, potentially alienating these countries

80 Even Japanese archival records note that on the morning of September 1, 1960, following Indonesia's resolution to sever economic ties with Japan, President Sukarno summoned Foreign Minister Subandrio. In a foul mood, Sukarno reportedly suggested terminating all diplomatic and economic relations with Japan. Prior to this, he had asked Prime Minister Djuanda Kartawidjaja, "Can Indonesia manage well without cooperation with Japan?"—a question that revealed his own uncertainty. Fully aware that his country was still struggling in the aftermath of independence, Sukarno nevertheless took the risk, even if it meant further harming Indonesia's fragile economy. Perhaps he acted out of a belief that Japan would ultimately yield (MOFA archive: Nihon Gaimushō Vol. 2 C'2.4.0.2-5-1).

and pushing them closer to the Eastern bloc. This reputational pressure was not an abstract concern but one actively discussed at various levels of Japanese policymaking, reflecting the intricate balance Japan sought to maintain between its Western allies and the broader Asian-African community.

This study of the Karel Doorman incident also sheds light on the distinctive characteristics of Japanese diplomacy, particularly its nuanced approach in situations where Japan was compelled to navigate conflicting geopolitical pressures that do not seem to have changed even today. On the one hand, Japan's actions in this incident can be interpreted as a display of diplomatic prudence, deftly managing the competing expectations of Indonesia, Western allies, and other Asian and African nations. On the other hand, they may also reveal a persistent ambiguity in Japanese foreign policy, a tendency to adopt a dual approach, seeking to maintain relations with opposing sides without committing fully to either. Such ambiguity has been a consistent feature of Japan's diplomatic posture, evident in its efforts to balance relations between the United States and China in later years, or more recently, Japan's stance of supporting Israel's antiterrorism campaign while simultaneously providing humanitarian aid to Gaza during the Gaza genocide from 2023 to the present. The Karel Doorman case thus provides a historical lens through which to explore the broader question of whether this strategy of diplomatic ambiguity can continue to protect Japan's interests in today's increasingly unpredictable geopolitical landscape. As the world becomes increasingly polarized, Japan may once again face similar dilemmas, making the lessons from this historical case study all the more relevant and potentially applicable to future studies.

While this study provides a comprehensive analysis of Japan's decision-making process during the Karel Doorman incident, these limitations should be acknowledged. The concept of "reputational pressure" is explored qualitatively without a standardized framework for measuring its impact. Although the study draws on archival records, official documents, and public statements to illustrate how Japanese policymakers were concerned about reputational damage, the lack of a clear metric for assessing reputational pressure makes it difficult to determine its weight compared to economic factors. Further research could develop a more standardized approach to measuring reputational pressure and explore alternative perspectives beyond those of Japanese decision-makers. In addition, the study does not explore the subsequent interactions and diplomatic developments between Japan and the Netherlands following the cancellation of the Karel Doorman visit. While Japan's final decision can be seen as a "victory" for Indonesia, this study does not examine how Japan and the Netherlands managed their bilateral relations in the aftermath. This omission limits the understanding of the broader diplomatic impact and the long-term consequences of the incident on Japan-Netherlands relations. It also overlooks Japan's strategy for dealing with another difficult situation posed by the Netherlands, sometime after the cancellation of the Karel Doorman's visit, which was the secret transportation by the Netherlands of Dutch troops in civilian clothing to the West Irian region using a commercial KLM aircraft that transited through Haneda Airport in Tokyo in 1962. Further research addressing this aspect would provide a more comprehensive view of the diplomatic dynamics during this period.

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