



ADOLPHUS G. STUDER

Brevet Major U. S. Volunteers
Consul at Singapore, India
Consul at Barmen, Germany
General Supt. of Education, Louisiana

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Did an Iowan Start a War in the Indies?

BY JAMES WARREN GOULD

One of the legends of the Indies is that an Iowan, Adolphus G. Studer, caused a war which ended in the conquest of the last remaining independent area of the Indies, the Sultanate of Atjeh. Here, for the first time, the true story can be told through the courtesy of the Dutch Government which opened its archives to this writer.

Adolphus G. Studer was born in Bern Canton, Switzerland in 1831.¹ Having come to the United States as a young man, he was naturalized an American citizen. As first lieutenant in the 15th Iowa Infantry under General W. W. Belknap, he was wounded at the battle of Shiloh (1862) and promoted to captain. He resigned from active service before the end of the war, but served as captain and then brevet major in the United States Volunteers until 1866. He then took part in the Reconstruction, serving as General Superintendent of Education in Louisiana. He then resided on a farm fifteen miles from Des Moines, Iowa, while working with the State Bank of Iowa. With the influence of his former commanding officer, W. W. Belknap, who had become Secretary of War, he was appointed American Consul

¹ For Mr. Studer's early life the help of Emory H. English of the ANNALS OF IOWA, Iowa State Dept. of History, Des Moines, is gratefully acknowledged. His official career is from U.S. Dept of State, Consular Reports, Foreign Affairs Records Group, National Archives, Washington (hereafter cited as *State*), *Singapore*, Vols. 8 and 20; *Barmen*, Vol. 5 in *State*; Register 1889 and 1892 in *State*; and van de Putte to Read, March 6, 1873 in *Buiten.*, *Singapore*, Vol. 100.

in Singapore in 1871. He served there faithfully until 1899 when his health and age suggested a transfer to Frankfurt. The Department of State found a vacancy for him at Barmen, Germany, where he served until he was 62. He was then transferred back to Singapore where he served only a short time longer, but he continued to live there until 1894.

The reader will agree that from such a long career of devotion to relatively obscure public service and conservative antecedents one can hardly expect the adventuresome disposition of a filibusterer.

Studer arrived in Singapore in September, 1871. Up to that time the political interests of the United States government in Sumatra² had always been completely non-territorial. The United States has confined its political contacts to the protection of American citizens and their commerce. To implement this, the conclusion of treaties of commerce and navigation had been frequently suggested. Although the Americans never desired any territorial concessions, the fact that commercial treaties were often used by the Europeans as the prelude to conquest probably made the Europeans fear similar American ambitions. There were certainly many opportunities to conclude treaties with the independent powers of Sumatra, or even obtain territorial concessions if they had been desired. However, the adventurer Walter M. Gibson was the only American who ever had any such territorial ambitions, and in them he did not have the support of his government. Yet repeatedly in history the Americans have been accused by the European powers in Sumatra of having territorial ambitions. Upon investigation these claims prove to have had no substance.

In 1872, at a time when American mercantile interests in Sumatra were virtually at an end, the United States briefly considered a commercial treaty with Atjeh. This was the last opportunity to conclude such a pact,

² See Gould, James W., "Sumatra—America's Pepperpot 1784-1873," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, Vol. 92, (1956), Nos. 2, 3 and 4.

considering that commercial interests in Atjeh terminated in 1866. It could hardly be expected that the treaty would have received any support in the United States, let alone agreement to a political concession.

Dutch historians have almost universally accepted the story of the origins of the Dutch conquest of Atjeh that was given out by the Netherlands government to justify its actions.³ That story, in summary, is that the Atjehnese refused to live up to their promises of 1858 to suppress "piracy," and while the Dutch were negotiating this matter, the Sultan's envoys treacherously concluded treaties with agents of various foreign powers at Singapore, primarily the United States. To forestall foreign intervention, the Dutch armies invaded Atjeh. Therefore the actions of the American Consul in Singapore, Adolphus G. Studer, have been put in the worst light of conspiracy against the Dutch. By implication, the motives of the United States government are impugned.

As the history books now stand, the United States is partially responsible for the tragic Atjeh war which lasted thirty-five years and cost many Dutch and Indonesian lives. Since this is the only story presented, American and English authors have accepted it without question. However, several obscure Dutch publications suggest some contrivance of the story by a Dutch agent.⁴ Very recently the eminent Dutch historian, Bernard H. M. Vlekke, quite independently also discovered documents in the American archives which suggest such a conspiracy.⁵

³ Netherlands Ministry of Colonies, *Officieele Beschiedenen betreffende het ontstaan van den oorlog tegen Atjeh in 1873* (The Hague: Alg. Landsdrukkery, 1881) is the usual source of Dutch historians, supplemented by the account of the Minister of Colonies, Eg. de Waal, *Onze Indische Financien*, Nicwe Reeks, Vol. 6, pp. 230-242.

⁴ A Dutch naval officer in Atjeh referred to the discovery of American plots through the "slyness and cunning" of a Dutch agent: J. A. Kruyt, *Atjeh en de Atjehers* (Leiden: Kolff, 1877), p. 8. E. Nyland, *Schetsen uit Insulinde* (Utrecht: H. E. Breyer, 1892), p. 224, says that a Dutch spy "played a very treacherous role in this affair."

⁵ B. H. M. Vlekke, *Nusantara*, pp. 299-300, written while the author was in the United States, was the first recognition of the American documents.

ORIGINS OF THE ATJEH WAR; THE SUMATRA TREATY

That expansive movement of the Dutch in Sumatra, which was stimulated in part by an American filibusterer Gibson in 1853, had by no means ended in the 1860's.⁶ The absorption of the native states of the East Coast was almost as slow a process as it had been in the west. This was particularly true because the British protested the "arbitrary and encroaching policy" and "aggression" of the Dutch every inch of the way.⁷ By 1865 the tide of advance had reached the borders of Atjeh proper after the absorption of the former feudatory states of Atjeh on the East Coast. Dutch interest in the border march of Tamiang, which lay barely within Atjeh like Trumon on the West Coast, naturally brought up the declarations in the Treaty of 1824 relative to the independence of Atjeh.

Dutch advances were largely conducted from their East Coast administrative center of Riau. Since the British watchpost for North Sumatra was at Singapore, the Dutch Consul there was in a key position to gauge British opinion and to assist moves at Riau. Holding the post of Netherlands Consul at Singapore was a British citizen, William H. Read. He strongly favored Dutch expansion and was a close acquaintance of the Dutch Minister of Colonies, Fransen van de Putte. Read's character is revealed by his own letter in which he quoted the British governor of the Straits saying, "The Straits people have no confidence in your sincerity."⁸

It is clear from both the Dutch and the British ar-

⁶ Lt. Gen. J. van Swieten who commanded the Second Expedition against Atjeh in 1873 cited Gibson's attempt as an example of the designs of foreign powers that justified (to the author) the Atjeh War: *De Waarheid over Onze Vestiging in Atjeh* (Zalt Bommel: Joh. Noman, 1879), p. 7.

⁷ For example, British Minister in The Hague to the Dutch Foreign Office, April 13, 1863 in Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Buitenlands Zaken*, Algemein Ryksarchief, The Hague (hereafter cited as *Buiten*), *Legatie Groot Brittanie*, Vol. 192; Brit. Minister to Foreign office, May 27, 1865 in *Buiten*, Vol. 3136.

⁸ W. W. Read to Fransen van de Putte, Oct. 25, 1864, No. 9769, p. 2 in *Buiten*, Vol. 3136.

chives that until mid-1868 there was no suggestion whatever of changing the status of Atjeh, or of British complaint about "piracy." British complaints for over four decades were solely directed against discriminatory trade restrictions which resulted from the Dutch expansion in Sumatra.

The first change came in mid-1868 when Engelbertus de Waal became the Dutch Minister of Colonies. This man had considerable experience in the Indies and was well-known for his writings on colonial policy. At this time Read visited The Hague and with the knowledge of Dutch officials approached the British Foreign Office about problems in Sumatra and was able to report home that the British were favorable to some proposal of settlement.⁹ Accordingly, in his first interview with the British Minister at The Hague, Admiral E. A. J. Harris, de Waal mentioned the Dutch acquisition of Atjeh for the first time. The suggestion originated with the Dutch and had no excuse except the *mission civilisatrice*.¹⁰

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 gave Atjeh new strategic importance, placing it on the new gateway to the Orient.¹¹ After protracted negotiations between the Dutch and British, largely over Dutch reservations about free trade, a treaty was finally concluded with the essential provision which had originated with the Dutch suggestion, withdrawing British objections to Dutch conquest of Atjeh.¹² The British consent was incorporated in the famous Sumatra Treaty of November 2, 1871, as Article One:

Her Britannic Majesty desists from all objections against the ex-

⁹ Read to van de Putte, May 8, 1863, No. 3552, p. 3 in *Buiten*. Vol. 3136.

¹⁰ Harris to Foreign Secretary Stanley, July 24, 1868, No. 66 in Great Britain, Foreign Office, *F.O. 37/487*, Public Record Office London.

¹¹ For Dutch recognition of this factor, see H. Blink, *Opkomst en Ontwikkeling van Sumatra als Economisch-Geographisch Gebied*, p. 70 and E. S. de Klerck, *History of the Netherlands East Indies*, Vol. 2, pp. 342, 336.

¹² Article One of November draft and Article Eight of final treaty of 1870 in *Buiten* Vol. 3136, Nos. 7455 and 1952.

tensions of the Netherland Dominion on any part of the island of Sumatra and consequently from the reserve in that respect contained in the notes exchanged by the Netherlands and British plenipotentiaries at the conclusion of the treaty of 17 March 1824.¹³

Dutch and British archives clearly show that: (1) the Dutch contemplated the annexation of Atjeh since 1868, and insisted on the use of military force after 1870, (2) that the Dutch and not the British initiated the idea, and (3) that "piracy" was not a British complaint, but a Dutch excuse for aggression.¹⁴ This should dispel any question of the responsibility for the origins of the war.

THE SINGAPORE PLOT

After the conclusion of the treaty of 1870, the Netherlands Indies Government under Governor-General Junker J. Loudon attempted to obtain Atjehese assent to a new treaty which would annex Atjeh to the Dutch East Indies. The new Dutch overtures to Atjeh were made as tactlessly and were rejected as peremptorily as most of the others of the past 270 years. The Vice President of the Council of the Indies, i.e., equivalent to chief of Loudon's cabinet, Frederik N. Nieuwenhuyzen, was largely responsible for the negotiations.

Most of the local negotiations were conducted by the Resident of Riau, Schiff. There being no direct cable to Batavia, most of Schiff's messages passed through the hands of the Dutch Consul General in Singapore, William H. Read, who we have seen was

¹³ Text in Sir Edward Hertslet, Comp., [Commercial] *Treaties and Conventions between Great Britain and Foreign Powers* (31 Vols., London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1827-1935,) Vol. 13, pp. 665-666; Dutch copy is Kabinet No. 3/218 in *Buiten., Legatie Gr. Brit.*, Vol. 193.

¹⁴ There is not one piece of evidence in the American or Dutch archives to prove that the United States ever complained about piracy as asserted by some authors, for example, A. W. S. O'Sullivan's introduction to C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, Vol. 1, pp. vii, ix; A. Kruisheer, *Atjeh 1896* (2 Vols., Weltevreden: Visser, 1913), Vol. 2, pp. 240, 242. de Klerck, *History*, Vol. 2, gives a fair picture of the truth of "piracy" stories (p. 342) and notes that Dutch conquests certainly did not eliminate the abuses (p. 359). Nor is there any documentary evidence that a British fear of an American base in Atjeh motivated British concessions as asserted by de Klerck, *History*, Vol. 2, p. 336 and Amry Vandenbosch, *The Dutch East Indies* (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1941), p. 376.

deeply interested in Dutch expansion in Sumatra. In 1868 his visit to Europe had paved the way to British abnegation with respect to Atjeh as we have mentioned, and another visit to the Dutch Minister of Colonies probably concerned Sumatra. Since 1861 Read had "given aid" to an indigent Sumatran prince, Tunku Mohamed Arifin of Moco-Moco. Arifin acknowledged being a Dutch subject and had applied for a job under the Dutch in Singapore. This was granted to him, for Read gave him money frequently thereafter, and Arifin often reported to Read about various political affairs.¹⁵

According to Studer, it was in the summer of 1872 that Arifin first approached him.¹⁶ Arifin inquired whether the United States would help him regain his father's throne in Sumatra. Studer very properly replied that the United States could not interfere in the matter. When Arifin asked why America did not annex colonies in the Indies, such as Atjeh, Studer astutely replied "that it was not our policy to annex in like manner; and, at most, all we wanted, was to make treaties of peace and commerce."

THE ATJEHNESE APPEAL FOR AID

By September 1872 it was common knowledge that the Dutch were gathering forces to invade Atjeh. The Atjehnese premier, Panglima Tibang, went to Singapore to appeal to the Governor of the Straits under the Raffles treaty of 1819, but the British adhered to their most recent agreement not to obstruct a Dutch con-

¹⁵ First use of restricted material in the Dutch Archives: *Procés Verbal* of Arifin, July 27, 1873, encl. 1 to Minister of Colonies to Foreign Minister, Nov. 15, 1873, No. Q 30 in *Buiten., Stukken betreffende den Oorlog met Atjeh* (hereafter cited as Atjeh), Vol. RaIII (July 1, 1873-Jan. 1, 1874). Dutch writers are aware of Read's employment of Arifin, for instance, van Swieten, *De Waarheid*, p. 11 and de Klerck, *History*, Vol. 2, pp. 346-347.

¹⁶ The date of their initial meeting varies: 1864 in Schiff to Loudon, Feb. 24, 1873, p. 2 in file May 14, 1873 Kab. 5, *Atjeh*, Vol. RaI (Jan. 1-July 1, 1873); 1863 in Read to Gen. Secretary, Batavia, Feb. 28, 1873, No. 26, *Singapore* Vol. 8, p. 144 in *State*; 1861 in Arifin to Read, Feb. 14, 1873 in file May 14, 1873 Kab. 5, *Atjeh*, *RaI*.

quest of Atjeh.¹⁷ They put Tibang off with false assurances of Dutch good intentions. Ingratiating himself with the Atjehnese premier, Read's agent, Arifin, was able to become his spokesman. In that capacity he approached Studer on September 17, 1872, and appealed for American aid and a treaty of assistance. To this Studer merely asked for a written appeal.

It was probably a result of Arifin's passing this reply to him that Panglima Tibang said, "I hope to come back here soon with a letter from our prince to the Consul." Arifin told Read about the possibility of a written request for aid. But curiously Read failed to report to Batavia that which he did report six months later in a tone of alarm implying recent discovery. Studer became quite enthusiastic about the treaty idea, but mentioned only to a few Americans the resources of Sumatra, the benefit to navigation, and "how a now happy and independent people would escape serfdom." However, Studer said, "In annexation I did not believe."

UNITED STATES NAVY CONSIDERS ATJEH

One of the Americans to whom Studer mentioned the idea of a treaty was Rear Admiral Thornton A. Jenkins, commanding the squadron of the United States Navy at Hongkong. Jenkins had arrived at Singapore on November 28, 1872, with his two largest warships, the "Colorado" and the "Lackawana." This was in no way connected with Sumatra events and merely followed the established custom of waiting for the expected arrival of a new flagship.¹⁸

Studer talked with Jenkins about the Atjeh treaty, and suggested that Jenkins stop at Atjeh. However,

¹⁷ The following facts, except where noted, are drawn from these sources: Arifin's *Proces Verbal* of July 27, 1873; Arifin's Diary in the same file; and Studer to Secretary H. Fish, March 18, 1873, No. 71, *Singapore*, Vol. 10 in *State* (hereafter cited as Studer's account). The accounts are not contradictory unless so indicated.

¹⁸ Admiral Jenkins to Secy. of Navy, Dec. 3, 1872, No. 78, U.S. Navy, *Asiatic Station, Jenkins*, Naval Records Groups, National Archives, Washington (hereafter cited as *Jenkins*), Vol. 1872, item No. 129.

when Jenkins heard rumors of war, he very properly decided not to go there lest he become involved.¹⁹

Shortly after this, in mid-December, Read went off to Bangkok on official business. This departure is more curious, particularly when the newspapers predicted war with Atjeh at any moment. One wonders whether Read was aware that war was not as imminent as the public believed and absented himself to avoid any suspicion of collusion with the subsequent actions of his employee Arifin. The Atjehnese Premier arrived just after Read left, and went first to Riau to forestall an expected Dutch ultimatum, waiting there for six weeks for a favorable Dutch reply.

When Admiral Jenkins returned to Singapore from a trip to Calcutta on January 15, 1873, Arifin approached him and asked whether he would conclude a treaty with Atjeh the next time he came back. Jenkins replied that unlike the British and Dutch, the United States had no colonies or territorial ambitions. When Jenkins left Singapore on January 23, he had made it perfectly clear to Studer and Arifin that he was not interested in visiting Atjeh.²⁰

THE ATJEH-AMERICAN TREATY

Two days later, Premier Tibang arrived from Riau on the Dutch warship *Marnix* which had offered to take him home to Atjeh. In view of Read's knowledge of the possible appeal to foreign powers, it is surprising that the Dutch should have given Tibang an opportunity to stop at Singapore unless they desired an appeal to be made. Arifin, the Dutch agent, arranged an interview between Tibang and Studer on January 29, at which he was to be present. Studer's version of the interview is that Tibang said the Sultan was glad to make a treaty, particularly in view of current Dutch pressures. After displaying his powers to treat, he asked Studer if he were ready to negotiate. Studer's

¹⁹ Studer's account, p. 9; Jenkins to Sec. Navy, April 24, 1873, No. 24, *Jenkins*, Vol. 1873, No. 24.

²⁰ Studer's account, p. 9; Jenkins to Sec. Navy, Jan. 19, 1873, No. 5 and Feb. 16, 1873, No. 7, *Jenkins*, Vol. 1873, Nos. 10, 13.

report says, "I told him at once that I had no power at all to make a treaty, neither was I authorized to ask for one . . .," but he adhered to his original offer to transmit treaty proposals to Washington. Tibang then said he had no idea what terms the United States might want. Studer foolishly got drawn into a discussion of this by asking what Atjeh would give. Tibang referred to the decline of American trade, which he hoped to revive, and offered Atjehnese protection of American trade and an agreement not to treat with any other powers. When Tibang kept insisting on American desires, Studer suggested things like extra-territoriality, property rights, security, religious freedom, extradition, etc. Nothing was put into writing.

The account which Read obtained from Arifin agrees almost entirely with Studer's, that Studer said that he was not empowered to make a treaty and that the Atjehnese would have to draw it up, and then he would send copies to Washington and Hongkong. Read's account differs essentially in adding the story of how the treaty was put into writing. "In order to assure himself of the contents of the treaty Mohamed Arifin made, so he said, in the form of the treaty concluded between the various nations and Siam . . .," a draft of which he read to Studer. That Arifin came armed with a draft of a treaty puts a new complexion on this conspiracy. It may be more than coincidence that his employer was currently interested in Siam. Studer felt he could find a better example of a treaty, and read the text of the Brunei Treaty which was translated into Malay and written down by Arifin "then and there."²¹

Apparently realizing that he still had nothing to prove that this dictation was Studer's "treaty," Arifin went back on January 31 and told Studer that Tibang wanted a letter saying that he had called on Studer. Without realizing that the letter would be used

²¹ Read to The Hague, June 15, 1873, No. 156, *Buiten., Singapore, Copying Book, 1873, Vol. 8, pp. 423-424.*

against him, Studer wrote Tibang a purely social letter dated February 5, 1873, only mentioning his visit, and nothing else.

Then, what is most incredible, Arifin did nothing for two weeks, not even mentioning the interview to the Dutch Vice Consul Meier, or to the Commander of the *Marnix* who had access to all of the confidential material on war preparations. One suspects that Read was essential for the correct transmission of the news.²² Arifin also managed to compromise the Italian Consul by receiving an appeal from the Atjehnese.

After receiving a letter from Arifin, Read returned to Singapore on February 13 and sent Arifin off to Riau to tell Resident Schiff, giving him the rather generous travel allowance of \$2 per mile in addition to the \$25 passage money. After his return from Riau, passage paid by Schiff, Read gave Arifin about \$45, and asked Batavia's approval.²³ Was this the price of treachery?

For unexplained reasons Read waited two days after his return to report Arifin's news, and then telegraphed only the following alarming teaser:

"Intrigues of great interest discovered of Atjehnese envoys with the American and Italian Consuls which may call for immediate consideration. Details by the first boat."²⁴

The next day he sent the following details by telegram:

"The envoys showed the American and Italian Consuls a general letter from the Sultan and sought help against the Dutch. American Consul at once promised that he would write Admiral Jenkins in China and made a treaty of 12 articles which must be signed by the Sultan and sent back here . . . The Americans will apparently be ready to go in two months. This information can be given full credence."²⁵

The effect in Batavia was electric. A telegram was sent off to The Hague: "Consul General at Singapore informs of treachery of Atjeh. Mission there of Amer-

²² Read to Loudon, Sept. 6, 1873, *Atjeh*, RaIII.

²³ Read to Loudon, March 3, 1873, p. 2, *Atjeh*, RaI.

²⁴ Read to Loudon, Feb. 15, 1873, *Buiten.*, *Singapore*, Vol. 8, p. 133.

²⁵ Read to Loudon, Feb. 16, 1873, *Buiten.*, *Singapore*, Vol. 8, pp. 134-135.

ican and Italian Consuls against us. Both have meddled in the question . . . American Consul presented a treaty to Atjeh and writes to Admiral in China."²⁶ In The Hague on February 18 the King was asked to consider the necessity of fulfillment of obligations of the treaty of 1824 giving security to Atjeh, with peaceful measures, of course, "as long as we are not compelled by Atjeh itself to [use] force."²⁷ The Foreign Office was asked to ask Washington and Rome to disavow their Consul's actions and to clear the matter with other great powers, on the basis of Dutch protection of commerce.²⁸ A note was sent off to the Netherlands Minister in Washington which authorized him to read to Secretary of State Fish a note describing how Dutch had "assumed the task of assuring the security of navigation and commerce" of Atjeh according to treaties with the British, that they had learned "that Atjehnese delegates are having relations with the Consul of the United States at Singapore, that he had the intention to conclude a treaty with them and he even is preparing to call upon the Admiral of the American fleet in the China Sea." The Dutch government considered that such actions might increase Atjehnese resistance, and was certain that the United States cabinet would not want to impede the Dutch, but rather give sympathy and support to their "*action civilisatrice*."²⁹ As an afterthought, the next day the Dutch asked the Secretary of State to request that Studer abstain from negotiations.³⁰

The Hague replied skeptically to Batavia on February 19:

If you do not doubt the truth of the information of Consul

²⁶ Van de Putte to Foreign Office, Feb. 18, 1873 LaA4, p. 1, *Atjeh* RaI.

²⁷ Van de Putte to The King, Feb. 18, 1873 LaA4, p. 2, *Atjeh* RaI.

²⁸ Van de Putte to Foreign Office, Feb. 18, 1873 LaA4, pp. 2-3, *Atjeh* RaI.

²⁹ Foreign Office to Neth. Min. Washington, Feb. 20, 1873, No. 5/16 Kab., Buiten., *Moelykheden met Amerika over de Blokkade, 1872-1874* (hereafter cited as *Blokkade*).

³⁰ Foreign Office to Neth. Min. Washington, Feb. 21, 1873, No. 3/17 Kab. in *Blokkade*.

Singapore . . . send strong naval force to Atjeh to ask explanation and assurance of two-faced and treacherous conduct.³¹

THE OPENING OF THE ATJEH WAR

This reply was as much as approval for invasion, and without even waiting for written details from Read, Loudon summoned an extraordinary meeting of the Council of the Indies and military leaders on February 21. The next morning Loudon telegraphed The Hague this summary of their decisions:

Council of Netherlands Indies at Batavia presided over by me. General and Admiral present. It agreed on my proposal to send a commissioner with four battalions to Atjeh as soon as possible with an ultimatum to recognize us as sovereign or war. We must confront America with fait accompli. Vice President [Nieuwenhuyzen] is the man . . . LOUDON³²

In other words, Read had furnished Loudon with his *casus belli*. Atjeh was given only two choices: to surrender under duress or to fight. Every Netherlander who knew the history of Atjeh knew what the answer would be.

If Loudon had any doubts at all that he had a good excuse, they were dispelled on February 23 by the receipt of Read's mail report. Loudon's reaction was: "As long as our sovereignty is not recognized, there is still the foreign interference to threaten us like the Sword of Damocles."³³

Before Studer became aware of the plot against him, Read used him for further evidence. When Arifin returned from Riau to Singapore on March 1, he probably reported to Read for instructions. He then went to Studer and asked for another letter addressed to Tibang, which he was given.³⁴ The letter was purely a social greeting with expressions of good will.³⁵ How-

³¹ Loudon to van de Putte, March 1, 1873, p. 1, in Netherlands Ministry of Colonies, *Kolonien*, Depot Schaarsbergen (hereafter cited as Depot), file April 8, 1873, p. 1.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³³ Loudon to van de Putte, Feb. 25, 1873, p. 20 in file April 7, 1873 No. M8 Geh., *Depot*.

³⁴ Arifin's diary, p. 16.

³⁵ Read to Loudon, March 4, 1873, encl. LaC, in *Blokkade*.

ever, Arifin used it to "prove" that Studer had given him simultaneously a plan of defense of Atjeh to carry to Tibang. The diagram is so ridiculous from a military standpoint that it is difficult to see how any historian has ever given credit to it, especially from an officer with five years service in the Civil war.

5000 men in the woods of the South	5000 in the interior	
	Harbor of Atjeh	5000 in the West

Read then tried to isolate Studer diplomatically by discrediting him with the British, who, however, gave no credence to Read's story.³⁶ When informed by the British of Read's accusations, Studer asked to confront Arifin.³⁷ Arifin was hurried out of Singapore within three days and was never allowed to see Studer again despite the latter's repeated requests.³⁸

Meanwhile Dutch apprehensions were increased when the following telegram was received in Batavia:

From a very reliable source news is received that the American fleet at Hongkong has undoubtedly received orders to steam to Atjeh to be there before us.

VICE PRESIDENT [NIEUWENHUYUEN] HEREWITH INFORMED³⁹
Dutch archives only tell that the reliable source was a Dutch trading company with offices in Hongkong.⁴⁰ Needless to say, there never were any such orders. As we have noted, Jenkins had fully made up his mind against any such action and Read knew it.

It is rather difficult to believe that The Hague was unaware of the role Read was playing, for on March 6 van de Putte wrote Read to thank him for his "good

³⁶ Telegram No. 117 in file April 15, 1873, No. Y3 Geh., *Depot*; Studer's account, pp. 21-22.

³⁷ Read to Loudon, March 6, 1873 in *Buiten.*, *Singapore* Vol. 8, p. 193; also May 14, 1873 Kab. 5 in *Atjeh* RaI.

³⁸ Arifin's diary, p. 18.

³⁹ Tel. No. 117 in file April 15, 1873, No. Y3 Geh., *Depot*.

⁴⁰ Loudon to van de Putte, March 6, 1873, file March 6, Kab. 3, *Blokkade*.

services" to the Dutch "especially as we experience them again in all your doings respecting the latest events in the Indian Archipelago, wherefore, allow me, to express you my best thanks."⁴¹

When cables kept pouring in from Batavia adding information about Studer's conspiracy, The Hague moved to obtain American disavowal.⁴² At Dutch urging, the American Minister cabled home:

Netherlands Government wish Consulate at Singapore telegraphed not to meddle with their affairs in Sumatra.⁴³

When this arrived in Washington on March 6, it was the first time that Secretary of State Fish had heard of the affair. Since neither Studer, Batavia or The Hague had even mentioned Atjeh within the last year, he could only reply:

This government has no evidence that Consul at Singapore is meddling—In the absence of specific information, it cannot assume that he is acting otherwise than as duty requires. If the Netherlands Govt. lay any complaints before this Govt., they will be carefully considered and the Consul will be instructed as our obligations to a friendly Power will require.

FISH SECRETARY⁴⁴

Gorham handed a copy of this to Gericke on March 7. When the Dutch persisted, Fish finally telegraphed Studer on March 8:

Netherlands Government represents interference with its affairs in Sumatra. Abstain from interference and report facts.⁴⁵

By March 7 The Hague was able to assure Batavia, "America telegraphs to Singapore for information. From that it further appears that Consul was not empowered" and "from previous telegram from America

⁴¹ Van de Putte to Read, March 6, 1873, *Buiten., Singapore* Vol. 100.

⁴² Loudon to van de Putte, March 5, 1873, file March 5, Kab. 6, *Blokkade*; Gericke to Westenberg, March 5, 1873, file March 5, Kab. 7, *Blokkade*.

⁴³ Gorham to Fish, March 6, 1873, *Despatches from U.S. Legation The Hague*, Vol. 20, in *State*.

⁴⁴ Fish to Gorham, March 6, 1873, *Instructions to the Netherlands*, Vol. 15, pp. 189-190, in *State*.

⁴⁵ Fish to Studer, March 8, 1873, *Despatches to Consuls*, Vol. 69, p. 261 in *State*; Westenberg to Fish, March 8, 1873, *Neth. Notes*, Vol. 7 (1870-1874), in *State*.

it appears negotiations of Consul unknown and unauthorized."⁴⁶ Influenced by the sincerity of American disavowels van de Putte repented approving the ultimatum to Atjeh and sent off a telegram saying "we wish and will not tie your negotiations with prohibition, but think that sovereignty or war, as a demand will make a bad impression elsewhere . . ."⁴⁷

However, van de Putte was to find that a *fait accompli* was being presented to him as well as to the Americans. On March 5, Read had cabled Loudon definite news that the American fleet was not bound for Atjeh.⁴⁸ Despite the receipt of this news by March 6, Nieuwenhuyzen was despatched to Atjeh on March 8.⁴⁹ In reply to The Hague's assurances of American innocence, Loudon presented his ultimatum:

No other security thinkable than recognition of sovereignty. Without that expedition has no purpose. Want positive orders given at once or let me handle this on my own responsibility.⁵⁰

Van de Putte replied on March 10 that he had

No objection if recognition of sovereignty were the result of negotiations. But I cannot approve sovereignty as the first demand . . .⁵¹

When Loudon replied on March 12:

Want it immediately said which demand I must make. I can really find no other starting point and there is no more time to be lost.⁵²

The Hague gave in.

Nieuwenhuyzen stopped to see Read in Singapore and certainly learned that there was no danger from the American fleet, and possibly even heard of the treachery of Arifin. Nieuwenhuyzen proceeded with Arifin to Atjeh, where, when the Sultan refused to re-

⁴⁶ Van de Putte to Gericke, March 12, 1873, p. 2, *Blokkade*.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁸ File March 7, 1873, Kab. 4 in *Blokkade*.

⁵⁰ Van de Putte to Gericke, March 12, 1873, p. 4 in file March 17, Geh. Kab. in *Blokkade*. It is therefore incorrect to state that the U.S. government disavowed the action "too late" as does the French author Octave Collet, *Terres et Peuples de Sumatra*, p. 103. De Klerck, *History*, Vol. 2, p. 348, is more correct on this point.

⁵¹ Van de Putte to Gericke, March 12, 1873, as cited above.

⁵² *Idem*.

ceive the ultimatum from Arifin, Nieuwenhuyzen declared war on March 26, 1873.⁵³ Netherlands troops landed and were driven back into the sea. Stronger forces landed again and again, but were fought back for thirty-five years. The Netherlands had underestimated that great human love of freedom which had inspired their own forefathers to struggle valiantly against Spanish oppression.

The Dutch people certainly did not universally approve of this aggression against Atjeh. There was a great deal of opposition to it at the time, and it is no longer regarded as quite so glorious a feat as many regarded it in the nineteenth century.

CONCLUSIONS

UNITED STATES INNOCENCE. American, Dutch and British archives demonstrate that the United States was guiltless of causing the Atjeh war. The conquest of Atjeh was a premeditated act of the Dutch, for which a *casus belli* was sought. The Commissioner in charge of negotiations with Atjeh had had an earlier success in using the Americans as a scapegoat, and the ruse was repeated. The accusations would be hardly credible to students of American diplomatic history who know the era of 1870 to 1896 as the most non-expansive in American foreign policy. The story is rendered more incredible when we review the lack of American territorial interest in Sumatra since 1874, and the end of economic interests in 1873.

AMERICAN ANTI-COLONIALISM. Had the United States been politically ambitious, the opening of the Atjeh war would have been the finest opportunity to obtain territorial control. The Atjehnese delegates were quite prepared to concede territory and trade privileges to any power that would assist them against Dutch aggression. However, neither the American Consul Studer nor his government desired such concessions. The

⁵³ [Nieuwenhuyzen to Loudan], April 3, 1873 in *Buiten., Singapore, Ingekomenstukken, 1873.*

United States remained true to its tradition of being a non-colonial power.

AMERICAN SYMPATHY WITH INDONESIANS. Far from coveting territory in Atjeh, the American consul Studer was sympathetic to Indonesian independence. It was this very sympathy which led him so easily into the clutches of the Dutch agent. No American could help but listen to the appeals of the premier of a nation which was about to lose its independence, even if he could do nothing. Herein lies the greatest irony of the Studer affair. The Americans were accused of doing what they had no desire to do—acquire territory. They failed to do what their natural sympathies called upon them to do, to aid the cause of freedom from colonial domination. They are remembered incorrectly for starting the Atjeh war, when they should be remembered at least as neutral sympathizers in the fight to preserve the freedom of the last independent area of Indonesia.

Studer was merely the convenient scapegoat whose name has not been vindicated. If Studer erred at all, it was in being naive enough to be trapped by that Dutch spy, Arifin, and his master, Read. From all appearances, he was used by Read and Arifin to create a *casus belli* for the conquest of Atjeh. The steps taken by him on behalf of his government were perfectly within diplomatic and consular usage; he offered to transmit treaty proposals to Washington. Considering that Atjeh was an independent country which no one denies it was then, the United States had as much right to protest the transmittal of treaty proposals by Dutch officials as the Dutch had to protest the same by Americans.

After the war had begun, the Atjehnese sent Studer a formal set of treaty proposals which Arifin had induced them to believe the Americans might sign. Studer transmitted them and the full powers of negotiation signed by the Sultan to Washington, without protest from the Dutch. It was merely deposited in the

files of the State Department, where it remains today.⁵⁴ It is a symbol of the once extensive relations between the United States and Atjeh, now all but forgotten.

⁵⁴ Enclosures to despatch No. 107, Oct. 4, 1873, *Singapore*, Vol. 11, in Dept. of State Archives.

MacArthur Lauds Stonewall Jackson

A tribute by Gen. Douglas MacArthur to Lt. Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson of Civil war fame as "a complete master of the art of war" was released recently by Jay W. Johns, president of the Stonewall Jackson memorial in Lexington, Virginia.

Johns, of Charlottesville, Virginia, was in New York for the unveiling of a bust of Jackson in the New York University hall of fame.

Said MacArthur: "General Jackson was a complete master of the art of war. He used its two greatest elements, initiative and surprise, in unsurpassed applications.

"Swift and sure in attack, dogged and determined in defense, undismayed by adverse odds, he was the ideal battle line commander. His fearless independence of character, his spirited presentation of his own views, however in conflict with those above him in authority, can well serve as a model for every officer of high field responsibility.

"I take great pride in the memory of my three uncles who fought under his inspired leadership."

Johns said MacArthur had accepted an appointment as a sponsor of the Jackson memorial.

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