Imamoera hield zich in zijn antwoord aan de richtlijnen uit Tokio. ‘Whether’, zei hij,

‘it would be allowed [a] high state of autonomy under the reign of the Japanese government or independence in condition of a federal government with Japan, or complete independence: it is a matter of the Japanese government and to be decided by His Majesty. I, the commander-in-chief of an expedition army, have nothing to say upon this question. Besides, according to my opinion, it would not come into question before the completion of this war. I suppose the Japanese Military Administration would last until then. However, a thing which I can say clearly is [that] the prosperity and welfare of [the] natives [will] be developed surely. They will be allowed to participate in the state affairs widely and many positions in the governmental offices will be occupied by them.’

Volgens Soekarno’s relaas aan Cindy Adams deed Imamoera ook enkele mededelingen over Soekarno’s positie, volgens Imamoera zelf deed hij dat in de vorm van instructies aan Nakajama die het contact met Soekarno diende voort te zetten: hij, Imamoera, wist precies welke opvattingen Soekarno er op nahield, hij wilde geen dwang op Soekarno uitoefenen, deze was vrij te beslissen of hij met de Japanners wilde samenwerken ‘or assume an attitude of an unlooker’ – hij mocht evenwel niets tegen Japan gaan ondernemen.

Enkele dagen later vernam Imamoera Soekarno’s antwoord: hij was bereid, ‘to lead the public in the Japanese line for the sake of the Indonesian welfare but in the understanding that he might not be restrained after the end of this war.’

Dat was voor Imamoera aanvaardbaar. Soekarno had op hem, hij had op Soekarno een uitstekende indruk gemaakt – zij zouden elkaar, voordat Imamoera in november Java verliet, nog enkele keren ontmoeten en ‘through these conversations I’, schreef Imamoera, ‘got an impression of him medical students marched into my office. I knew each by name. They . . . carried their distrust on their faces . . . ‘How can you answer the romusha-question?’

I answered dully. Of what consolation were words? ‘There are two ways to work. One is the revolutionary way, which brings bloodshed and death, as witness the Peta-revolt. It came too soon. We were not ready. We are still not ready. The second way is to work with Japan, consolidate your strength and bide your time until her downfall. I follow the second way . . . If I must sacrifice thousands to save millions, I will. We are in a struggle for survival. As leader of this country I cannot afford the luxury of sensitivity.’

. . . The medical students had given me much difficulty. Many were Sjahrir’s pupils.’ (Cindy Adams: Sukarno, p. 192–94)


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