

'HELFRICH: I must decline to accept your recommendation. I must continue resistance as long as I have ships that can fight. I have already ordered a greater concentration of submarines against the enemy in the Java Sea. The enemy will make another attempt to land tonight near Rembang.¹ He may succeed tonight but I shall attack the next wave of transports.

PALLISER: Then I must say to you as the Senior British Naval Officer . . . in this area that my instructions from the Admiralty are to withdraw His Majesty's ships from Java when resistance will serve no further useful purpose. That time, in my judgement, has come. Therefore, I feel it my duty to order His Majesty's ships to India at once, and this I propose to do.

HELFRICH: You realize that you are under my orders?

PALLISER: I do of course. But in this vital matter I cannot do other than my duty as I see it.

HELFRICH: You know that I lent to the British when Malaya was threatened, all of my fighting fleet — my cruisers, my destroyers, my submarines, my air, all of it was placed at your disposal for operations as you saw fit. In doing so we suffered great losses. Furthermore, you did not hold Malaya. Singapore now is in the hands of the enemy. You failed. I think the correct course now is to let me continue to handle this situation and save Java.

PALLISER: I cannot alter my decision.

HELFRICH: Will you delay one hour until I see the Governor General and inform him what you intend to do?

PALLISER: I cannot delay longer. Every minute counts now.

HELFRICH: And you, Admiral Glassford, what do you intend to do?

GLASSFORD: My instructions are to report to you for duty. Any order you give me will be obeyed at once. I wish to say to you, however, that I concur without reservation in the advice given you by your Chief of Staff. I am to retire on Australia by order of my Commander-in-Chief if it is necessary to abandon Java, but that is for you to decide.

HELFRICH: Very well then, Admiral Palliser, you may give any order you wish to His Majesty's ships. Admiral Glassford, you will order your ships to Australia.'

Het verslag van dit gesprek dat Helfrich in zijn memoires geeft², vertoont twee afwijkingen: de woorden *'and save Java'* komen er niet in voor en evenmin de laatste zinnen waarin hij Palliser wegens insubordinatie als het ware uitstootte en Glassford bruusk bevel gaf, de beleidslijn te volgen die hij eerder in het gesprek geweigerd had te aanvaarden. Het einde van het gesprek was volgens Helfrich dat hij, in het midden latend wat nu diende te gebeuren, meedeelde dat hij, zoals hij al had aangekondigd, het gerezen dispuut aan van Starkenborgh zou voorleggen. Inderdaad, hij zocht deze omstreeks negen uur 's morgens op en, aldus

¹ De Japanners wáren daar al geland. ² Dl. I, p. 435–36.