

SECURITY AND PEACE, AT HOME AND IN THE WORLD: BUILDING BRIDGES

Today's security challenges are more complex than ever before and no longer have any regard for national boundaries. They therefore require a global response. As a relatively small country, the Netherlands depends on alliances for its security. A successful security policy can be achieved only through multilateral collaboration in various contexts and organizations. "A secure Netherlands in a secure world" is the title of the new Dutch international security strategy. It is based on three pillars: the defense of its own and its allies' territory, an effective international legal order, and economic security. This article presents the core elements of this strategy, particularly as reflected in the bilateral relationship between the Netherlands and Turkey, two NATO allies.

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“Mankind is a single body and each nation a part of that body. We must never say: ‘What does it matter to me if some part of the world is ailing?’ If there is such an illness, we must concern ourselves with it as though we were having that illness.”

-Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

Security as a Common Good

“Peace at home, peace in the world.” These words were uttered in 1931 by the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and they became the cornerstone of Turkish foreign policy and diplomacy. At a time when most states harbored the illusion that security was a strictly national concern, Atatürk’s words were visionary. He implicitly acknowledged that peace and security cannot be taken for granted and that ensuring the security of one’s own



country can only be achieved in collaboration with others. Safety and security are of mutual concern and entirely interdependent, a fact today no one would question.

Today more than ever, it is clear that security does not begin and end at national borders or, in the case of the Netherlands, at the borders of the European Union or the NATO alliance. The challenges we face are global; so the response must be global too. The dominance of the Westphalian order of sovereign nation states that underpins the current international system is no longer self-evident. With the proliferation of actors within national societies, and of non-state actors in the international arena, the Westphalian system is morphing into a more complex and multidimensional structure. Maintaining security within that structure depends not only on cooperation between countries but also on countries working with international and civil society organizations and private sector entities. Securing the national and international environment now requires a multistakeholder model.

The current Dutch government has based its policy program on the notion that bridges need to be built between these different stakeholders, at home as well as abroad. “Building bridges” is an apt summation of the core task of any modern foreign ministry and of modern diplomacy in an unstable global landscape. Diplomacy is about building

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bridges between all stakeholders and bringing about global stability and international solidarity, in the interest of all. The task of today’s foreign ministries entails more than their traditional role of representing their state’s authority abroad: they now serve as catalysts for the endeavors of various stakeholders in the international order. Modern diplomacy happens at the point of interaction between national and international stakeholders. A wide range of different inputs must be welded into a coherent approach, based on a clear understanding of the national interest.

Today’s security challenges similarly call for a different approach, one which takes into account the interactions with new players in the international arena. This summer the Dutch government presented a comprehensive international security strategy, the title of which neatly mirrors Atatürk’s adage: “A secure Netherlands in a secure world.” Although coincidental, the evocation of Atatürk shows how mainstream the idea of interdependence has become and how visionary his words really were.

In what follows, I will elaborate further on this international security strategy as a response to the complexity of the challenges we face. I will give examples that show how the strategy is reflected in the cooperation between the Netherlands and Turkey, two NATO member countries that maintain very strong ties going back centuries: in 2012 we celebrated 400 years of diplomatic relations, with many bilateral events in Turkey and the Netherlands. Against this background, the Netherlands considers Turkey’s accession to EU to be the logical next step in the development of the bonds between our nations.

The Netherlands’ New International Security Strategy and its Three Pillars

The Netherlands’ international security strategy is a response to the challenges posed by a rapidly changing, complex, and unpredictable world, both in economic and in geopolitical terms. In such an environment, it is important for a country like ours to keep its interests and priorities firmly in its sights, particularly in a time of

austerity. The Netherlands, a relatively small country with an open economy and an international outlook, is highly dependent on other countries.

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The strategy acknowledges that today’s threats have little regard for national borders or physical barriers, and that internal and external security are increasingly interwoven, as illustrated by Atatürk’s words quoted above. Events in the world around us have a direct impact on our own security and prosperity. The balance of power is shifting, and while Europe’s influence is declining in relative terms, new powers are gaining

influence. Defense spending in Europe is falling, but it is rising in other parts of the world. This rapid change and economic development is also causing instability. The growing unrest in the regions surrounding Europe has an impact on its security, both directly and indirectly.

Technological advances raise new issues. Take, for example, the debates on shale gas fracking or the use of drones. The internet and social media have brought the world closer together, which in itself is a great good. At the same time, cyber-attacks pose one of the greatest security threats of our time. Terrorism and piracy constitute both a security problem and an economic threat.

The strategy that emerged as a response to these challenges is based on three areas of strategic interest in foreign security policy:

The Defense of Our Own and Our Allies’ Territory

Transatlantic cooperation and the NATO alliance remain vital for the broader security of the Netherlands – and indeed that of all NATO partners. The defense of the Alliance is a priority for the Netherlands. An excellent example of this is the current deployment of Dutch Patriot systems, accompanied by Dutch battalions, near Adana in Turkey, with a view to defending Turkey’s territory and people against the threat of missile attacks from Syria.

This is the third time in 20 years that the Netherlands has stationed Patriots on Turkish soil. This allied solidarity is further underlined by the fact that the Netherlands is



shouldering this responsibility together with two other long-term allies, Germany and the U.S., which have also stationed Patriot missiles in Turkey.

The Netherlands is a strong advocate of enhancing European responsibility when implementing this strategic interest. The only way that individual European countries like the Netherlands can counter their loss of influence in international affairs is by deepening their collaboration with other European partners. Defense cooperation with other European countries will enhance our capacity for military action and help us retain sufficient strike capability. A strong EU that adds responsibility for security and defense to its remit is important for a stable international system and a strong NATO. Turkey and the EU would both benefit from broadening the scope for cooperation between NATO and the EU.

This focus on the defense of our own and our allies' territory implies taking a greater interest in events on the EU's periphery. Events there have a direct impact on our own security and economic interests. Turkey and the Netherlands face interdependent security challenges in this respect. The situation at the Turkish-Syrian border and the influx of refugees, for example, constitutes a direct security threat not only for Turkey but also for EU countries. Such conflict zones are attracting certain groups of young people from Europe (including the Netherlands). For a variety of reasons,

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these individuals are eager to join in the fray and are susceptible to extremist propaganda. In the longer term, it is by no means certain what these developments on Europe’s borders will mean for the stability of the continent itself.

With a view to better understanding events in Syria and investing in the stability and security of its neighborhood, the Netherlands has appointed a special envoy for Syria to liaise with Syrian opposition groups, authorities, and fellow envoys in the region. He is based in Istanbul,

highlighting Turkey’s prominent role in the quest for a solution.

An Effective International Legal Order

Given its global interests, the Netherlands will remain active throughout the world, through multilateral and other channels. For the Netherlands, with its open economy and limited direct international power, the best guarantees of security, stability, and prosperity are a stable and effective international legal order. Strengthening international and European cooperation in international fora and organizations will help us respond to most of the challenges we face.

The Hague is known as the international city of peace and justice. The Peace Palace, a sublime symbol of those ideals, recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. Apart from being home to the International Court of Justice and the Permanent Court of Arbitration, The Hague is also the seat of various international war tribunals and the International Criminal Court. The emergence of these institutions is another illustration that the Westphalian order, while still the cornerstone of international relations, is evolving into something more complex: national sovereignty is no longer sacred, and universal jurisdiction for the most heinous of crimes is becoming the accepted norm. The concept of a “responsibility to protect” is gradually acquiring universal legal weight. Without being replaced, the concept of national sovereignty is being refined thanks to a growing awareness of a universal moral imperative.

An important element of the Netherlands’ pursuit of an effective international legal order is of course the EU framework. That order is given expression in the concept of “effective multilateralism”, first mentioned in the EU’s European Security Strategy (ESS). This concept also emphasizes the necessity of a rule-based international order

supported by strong cooperation with international organizations, with the United Nations (UN) at its core. Investing in the UN is an investment in our common future. We are all stakeholders with a long-term common interest in the maintenance of instruments for peace, justice and development. They need to be continuously updated if they are to help avert future disasters. That is why we invested in the OPCW, which is now proving crucial in the Syrian crisis. That is why we should invest in improving the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Security Council. And that is why it is so important that we come up with a clear and ambitious post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

Dutch commitment to a strong international legal order is backed up by its strong UN credentials. Since the establishment of the UN, the Netherlands has held a non-permanent seat in the Security Council five times. It has announced its candidacy for another term in 2017-8, proposing a partnership for peace, justice, and development. A peaceful world



demands a sustainable legal order and a powerful development agenda. It demands a strategy for disarmament and a focus on human rights. These are the principles of Dutch foreign policy.

Last but not least, in its efforts to strengthen the international legal framework for non-proliferation and disarmament, the Netherlands will host the third Nuclear Security Summit in March 2014, where world leaders will discuss the shared goal of enhancing nuclear security and combating nuclear terrorism. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and missile technology is a growing cause for concern. The ultimate aim is to rid the world of WMDs, including nuclear weapons. Mutual disarmament remains the basic principle on which these efforts are based. Turkey will be a prominent participant at the summit.

Economic Security

Economic security is an integral part of our security policy. Security will not last unless it is underpinned by economic stability. For the Netherlands, the key to a strong economy lies to a great extent in our relations with other countries. Our

infrastructure is part of a European and global network, and our prosperity is built largely on raw materials and energy that come from elsewhere. A level playing field for Dutch companies, unrestricted international trade based on transparent common rules, and free trading routes are all essential. The rules of the global economic system must be strengthened, observed, and enforced.

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For the Netherlands, an important element of economic security lies in cooperation with the private sector. This is yet another illustration of the earlier assertion that providing security is no longer the sole realm of states. Nowadays, the protection of our security is a multistakeholder exercise. The Dutch private sector has eyes and ears—and interests—throughout the world. Arrangements we make with the private sector can enhance our national security

and the security of vital sectors. Companies’ knowledge and technology are needed in order to bring a secure digital world one step closer. Cybersecurity is a matter for both the government and the private sector. The same applies to the protection of merchant shipping and energy supplies.

This brings us to another important component of economic security: energy security. The Dutch economy is vulnerable to breakdowns in its energy supply. In order to secure our own supplies of energy and resources, we are trying to help build a more stable global energy market, but this can only be achieved through governance at the global level. This demonstrates the need for a shared European perspective. We need a common European energy policy if we want to be part of the team of global players that is needed to address this issue.

In the interests of its prosperity and economic security, the Netherlands wants to maintain its role as an energy distribution hub. Through years of experience, the country has built up superb know-how in the gas sector. It enjoys an excellent location, good storage options and an extensive gas infrastructure. It has the potential and ambition to become the gas hub of Northwestern Europe. It is equally keen to share its expertise with other countries that aim to become strategic energy hubs, Turkey among them. Turkey is a key element of the vital importance that Europe now attaches to the diversification of its energy supplies. The country is already set to play a crucial, strategic role in Europe’s energy security as a key

transit state of the Southern Gas Corridor, the planned fourth natural gas “super-highway” to bring gas to Europe.

To establish itself as a real hub and fulfill its potential, Turkey (and its neighbors) should take advantage of today’s unique regional context and opportunities, created by recent finds and discoveries, and work towards a solution to long-standing regional issues and conflicts that prevent regional cooperation. This would enable the Turkish leg of the corridor, the Trans-Anatolian

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pipeline (TANAP), to start transporting gas from other sources in the region besides the Caspian, such as the Mediterranean. Both Turkey and the EU would reap huge dividends from such a policy – in terms of not only enhanced prospects for lasting peace and security, but also diversification of energy supplies.

Energy security can also be provided by new technologies. In this respect, shale gas is a potential game changer. Shale gas is a much cheaper and cleaner energy resource than oil and coal. It already has considerable economic influence. We have seen the shale gas boom in the U.S. and its positive effect on the American economy. The magnitude of shale gas exploitation elsewhere in the world is still unclear. In other parts of the world, extracting shale gas has turned out to be much more complex than in the U.S. Europe is analyzing whether it can integrate this new technology into its energy strategy and take advantage of the opportunities it affords – and if so, how. Forays in this field are currently underway, and all across Europe you can see the first moves being made, including in Turkey and the Netherlands.

Conclusion

As a relatively small country, the Netherlands depends on alliances for its security. Our security policy will be successful only if we work together. We will therefore continue to promote multilateral cooperation in various contexts and organizations. Given our geographical location and tradition as a seafaring trading nation, the Netherlands has always been inextricably linked with other countries. We have always worked to promote international stability and an effective international legal order, as exemplified by the works of the Dutch jurist and philosopher Hugo Grotius. We continue to do so in the knowledge that this is in the interests both of the Netherlands and of other countries.

The three pillars of the Dutch international security strategy are reflected in the keywords of the Dutch candidacy for membership of the UN Security Council in 2017-8: peace, justice, and development. These are goals we will achieve through a solid defense, an effective legal order, and economic security.

Security Council member or not, the Netherlands will continue to build bridges in order to ensure a secure Netherlands in a secure world, and fulfill the dream of “peace at home, peace in the world.”