WRR

Attached to the World

ON THE ANCHORING AND STRATEGY OF DUTCH FOREIGN POLICY

Ben Knapen, Gera Arts,
Yvonne Kleistra, Martijn Klem
& Marijke Rem

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This book is based on a report that was published by The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR). According to the Act of Establishment, it is the Council's task to supply, on behalf of government policy, scientifically sound information on developments which may affect society in the long term, and to draw timely attention to likely anomalies and obstacles, to define major policy problems and to indicate policy alternatives.

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SUMMARY

Attached to the World: On the Anchoring and Strategy of Dutch Foreign Policy

The Netherlands is attached to the world. Few other countries are as closely inter-woven politically, economically and socially with the world around us. That makes Dutch foreign policy a strategic affair. The Dutch government has to deliver an alert response to the risks *and* opportunities of a rapidly changing world.

Today's world can best be described as hybrid in nature. On the one hand, there is the familiar world of geopolitics and nation states. That world is currently going through a shift in the balance of power towards the East. On the other hand, there is the 'network world', populated not only by states, but increasingly also by non-state actors. State borders present virtually no obstacle to these networks. Seen from this perspective, it is no longer possible to speak of *the* foreign policy of *the* state; it is more correct to think in terms of many different expressions of foreign policy within a 'disaggregated state'. Increasingly, ministries and agencies have their own objectives in international affairs and participate autonomously in international networks, especially in a European context. As a consequence, the traditional distinction between 'domestic' and 'foreign' is becoming increasingly blurred.

Most people in the Netherlands experience this differently. To them, the Dutch state remains the primary actor in relations with the outside world. At the same time they are unsure what position the Netherlands occupies in today's world. Familiar reference points are disappearing and partly as a result of the financial crisis, global power relations are shifting faster than most people could ever have imagined. There is a growing tension between this feeling of being threatened by the outside world and the need to nurture the relationship with that same world.

Domestic tensions, fading dividing lines between 'domestic' and 'foreign', and the opportunities and risks presented by a hybrid world create a need for a study of the changing conditions of foreign policy and of the possibilities and limitations these conditions offer. This report aims to contribute to a new orientation towards the outside world. It focuses on the question of how the Netherlands can develop a foreign policy strategy that reflects both the shifts in the global power balance and the radically altered nature of international relations. Our answer to this question is that foreign policy needs to be rethought. We underpin this by examining first how the Netherlands can develop its own strategic foreign policy, then by explaining how this policy could be embedded in Europe as the dominant policy arena, and lastly by pointing out how such a strategic foreign policy could be put into practice.

From fragmentation to strategy

The agenda of topics in Dutch foreign policy has changed fundamentally. National policy themes have become global issues, the international agenda has expanded considerably, and the fixed order of policy themes has disappeared. In addition, different policy areas have become interconnected and are no longer addressed exclusively in the interstate arena (geopolitics), but also in intra-state and non-state arenas (network world).

The Netherlands has traditionally aspired to play an active international role. The government's response to the turbulent expansion of the foreign policy agenda is in line with this aspiration: doing as much as possible with as many partners as possible. As illustrated by the traditional notion of the Netherlands as a 'model country' or by recent Dutch contributions to international peace missions, Dutch foreign policy is still firmly grounded in a deep-seated need to play a robust role in the international arena. This has produced a foreign policy that could be likened to a doughnut: a broad spectrum of aspirations, points of view and activities, without a comprehensive vision connecting the various components and allowing priorities and posteriorities to be determined.

Strategic foreign policy should go beyond the broad intentions that typify current Dutch foreign policy. This means choosing, setting priorities and seeking areas in which the Netherlands can make a difference. The first step towards achieving this is to be aware of and acknowledge that we live in a hybrid world. Only when the Dutch government realizes that its current foreign policy is insufficiently geared to this reality can a strategic foreign policy be formulated. The second step involves making choices and setting priorities across Dutch foreign policy as a whole. The actual choices made are political in nature, but a transparent deliberation framework would facilitate the decision-making process and increase the accountability of those choices – especially in the prevailing situation of financial austerity and cutbacks. Moreover, a prerequisite of a consistent policy is that the Dutch are still able to recognize themselves in their country's foreign policy.

Our deliberation framework is based on three questions:
1   What is important for the Netherlands?
2   Where do the interests of other actors lie and what are they doing to achieve them?
3   Where can the Netherlands make a difference?

Based on the answers to these questions, foreign policy can be divided into three components. In the first place, foreign policy aims to defend the vital interests that are irrevocably linked to the survival of the Netherlands, its people and its territory. Because these vital interests are essential, there is no need to set

priorities. This does not apply to the second component of foreign policy, defending non-vital interests. The practical reality of complex interdependence in international relations gives rise to a search for what this report calls *extended national interests*, i.e. more specific areas where Dutch interests and global issues coincide. That means searching for policy areas at the interface of global issues and national interests. The third and final component of foreign policy consists of 'niches': specific areas of policy where the Netherlands wishes to make its presence felt in the longer term. Developing these niches is highly relevant, as the marketplace of international relations has become far too crowded for the Netherlands to have a presence everywhere.

Europe as a dominant arena

Cooperation with other countries and organizations has been the cornerstone of the Dutch government's foreign policy for many decades. For the Netherlands, the European Union (EU) is the dominant arena for that cooperation. If the Netherlands wishes to achieve its foreign policy goals, it must exert influence in this arena and excel here. With this in mind, it is helpful to approach the EU from two complementary perspectives. On the one hand, it can be seen as a political arena in which laws and regulations are developed that apply to all member states. On the other hand, the EU is a stepping stone to the world, a kind of power bloc that aims to exert its influence to defend fundamental European values and interests.

Anyone considering the EU as the dominant arena will see it as the appropriate channel for the Netherlands to pursue its vital and extended national interests. The most effective strategy is to translate Dutch interests into European legislation or policy. The pressure to act as one has increased with the institutionalization of the European Council. For a successful member state this offers opportunities to connect and to advance its reputation.

European legislation and regulation are created through the interaction between European institutions and various state and non-state actors. This process offers a perfect opportunity to make Dutch policy productive, offering interesting possibilities to influence European policies. Accepting Europe as the central political arena and as the stepping stone to international issues calls for strategy, making choices, planning an approach and mobilizing networks. This in turn requires the Dutch government to develop into an *enabling state*, i.e. a government that enables other parties to conduct activities that are in both their own interests and those of the Netherlands.

At the same time there is a certain built-in tension within the European construct between collective aspirations and joint action on the one hand and the need for individuality in the member states on the other. Bilateral policy-making and

seeking to influence opinions in other member states therefore continue to be important instruments that can be used in parallel to efforts at the European level. The Netherlands can also play a constructive role in defining the European agenda in coalitions with and within influential neighbouring member states. In this respect the most productive approach is to allow ourselves to be guided by the following questions: what kind of Europe do we want to live in, and do we want to use our influence where possible to help shape it?

Directing and facilitating

A hybrid world, the EU, the proliferation of non-state actors on the international stage and the implementation of a successful niche policy demand new ways of working. Many attempts to restructure or 'decompartmentalize' foreign policy have been made before. A new way of working does not require reorganization or new labels however. It is above all a new approach, a new attitude that forms an integral part of the ambition to pursue a more strategic foreign policy. Three elements require further elaboration here: interdepartmental division of labour; better use of existing instruments; and switching between state and non-state arenas.

Foreign policy is no longer limited to a single ministry. All ministries have their own international policies for those areas in which they possess expertise and substantive competence. Especially within the EU it is now possible to speak of 'Dutch foreign policy' to only a very limited degree. In order to operate effectively in this predominant arena, it is in most member states the centre of the national government, embodied by the president or the prime minister, which controls European policy. More than ever before, Europe has become *Chefsache* since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. It is however a sensitive matter to refer to this directly, despite it now becoming a reality in the Dutch practice. Yet the title 'Minister of General and European Affairs' would more accurately express the interconnected nature of national and European policy, as well as the personal responsibility of the prime minister for Europe.

In addition to this ministry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continues to play an important role in foreign policy; no longer as a coordinator, but above all as a line ministry responsible for themes such as the Dutch contribution to the new EU Council of Foreign Affairs, the integrated strategic direction of our external security (i.e. the *comprehensive approach* and its components of diplomacy, defence and development cooperation) and issues relating to the multilateral architecture.

To make strategic choices visible and engender strategic debates in parliament, we need instruments that are no longer grounded in the obsolete logic of ministries. First, we propose transferring overall foreign policy strategy from the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs to the Cabinet. Second, strategic choices and the corresponding budgets should be set for each government term of office, with the Cabinet taking a decision each year about the specific activities to be undertaken in each budget year. This would offer a useful starting point for a debate with parliament about choices and priorities.

Implementing Dutch foreign policy strategically beyond the national borders also requires closer scrutiny of the broad network of Dutch embassies and consulates. Changes in the intensity and structure of the Dutch presence abroad should reflect strategic choices, not automatic reflexes. Alternatives that could be considered include new forms of representation abroad, cooperation with other countries to represent Dutch interests locally, and the deployment of officials from other line ministries. In addition, knowledge management should be made a priority at all levels of policy, to ensure that institutional learning is not only a responsibility, but is also part of the organizational culture. Analogous to the Diplopedia in the US, those who implement foreign policy should store their knowledge, experience and lessons learned in government-wide databases.

Lastly, in addition to their state-based focus, ministers, state secretaries and officials need to adopt an approach that links up to the network society populated not only by state actors, but also by non-state actors. Cooperation with NGOs, transnational corporations and sub-state actors calls for a way of working that is no longer based on directing, but on facilitating and connecting. With a sharp eye for Dutch interests beyond its territorial and immaterial borders, the Dutch government should connect actors and networks and facilitate the exchange of goods and ideas in such a way that this benefits the Netherlands and its people. To do so, the Netherlands should be at the centre of relevant networks: the more prominent its position in the network (a large number of contacts, the appreciation of other actors), the greater its capacity to acquire knowledge and services from other actors, to regulate the transmission of information and products within the network, and to determine agendas and frame debates.

In summary, this report is a plea for the Dutch government to adopt a more critical approach to its strategic and substantive choices, to strive for excellence within the European arena and to become a facilitating partner in the world of non-governmental actors.

PREFACE

In this report to the government, the WRR presents its views of a future-oriented foreign policy for the Netherlands. It was prepared by an internal project group led by Professor H.P.M. Knapen, member of the Council until 14 October 2010. The Council formally approved this advice on 7 September 2010.

The WRR project group consisted of the following staff members: drs. G.A.T.M. Arts, dr.mr. A. van den Brink (also project coordinator until 1 May 2009), dr. Y. Kleistra, drs. M.H. Klem, drs. P.J.H. van Leeuwe (also project coordinator from 1 May 2009 until 1 August 2010), M. Rem MA MBA, and dr. F.S.L. Schouten. J. Kester BA and T.B.P. Tran MA were involved in the project for some time as an intern and junior academic staff member, respectively.

This report was informed by a thorough series of analyses, consultations, and seminars. Besides the review of a body of research literature, various studies into certain themes and countries were also performed, and interviews were conducted with over a hundred external experts and parties involved, who have been listed at the back of this report. Throughout the project, study visits were made and talks were held with those in charge of policy at international organisations (EU, UN and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)) and in several countries (Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Germany, the UK, Norway, Sweden, China and Singapore). Such comparisons with other nations were illuminating as writing about Dutch foreign policy also requires one to take on board the external perceptions of the Netherlands.

Over time, several external specialists made their expert contributions to the project. Dr. P. van Ham, director of the Global Governance research programme at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, wrote an analysis of public diplomacy. Dr. L. van Middelaar, publicist at the time and currently speech writer for the Cabinet of European Council President H.A. van Rompuy, prepared a contribution on the Netherlands and the EU. Dr. B. Müller, head of International Affairs at the representation of the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia in Berlin, wrote a contribution on the foreign policy of our neighbouring federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Many elements of these contributions were incorporated in the final version of this report.

Special seminars were held with experts in the fields of food, water, and the international rule of law.

1 MOTIVATION AND BACKGROUND: AN INTRODUCTION

1.1 MOTIVATION

Breathtaking and promising: this is what the newly appointed Dutch Cabinet called the developments in the world and the opportunities for the Netherlands three weeks after the fall of the Berlin Wall (Second Chamber 1989-1990, 14th assembly). The Soviet Union had pulled out of Afghanistan, the Berlin Wall had fallen, and the totalitarian Eastern Bloc had vanished. There was a peace dividend to be harvested, and a new, better world was in the offing.

Moments of euphoria prove to be hazardous benchmarks, as the difference with the situation two decades afterward could hardly be greater. Whether it is globalisation, Europe, China's industrial muscle, Islamic fundamentalism, or Wall Street: it seems the outside world is currently presenting itself to the Netherlands chiefly as a potential disturber of order and prosperity. Part of the public has disengaged. In the 2010 election campaign, it was clear for everyone to see how much people's interest in the world outside the Netherlands had shrunk. Though a Cabinet had resigned over a foreign politics issue – troops in Uruzgan – this was a non-election item. Many voters were interested in issues closer to home. Perhaps this was not so much because they were not interested in foreign affairs, but because they, as former State Secretary for European Affairs Frans Timmermans put it, consciously or unconsciously mainly perceive the outside world as a threat: a threat to prosperity, to stability, and to security (Timmermans 2010).

Besides uncertainty about the outside world, various countries show a growing discrepancy in appreciation of what Thomas Friedman popularised under the heading *The World is Flat* (Friedman 2005). Differences of opinion on processes of globalisation and Europeanisation have increased over the past few years. Those with higher educational attainment levels, who have mastered foreign languages and travel all over the world, are seizing new and exciting development opportunities thanks to globalisation. They are the modern cosmopolitans. At the other end, there are what the sociologist Ulrich Beck called the *Globalisierungsverlierer* (Beck 1997): large groups of people who, rightly or wrongly, consider themselves the ones who are picking up the bill for globalisation in terms of fewer opportunities and greater risks. Bovens and Wille quite plainly call this an opposition between cosmopolitans and nationalists (Bovens and Wille 2009). Antitheses in society which used to be of a socio-economic nature, have been transformed into an economic-cultural divide, separating openness and integration on the one side from closure and demarcation on the other side (Kriesi et al. 2008).

We would not be venturing too far if we suggested that such developments have consequences for what used to be called the 'silent consensus' in the field of foreign policy (Everts 2008). This consensus, in a great many areas, is breaking down. The size and the perspective of development cooperation are a case in point, but issues such as the enlargement of the EU or participation in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Uruzgan are also indicative of crumbling consensus. This is not to say that people's interest in foreign policy as such has suddenly increased dramatically. Such involvement has never been very great and still is not (Everts 2008).

Quite the antithesis of such scepticism and uncertainty is an undisputed reality: virtually no other country in the world is as reliant on its international connections as the Netherlands (see Appendix 1). Each and every study reconfirms that the future prosperity of the Netherlands is entirely dependent on our international orientation (Ter Weel, Van der Horst and Gelauff 2010). So as to improve its competitive advantage and its business establishment climate, the Netherlands' embedding in Europe, reinforcement of the internal market, and expansion of the European knowledge economy are essential, as the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER) concluded in its last globalisation report (SER 2008a). Our prosperity is dependent on foreign countries for about 70 per cent, a figure that has risen considerably over the last few decades, even if we take into account regression due to the financial crisis (Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV) 2010; Appendix 1). Added to this is the fact that we have never before been so dependent on other nations for our national security.

Whether the issue is international criminality, weapons of mass destruction, or unregulated immigration flows, the Dutch government cannot guarantee national security without international cooperation and coordination. Cross-border trust, reliability, and familiarity are essential. An international orientation, in other words, is imperative, and, in practice, ought to translate into an eager engagement with the outside world, know-how, and action.

This tension between scepticism against the outside world, on the one hand, and the necessity of engagement, on the other, causes frictions. Goetschel (1998) calls this an 'integration dilemma'. It may induce passiveness where decisiveness is crucial and it may create strains that are sometimes difficult to handle. For the Dutch government, it is far from easy to pursue a familiar and consistent policy course. Stuck between conflicting requirements, the government is showing uncertainty in its foreign politics. It responds waveringly to the dilemma of 'the outside world as an opportunity and a threat'; sometimes, it will defend the consequences of globalisation as a win-win situation, full of new opportunities and perspectives; sometimes, it will knuckle under and blame Brussels, while trying and pretending to be in control. It varies. Over the last few years, the Dutch

government, hedging against voter distrust, has become more cautious in matters of European integration; the very word 'integration' itself, for instance, was replaced by the word 'cooperation' in the coalition agreement of the Balkenende IV Cabinet (2007). Poised between Euro-integration and Euro-scepticism, 'cooperation' suggests a cautious middle course that tries to do justice to diverging currents.

In addition, things are ever more rushed, or so it seems, and hence ever more unpredictable. Even back in 1999, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs Van Aartsen complained that the 'CNN factor' was increasingly threatening to rule Dutch foreign policy. Faced with images of human suffering, viewers – citizens and politicians – were tending to support one cause or another within a matter of hours, acting on impulse and driven by primary emotions (Van Aartsen 1999). Such impulses are reinforced by a longing for authenticity and emotion, which is strongly bonding senders and receivers in the visual mass media. Through Google and YouTube, an unexpected event may circulate the entire world in a matter of hours and force governments to respond and act. 'Non-interference in internal affairs' has become an archaic phrase in this perspective, for what, strictly speaking, are still internal affairs? Computer and media networks, for instance, have changed the nature and the dynamics of international relations. There no longer is a small, professional elite with a leading edge in knowledge. The Dutch diplomat who is called upon to act in the event of a plane crash in Tripoli is simply carrying, just like anyone else, the most recent printout of the Libya page from the public CIA website (Mat, Van Nierop and Schenkel 2010).

To be perfectly clear, reflecting on foreign policy alone is not the answer to issues of globalisation, and even less so to domestic questions of polarisation in society. Foreign policy is just one domain in an only partially explored realm of transition issues relating to globalisation. However, if one scrutinises one's own position in the world, one can set and achieve realistic goals. This is an urgent imperative because future prosperity calls for self-confidence and action, whereas the current display of uncertainty leads to passiveness and procrastination. A country with an international orientation cannot afford to do so.

1.2   BACKGROUND

To be sure, such tensions and uncertainties are not only caused by sharper domestic conflicts between openness and closedness or between cosmopolitanism and nationalism. They are also produced by radically changed circumstances at the global level. The Netherlands is not the only country facing this dilemma. As this report will show, various countries are asking themselves what their foreign policy can accomplish and how new connections can be forged between relevant actors in international relations. The character of international relations, the

balance of power, and the players have been subject to such changes that there is, in fact, an entirely new context in which policymaking is to take place. The market square of international relations is getting jam-packed with rising powers and many non-state actors that had no business there in days gone by (Lane 2006; Coolsaet 2008).

Contemplating foreign policy, therefore, can only be useful within a frame of awareness that the context in which such policies take place no longer resembles the diplomatic relations between states of former times. The recently published *Defence Explorations* (Ministry of Defence 2010) have tried to formulate an answer to the question of future threats by means of scenarios. These scenarios sketch out four perspectives of the future: 1) a world of multipolar power blocs; 2) a world of multilateral cooperation between states and world regions; 3) a non-polar world order of networks; and 4) a fragmented, chaotic society. The likelihood of any one of these four scenarios manifesting itself in any pure form will be limited, but these varieties offer useful insights into purposeful long-term investments in the armed forces.

This study is not concerned with developing such scenarios and their consequences, as foreign policy in itself is too changeable, and a small country is too much bound by organised adaptation to changing circumstances (Hellema 2001). What matters to us is the analysis that underlies these scenarios. This analysis is founded on two diverging developments that are now manifesting themselves more or less concurrently in the world. It is exactly the simultaneity of these diverging tendencies that is the new reality facing foreign policy.

First of all, there is the world in which geopolitical factors (geographical location, territory, population size, raw materials, and potential military power) are decisive for the position of nation states (cf. Criekemans 2006). This world is characterised by a fundamental reshuffle in the traditional global balance of power. In the Cold War, there were two power blocs (bipolar); then there was a brief period of American hegemony (unipolar); and meanwhile we are living in a transitional period, in which rising powers such as China, India, and Brazil are successful in demanding influence, while countries that have had such an influence for a long time are still retaining major bases of power (multipolar). The power and the composition of the rather young G20 speaks volumes in this regard. A striking feature of the rising powers is that the state is playing a much more central role in their foreign policy than we are accustomed to in the Western world. As these states are becoming increasingly important in the world economy, rivalry between states over diminishing supplies of strategic raw materials is growing, and there is a stronger focus on the potential of military power. This is a world in which states or groups of states are still the most important players and in which, *mutatis mutandis*, there is still the prevailing adage that all states are equal, but some states

more so than others (Cohen-Tanugi 2008). We are reminded here of Moïsi's observation that Europe is getting smaller in a world that is getting bigger (Moïsi 2009). The same goes for the Netherlands (Bot 2006).

This is also a world in which there are ceaseless tensions between multipolarity, that is, major power blocs that are competitive and distrustful, and multilaterality, that is, power blocs that are looking for cooperative mechanisms of global governance. Multipolarity manifests itself in matters such as the arms race, protectionism, and the appropriation of raw materials. Multilaterality manifests itself in matters such as the G20, in which states are jointly searching for answers to globalisation questions (Held and McGrew 2002).

Parallel to this situation, secondly, we are witnessing the rise of a network-world of international relations. This is characterised by an explosive increase in the number of non-state actors, topics, and channels of cooperation (Milner and Moravcsik 2009; Peters 2009); such channels may be old and formal organisations, but increasingly they tend to be informal networks.

Such interrelationships are not unique. World history has seen examples of strong interrelationships between states and peoples before. In the past, there were tight economic and political networks with public and private actors in many places (Bisley 2007), but what distinguishes the current interrelationships from previous ones are the scale and the intensiveness with which they are now developing at a fast and furious pace. The contemporary kind of interrelationships comprise more regions in the world, develop at a higher speed, and have more far-reaching consequences for many more policy areas than ever before (cf. Dodds 2007: 64; Simmons and Jonge Oudraat 2001: 4-6). The hierarchical position of the state in such a network society has only limited significance. A lively civil society is an example of a non-state but certainly functional network-world. However, such a network-world may also degenerate into fragmentation and even chaos, with population groups insisting on their identity (and usually showing animosity along ethnic dividing lines), globalisation stagnating, and social insecurity increasing. This is a process involving little order and much unpredictability. A manifestation of such fragmentation is failing states.

Both the 'geopolitical world' and the 'network-world' are based on these existing, diverging elements and tendencies in international relations. What this is mainly showing us is how hybrid these relations have become. On the one hand, relations between states and state actors, ruled by geopolitics, have not ceased to matter. On the other hand, formal and informal networks, ignoring national borders, are rapidly gaining importance. So what we are seeing in this hybrid practice is what has been known in the literature for quite some time as the concept of 'complex interdependency' (Keohane and Nye 1977). This growing variety of actors and the

increasing multiformity of mutual interrelationships also finds expression in a
growing diversity of mutual dependencies. We have seen the rise of diverging
contacts, relations, and partnerships between a variety of actors; horizontal
networks next to vertical ones; private and public-private networks next to public
ones; and informal networks next to formal ones. It is characteristic of virtually all
these connections that they involve multilateral dependencies and that these
dependencies are multiple; that is, actors in complex networks are often depen-
dent on each other in several respects, such as knowledge, finance, services, prod-
ucts, and non-material values.

The literature, in addition, also refers to the disaggregated state. In the disaggre-
gated state, the various constituents of government have acquired a more and
more autonomous character. They have developed their own international poli-
cies, maintain transgovernmental ties with associates abroad, and participate in
formal and informal policy networks that go beyond national borders (Leguey-
Feilleux 2009: 62-64). This has increasingly led to issues, relevant at the national
political level in other countries, becoming items on domestic agendas and vice
versa. What we are seeing, in Slaughter's words, is: "…not a collection of nation
states that communicate through presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers
and the United Nations. Nor is it a clique of NGOs. It is governance through a
complex web of 'government network works'" (Slaughter 2004). In the disaggre-
gated state, a government that is relentlessly trying to coordinate foreign relations
is by definition putting the cart before the horse.

This report takes the hybrid character of international relations as the starting point
for its analysis. The simultaneous presence of the state-based, geopolitical world
and the network-world involving state and non-state players alike will guide our
findings in subsequent chapters. What is important here is that hybridity not only
impacts the way in which foreign-policymaking comes about and is implemented
but also the way in which we think about foreign policy. As a consequence of this,
the end of foreign policy has already been announced more than once (Koch 1991;
Talbott 1997; Hain 2001; Gyngell and Wesley 2007; Rasmussen 2010). The end
might indeed be at hand. For is there still such a thing as Dutch foreign policy when
Dutch ministries and municipalities pursue autonomous foreign policies? When
the Netherlands, in its cross-border choices and actions, is so greatly dependent on
the international structures in which it is embedded? When the world stage on
which the Netherlands is performing, is seeing the entrance of an increasing crowd
of state and non-state actors? And when the Netherlands is facing challenges and
threats that far transcend our national borders?

We believe there is. New actors on the world stage, the disaggregated state, and
close international relations must not only be considered as putting restrictions on
Dutch foreign policy but also as offering opportunities for promoting Dutch inter-

ests. Such opportunities are mainly lodged in nation states having sovereign status and continuing to preserve this status in a hybrid world.

With respect to the notion of sovereignty, it is important to distinguish between *being* sovereign and *having* sovereign rights, or between the status of sovereignty and the privileges and duties this involves (Aalberts 2006: 174; Sofaer and Heller 2001; Weinert 2007). Sovereignty is a status that is the privilege of nation states. On the one hand, sovereignty may represent a claim to the democratic legitimacy of a people tied to a territorial state; on the other, it refers to the authority to protect the state and its territory against domestic and foreign enemies (Agnew 2009). Besides recognition by other nation states, this status originates in the will of citizens (Pemberton 2009: 3-10; Bickerton et al. 2007: 9-10). It is for this reason that the sovereign status of states is closely tied up with feelings of national identity, national character, and national destination.

In contrast to the sovereign status itself, the power and the rights that are attendant upon this status are not categorical but gradual. A nation state, for example, may transfer many or few of its sovereignty-related competencies to international organisations as it sees fit. This plays a particularly important role in relations with the EU. So here we face the issue of what the Netherlands, as a nation state, *insists on doing* by itself and what, in all fairness, it still *can do* by itself.

1.3   PROBLEM DEFINITION

The backgrounds, structural shifts, and areas of tension outlined above will serve as starting points for this report. On the one hand, the Netherlands is a small country and, in consequence of geopolitical shifts, is only getting smaller. This restricts its scope of action. On the other hand, a hybrid order is also offering new opportunities. In all globalisation and international interrelationship indexes, the Netherlands finds itself in the top bracket (see Appendix 2); this is offering interesting opportunities for meeting its needs and pursuing its ambitions in network-like structures. It is also a major rationale behind this report to explore what role the Netherlands could and should play in this dynamic global environment. Both our study and its findings and recommendations were guided by the following question:

> *How can the Netherlands develop a foreign politics strategy that suits the changing power relations in the world and the radically changed character of international relations?*

This main question can be broken down into a series of sub-questions that need to be addressed in order to formulate a coherent answer. We have restricted ourselves to three core elements:

1   What are the possibilities for the Netherlands to develop its own strategic foreign policy? What are the prerequisites and what are the restrictions?
2   How can our country pursue its own interests and ambitions in the best possible way? What are the most appropriate channels for doing so?
3   What consequences must we draw for foreign policy organisation and approach in order to accomplish strategic foreign policy?

This is not the first attempt to address such challenges. The Kok I Cabinet, for instance, undertook to re-evaluate Dutch foreign policy in 1994. This re-evaluation aimed to effect policy integration, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs playing a central role as the coordinating body for all ministries' foreign relations. It had the ambition to create greater coherence by removing partitions between the different policy sub-areas and by underlining the main policy goals in policymaking. This ambition, however, came to very little in the end (Meyer 2006: 111-117; Hellema 2006: 358-364).

At the same time, the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) produced a report entitled *Stability and Security in Europe: the Changing Foreign Policy Arena* (WRR 1995). This report advised linking up more closely with France and Germany, which were held to be the engine of Europe. Shortly afterwards, however, this engine faltered, and after 9/11 the Western world completely revised its focus, controlling terrorism and the belt of instability in the Middle East.

It is proving to be hard to devise a suitable, contemporary approach to foreign policy. Of course, there have always been attitudes, intentions, historical reflexes, or generalisations inflated into policy priorities, such as 'stability in the Middle East' or 'a better functioning EU'. Other than that, however, much of foreign policy amounts to ad hoc responses to events. Day-to-day policy practice shows that many government players in this field are also confused: what should they be dedicating themselves to? Where can they make a difference? What should they ignore? How can they keep the attention of a critical audience? What is at stake? 'Minister travels to Middle East to help promote peace process', as the headline goes. Does it matter? Does it make a difference? Is it still relevant in today's world?

Sometimes foreign policy raises expectations that go far beyond the bounds of the possible, as in a human rights memorandum containing many dozens of priorities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007) or the Ministry of Economic Affairs' pursuing its own prime policy focus in Russia, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, and Algeria, largely disconnected from other Ministries. Sometimes policy reveals this underlying uncertainty, as in the 2005 referendum slogan that ran 'Europe, quite important.' Sometimes the jargon illustrates that the new international reality has not

yet been fully internalised, as when a minister mentions 'building bridges' between states when major key positions have long since been taken by NGOs.

The absence of a shared policy goal and strategy makes foreign policy the plaything of internal, personal, or incident-driven coincidences. This will harm authority, reliability, and reputation, both internally and externally. What is needed is the kind of policymaking that focuses its ambitions and priorities on contemporary international issues and that, on the other hand, offers sufficient possibilities for identification at home. The automatic pilot is getting us nowhere, as too many things have changed to be able to fly by the old coordinates. We need to make clear choices, pursue some things, and abandon others, though this may not always be simple in a world in which every day offers up fresh current affairs, excitements, and adhocracy.

1.4   LIMITATIONS AND STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

This report is the reflection of study, several journeys, conversations, seminars, case studies, and direct written input by external experts and those involved in the field. It also represents a selection, as a study investigating the position of the Netherlands in the world cannot but find and report on some main outlines.

This is not a study that set out to raise everything for discussion. We have not, for example, dealt at any length with the question of what it would mean if the Netherlands were to pursue a position in the world like that of Switzerland: neutral, apart, and a member of little else than the United Nations (UN). We have chosen to ignore, or perhaps just briefly touch on, such discontinuities of circumstances, interests, logics, and interrelationships in the last five decades. This report, after all, does not mean to be a purely academic exercise. It means to offer an analysis and a deliberation framework leading to policy recommendations, which can be tested for their usefulness and which can serve as input in discussions on a meaningful playing field of possibilities and options.

Both our approach and our choices have their limitations. The report, for instance, only obliquely deals with the Dutch Armed Forces and with development cooperation and is not making a separate case for, say, international cultural policy. On the one hand, this would require a separate study, and, on the other, it might manifest itself as a derivative on the basis of the report's recommendations. Moreover, the WRR produced a report on development cooperation earlier this year (WRR 2010).

This report is about Dutch foreign policy in a general sense rather than about the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs exclusively, even if these are of course included. Nevertheless, it would seem clear that this Ministry in particular feels

highly uncomfortable as the representative par excellence of openness and inter-nationalism in a domestic climate that is wavering and polarising. In addition, the Ministry is experiencing loss of function as most other ministries pursue their own foreign policy, sometimes in harmonious relations with the traditional Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and sometimes entirely without it. This means that the above-mentioned widely felt insecurity about the position and role of the Netherlands is also reflected in very concrete doubts and the Ministry's general feeling of embarrassment and being misunderstood.

We have made an effort to use various concepts from international relations as transparently as possible in this report. However, it is in the nature of the subject matter for terms to be slippery, as they are often closely connected with their users' point of view. Some use the phrase 'foreign policy' or 'foreign politics' where others use 'international policy'. 'Foreign policy' would denote old-fash-ioned state-to-state foreign politics conducted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 'International policy' involves any number of countries and can be conducted by a variety of organisations with a more public or a more private character. 'Transna-tionalism', finally, refers to the phenomenon of a multitude of non-state actors playing a role on the world stage. Though they have a non-state character, many agencies and private or semi-private institutions have a major impact on interna-tional state relations, ranging from international accounting regulations to agree-ments on Google search structures or FIFA rules. As a semi-state institution, the EU uses the phrase 'external relations' for its policies with the world outside the Union to contrast them with its internal relations within the EU. In this report, our main subject is foreign policy, that is, the policies of the national government in all its branches relating to actors across the borders.

Chapter 2 presents an analysis of the rapidly changing global environment and particularly the explosively growing international agenda and the way in which Dutch foreign policy has responded to these developments. Here we outline avenues that would enable the government to develop a foreign policy that answers to its own goals and ambitions and that is designed to allow it to respond swiftly and effectively to changes in the world around us. In Chapter 3, we identify opportunities for operating creatively in Europe and with Europe, accepting that Europe is the dominant sphere of activity for foreign policy. In Chapter 4, we explore what strategic foreign policy means in everyday practice and what skills are required to accomplish it. We end this report with a summary of its conclu-sions and recommendations, framing the outlines of strategic foreign policy.

2   FROM FRAGMENTATION TO STRATEGY

On 28 December 1943, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs Eelco van Kleffens announced in a speech he delivered for Radio Orange that the Netherlands would be pursuing an 'active' foreign policy. The idea that an active approach of the Netherlands in international politics is absolutely essential for a small open society whose scope for action is co-dependent on others has been the core of Dutch foreign policy ever since. An active approach has become the trademark of the Netherlands abroad: we are represented at virtually every table and we participate in virtually everything.

The upheavals of 1989 have not changed any of this. More than ever, the Dutch government is convinced that an active foreign policy is a vital necessity for a country like the Netherlands, as witnessed, amongst other things, in many references to the government's active approach on the international stage in the Queen's speeches, government declarations, Explanatory Statements, and addresses:

"The Netherlands is largely dependent for its prosperity on the delivery of goods and services to foreign countries… In contacts with our partners and international organisations, key issues are the alleviation of poverty in the world, the sustainability of our planet, the reinforcement of human rights, and international peace and security. The efforts of the Netherlands during the past G20 and European summits must also be regarded in this perspective. … Stability, peace, and good governance are greatly aided by cooperation in international organisations, such as the European Union, NATO, and the United Nations. A well equipped security and defence organisation also makes a contribution to this" (Queen's Speech 2010).

Developments in the post-1989 world, meanwhile, have thrown up obstacles to the government. The global context in which policymaking takes place has changed to such an extent that the tried and trusted international policymaking frameworks (see Voorhoeve 1979) have become outdated. An alternative framework, at the same time, is lacking, making it increasingly difficult in practice to decide what the Dutch position should be or what role the Netherlands should play in specific cases. The choice for pursuing an active policy, therefore, often amounts to little more than an attitude of 'if it fails to do some good, it won't do any harm' rather than a manifestation of a goal-oriented strategy aiming to achieve a specific goal or at least bring it a little closer.

In this Chapter, we will show that the Dutch foreign policy agenda has fundamentally changed in character: national policy themes have become global issues; the international agenda has expanded considerably; and the set order of themes has

disappeared. Then we will address the consequences of these developments for Dutch foreign policy and deal with the question of why the deep-seated tendency to keep a finger in every pie has become untenable for a country like the Netherlands. Finally, we will outline a framework that may be conducive to transparent choice-making.

2.1   TILTING OF THE POLICY AGENDA

What is immediately evident to anyone these days, policymakers, politicians, opinion leaders, and scholars alike, is that, over the past two decades, the Dutch foreign policy agenda has not only become less predictable but also much more overloaded.

The disintegration of the Eastern Bloc initially led people in the Netherlands to believe, as it did in other countries, that the major themes that had dominated the foreign policy agenda during the Cold War were a thing of the past. Soon, however, it transpired that this was an over-optimistic reverie. Most issues that had had their set place on the foreign policy agenda before 1989, such as the Middle East conflict, non-proliferation, and security, simply remained where they were or were replaced by new issues. With the disappearance of the Soviet threat, the dangers of vertical nuclear arms proliferation (the nuclear arms race) did indeed decrease drastically, but they were replaced by the increased risks of horizontal proliferation (as countries like India and Pakistan obtained nuclear arms by legally or illegally importing 'civil' nuclear knowledge and equipment from other countries) and by the possibility of terrorists or failed states having access to nuclear arms or nuclear arms materials. Moreover, once the East-West conflict dropped out of the equation, scores of other old conflicts, which had been frozen during the Cold War, now flared up (as did conflict hot spots in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Africa), causing international developments to gain momentum. At the same time, the fluid international environment, and particularly the speed at which political, economic, and social processes of transformation were taking place, now burdened the agenda with many new topics.

If we take the government's international policy intentions, as laid down in the annual Queen's speeches and the Explanatory Statements to ministerial budgets, as our starting point for all that impels the Dutch government, then we see that, since the 1989 upheavals, the number of items on the foreign policy agenda has only increased. Post-1989 themes such as conflict prevention, conflict management, nation-building, migration, Muslim radicalism, human security, and melting icecaps are now jostling for attention along with 'old' themes such as European security, stability, territorial integrity, foreign trade politics, European cooperation, development cooperation, and human rights. It is also characteristic of this agenda that the set order of topics, which used to be so typical of the pre-1989

agenda, has disappeared. Issues that used to demand little or no political attention (technical issues, or 'low politics', such as the environment, bankers' bonuses, or food safety) may now soar to the number one position on political and social agendas from one day to the next. Topics that used to be permanent fixtures in the 'high politics' category, such as trans-Atlantic cooperation, are not automatically rated as such any more.

What may be less evident is that many of the issues that are now high-ranking priorities on the foreign policy agenda are of a different kind than they used to be. Over the years, relatively straightforward national and regional policy themes have been subsumed into global issues, which are characterised by there being many different players operating on different boards simultaneously and there being no one with overall control of how the problem is actually put together and what actors are involved.

We have analysed such policy pressure and complexity in the areas of security, energy, and the climate. What emerges are three processes in which increasing interrelatedness is taking place simultaneously at present. First of all, national problems are increasingly interwoven with global issues; secondly, many issues are overlapping in terms of content while losing hierarchy in their ranking; and thirdly, these issues are no longer only dealt with in the interstate arena but also in intrastate and non-state arenas, often at the same time.

2.1.1   SECURITY

The shift from national policy themes to global issues has occurred in different security domains. Dutch security policy is geared to protecting Dutch interests, particularly territorial integrity, by promoting the international rule of law, peace and security. This is where the Dutch armed forces have a major role to play. Article 97 of the Constitution states that it is the task of the armed forces to defend and protect the interests of the Kingdom and to enforce and promote the international rule of law. As it was felt that only the United States was able and willing to guarantee Dutch security (i.e. to protect Dutch interests and territory), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), established in 1949, became the cornerstone of Dutch security policy, and the Netherlands proved itself a 'loyal ally' in the post-war period (Van Staden 1974).

During the Cold War, NATO focused on national defence. Troops were stationed along the Iron Curtain to stop the enemy, and the navy and the air force guarded waters and air space with the aid of American nuclear arms. The core of the Allied strategy in this period was Article 5 of the NATO treaty, which proclaimed that an armed attack on one NATO state would be considered an attack on all NATO states and that all NATO states in such a case would support the party attacked (meaning

to cooperate, including the use of armed force) to ward off the attacker and to restore and enforce security in the North Atlantic area (NATO Founding Treaty 1949, Article 5).

Despite internal divisions on nuclear armament and rapprochement with the Eastern Bloc, the bipolar system of the Cold War created a fairly stable and clear security situation, certainly for a country like the Netherlands. Its NATO membership served as a well-defined policymaking framework. It was clear who the enemy was, what the nature and magnitude of the threat were, and what was to be done against this threat. In essence, the continued existence of the Kingdom was safely rooted in this alliance, and security policy, in the sense of a defence issue, topped the hierarchy of foreign policy issues.

What is most salient in current threat analyses is that our idea of the security risks we are actually running and what the pursuit of security might actually entail, has become more and more diffuse over the past two decades. In the present day and age, our primary concern is no longer how to defend our own territory but how to guarantee (a certain degree of) international security and stability. Immediately after 1989, the government was focusing entirely on the changes in the Alliance's strategic environment and on the new challenges this raised for collective defence. Even before the Soviet Union was formally dismantled in 1991, NATO presented the first strategic update of *The Alliance's New Strategic Concept*, stating that the Alliance's security environment had much improved in consequence of the political developments in Central and Eastern Europe as the threat of a mass attack on NATO in Europe had disappeared. At the same time, the Strategic Concept called the 'remaining' security risks "multi-faceted" and "multi-directional", and, hence, highly unpredictable (NATO 1991).

At the time, it was assumed that these risks had their origins mainly in the serious economic, political, and social problems – including ethnic rivalry and border conflicts – that were afflicting many countries in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989. However, events in Yugoslavia, Somalia, and Rwanda made it clear that the threat posed by intrastate conflicts proved to be less delimited than people initially thought. As the bipolar structure had fallen away, the likelihood of an outbreak of 'classic' war decreased, but there was also a shift from interstate to intrastate conflicts (Marshall and Cole 2009). Henceforth, the challenges of failed states would become more pressing, involving more ambiguous concepts such as 'regional stability', 'peace missions', and 'armed conflicts'. This expansion of the security domain also meant that other international organisations, particularly the UN, were beginning to play a more prominent role in interventions in situations involving threats to international peace and security.

In the 1990s, changes in the international security environment mainly affected the duties of the Dutch armed forces, with the outbreak of war in the former Yugoslavia serving as its immediate cause. In the course of 1993, the Dutch government decided to send a Dutch combat unit to Bosnia in the framework of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), a peace force that had been established by the Security Council in 1992. Though its traditional task of defending Dutch territory in the NATO alliance framework remained its chief task, the second task of the armed forces, as it carried out international operations for the UN or NATO, such as the Dutchbat mission to former Yugoslavia, was gaining increasing prominence.

Dutch involvement in international UN operations is not new: since the 1950s, the Dutch military has been involved in various UN Observer Missions in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. What is new, however, is the character of the post-Cold War operations. Over the past two decades, the emphasis has increasingly shifted towards peacekeeping: operations under chapter VI of the UN Charter (peacekeeping) decreased, and operations under chapter VII (peace-enforcement) increased. The organisation and implementation of these kinds of operations have become a problem in themselves, not in the least due to the increasing complexity of the conflicts that need to be dealt with. In contrast to the former territorial defence situation, NATO is now dependent on many other actors – state actors and non-state ones – for its missions (Albright et al. 2010).

As the political landscape changed rapidly and experiences with peace operations multiplied, the notion of security itself has become increasingly stretched in organisations such as NATO and the UN. In its Strategic Concept of 1999, security for NATO was already more than just a matter of defence capacity, also including issues such as political, economic, social, and ecological stability, development, and prosperity (NATO 1999). In the revised Strategic Concept (Albright et al. 2010), this expanded security concept was stretched even further. Since he took office in 2009, NATO's current Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, has encouraged NATO to develop into a security alliance in the widest sense of the word, that is, an alliance that is capable of dealing with a wide range of threats, from piracy, cyber attacks, food shortages, energy security, rising sea levels, and natural disasters to security risks posed by the melting of the North Pole ice caps. What these threats have in common is that they are all of a non-military kind but they allow themselves to be defined as social and environmental problems that increasingly tend to be solved by military means (Rasmussen 2009; Albright et al. 2010). Critics call this a tendency for 'securitisation', with a growing number of policy areas being cast in a security frame (Buzan, Waever and De Wilde 1998).

With the introduction of the concept of human security, the UN undertook to focus on the individual human being in addition to its traditional focus on states. Where state security is predominantly taken to mean military security, human security is about security in the widest sense of the word. The 1994 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which coined the term human security, said that the issue of worldwide human security comprises at least seven areas for special attention: economic security, food security (physical and economic access to food), protection against diseases and unhealthy lifestyles, protection of the environment, personal (physical) security, protection of communities against sectarian and ethnic violence, and political security (UNDP 1994).

In answer to the changing character of security issues, people have pursued what, in international relations jargon, has been called a modern comprehensive approach. If an operation involves more than just the defeat of an opponent and especially includes the building of a stable region, then its civil side is at least as important. This would comprise the building of a police force and the development of the judiciary, with independent and authoritative administration of justice, with public prosecutors and lawyers. This, then, also introduces the socio-economic development of the area as a mission. As an integrated approach to introduce stability in areas that are considered hotbeds of insecurity, this is also called a 3D approach (Defence, Diplomacy and Development).

The consequence of this development of the idea of security into a 3D concept is that, in Dutch policy too, everything is interconnected with everything else, and there is a growing patchwork of activities. For instance, development cooperation budgets and many ministries (Economic Affairs, Home Affairs, Justice, Finance, and Defence) contribute to a 3D policy for fragile states, with programmes such as Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR). The Stability Fund of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spends about € 100 million a year on projects in countries where there are conflicts or impending conflicts. Such projects range from funding army and police training programmes and combating small arms to organising peace missions, in the conviction that, if prosperity increases, the likelihood of conflict decreases and security increases.

Human rights policy also has a role to play here. It is justified by the idea that respect for human rights is essential for the rule of law and stability. The memorandum *Human Dignity for All* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007) also specifically pursues the interconnectedness between human rights, peace, and security on the basis of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) concept. This concept states that each state is responsible for the security of its own citizens but that other states may intervene if a state cannot or will not accept this responsibility. This principle,

therefore, undertakes to persuade states that they are at the service of their citizens and must not hide behind the principle of sovereignty if such is not the case (Evans 2008). In changing coalitions of countries, as in the UN Human Rights Council, the Netherlands is attempting to achieve greater exposure for human rights. In addition, it employs a special human rights ambassador who coordinates activities, liaises with NGOs and acts as an advocate.

So it is precisely this interconnectedness between the many aspects of 3D policy that is generating a virtually endless pile of relatively small activities that are all, in one way or another, covered by the umbrella notion of human security. During the Balkenende IV Cabinet, there was a plan to establish a pool of civil experts (public and private) in the fields of justice and law enforcement so as to assemble expertise and capacity for 3D projects (TK 2008-2009, 31 787, no. 6). Foreign Affairs now has a Fragility and Peace-Building Unit, coordinating cooperation between embassies, ministries, NGOs, and international organisations to support Dutch policy in fragile states. In sum, the development of the concept of security exemplifies how complex and fragmented global issues and, hence, foreign policy have become. Security used to be an issue of allied loyalty and defence, but it has now grown into a diffuse issue, involving many actors in many ministries and many states, as well as many non-state actors.

2.1.2   **ENERGY**

Another issue that has shifted from being a national policy theme to being a global issue over the past two decades, albeit in a slightly different way, is the theme of energy. Particularly since the turn of the millennium, Dutch policy has focused on the global energy issue, its main ambition being the development of sustainable global energy management. Also in the long term, energy should be available and accessible to all, and its use should cease to be harmful to the living environment and to future generations. This pursuit comprises a range of related issues: the problem of the scarcity or depletion of energy sources (including our own Dutch natural gas supplies), the explosively growing demand for energy by rising powers such as China and India (International Energy Agency 2007), the problem of greenhouse gas emissions due to the use of oil and gas (climate change), and rising tensions between countries and regional political crises that are predicated on energy (for example, the conflict between Russia and the Ukraine over gas supply, which flares up repeatedly).

In 2008, the Dutch government allocated considerable funds to sustainable energy, energy saving, energy innovation and CO_2 reduction (Ministry of Economic Affairs 2008: 23). The Balkenende IV Cabinet selected six themes that have social relevance and offer opportunities for reinforcing the coherence between development cooperation, innovation, and environmental policy.

Sustainable energy is one of these themes (Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment 2008). It was decided to allocate € 500 million to the establishment of sustainable energy projects in developing countries (TK 2007-2008, 31 250 and 30 495, no. 30). In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has established the Global Sustainable Biomass Fund (FDBM), aiming to support developing countries in making their production of biomass for domestic energy purposes and for exports more sustainable. A sum of € 6 million has been allocated to this purpose for the year 2010 (TK 2009-2010, 32 335, no. 1).

From being a domestic policy area with a fairly clearly demarcated goal, energy has developed into a range of initiatives aiming to contribute to the goal of sustainable global energy management, reaching far beyond the confines of the Netherlands. What is keeping all these initiatives together is umbrella headings like 'sustainable development' and 'sustainable energy supply'.

At the same time, the Netherlands is attempting to secure its own energy future by preparing for the 'post-gas deposit' era. It is working on the development of a so-called gas roundabout, allowing natural gas and liquid gas to be exported from various countries through the Netherlands to other European countries (Ministry of Economic Affairs 2008). With this in mind, Economic Affairs selected Russia, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia and Algeria as priority countries in being major suppliers. Gasunie, the Dutch state company, is participating in the construction of a pipeline from Russia (Nordstream), which is also why the city of Groningen (its local council, its university and its museum) is taking a more-than-modest interest in Russia.

Within the context of the internal market, we also see conflicting merging and demerging tendencies (Van der Linde 2005). Energy infrastructure and energy supply in the Netherlands have been disconnected and operate in an international field of competition. The network companies are in the hands of the government but are engaged, as if they were private enterprises, in expanding their strength by purchasing foreign infrastructure networks so as to be able to develop their central role in distribution (WRR 2008).

If fragmentation and interconnection of policy areas are manifest anywhere, it is in this field of energy. Energy is European policy if it is about the free market. It is European and global policy is if it is about sustainability. It is ministerial policy if it is about securing future energy supplies. It is private and regional policy if it is about reinforcing economic positions. All this is then intersected by networks of private actors, NGOs, and ad hoc coalitions of countries aiming to protect their energy interests.

2.1.3   CLIMATE

The issue of climate change is so complex and all-encompassing that no one has a full grasp of the matter. Knowledge can be found with a variety of climate think tanks, such as the UN's International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), databanks of national climatological institutes, such as the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI), international climate NGOs, such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, and the global climate movement, which organised itself during the Copenhagen summit in 2009 under the name of the People's Climate Summit, or Klimaforum 09. Their knowledge, however, is in a state of development. In addition, the issue of climate change is characterised by pressure of time: the longer we postpone solving the problem, the more acutely it is likely to manifest itself. There is also the possibility that the effects of interim climate changes – think of climate-related natural disasters like droughts, floods, hurricanes, and heat waves – might have a disruptive effect on the economy, which will make it harder to realise required technological innovations (cf. WRR 2006).

The effects of climate change are closely interconnected with many other issues, such as biodiversity, food supplies (the regional decrease in food productivity due to flooding and desertification), human health (expansion of the areas in which infectious diseases occur), international stability (increasing pressure on local and regional societies in consequence of the increase in water and food shortages, droughts, and natural disasters), and migration (Adger et al. 2006).

The Dutch government is aware of the complexity and the interrelatedness of the issue of climate change with other themes and, over the past few years, has spent a lot of energy on developing national climate and adaptation strategies (making the Netherlands climate proof). As yet, this has barely progressed beyond 'putting together an agenda' in answer to the question 'what shall we do?' In its report entitled *Klimaatstrategie – tussen ambitie en realisme* (Climate Strategy: Between Ambition and Realism), the WRR argued that, though the Netherlands is playing a leading role in climate policy issues, such policy activism has actually produced a fragmented, technically complex, and ceaselessly changing policy (WRR 2006). The last national adaptation strategy that was presented by the Balkenende IV Cabinet also got bogged down in launching awareness campaigns, funding knowledge development projects, expanding the existing toolkit, and expressing the ambition to 'map out' possibilities for a more focused deployment of instruments and to 'concretely elaborate' and 'actively monitor' pipelined projects (Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment et al. 2007).

A shared characteristic of all three issues discussed above is that they involve a tangle of interconnected issues, making the problem in question hard to grasp. They involve numerous uncertainties, countless actors, many – often conflicting –

solutions that are being proposed at different levels, and, last but not least, they have a dynamic character. For the government, this means that its knowledge base required to define the issue in question and generate solutions is inadequate by definition, which, incidentally, not only affects the government: it affects all actors involved. Moreover, it is hard to define and demarcate one's own specific role in this tangle, as there are too few 'natural' handles on these problems, which tend to transgress the boundaries of public-private and domestic-foreign domains.

2.2   CONSEQUENCES FOR FOREIGN POLICY

As the set order of items on the international agenda has disappeared, it has become increasingly difficult for the government to pursue a coherent and consistent policy. On the one hand, the increased size and diversity of themes have forced the government to formulate policy objectives in many more areas than before. On the other, the lack of a clear hierarchy has inevitably caused these policy objectives to be more wide-ranging. In this context, it is important to explore whether the Netherlands can actually maintain its 'active approach' to foreign policy and what might be its possible consequences.

2.2.1   FOREIGN POLICY AS A DOUGHNUT

The most important observation about the shift from national policy themes to global problems we sketched above is that Dutch foreign policy has been making a similar turn. Explanatory Statements (cf. TK 2005-2006, 30 300 V, no. 2; TK 2006-2007, 30 800 V, no. 2; TK 2007-2008, 30 800 V, no. 2; TK 2008-2009, 31 700 V, no. 2; TK 2009-2010, 32 123 V, no. 2) invariably highlight the countering of climate change, the protection of human rights anywhere in the world, a properly functioning legal order, regional stability and good governance. These complex, dynamic, global problems are not only the starting point for policy, but their solution is also the policy objective. As we cannot attain our own objectives by ourselves, we do a bit of everything.

Dutch foreign policy consists of a broad range of aspirations, viewpoints and activities; in the middle of this range there is little to connect the various elements. It thus resembles American foreign policy under President Clinton, which political scientist and top advisor Michael Mandelbaum diagnosed as follows: "We have a foreign policy today in the shape of a doughnut – lots of peripheral interests but nothing at the centre." (Mandelbaum cit. in Friedman 1992)

Let us give an example to illustrate this picture. In the course of 2007, the Balkenende IV Cabinet expressed its ambition to put human rights at the top of the Dutch policy agenda during its period in government. This ambition led to the appearance of a new human rights memorandum in November 2007 (Ministry of

Foreign Affairs 2007). This memorandum, containing well over a hundred action items, as well as its Explanatory Statement expressing the Cabinet's aim of 'a balanced and distinct dedication to the promotion of human rights anywhere in the world', show that this ambition to devote more attention to human rights in foreign policy means, in practice, that the Netherlands is proposing to devote itself to human rights for anyone, anywhere, anytime. This picture is confirmed when we take a look at the six prime focuses of policy mentioned in the memorandum.

The combating of capital punishment, torture, and discrimination on the grounds of religious persuasion, gender, or sexual orientation, the promotion of religion and belief, and the rights of children are also major themes in the human rights policies of the UN and influential NGOs such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW). The protection of children was considered important enough by the UN to warrant the negotiation of a separate children's rights treaty, in addition to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly on 20 November 1989 and it is currently the most widely ratified international human rights treaty. In the world of human rights NGOs, the death penalty is considered the ultimate denial of human rights. For this reason, Amnesty and HRW have launched long-term campaigns aiming to achieve the unconditional abolishment of the death penalty anywhere in the world. In Europe, the Council of Europe is intensely involved in these major themes. It has drafted separate protocols to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), drafted treaties (including the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment), and founded special bodies (such as the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance and the Platform on Children's Rights). From this point of view, the government's active human rights policy in fact amounted to little more than embracing virtually all major human rights themes that had already been taken on by others at an earlier stage.

The Netherlands cannot solve global human rights problems on its own. The same goes for the issues of global poverty, energy, climate change, refugees, and international terrorism. The reality is that all parties desperately need one another in all of these areas so as to be able to take effective measures. The Netherlands must accept its responsibility, but this does not automatically imply that it should do or continues to do everything in all of these areas.

2.2.2   PUNCHING ABOVE ITS WEIGHT

The Dutch performance on the international stage up until 1989 was the direct derivative of a frame of reference that was determined by Cold War relations. Its policy was firmly founded on its partnerships with NATO, the EU and the UN. In

practice, Dutch foreign policy, in terms of policymaking, decision-making, or policy implementation, was directly linked to our cooperation with these organisations. In doing so, security – the Atlantic primacy – was its first concern. Deliberations and ideas in other areas were directly derived from this primary concern (Voorhoeve 1979).

Within these fixed frameworks, the Dutch government had ample scope to define its own policy accents. This was a clearly felt need both in politics and in large sections of the population, but it often led to a dedication that went beyond what could, in all reason, be expected from the Netherlands. The most telling example of such punching above its weight is undoubtedly the articulation of the idea of the Netherlands as being a 'model country'. Proponents of this notion of a 'model country' called on the Netherlands to take upon itself a leading role in changing the world (Kennedy 1997: 78). This idea that the Netherlands should be a model country was first advocated in 1972 by the Mansholt committee, which, at the time, served as a social think tank to support the combined political campaign of three political parties: PvdA, D66, and PPR.

The model country initiative had everything going for it in two respects. Firstly, it met with the full support and involvement of the government right from the word go. During the Den Uyl Cabinet, development cooperation expenditures rose considerably, and the importance the government attached to human rights and democracy was immediately exposed to the full glare of publicity, among other things by its open support of liberation movements in Angola and Mozambique and of the victims of the military dictatorship in Chile, as well as by attending a demonstration in Utrecht against death sentences in Spain. Secondly, the model country idea seamlessly matched conceptions and ideas that were prevalent in Dutch society in those days, which had witnessed a shift from material prosperity to spiritual development and quality of life since the 1960s. Mustering a lot of enthusiasm and energy, large groups of citizens embraced post-material issues such as human rights, disarmament, and environmental protection. It was precisely this combination of factors that was decisive for the Netherlands in gaining a reputation for itself as a model country abroad:

"This is how the Netherlands also made the impression abroad that it was, in many respects – and some thought in all respects – a unique country, in the vanguard of social change, a model for other countries, a source of inspiration for idealists, and an indication of what the future had in store" (Kennedy 2005: 116).

Partly because it was so firmly rooted in society, the model country idea managed to preserve its value as a policy concept for a long time after the Den Uyl Cabinet had fallen.

The deeply felt need to make a contribution that went beyond what could, in all reason, be expected from a country like the Netherlands continued to exist after 1989, as witnessed, among other things, by preserving the Dutch tradition of spending above-average development cooperation budgets: the Netherlands outstrips the 0.7 per cent standard that was agreed in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The development budgets of most rich countries are below this standard. It is partly owing to this above-average aid volume that, since 2003, the Netherlands has been in the top three of most development-friendly countries in the world on the Commitment to Development Index (WRR 2010: 21).

In the 1990s, the Dutch armed forces quickly transformed from being a defence force geared to dealing with a large-scale conflict into armed forces that could be deployed at all levels of the violence spectrum in any place in the world, again illustrating the tendency for delivering above-average achievements on the global stage. This makes the Netherlands one of the few NATO countries whose armed forces are capable of taking control of multilateral operations at any level of conflict (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1   Position of the Dutch armed forces within NATO

Type of armed forces	Country
Full spectrum force	US
Fully expeditionary	UK, France, Netherlands, Spain, and Italy (after restructuring)
Partially expeditionary	Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Norway
Stabilisation force	Poland and Turkey
Peace force	Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Czech Republic
No capacities	Iceland

Source: De Wijk 2004

This major transformation has never stopped the Dutch government from cutting back on the armed forces in each new round of budgetary cutbacks, but the political ambition to take part in peace operations at the highest levels of conflict and the preparedness to make ad hoc funds available for such goals have always been there. The preparedness to risk military lives in Uruzgan illustrates, even more so than the financial sacrifices, how much the Netherlands is prepared to commit to such new missions. The Uruzgan mission, meanwhile, is the most costly military

operation in Dutch history, and it is hard to predict what the final expense figure will be. In doing such calculations, it matters quite a lot what are taken to be expenses. In a recent debate in Germany on precisely this topic, estimates by economists exceeded those of the government by a factor of three (Brück, De Groot and Schneider 2010). In the Netherlands, too, it soon transpired that the original budget would be far exceeded. If one rereads the minutes of parliamentary debates, one sees expenditures soaring after mission extensions and miscalculations. Expenses of the mission that was launched in 2006 were first estimated at around € 340 million. Early 2010, these estimates had been adjusted in an upward direction to more than € 1.4 billion (TK 2009-2010, 27 925: 388). Partly owing to the financial crisis and drastic expenditure cuts in other areas, irritations in politics and society were mounting.

What made matters worse was the persisting lack of clarity about the question of what specific need the Dutch contribution in Uruzgan was meant to fulfil, and, since 2006, various ministers have come up with different arguments to justify the mission. What looked like a comprehensive or 3D approach on paper soon crumbled when it was subjected to argumentation: it was considered a war against the Taliban by some and a development mission by others. This has somehow made Dutch participation in ISAF and future peace missions rather haphazard.

The way in which the government handled the ISAF mission is testimony to the lack of a vision or policy framework that is properly tailored to today's world and that will serve as the foundation for making *and* justifying clear choices. Precisely in a context of financial stringency and cost-cutting measures, the lack of clear choices is increasingly proving to be a deficiency the government cannot permit itself, not only with regard to peace operations but also with respect to other domains of foreign policy in which it has the ambition to play a prominent role. This is even more so as citizens must be able to endorse such activities in order to make consistent policy possible.

2.2.3   PUBLIC OPINION AS AN UNCERTAIN FACTOR

Besides the observation that the tendency to 'want to do it all' is becoming increasingly more difficult to realise, Dutch public opinion is also becoming less of a constant, doing little more than exclude certain options. Dissent over foreign policy issues has become the rule rather than the exception and may affect the Dutch credibility and ability to act abroad.

So far, foreign policy was predominantly guided by the principle of permissive consensus (Key 1961; Inglehart 1970): the administrative elite was able to allow itself to develop and implement foreign policy without engaging much in dialogue with citizens, knowing that the direction of such foreign policy was a matter of

overall consensus. This is a thing of the past now, as consensus is crumbling in all quarters. We have already referred to the increasing polarisation on the theme of development cooperation (see also WRR 2010). In addition, there are quite a few themes on the foreign policy agenda on which the preferences of major groups of citizens and politics are clearly diverging, with the theme of international peace enforcement in general and the Dutch participation in the ISAF mission in Uruzgan in particular serving as a case in point. The ambition level shown by the Dutch government for international peacekeeping missions is clearly at odds with the lack of enthusiasm in Dutch society for deploying the Dutch armed forces in perilous combat operations.

The result of successive opinion polls on the Dutch participation in the NATO ISAF operation in the Afghan province of Uruzgan, an operation that, according to the Defence Ministry, is on the interface of both categories, showed that this interface meant something different to government and parliament than it did to society at large. Even at the time when the government's intention to make a military contribution to this operation was being debated, opinion polls indicated that no majority for this initiative was to be found (AIV 2006a: 13). Nevertheless, the Dutch Second Chamber of Parliament consented to the Uruzgan mission with a large majority of 126 votes on 2 February. Since the mission was launched, monthly opinion polls on the Uruzgan mission have been conducted by the Behavioural Sciences Service Centre/Ministry of Defence. The first of these Uruzgan monitor polls in August 2006 indicated that 38 per cent of the interviewees supported the mission, 26 per cent opposed it, and 36 per cent neither supported nor opposed it. In the July 2009 opinion poll, these percentages were 35 per cent, 32 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively. The overall trend shows a slight decrease in the number of proponents and a slight increase in the number of opponents (Ministry of Defence 2009: 7). The decision in November 2007 to prolong the mission until late 2010 (the mission was initially scheduled to terminate on 1 August 2008) was rejected by the majority of the population. This makes the Uruzgan mission the first military operation in Dutch history that was not supported by a majority of citizens, both before and after it was approved by the Second Chamber (Everts 2008: 164). International opinion polls investigating the general conditions under which citizens are prepared to support the deployment of armed forces show that the Netherlands, just like other countries, shows a high level of support for operations that involve words such as 'peace', 'reconstruction' and 'humanitarian', and that such support is considerably lower when the term 'combat operations' is used (Everts 2008: 109). In other words, 3D is all very well, but when D proves to be too much of the D of defence, public support is at stake.

If, in the past, foreign policy used to be an interstate affair, today it is characterised by a transnational network of relations between people and organisations everywhere in the world. Foreign policy, in other words, is no longer the realm of an

administrative elite: it has become increasingly easy for individuals, organisations, and companies to operate away from the clutches of the government. Though the public at large is barely interested in foreign policy, as every election reconfirms (Everts 2008: 362; TNS/NIPO/De Volkskrant 2010), non-state actors can play a key role in mobilising social pressure. The mass media and the Internet play an important part in this (Baum and Potter 2008).

Dutch foreign policy is not only influenced by developments on the international stage, but domestic political, social, and economic structures and developments also affect foreign policy (Verbeek and Van der Vleuten 2008). Despite their varying interest in and wavering support for foreign policy, large sections of the population have a clearly felt need to identify with the nation state as the centre of public security. The government is expected to articulate national interests and ambitions, also with respect to other nations, despite domestic polarisation on specific foreign politics issues. Because of its sovereign status, the Netherlands is for many citizens the main frame of reference in the world of international relations. Internal opinions may be much divided, but as soon as the outside world comes too close, many hold on to the uniqueness of the Netherlands.

When ties between population, territory, and state are at stake, the theme of national identity is never far off, an issue to which the WRR devoted a report in 2007 (WRR 2007a). This report showed that the need for a clearly defined Dutch identity was great. What is also relevant here is the idea that the Dutch identity must be distinguished and should be distinguishable from that of other countries. People's concerns that transfers of authority amount to meddling with national uniqueness and national identity make such transfers socially unacceptable.

At the end of the day, many of these concerns are predicated on anxieties about the continued existence of the Netherlands as we have come to know it. What is at the core here are socio-cultural and socio-economic aspects in which national and international concerns are closely interrelated. An example here is the fear that the arrival of large groups of migrants with double nationalities might cause society to lose its coherence and cohesion. Another example is the impending dichotomy between the nation and the economy: as economic networks are eluding nation states, it is becoming increasingly difficult to consider a multinational as an American or a Dutch one. Social elites in private service networks, in particular, are getting increasingly detached from their social environment as they are turning into the champions of globalisation and Europeanisation (Reich 1991). This is what Beck was referring to when he used the phrase *Ortspolygamie* (Beck 1997).

Concerns about this gradual process are far from new (Lechner 2007). In his 1996 book *Het nut van Nederland: Opstellen over soevereiniteit en identiteit* (The Use of the Netherlands: Essays on Sovereignty and Identity), Scheffer already advocated

the "revaluation of the nation state as a carrier of parliamentary democracy, social protection, and rule of law in the EU" (Koch and Scheffer 1996: 13). Before that, historian Van Sas had already championed nationhood as an important cultural-mental factor (Van Sas 1991). And according to the late historian Tony Judt, the old-fashioned nation state is better suited to guaranteeing common loyalty, protecting the disadvantaged, enforcing a more honest distribution of prosperity, and offering compensation for disruptive international economic developments. In this analysis, the use of the nation is rooted in its capacity to counterbalance the disruptive forces of globalisation and to offer social and democratic guarantees that will safeguard the nation (Judt 1997).

Besides the necessity and the usefulness of having the Netherlands as the main frame of reference, there is also its inevitability. The media may be offering a window on the world, but this metaphor already implies that the world is outside and that the Netherlands is inside. The Dutch are mainly communicating with the Dutch: consumer programmes, chat shows, health programmes, all these worlds of experience are largely situated within national enclosures. Growing media consumption, we suspect, tends to reinforce rather than weaken a nation-bound world view. As a consequence, the Dutch share many images, names, and references with each other that would mystify any non-Dutch person. These are functional, normative, and also emotional identifications that promote specific feelings of affiliation with the nation state (Johnson 1993).

It is important for Dutch foreign policy to be clearly identifiable and visible. By being honest about the possibilities and impossibilities for the Netherlands in a hybrid world and by searching for widely shared objectives that may secure the position of the Netherlands and the Dutch in the present and in the future, a foreign policy should be achieved that is not only effective in promoting Dutch interests but that is also held by many citizens as a foreign policy they would care to endorse.

2.3   TOWARDS CLEAR CHOICES AND PRIORITIES

The observations above lead us to conclude that giving Dutch foreign policy a clearer sense of direction is an urgent imperative. If we fail to do so, policymakers and policy followers will not be able to see the wood for the trees, with all the negative consequences this will have for results, for legitimacy, for areas of expertise and for internal and external authority. It is crucial to move from loosely formulated missions to strategic choices in Dutch foreign policy: from doing a bit of everything to being clearly focused. This means we need a new decision-making framework to establish priorities that fit the changing international environment.

To identify such choices, we will be guided by national interests. This will allow us to distinguish between a permanent fixture in foreign policy and a free space in which priorities can be established. Within this free space, we can also identify niches. Niches allow a country, while being aware of the constraints involved in its own agenda-setting capacities, to profile its own specific policy areas in the long term.

2.3.1   AWARENESS OF THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

An inevitable step that would precede choice-making and priority-establishing in Dutch foreign policy is that of awareness and recognition: awareness that the world is hybrid, having characteristics both of a geopolitical world and of a network environment, and recognition that, as described above, this has fundamentally changed the character of the Dutch foreign policy agenda. Only when the Dutch government has fully woken up to these changes and only if it recognises that its current foreign policy is not properly tailored to this situation can it decide to pursue a strategic foreign policy.

Lack of understanding is not the only obstacle. Other impediments include a lack of nerve to let go of the old fixtures and a lack of intellectual ingenuity and flexibility to find new ways of protecting Dutch values and interests. Recognising the hybrid world is mainly a matter of attitude. It primarily requires a mental U-turn. In order to establish a strategic foreign policy, politicians, government officials and citizens must be fully aware of the consequences that living in a hybrid world involves. They must understand that the disaggregated state, the interconnectedness of worlds at home and abroad, Europe, and the power of non-state actors are phenomena that can barely be influenced by the Netherlands, but that, conversely, most definitely do influence the position of the Netherlands in the world.

In other words, all this is not about how the Dutch government could strengthen or undo the rise of non-state actors or the international activities of ministries. It is not about whether the Netherlands means to reinforce the European arena or to counter a shift in the balance of power towards China. Non-state actors, the disaggregated state, European integration, and the rise of China are givens, which serve as the parameters or the independent variables in making and implementing foreign policy. What is crucial is how the Netherlands handles these givens. Should the government deny or ignore these parameters, they will pose a risk. However, if the government acknowledges them, they may hold out new and possibly surprising opportunities.

The position of the Netherlands in the world may be compared to a raft on a fast-flowing river (cf. Evans, Jones and Steven 2010). If you insist on steering your own course in such rapids, you will surely capsize, for it is the river rather than the

captain that dictates the raft's speed and course. It is impossible to pause, to back-track, or to take a break and chart a new course. Whether the team on the raft want it or not, they are propelled by the river's rapids and bends. The power of the river does not mean, however, that a raft cannot do anything but drift aimlessly. Those in charge who know the river's power certainly do have the possibility of charting some course of their own within the banks of the river. It is vital for the crew to be guided by their common goal and to work as a team. The elements that will decide the raft's survival – recognition of major external influences on one's own course, knowledge of impending developments and the ability to anticipate them, knowledge of one's own strengths and weaknesses, and a joint strategy for handling change – also help to clarify what should be the principles for pursuing strategic foreign policy.

The coalition agreement of the Balkenende IV Cabinet of February 2007 illustrates what we mean. It announced that the Dutch government meant to play an active and constructive role in the world and in Europe because an introverted role of the Netherlands would not serve our national interests (TK 2006-2007, Proceedings, no. 45: 2629-2734). Such an announcement raises scores of other questions. Why would we want to continue to play an active and constructive role and why would it be in our national interest? In what areas do we want to profile ourselves as an active and constructive player? In what areas can we play such a role? How should this role be interpreted in the future? In what organisations will we play an active part and why? What specific contributions do we believe we can make to these organisations?

The same goes for the government's intention, articulated in the same coalition agreement of the Balkenende IV Cabinet, to devote itself to good cooperative relationships in Europe with a clear division of tasks between the Member States and the Union, to attune Dutch security policies to the new situation in the world, and to focus on peace missions, on countering terrorism, and on conflict prevention and reconstruction. What do or do we not consider good cooperation in Europe? What would be a proper role for the Netherlands to play in this context? Where do we want our security policy to take us? What can we do? What is our ambition level? How do these choices relate to our ambitions in other areas?

2.3.2   INTEREST-BASED PRIORITISING

In the end, choices are a political matter, but in order to be able to make such choices, it would be advisable to take a close look at the interests of the Netherlands. We will do so by means of the following questions:
1   What is important for the Netherlands?
2   What are the interests of other actors and what do they do to realise them?
3   Where can the Netherlands make a difference?

Questions 1 and 3 are in line with the priority principle used by Norway to guide its foreign policy during the *Refleks* project, a large-scale reflection on Norway's foreign policy (Lunde and Thune et al. 2008; cf. Russett, Starr and Kinsella 2006: 21-23). As the Netherlands is an EU Member State and is party to treaties with a great many international organisations, we have added question 2.

Such a priority principle enables us to weigh and rank the issues the Netherlands is facing and will be facing in the future with the aid of a specific type of national interest (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1   Typology of national interests
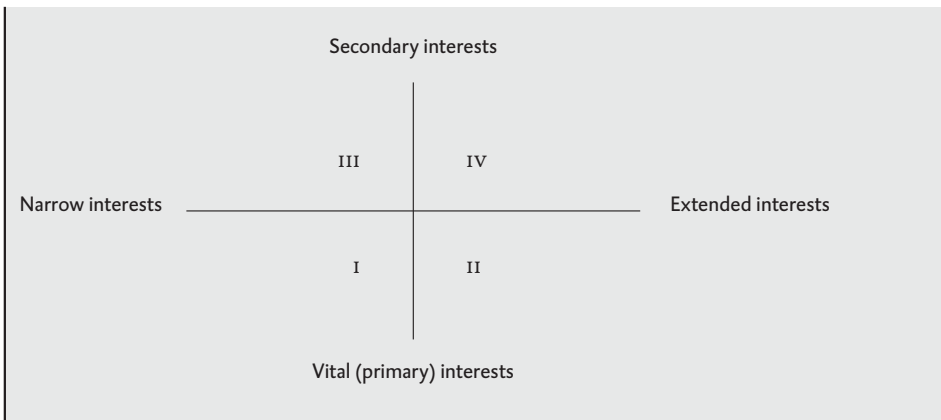
Where issues should be placed on the Y-axis depends on how one answers the question 'what does the Netherlands consider important?' The position on the X-axis then depends on how one answers the second question: 'what are the interests of other actors and what do they do to realise them?' If issues concern the Netherlands alone, they come under 'Narrow interests' on the left-hand side. The more the Netherlands shares such interests with other actors, the more their position will shift towards 'Extended interests'. The answer to both these questions, finally, marks out the position of a policy issue in any one of these quadrants, after which the third question will force us to critically reconsider choices made.

How to value issues is not a one-off exercise, as foreign policy implies responding to continually changing circumstances and calls for unceasing dexterity. How these three priority questions may help us to make choices will be discussed below, where we will also explore the significance and the role of different kinds of national interests.

1   What is important for the Netherlands?

The first question serves to weigh different Dutch interests: the more important an objective is, the closer it will be to vital (primary) interests, and the lower its position will be on the Y-axis in Figure 2.1. There is no such thing as an objective method for assessing the relative weight of interests. Nor does the Netherlands have a foreign policy tradition of 'grand narratives', of road maps or guiding documents that might help to point out a kind of self-evident mutual relation between a variety of interests.

The national interest remains a notoriously difficult concept despite the scholarly attention that has been devoted to it for a long time (Frankel 1970; Krasner 1978; Van Schie 1994). Its description, firstly, easily leads one into a circular argument, and its second weakness is related to this (Chafetz, Spirtas and Frankel 1999): who will decide what is in the interest of the Netherlands? Is the national interest what a country is pursuing through its actions (descriptive), or is it the aggregate of goals a country should be pursuing (prescriptive)? The concept of the national interest, moreover, often obscures the distinction that must be made between the goals and means of foreign policy (George 2006). Power and influence on the world stage readily appear to be a national interest in themselves, but in fact they are little more than instruments for safeguarding interests through foreign policy (Holloway 2006). The question that really matters here is how a country decides to what purposes it will wield its power and influence (Finnemore 1996: 3).

So as to understand this, two aspects of national interest need to be explored separately: first of all, it should be truly national, that is, a collective, public matter; and, secondly, it should be a true interest. Christopher Hill's approach to the concept of national interest helps to clarify this:

"(National interest) is only of use as a measuring stick. On the one hand it enables us to judge whether a given policy is genuinely a *national*, or public, collective concern, or instead of private, group or sub-national goal masquerading as the former. On the other, it should help us to see whether a goal or policy is really derived from an *interest*, in the sense of a stake which a given unit has in a problem, as opposed to being a value, preference or mere aspiration" (Hill 2003: 19).

This division also underlines the importance of making a sharp distinction between ambitions that merely concern a value, a preference, or an aspiration and ambitions that concern a direct interest: a stake. It will be crucial to search for connections between interests and ambitions in order to move from a loosely formulated mission to strategic choices in Dutch foreign policy, or to take the step from doing a bit of everything to being focused.

It is important here to underline once more that national interests are not objective givens; they are, as Finnemore (1996) argues, "intensely political". National interests, therefore, are rarely clear-cut but tend to be diffuse. To underscore this limitation, we should perhaps call them 'perceived national interests' (Gourevitz 2007).

Despite the intricacies involved in the concept, it is possible to dissect the aggregate of perceived national interests in such a way that it will give us something to go on in choice-making. In doing so, we will make a distinction between vital or primary national interests and secondary national interests. Some issues will be beyond all doubt: the integrity of Dutch territory, the immediate security of Dutch citizens, and the protection of the main political institutions and collective values. One would be hard put indeed to find any Dutchman or -woman who would not consider the defence of these matters a core task of the Dutch government in its relations with other nations. In the tradition of the realistic school in international relations, these are called vital national interests (Morgenthau 1948; Holsti 1967; Roskin 1994). These vital national interests generally have the character of protecting us against external threats that are both acute – a threat that can be perceived here and now – and destructive.

In pursuing its vital interests, the Dutch government need not make any choices. As they are essential for the continued existence of the Netherlands, the Dutch people, and the Dutch territory, the realisation of such interests will be a foreign policy priority at all times. Precisely because these are life-and-death interests, they are beyond discussion.

This is not quite the case for issues that are closer to what have been called secondary interests. These, for example, might include interests that are not acutely and unconditionally vital for the preservation and promotion of security, prosperity, and well-being of the people but that, nevertheless, are considered highly important for our country by a large section of the population. This is where the Dutch government should be establishing priorities. A criterion that might guide the choice process is an affirmative answer to the double question that was already mentioned above: is the interest truly shared at the national level and is it truly an interest that makes a difference for the Netherlands?

This will allow us to make a first, crude ranking of issues. The two next questions will then provide additional criteria to make a further selection in foreign policy priorities.

2   *What are the interests of other actors and what do they do to realise these?*

The answer to this second question indicates to what degree an interest is merely a Dutch one – narrow national interests – or to what degree this interest is shared

with other international actors, particularly the EU: these are the so-called extended national interests (cf. Lunde and Thune et al. 2008). Reinforcing the sand dune system along our North Sea coast would be a narrow national interest; to operate effectively to deal with rising sea levels would be an extended national interest. The answer to this question would place an issue on the X-axis in Figure 2.1. The closer it finds itself to extended national interests, the greater the necessity and the possibility of dealing with it together with other actors, particularly within the EU. If a Dutch interest coincides with that of other actors, the follow-up question is what action these other actors are undertaking to promote this interest.

Most issues that involve choices will be located in the right-hand quadrants of Figure 2.1. As we observed before, national interests have become increasingly entangled with global issues, and the interests of the Netherlands and its citizens have become part of or even identical to the interests of a much larger collective. Eradicating the roots of terrorism is most definitely a vital interest for the Netherlands, but the Netherlands is by no means the only country and probably not even the principal country that would stand to benefit from realising this interest. The Netherlands may be seriously harmed by pandemics, but it is no use for it to prepare itself in isolation. There are interests that rise above those of the Netherlands as a collective.

Extended national interests touch upon strategic global issues. To address such issues means to make a contribution to what is known in the literature as global public goods (see Went 2010 for a typology). The feature of such global public goods is that virtually all countries will benefit from solving the underlying issues, while no single country can achieve this on its own. If the Netherlands cannot independently secure the interests involved here, this does not imply that such global public goods should not be incorporated into the Dutch foreign policy vision (cf. Murphy 2008). It is the task of the government to explore how global public goods relate to the Netherlands and the interests of Dutch citizens; where there are the most substantial interfaces between global public goods and the Dutch interests; and how and how much the Netherlands would be willing and prepared to contribute to safeguarding such global public goods. For a strategic foreign policy, this means it must fully take into account the multitude of interdependencies between, on the one hand, the nation and the society that has generated these interests and, on the other, the global public goods (George 2006).

With the aid of the answers to the first two questions, it is possible to determine the position of any arbitrary issue in the coordinate system. If it is a vital interest, then it deserves the government's undivided attention. In order to be able to make choices between any other issues, the Dutch government should predominantly focus on interests it shares with other actors, particularly with the EU (see Figure 2.2), for these are issues that are not pursued by the Netherlands alone. They will

be priority issues for groups of states, offering a greater opportunity to make a difference together. For an open country like the Netherlands, which, with its dependence on international trade and the international rule of law, is so strongly attached to other nations, this means that it will reap many more benefits from promoting extended national interests than virtually any other country.

Figure 2.2   **Preferred space for making strategic choices**
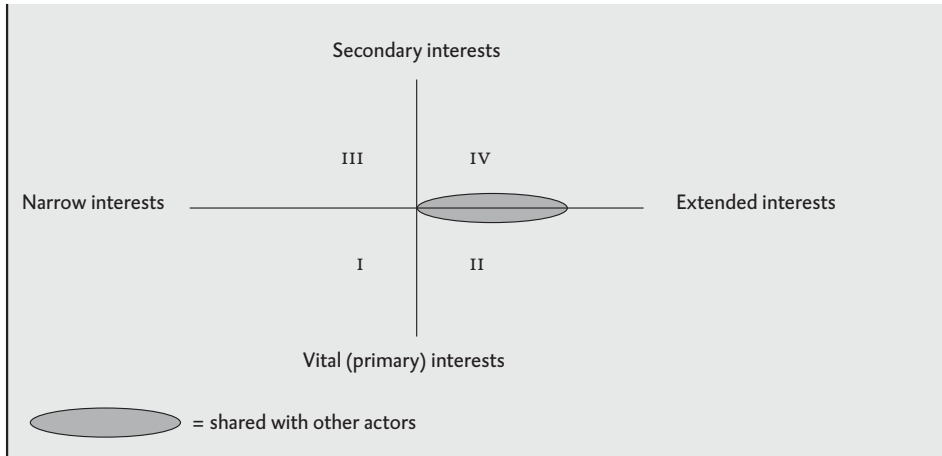
3   *Where can the Netherlands make a difference?*

The third and last question is all about ability, capacity, and strength: where do we have the possibility and potential to exert an influence? Where do we matter? There are several factors that are important and that influence the Netherlands. We must make a distinction between, on the one hand, factors that are important, influence us, and can be influenced by ourselves, and, on the other, factors that we cannot change or that do not represent a vital interest for us (cf. Rochon 1999). The memorandum *Maak ruimte voor klimaat* (Making Space for Climate) (Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment et al. 2007) may help to illustrate this. This memorandum makes a rousing case for us to dedicate ourselves, both here and elsewhere in the world, to saving the climate. Many a country and many an organisation might have formulated a similar ambition, as indeed they did: the EU Member States attuned their climate ambitions in order to pursue a joint EU policy. On an issue like rising sea levels, however, the Netherlands might have been expected to make a specific expert contribution to produce added value to these EU initiatives, connecting actors and countries and stimulating thought and action in the desired direction.

Answering the third priority question requires a thorough reality check of the margins of the abilities of Dutch foreign policy: where can the Netherlands make a

difference and where can it not? Only those who know what they are capable of can properly appraise what results will be within their reach. Making a contribution to solving the Middle East conflict, for example, has been one of the goals, even a prime focus of Dutch foreign policy for many years. But what does such a noble pursuit signify, when many bigger countries, including the US, have cherished the same ambition without producing results?

Such a reality check should most certainly take on board the hybrid character of international relations. If we limit ourselves to a geopolitical analysis of the Dutch power base, we might rush to conclude prematurely that the influence of the Netherlands in the world is of diminishing importance. Titles of contributions by Joris Voorhoeve in the *International Spectator* are telling, even if he puts them into perspective in the articles themselves: they range from *The Diminishing Role of the Netherlands* (1981), via *The Netherlands: A Medium-Sized Pocket Power* (1991), to *From Fellow Actor to Extra* (2010). An obsession with smallness, reducing the Dutch position to that of a nominal figure that has no strings to pull at all, however, would seriously harm Dutch foreign policy (Rozemond 2010).

In a hybrid world, geopolitics is no longer the only power base: at least as important is network power. Anyone with a bright idea and a clear strategy can mobilise people, influence the agenda, and become a fellow player in the appropriate networks, irrespective of a country's size. Know-how, expertise, and contacts produce authority, and there may be more advantages than disadvantages in representing a small country rather than a big country (Klem and Kester 2010). The unique role played by the Netherlands in international financial institutions shortly after the Second World War illustrates that the country played its full-size role in the past and that this was also beneficial to a free-trading country like the Netherlands.

At the same time, we must beware of overestimating our powers. If the Netherlands should dedicate funds to activities abroad that exceed its powers, this would harm the promotion of its interests abroad. The funds, energy, and attention devoted to a sweeping goal can no longer be dedicated to a perhaps less sweeping but possibly no less ambitious attempt to accomplish a foreign policy objective. Without careful consideration, this may provoke inconsistencies and reputation damage.

One of the consequences of making clear choices is that the Netherlands will more often have to choose not to do something or to take on less. Obviously, it would be wise to examine if such posteriorities could be accommodated elsewhere, within the EU, for instance, or even outside it. This would not be predicated on the belief that Dutch interests might be served just as well by a multilateral organisation as by our own government but on the understanding that hiving off tasks need not

always imply the neglect of an interest. The ambition of pursuing a strategic foreign policy may then mean in practice that, in some cases, the Netherlands may choose to be in the driving seat while, in other cases, it may take a back seat. If Canada, for instance, proves to be more resourceful and expeditious than other countries in accomplishing an international treaty against landmines together with the NGO movement, this exempts the Netherlands from making it a prime focus of policy. It will be safe and sound in Canada's hands.

2.3.3   NICHES AS SPECIALISATIONS

Besides promoting vital interests and making strategic choices from a limited number of extended interests, it is recommended to include a third component in foreign policy: niches. Niches are generated by chosen priorities and distinguish themselves from other foreign policy domains in three ways: 1) they are eminently suitable instruments for the Netherlands to profile itself in the world; 2) they receive more funds than regular foreign policy items; 3) they are priorities established for the long term, going beyond a single cabinet period. Niches enable the government to steer a stable, long-term course that clearly specifies where the Netherlands believes it can make a difference in the world.

A niche can be a promising 'site' in the international system for reasons of location, tradition, or because it is widely recognised and accepted (Hendrikson 2007). The idea of having niches in foreign policy – called 'niche diplomacy' in the jargon – is by no means a new one. The term was coined two decades ago by the then Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gareth Evans. He meant the term niches to refer to concentrating budgets on a few specific areas where the likelihood of achieving valuable and significant results would be the greatest, instead of attempting to cover the entire foreign policy domain in thematic and geographical terms (Evans and Grant 1991). Niches may be an important aid in smoothing people's identification with policy, assembling expertise, forging network alliances, and polishing reputation. Within the foreign policy framework, they would allow the Netherlands to develop an agenda of its own that would take on board the country's particular circumstances, strengths, and ambitions, suiting the country's image and self-image. This would make niches an essential ingredient in developing a clearly identifiable profile to showcase the Netherlands in the world.

Niches would have three major advantages. First of all, to excel in a specific policy area is one of the few means by which a medium-sized power like the Netherlands can make a substantial contribution to international and global issues. Secondly, specialisation for a country means to gain knowledge and experience it can then use to further perfect its niche. Thirdly, niches are an important source of influence and power on the world stage. A country that is devoting much of its knowledge, attention, and budgets to an exclusive theme, it is felt, will make itself

invaluable in this area. This central position and its attendant status can then be used by a country as a stake in negotiations with other states, even if these negotiations concern an area other than that in which the country is taking pride of place (Cooper 1997).

Niches tap into comparative advantages, distinctive power, and core competencies. In that sense, they relate to the approach of Porter in his study on *The Competitive Advantage of Nations* (1990). Many states and regions in the world do this too, supported by ample scholarly evidence to serve as the foundation for the spatial, administrative, and cultural dimensions of innovative activity and specialisation. This is not only about geography and economics, as institutions also play a role as socialising agents (Hall and Soskice 2001).

All this goes beyond the launch of ad hoc publicity campaigns and also requires more from policymakers than what in the literature is called image or reputation promotion policy. That would be part and parcel of the enterprise, of course, but trade missions decked out with glossy brochures and tulip logos will surely go pear-shaped if they are not grounded in sound and convincing policy (cf. Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2009).

Some policy areas manifest a policy preference that, from its embryonic state, might grow into a proper policy niche. This is not about large-scale reallocations of budgets based on processes of choice and policy, but about small activities, negligible in the aggregate of foreign policy expenditures and hidden somewhere in policy domains. Suggestions for niche development often prompt people in policy practice to respond that they are already doing so. This is a stubborn misconception. As we indicated before, there are only few activities that do not figure on the lengthy ministerial activity lists. However, this is not quite the same as to designate specific niches and then to gear policy to these designations. This would have serious consequences.

2.3.4   SOME EXAMPLES OF NICHES

This report is not about the framing of niche policy as such but about new ways of foreign policymaking and implementation. It would require a separate study to develop a concrete policy focus. Here we will merely outline the general starting-points rather than specific choices and their realisation. However, so as to be able to encompass the development of niche policy in our recommendations, it is useful to supply some examples of what niche policy might imply. In order for us to do so, we have examined three possible niches in greater detail:

1   Water and climate;
2   Food and sustainability; and
3   Building the international rule of law.

These are three undisputed global public goods that are closely interconnected with a specific extended national interest. Without meaning to set the agenda in advance, we hope they will stimulate discussion and thought.

1   *Water and Climate*

The year 1999 saw the establishment of the Netherlands Water Partnership (NWP), a foundation involving participants from the public sector, the private sector, knowledge institutions, and NGOs. The Netherlands and water, it was felt, was an association that required no further explanation in the world, and there is a lot of expertise in the fields of water delta infrastructure and water sanitation in the Netherlands. For example, out of the four dredging companies that matter in the world, two are established in the Netherlands and two in Flanders.

Though the Balkenende IV Cabinet proclaimed that Dutch water expertise should be employed to solve water problems elsewhere in the world, this did not prove to be a genuine choice, let alone a priority.

The Watership Programme budget is covered by the Homogeneous Budget for International Cooperation (HGIS) of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment for an annual sum ranging between € 10-13 million, and, as of 2011, for an annual sum of € 9.5 million (TK 2009-2010, 32 126, no. 1-2). In addition, the budgets of the Ministry of Development Cooperation and other ministries also cover a diversity of water-related goals (NWP 2009).

Since 2000, the trade volumes and exports of Dutch water-related products and services have been documented in a so-called Water Sector Export Index (WEX). Over this period, the export share has virtually doubled, even if the figures for small and medium-sized enterprises are not entirely reliable. The share of water activities in exports, expressed as a percentage of total Dutch exports, was almost 2 per cent in 2008 (Gibcus and Snel 2010). In itself, this is a rather small-scale initiative, predicated more on the wish to allow a variety of parties to come into their own than on the wish to develop a real niche. However, the theme of water conjoins knowledge, interests, and opportunities for identification.

Water is a rather wide-ranging term for diverging activities. The term covers issues relating to urbanisation in coastal and delta areas – a strong trend in the world – as well as the supply of clean drinking water and the processing of waste water. These last two are not Dutch core competencies par excellence, whereas the first one is. However, all are clearly connected. Several ministries are involved in international water policy to a greater or lesser extent: chiefly that of Infrastructure and Environment, but also Development Cooperation, Foreign Affairs and Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation.

A Global Water Implementation Agenda is being put together with several stake-
holders, focusing on the effects of climate change, long-term relation building
with a number of selected delta countries (Indonesia, Vietnam, Mozambique,
Bangladesh and Egypt), the launch of an international Dutch Delta Design market-
ing and branding programme, and the development and promotion of regional cen-
tres of expertise. A prominent player here is Deltares, which grew out of the former
Hydrodynamic Laboratory and parts of TNO Knowledge for Business. This Imple-
mentation Agenda offers an interesting starting point for further development, but
this would require the separate worlds of expertise and science to merge in a multi-
disciplinary way and to make audacious choices. The Dutch contribution to stabil-
ity in the Middle East is perhaps diffuse in general, but it could be a very precise
one in areas where water scarcity serves to aggravate tensions. Water governance
comprises the organisation and implementation of hydraulic engineering, water
technology, institutional, legal, organisational, and financial knowledge. It is,
therefore, an area of expertise the Netherlands can potentially offer to the world.

In terms of reputation marketing, Dutch efforts in exceptional events (such as
New Orleans after the Katrina hurricane, the BP oil disaster on the Louisiana coast,
and the salvaging of the sunken nuclear submarine Kursk) have been widely show-
cased. It is also most helpful that the Dutch Crown Prince Willem-Alexander has
taken the domain of water management upon himself; he chairs the UN advisory
board on water and sanitation (UNSGAB), is an honorary member of the World
Commission on Water for the 21st Century, and is the patron of the Global Water
Partnership of the World Bank and the UN.

2 *Food and Sustainability*
In 2001, various parties, led by the Wageningen University and Research Centre,
founded the so-called Food Valley, which has the ambition to cluster knowledge,
research, development, and information in the areas of food, food sustainability,
food security, and food safety. Most research centres are located in the region
between Wageningen, Veenendaal and Utrecht.

The agro-complex has of old been one of the biggest branches of industry in the
Netherlands. Together, food and stimulants (alcohol and tobacco) account for 17
per cent of total Dutch exports and a net turnover of € 23.6 billion (2008 figures
from the Ministry of Economic Affairs 2009), making the Netherlands and the US
competitors for being the number one agricultural-produce-exporting nation. As a
manufacturing industry, it accounts for about 10 per cent of GDP.

Food is swiftly turning into a new globalisation issue. The Food and Agricultural
Organization (FAO) expects that by 2050, there will be 30 per cent more people in
the world and the demand for food will have increased by 70 per cent (FAO 2009).
Rising prosperity is pushing up demand for more varied foods, while available

farmland is shrinking in relative terms. International development aid, moreover, has neglected agriculture (WRR 2010). A country like China is attempting to secure agricultural land in Africa: in Mozambique, there is what is now called 'China's new rice bowl'. At its meeting in Pittsburgh in September 2009, the G20 called for the establishment of a Food Security Fund at the UN, and the FAO renewed its Committee on Food Security.

The Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER 2008b) advised the Dutch government to consider food security as its 'system responsibility'. At the same time, it observed that the progressing intensification of production is pushing up against its ecological and biological limits. Consumer organisations and concerned citizens are up in arms and are canvassing competent authorities in Brussels. Sustainability and consumer protection are rising items on the agenda of the European Parliament.

The agro complex is facing the challenge of reconciling the interests of food safety, conservation, the environment, and animal well-being, while elaborating innovations aiming to increase food production. This sector, therefore, is facing an uphill struggle to make the transition from intensification to sustainability. Major interests are at stake. The study entitled *Schaarste en transitie: kennisvragen voor toekomstig beleid* (Scarcity and Transition: Knowledge Questions for Future Policy) by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Infrastructure and the Environment (Scarcity and Transition Project Group 2009) sketches the international outlines of this theme and offers suggestions for Dutch opportunities to make a contribution to this globalisation issue. The Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation is also involved as a supplier of knowledge, as is Development Cooperation, which is spending € 50 million a year on 'promoting food security in developing countries' (HGIS memorandum 2010, TK 2009-2010, 32 126, no. 2).

Food Valley itself, however, is still small and mainly sustained by the regional Development Society East and Wageningen University. The integration of small private research companies is lagging behind; the involvement of other universities and research institutions could be improved; and constructive opposition by NGOs in this sector is also lacking, meaning that as yet we are not seeing a strategic symbiosis of actors. In foreign policy too, the world of agricultural attachés and the world of diplomats are largely separate ones. The relevance of the theme and the presence of high-quality expertise and international networks, however, are beyond dispute. This might impel the government to explore the strengths and weaknesses of such a prime policy focus in its foreign policy.

3   Building the International Rule of Law

Building the international rule of law is a promising mission: it ranks high on the agenda of globalisation issues and arises from Article 90 of the Constitution,

committing the Netherlands to promoting the international rule of law (cf. Besselink 2004). This translates into active membership of international organisations, stimulating the development of and promoting compliance with international law, protecting human rights, and disseminating the rule of law (Malcontent and Bauder 2003: 71). This theme covers areas such as international legal services, development cooperation, arbitration, international criminal law, and transitional justice. It is also holding out opportunities for significant expansion of its scope, as building the international rule of law also implies the protection of security, which is no longer primarily about preventing war among states but about promoting the security of groups of people. This theme, therefore, involves a lot of interaction among legal authorities, security services, and many actors from civil society (Voorhoeve 2008).

Just like Oslo is associated worldwide with the Nobel Prize for Peace, The Hague is bracketed with the Peace Palace. Over the past decade, not only many international institutions but also smaller knowledge centres have established themselves in The Hague, and the volume and scope of their activities is increasing (Nelissen 2008). Keeping pace with globalisation, international law is evolving from an interstate into a trans-state affair. The UN Tribunals and the International Criminal Court can prosecute those who are suspected of committing crimes that jeopardise peace, security, and well-being in the world, turning individuals into the objects of international law. The Permanent Court of Arbitration is not only there to serve states but also to settle disputes between states and private parties or multilateral organisations: disputes brought before the Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes in Washington can also be dealt with in The Hague. Recently, it dealt with the biggest commercial arbitration case ever between Yukos and the Energy Charter Treaty.

The Netherlands is home to a high diversity of NGOs that can promote knowledge in the fields of the international rule of law, offer constructive opposition to businesses and governments, and enter into valuable partnerships with academic centres. Several Dutch universities and knowledge institutes are taking initiatives in this regard. In addition, commercial dispute settlement is proving to be an attractive growth market for lawyers and accountants, and, hence, for internationally oriented, knowledge-intensive services.

Many parties from various ministries and lower-level governments are also involved in this theme. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for instance, has a Human Rights ambassador, a Fragility and Peace-Building Unit, and a special International Organisations ambassador. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has an angle on this policy field from the perspective of knowledge development. The local council in The Hague is aware that this is offering economic opportunities for the city, as, directly and indirectly, it might involve 40,000 new jobs

(Decisio 2008), and this is also how the Ministry of Economic Affairs is involved. Building the rule of law is promising not only because the theme has so many cross-links but also because it involves the whole gamut of state and non-state actors and offers opportunities for making smart conjunctions (cf. Zatepilina 2009).

The local council in The Hague is attempting to bestow unity and decisiveness upon the aggregate of activities by way of an umbrella organisation called the Institute for Global Justice (Peace and Justice Commission 2009). Early 2010, the Ministry of Economic Affairs made another € 17.5 million available out of its regional reinforcement budget to help its creation (Peace and Justice Commission 2009). The national government, then, regards this initiative with sympathy but mainly considers it an economic activity. An annual € 15 million of HGIS funds is allocated to institutions in The Hague, classified as 'The Netherlands as an attractive seat' (TK 2009-2010, 32 123 V, no. 2). As yet, therefore, this is a regional, economic, city marketing activity rather than a foreign policy niche of any importance. However, the dynamics of the theme and the actors involved offer opportunities for developing it into a genuine niche.

2.4   CONCLUSION

There is no longer a set ranking order in foreign policy issues. Partly because of the rise of non-state actors, the policy agenda has tilted. What used to be the clear and paramount goal of protecting territorial security through NATO has changed in the wake of rapidly changing circumstances. This particular security goal, therefore, has ceased to be a typical foreign policy mission and is now vying for priority with many other goals.

As the Netherlands has a loosely formulated foreign policy mission, it is active in many areas all at once. However, it is lacking a policy frame that is properly geared to today's world and that would allow it to make *and* justify clear choices. This is also evident in its drive to make a greater contribution than what might, in all reason, be expected from a country like the Netherlands. In consequence, the many dozens of priorities in its current policy have led to fragmentation of attention, knowledge and consistency and have trailed loss of authority, expertise and opportunities for identification in their wake.

However, there are plenty of opportunities for making choices and occupying interesting domains. A first condition for doing so is for the Dutch government to fully recognise the new global context. Only when it has fully woken up to the hybrid world, and only if it recognises that its current foreign policy is not properly geared to this world will it be able to take the avenue of strategic foreign policy. Though the Netherlands may be diminishing in geopolitical terms,

contemporary international relations, which are based on state and non-state networks, are largely detached from such considerations of size (Peters 2009). All this means more specifically that policy objectives should go beyond the rather wide-ranging intentions as we know them. This means there are choices to be made, priorities to be established, and areas to be designated where the Netherlands can make a difference. The actual choices involved here are of a political nature, but a transparent decision-making framework can be a valuable aid.

In addition, the idea of niches will become more attractive once it has been grasped that the Netherlands is getting smaller in a world that is getting bigger. This observation might encourage the government to find and seize opportunities in another way. It will help to reassess and refocus the choice-making process, which, in the end, will prove to be more rewarding than pursuing the myth that the Netherlands is and will remain a medium-sized country. This will only end in inflated expectations, underachievement, limited results, and disappointment all round. Only those who accept the new realities in Europe and in the world can find within themselves new ways of seeing and acting with conviction and enthusiasm. Niches might prove to be particularly valuable, as whoever manages to occupy interesting niches may create surprising coalitions with surprising parties and can make a difference.

In this Chapter, we discussed themes in terms of their content. However, as the Netherlands is so attached to the outside world, we cannot merely be concerned with content matter but also with arenas. Let us use the metaphor of the busy market square once more: what matters is not just one's range of products but also one's particular spot on the market. This is the topic of the following Chapter.

3   EUROPE: ARENA AND LINK

The awareness that more and more issues are transcending the national level and that cooperation is the only way towards achieving cross-border solutions is an important starting point for successful operation in the field of foreign policy. The Dutch government is thoroughly aware of this fact. As early as in its Re-evaluation Memorandum (*Herijkingsnota*), it observed that the Netherlands was becoming increasingly more intertwined with the rest of the world, because in an increasingly interdependent world, one's own interests cannot be separated from those of others (TK 1994-1995, 24 337, no. 2: 11). In addition to this awareness of linked destinies and mutual dependency, choosing to cooperate is also founded on the assumption that it will be advantageous for the Netherlands.

The choice we need to make in foreign policymaking and implementation, therefore, has progressed way beyond the question 'do we or do we not wish to cooperate?' Since the end of the Cold War, successive Dutch governments have always prioritised cooperation. However, the increasing complexity and dynamics of the international system, have prompted the Netherlands to engage, over the past few years, in cooperation with a growing number of parties on a growing number of issues. Even so, we need to assess which international issues can be meaningfully supported by the Netherlands and in which bodies we should be playing a more pronounced or a more modest role. It is not an option to withdraw from the various partnerships or to remain on the sidelines when called upon to act. It is important to reflect on the instrument of cooperation itself and to establish our ambitions and qualities in these partnerships: to invest in depth rather than in width.

To invest in depth means that it should be accepted across the board that, for the Netherlands, Europe is the most important international arena for taking initiatives and agenda-setting. The architecture of the EU is considered a priority by many, calling for specific attention to be paid to the way the EU is organised and operates, with the following issues ranking high on the national agenda: improving broad-based public support for European integration; securing democratic control and subsidiarity; enforcing admission criteria; and making external policy more coherent (TK 2009-2010, 32 123 V, no. 2). All these issues are about constructive involvement in the wide frameworks in which the European process of integration is developing. This is, without a doubt, an important theme that requires non-stop attention, but precisely because of the importance the Netherlands attaches to European cooperation ("If it did not exist, it would have to be invented tomorrow," in the words of the government (TK 2009-2010, 32 123 V, no. 2:20)) it is necessary, in addition to this institutional attention, to make the required U-turn to in-depth investments. To do so requires, first of all, that we reassess our European agenda through asking the following two questions: what is it we can do

through Europe? What is it we will and must do by ourselves (for the time being)? If we choose to deal with an issue through Europe, we should then answer the next question: do we wish to profile ourselves and invest in the way Europe is handling the issue concerned, or do we abandon it to the European cooperation effort without making an effort of our own?

What is perhaps an even bigger challenge is the U-turn that will be required to properly focus Dutch foreign policy on the EU. It is not only the commitment of Dutch citizens to the EU but also that of Dutch politics that has for years left much to be desired. This is true of foreign policy and European cooperation in general. In its 2007 report *Rediscovering Europe in the Netherlands*, the WRR observed that there has been a lack of debate among political heavyweights with diverging views on the current and future significance of Europe for the Netherlands and the concrete Dutch ambitions in specific subareas of European policy (WRR 2007b: 53). This has scarcely changed since then. Anyone who followed the immigration debate during the last national elections, for example, witnessed a political party dispute that framed the issue largely as a domestic Dutch affair. However, by law and by treaty, this is not a Dutch but a European matter, and policy changes must be made not by individual Member States but by the Union (Rodrigues 2010).

This tendency to 'retreat behind Holland's dikes' runs counter to European reality. Also from a geopolitical viewpoint, there is every reason to relax the nervous attitude towards the EU. The rise of new powerful states in the world gradually turns individual EU Member States into relatively smaller entities, leaving the EU as the only player capable of wielding sufficient counterweight.

Below, we will discuss what it means for us to consider Europe as our 'natural sphere of activity' and what its consequences are for foreign policymaking and implementation. We will begin by considering the changes in the two traditional pillars supporting Dutch foreign policy. Next, we will outline the way in which the Netherlands can operate in Europe as a political arena and as a link to the world stage. Finally, we will emphasise the importance of recognising and responding to attitudes towards Europe in society. As long as sizeable groups of Dutch citizens consider Europe as another extension of globalisation rather than as a cushion against its reverberations, this will paralyse the Dutch government in its European range of action.

3.1   BEYOND TWO MENTAL WORLDS

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has two main Directorates-General: the Directorate-General for Political Affairs (DGPZ) and the Directorate-General for European Cooperation (DGES). There often used to be tension between these two, with

the one more Atlanticist and the other more European in approach. This would seem an insignificant detail, only of interest to insiders, and so it is. But it is also telling, for these two domains, in the words of Van Middelaar (2009), represented two separate mental worlds. On the one hand, the world of the Atlanticists was one involving power relations with a superior protector, the US. On the other hand, the world of the Europeanists involved the promise of a supranational and depoliticised Europe with equal rights for all Member States.

Whenever these two worlds collided, as they did in the early 1960s, when the European Community pushed for a political union (Bloes 1970 in Vanke 2010), the Atlantic world in the Netherlands would always come out the winner. The 9/11 attacks, the military operations in Afghanistan, the war in Iraq, and the European referendum were similar moments of doubt for the Netherlands: where would it direct its feelings of solidarity and shared destiny? In this respect, the fissure that emerged at the start of the Iraq war was an almost perfect illustration of a Dutch dilemma: the US and the UK engaged in war; France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany wanted nothing to do with this war; and in between, then, was wedged the Netherlands, offering political but not military support. When it came to the crunch in this internal conflict between the so-called Atlanticists and Euro-peanists, the Atlanticists would dominate for a long time to come, as shown by the Dutch position on the Iraq war in 2003 (Davids Commission 2010).

These two pillars – the Atlantic alliance and European integration – are no longer what they used to be. That is to say, Europe is more omnipresent than ever before in many new guises; and the Atlantic alliance has lost its original *raison d'être* – a common enemy – and it is now mainly looking for new reasons to justify its existence. There are insecurities enough in the world, but what part will there be to play for NATO in their control? Before we examine Europe as an arena and link for Dutch foreign policy, we will first analyse the weakening of the Atlantic pillar.

3.1.1   NATO

NATO now has 28 member countries and, in May 2010, gave a first impetus to its new Strategic Concept, entitled *Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement*, which was published in December 2010. The previous Strategic Concept dated from 1999 and was mainly based on experiences in the Balkans. After that, twelve new Member States joined, there were the unexpected experiences with terror attacks, and the EU developed its own Security and Defence policy, which NATO had to take on board. The new strategy seeks to reconfirm Article 5 and to interpret possibilities offered by Article 4 of the NATO treaty: "The parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the parties is threatened." Article 4 offers the opportunity of shifting NATO's focus from defence to human security. This devel-

opment has been in progress for quite some time, and all NATO actions are based on the so-called 'non-article 5 crisis response operations'. The US in particular feels it cannot effectively protect its own territory and population in the current circumstances without out-of-area operations. In this view, then, NATO must cover a wide spectrum of security tasks (Hamilton 2009).

In truth, however, what is at stake is a subjective assessment of what exactly constitutes a threat. In consequence, crisis management operations involve only those member countries that feel called upon to do so ('coalitions of the willing'). As such operations do not involve acute threats to their own territory, governments do not send out conscripts but only professional servicemen and women, whose voluntary professional choice has already accommodated personal security risks. Such operations, therefore, involve a lesser degree of commitment than defence of the alliance area ensuing from Article 5.

The new NATO has become an organisation that is still highly appreciated by the military due to its long tradition of cooperation and the leading role taken by the American military. As a defence organisation, it is still unrivalled, if only because the EU Member States still lack the funds and the willingness to establish a common European defence system. As a political organisation, however, NATO, is more divided and noncommittal than ever before, lacking a common enemy and searching for a mission that will inevitably be less coherent than in the past.

In 2009, the Dutch government, just like the UK and the US, still mentioned a NATO mission that involved being 'globally active for peace and security' (TDK 2009-2010, 32 123 V, no. 2), but an Expert Group led by former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright observed in its recommendations for NATO's new Strategic Concept: "NATO is a regional, not a global organisation" and it added: "Compared to its first decades, NATO between 2010 and 2020 is likely to appear less on the central stage of global affairs" (NATO 2010). As we discussed in Chapter 2, security has become a complex issue, with varied threats and the indispensable involvement of a wide variety of organisations and disciplines.

This means that the Atlantic Alliance, as the most important pillar of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' foreign policy, is losing importance. An enemy that is present and visible enough to be able to tie all allies together, is simply nowhere to be found. If Russia should decide to deploy one of its mightiest weapons and turn off its gas supplies, NATO troops cannot simply go and turn them back on. And whenever NATO troops are brought into action, as in Afghanistan, they, too, will become dependent on many other actors. However, this had not been anticipated in the scenarios of a defence alliance. As for the security aspects of criminality, terrorism, the climate, financial stability, and energy security, all of which are considered greater risks than a military attack, the body of European treaties,

agreements, and mechanisms has a much greater influence than NATO could ever hope to achieve.

In the past, NATO had another, specifically political function for the Netherlands, i.e. as the instrument par excellence to keep the US involved in Europe. The US served as a kind of European balancer. This was a deeply felt anxiety, rooted in centuries of neutrality and its abrupt termination in 1940: the Netherlands did not want to be crushed by any of the European 'superpowers' and it therefore looked to the US as the only country ultimately to guarantee Dutch security. Beyond the idealism of a supranational Europe in which the bigger European Member States could be tamed by a community of law, there was always one solid *Realpolitische* side to Dutch foreign policy: the US were watching over us. This served as an anchor and made the Netherlands a faithful ally. Those days, however, are over.

3.1.2   EUROPE AS A POWER BLOC...

Because of its size and its commercial, economic, and financial impact, the EU is a significant player in the world. Its common external trade policy, therefore, is an essential component of EU foreign policy. The EU is the sole international organisation to have full membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the G20.

With the establishment of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in the early 1990s, the EU undertook to build its strength and responsibility in the world in what, up to then, had predominantly been an economically oriented partnership. Crucially, the Member States were and still are aware that jointly, they are a player on the world stage with responsibilities that require a stronger European presence on the international stage. The fundamental innovation in the Treaty of Maastricht was that the Member States jointly carried formal responsibility, while the old powers remained intact (Van Middelaar 2010: 14).

An important component of the CFSP is the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). This gained momentum with the further elaboration of the Petersberg Tasks agreed in 1997, in which the EU profiled its ambition to dedicate itself to humanitarian and rescue operations and peacekeeping and peacemaking missions (Van Eekelen 2006; AIV 2003). In 1999, it was decided to establish multinational, combat-ready EU battle groups. Subsequently, in December 2003, the Security Council adopted the Security Strategy *A Secure Europe in a Better World* (EU Council 2003) and, in 2004, the European Defence Agency (EDA) was established, aiming to increase the EU's defence capabilities. So far, the EU has taken part in 24 peace operations and missions in about 15 countries, both in the EU's eastern border areas and in Africa (EU Council 2010). These are mainly operations in the lower violence spectrum (police tasks, building the rule of law, etc.).

Despite these steps forward, CSDP practice has not yet lived up to the ambitions the Member States had expressed for themselves (Klem 2010). The main reason for this is that the Member States still take a highly cautious approach to transferring powers in the field of security and defence. This is also true of the Netherlands, which takes an ambivalent stance (for an elaborate analysis of the Dutch security and defence policy, see Klem 2010).

Nevertheless, the consequences of the rise of new powers will also radically affect Europe. Not only the EU's relative but also its absolute power base is diminishing. True, with its expansion to 27 Member States, the EU size has increased in some respects, its joint GDP has outstripped that of the US and its Member States' total military apparatus is the largest after that of the US, but the EU is not a state with state-like instruments. Europe's power may even diminish further, due to its ageing population, expensive social security system and its lack of unity. In a geopolitical sense, the European countries have not organised themselves in as 'stately' a way that would enable them to counterbalance China or the US. There is, in fact, no unitary economy or an integrated European army. Europe's economic and monetary power, in other words, does not translate into political influence on the world stage. However, the external pressure to secure its interests in a geopolitical sense is increasing. Moreover, there is an increasingly visible risk of being forced out of the centre of international decision-making in a G2 world in which the US and China rule the roost. This is why, at the Bilderberg Conference on 6 February 2010, Minister Verhagen advocated building "the EU as a third political superpower on the world stage besides the US and China" (Verhagen 2010).

European policy manifests itself in many guises: now they are ad hoc coalitions (as on the issue of Iran), now there is a core group (as in monetary policy). In the international arena, the EU chiefly manifests itself as a soft power (Nye 2004). The Union undertakes to be a world power that exerts its influence on the basis of values that Europe considers fundamental: the kind of influence whereby European rules and regulations are increasingly being applied by non-European countries as a result of trade relations, development cooperation, and the disciplining effect of neighbourly ties (Laïdi 2008; Bindi 2010).

3.1.3   … AND EUROPE AS A NETWORK

Within the EU, there is a complex and differentiated system of formal and informal institutions and legislative and implementation procedures, which vary with each subject and subarea. Expert groups, council working groups, and comitology, with representatives of the Member States participating, play an important role. Further European integration and the rise of a multitude of formal and informal European networks have created new arenas for technical ministries, executive bodies, and decentralised governments. Technical ministers and their civil

servants now directly meet their foreign colleagues (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations 2009).

The interplay between these networks of experts and the European Commission produces legislation, which then, through the judiciary and its case law, finds its way into the national domains. Europeanization of policy at this level is less a matter of politics than of policy (Sable and Zeitlin 2008).

In the case of comitology, experts generally act on the basis of their own understandings and findings rather than on the basis of fixed mandates (Brandsma 2010).

This means that integration here may go way beyond what is actually observed in the political sphere, let alone what is made explicit (Princen and Yesilkagit 2005).

Since the 1990s, the European Commission has paid more active attention to non-state actors and it has taken initiatives to involve these actors at the EU level (European Commission 1997; 2001). In preparing its policies, the European Commission now eagerly uses the knowledge and know-how of these networks. In social policy, the representation of trade unions and employers' associations has been institutionalised in European decision-making procedures since the 1990s. In other policy areas, the Commission has made funds available to draw in non-state actors. For example, it annually allocates more than € 1 billion directly to NGOs (European Commission 2000). At the same time, it has made deliberate efforts to create formal platforms for non-state actors and NGOs from the Member States to unite, thereby recognising their contribution to enacting new legislation and softer kinds of cooperation, such as voluntary coordination (the open coordination method). The Commission also aims to involve relevant multinationals in Brussels' decision-making processes. Non-state organisations, whether or not in networks, play a wide range of roles in Brussels, varying from controller, supporter, expert, supplier and disseminator of information and political activist, to settler of disputes. Decision-making, therefore, is based on institutionalised dialogue (AIV 2006b).

All this has given rise to 'another' and less tangible Europe: that of professional networks criss-crossing Europe and branching out far beyond it. A salient example of such a complex network is Dutch energy policy, involving, besides the national government, Gasunie and Groningen's public administration regime. In 2003, Gasunie and GasTerra (both private limited companies with a public task and governments as shareholders), for example, together with the University of Groningen and Russian Gazprom, established the Energy Delta Institute. This institute aims to train foreigners and particularly Russian engineers in international energy business. In addition, the state-owned Gasunie corporation is now

participating in the Nordstream gas pipe project and has bought an extensive, existing gas pipe network in Germany. This complex is partly embedded in the EU structure (internal market), and partly outside it (external energy policy). Several ministries are involved (the Dutch Energy Council and the Advisory Council on International Affairs 2005). Though the possibility of an interdepartmental deliberation mechanism was already mentioned in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' 2006 Explanatory Statement (TK 2005-2006, 30 300 V, no.2: 39), the 2010 Explanatory Statement does not go beyond stating that "consistency in the Dutch efforts at bilateral, European, and multilateral levels is of great importance, particularly with a view to establishing an effective and coherent use of these instruments together with the energy-relevant countries" (TK 2009-2010, 32 123 V, no. 2: 88-89).

The reach of these networks thus goes far beyond civil society, as many national authorities have been subsumed in European administration. The Netherlands Authority for the Financial Markets (AFM), for instance, is a Dutch regulator that is engaged in the Europeanization of standards through the European organisation, which still has a somewhat informal character. The Committee of European Securities Regulators (CESR), the AFM's European network, has in fact become part and parcel of this European governance system. The network of privacy regulators of the various Member States plays a similar role, as does the network of European competition authorities and courts of audit.

Such networks generally fly under the radar of media exposure, as we have to do without a shared European language, a common European government, and a single European nation. Inasmuch as the media are vehicles for how nations handle themselves, they are also purely national media. It is precisely the media that are clinging tenaciously to the classic dichotomy between domestic and foreign, in which anything outside the Netherlands is foreign affairs and anything inside it is domestic affairs. This is no different in other Member States.

The phenomenon of European networks has far-reaching consequences that are blotted out of the public debate but that are no less significant for all that. There is a situation of multilevel governance, with policies being made through the interaction between state actors (at national, regional, and local levels) and non-state actors (Hooghe and Marks 2001). This offers interesting opportunities for influencing policy, which could be done in much more systematic and strategic ways than has been done so far (WRR 2007b; Dijstelbloem et al. 2010).

3.1.4   A NEW AVENUE

The European combination of being a modest power bloc and a meaningful network in which the Netherlands is embedded, renders the classic conception of

NATO as the security pillar and Europe as the prosperity pillar of Dutch foreign policy obsolete. NATO can no longer fulfil this central function, and Europe as a pillar on which our house is founded, is a false metaphor: Europe is the house, and we are in it. This observation does not go without saying, nor have all of its consequences been drawn by a long shot.

Over the past few years, roughly three avenues have been proposed to deal with the consequences of this reality and to find a new anchoring. The first avenue involved, to some degree, denying change and holding on to the way things were, in the words of the former Minister of Foreign Affairs in his 2008 address: "Changing World, Permanent Values". In doing so, the Netherlands will be guided, as it had always been, by its alliance with the EU, NATO and the UN, because these three frameworks "guide Dutch foreign policy" (Verhagen 2008: 512). As usual, in this framework, the EU primarily represents prosperity, NATO security, and the UN global governance. However, this avenue fails to take into account the permanent crisis of international institutions – as symbolised in the Security Council's waning representativeness – as well as the fact that the Netherlands is getting smaller in a new world of rising powers (Colijn 2007).

So a second avenue, advocated by some, is to return to pre-war 'politics of autonomy'. Now that Europe's communitarian promise seems to have faded and NATO's role has been curtailed, the Netherlands has been forced into abandoning 'grand politics' and has shrunk a size or two anyway in a Europe of 27 Member States (Tromp 2004), returning to the pre-war situation of detachment would seem a self-evident course to take: let us return to being a small country with a few moral examples to hold up as an example to others. When Tromp wrote this, he was casting his eye on Switzerland. People are indeed attached to autonomy, as parliamentary debates show.

A politics of autonomy as an umbrella framework, however, would amount to denying that Europe has become a domestic area and that international relations are completely intertwined: as if states in Europe still had their sovereign powers intact, as they had before the Second World War and before the technological and economic boom of the 1990s. We are part and parcel of Europe, whether we like it or not, and even countries that are not EU Member States, such as Switzerland and Norway, have little choice but to conform to the fabric of Brussels regulations and agreements, as indeed they do. Switzerland, for instance, has now joined the Schengen area. And there is not a single political party to be found in the Netherlands that is prepared or even able to champion and materialise such an autonomous course, despite tough words being uttered with some relish about 'Brussels'. In its 2010 election programme, the Party for Freedom (PVV) actually came closest to such a position when it argued for abolishing Schengen, doing away with the European Parliament, and 'terminating the annual billions' worth

of payments to Brussels.' The economic interdependence of the Netherlands with the EU has grown to such a degree that exports to the EU now amount to virtually 50 per cent of GDP and imports to 34 per cent (see Appendix 1).

The most obvious avenue to take, therefore, would be a third one: constructive embeddedness into the new reality. This avenue, then, would imply an orientation on what has, in fact, already turned into a domestic area: Europe. This does not simply imply we should ignore the rest of the world, but it does imply a reorientation. It implies we must embrace Europe – the Union, the euro group, Schengen, and other alliances – as our central political arena outside the Netherlands. It also implies we should take advantage of Europe as our main link to the global level (Rood 2010). For a country that has always relied on the Atlantic partnership for its security and Europe for its prosperity, this is quite an avenue to take for Dutch foreign policy.

3.2   EUROPE AS A POLITICAL ARENA

Taking advantage of the opportunities Europe offers would seem to be the most opportune way of making foreign policy productive. The difficulty here is that Europe is a community in some policy areas but not in others; that it speaks with one voice but not always. There are political battles among Member States, parties, and schools of thought over which meaning is to be given priority. This battle is open and undecided. All this is part of the game, and it is no coincidence. It results from historical, cultural, economic, political and legal categories that are inherent to the process of European integration.

Following Van Middelaar (2009), we can make a distinction between three spheres into which European states have marshalled their interactions (2009). These spheres contain each other like concentric circles; each sphere has its own principles of movement and order; each has its own rules and etiquette, descending on the violence scale from war, threat of violence, to veto and majority voting; each is characterised by a self-image and an audience.

The outermost sphere is roughly demarcated by geography and history. In the hybrid world we have sketched before, this sphere resembles the geopolitical approach. It comprises the full congregation of sovereign states *on the continent* that was known for centuries as 'the European concert'. Movement here is generated by states in pursuit of their self-interests; order is generated by the balance of power and by territorial borders. The balance of power was the system's unwritten constitutive rule. It was transgressed with every war or threat of war and needed to be re-established through negotiations, concessions, and compromises, as in the Vienna peace conference of 1814-1815. Territorial borders were its visible expression. Up to the present day, the relations between states on the European

continent are, in part, rooted in this purely political environment of balance of power, war, and border incidents. Think of the conflict between Croatia and Slovenia about their borders in the Adriatic Sea, or the recent tensions between the Netherlands and Belgium over Antwerp's access to the North Sea, a topical issue since 1585. In this outermost sphere, law means international law, which comprises the law of war and peace.

The innermost sphere closely resembles the network perspective in our hybrid world view. This sphere is the product of a founding act from 1951: the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community. It baptised itself a 'Community'. It covers a legally demarcated but growing action scope for participating states. Its internal principle of movement is the idea of the future: the 'European project'. Order and structure are provided by the Treaty. The founders' main goal was to make a radical break with power politics *à l'ancienne*. The idea of European peace was connected with the idea of confining diplomacy. The founders believed that Europe could never arise from conflicts of national interests: these conflicts had been too brutal, and the wounds of the last war had been too deep. So they undertook to go beyond the world of nation states. In contrast with earlier peace treaties, therefore, the Treaty envisioned independent European institutions, a High Authority (later Commission), and a Court. A parliamentary Assembly (later European Parliament) was also introduced.

A third and intermediate sphere arose, immediately and unexpectedly, at the time when the Community was founded, in-between the Brussels' inner world and the continental outer world. This sphere remained undetected for a long time and escaped legal definition. This may be why it was never given a name. And yet, it is crucial. It is the intermediate sphere of the Member States together. The countries that joined the Community gradually discovered that they had grown into a club in the world, that they shared interests, and that they were condemned to each other's company whether they liked it or not. The strongest principle of order in this sphere is membership, but law and the balance of power also play a role. Movement is generated here, as in the outermost sphere, by everyone pursuing their national interests, but also – and here is the surprise – by a growing awareness of shared interests. This sphere, then, is an intermediate one in the sense of its characteristics – some overlapping with the outermost sphere, some with the innermost – and also in the sense of its function, as its role is to connect, to cement relations, to cushion events, and to build bridges.

Sixty years of European integration history may lead us to conclude that this intermediate sphere is not a transitional sphere between the outside and the inside but that it will keep formalising itself in more pronounced ways. This is an expression of the double-edged fact that the Member States will neither disappear nor escape the challenge of having to manage the Union as a collective. The Netherlands, in a

sense, still needs to master its craft in this intermediate sphere. As we pointed out at the beginning of this Chapter, the Directorate-General for Political Affairs was focused not on the EU but on NATO; and the Directorate-General for European Affairs was focused on the EU as a communitarian system in the making. The intermediate sphere, however, requires a more political European approach. Internal negotiation dynamics are like a table at which all EU members convene and do their business, but from which, as all sub-negotiations are taking place simultaneously and all interests are interwoven, they cannot walk out without paying a high (economic and political) price. More important than the formal decision-making rules (veto or majority?) is the fact that members together are sitting at a table where, Treaty-tied, things are turned into shared problems, and finding solutions is a joint responsibility. Whatever the formal procedure, pressure will always generate a solution. The key to having influence lies in one's skill in making problems into shared problems. The craft in this intermediate sphere, therefore, is not only, not even primarily, a matter of public administration skills. Citizens also need to learn that tensions between joint aspirations and individual needs within the Union are permanent and inherent in the construction. Such tensions are not proof of failure but offer opportunities for greater commitment. This also means that it is unproductive to frame the discussion in the antithesis between more Europe or less Europe: a political arena is a political arena (WRR 2007b; Van Middelaar 2009).

3.3   EUROPE AS A LINK TO THE WORLD STAGE

The dreamed-of New World Order after the demise of the Soviet Union never materialised. Instead, we live in a world that is more chaotic and unsettled. Whenever there are unexpected crises and events, Europe is often our first foreign policy refuge, sometimes successfully so, as the 2008 financial crisis demonstrated.

The 'new' geopolitics requires a stronger and more united Europe that can act 'stately'. Without a stronger link from Europe to the rest of the world, the world will just happen to us. In a changing geopolitical world, therefore, a stronger Europe is decidedly a Dutch interest. This is where our security, prosperity, and well-being come into play most directly.

Let us illustrate this with a few examples.
– Russia remains active in the 'post-Soviet space'. Let us imagine that, in its Summer War against Georgia, it had not been France with President Sarkozy that happened to be chairing the EU but another small Member State. As it happened, this was a happy coincidence, but a stronger Union would have been more reassuring in such a case.
– Nor does the US always have the interests of Europe at heart. How much easier it would have been if the Union – or at least the three biggest EU Member States –

on the eve of the Iraq war would have been unanimous in their approach and could have had a moderating effect on the US.

– The almost disastrous crisis in the international financial system has saddled the US with budget deficits. These can only be reduced by inflation or by spending cuts. Europe, or in this case euroland, should be influencing American policy and, if such is not possible, should be controlling the damage. This can only be done through a joint and coherent European (and euro) policy.

– China uses its own currency to prop its export vigour. It is employing its own sustainability criteria for its industrial production. Debates on this issue with Europe would only gain impact and significance if Europe acted as a Union, armed with instruments to influence negotiations and to accomplish the compromise it requires.

For the Netherlands too, the EU is the channel for promoting its extended national interests. On many issues, it has become more and more difficult to make any difference outside the European framework. In the matter of energy security, climate, financial stability, food security, or rule of law, the European environment is, to a greater or lesser degree, our primary domain for promoting interests and advocating values, whether by way of the formal European institutions or by way of ad hoc coalitions. Dutch environmental and energy policy is a classic example of the latter (cf. Kanie 2003).

European power on the world stage is limited, as recently shown in the 2009 Copenhagen climate summit, but there are no alternatives. If we need to pressurise a Middle East country, European trade agreements are a more powerful weapon than the rhetoric of an individual Member State. If there is talk of CO_2 levies on imports, 'Brussels' is the acting agent. If there is trouble at the borders, all that counts is the European instruments: Polish customs officials at the Belarus border are European customs officials, and the Spanish coastguard is a European coastguard. The list is endless.

This observation, however, also calls for a certain degree of modesty, for the political network of Europe is slow to reach common standpoints and take joint action. The EU is not a stately actor, let alone a superpower. If the Netherlands means to play a constructive role in this network, this would require a specific set of skills and a specific set of tools.

3.3.1   EXTERNAL POLICY IN THE TREATY OF LISBON

During the negotiations on the Treaty of Lisbon (the 'Constitutional Treaty' until 18 June 2004), a lot of attention was devoted to European foreign policy.

The three main institutional changes in this regard are:

1   the creation of a permanent President of the European Council of government leaders, who is to synthesise EU government positions and who, at his or her level, represents the EU in the world;
2   the creation of a High Representative who will combine two separate positions: the political position of CFSP High Representative, and the budgetary and administrative position of European Commissioner for external relations, responsible for representing the European Commission abroad. The High Representative is also Vice-President of the European Commission and represents Europe in contacts with ministers for foreign affairs;
3   the creation of a European External Action Service (EEAS) desk, composed of civil servants from the Council and the Commission and diplomats from Member States.

Much of the detail and the division of roles is as yet unclear, but, in principle, these three innovations provide the Union with an international face at the presidential level, a 'Minister of Foreign Affairs', and a diplomatic service in the making. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be paying close attention to these developments, both in terms of their shaping and their staffing. This is not so much about the usual tussle for higher positions, but rather about being present at the nursery of Europe's new diplomacy and about contributing to a new way of conducting diplomacy. It is after all easier to lobby for current and future policy objectives if there is manpower on the spot; without such a presence, all you can do is wait and see what comes out of the policy machine, and, if you do not like it, engage in lobbies and alliances with other Member States to set things right. The EEAS, therefore, should be a human resource priority in the years to come, not only now when the main tracks are being put down, but also in the near future when this organisation will develop further. This service may also present an excellent opportunity for engaging in task distribution and specialisation in the future.

3.3.2   THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

The rise of new power blocs in the world, on the one hand, and the internal European interdependencies, on the other, keep pushing European Member States into joint action, each time affecting the political arena in Europe itself and its relations with other states and power blocs. The credit crunch has only served to accelerate this process. An institutional consequence of this development is that the European Council, in all likelihood, will become a more prominent site for influencing European policy. International state politics increasingly takes place at the level of government leaders; here one might think of the G20's upgrading from the level of ministers, where it had been since the 1999 financial crisis in Asia and Russia, to that of heads of state and government leaders; or of the UN climate summit in

Copenhagen in December 2009, which had government leaders flocking to it from all over the world.

It has become established practice now for the European Council to prepare the European position for the G20 and for climate summits. This Council is the place par excellence where the highest executive power of both the Member States and the Brussels institutions (the Commission and the President of the Council) convene and, hence, where connections among the spheres, imperative for such changes in foreign policy, can be made. This is where government leaders can synchronise their joint negotiation positions for the international forums; where they may decide that certain strategic decisions are subject to further elaboration by the Commission or a specialist Council; or where they can authorise certain individuals to act on behalf of the Union. The latter is of particular importance for the innermost sphere. Without a European Council mandate, the President of the European Commission, as the 'boss of the innermost sphere', will lack the authority to address partners in Washington, Moscow, or Beijing on behalf of all 27 members.

3.4   A CONVOY CARRYING TWO FLAGS

In the previous Chapter, we used the metaphor of a raft on a fast-flowing river to make clear how helmsmen may be exposed to uncontrollable forces. The institutional and political embedding of countries in Europe, however, is a more stable affair. To symbolise the position of the Union in the world, one could use the metaphor of a convoy of 27 ships charting their course through the geopolitical waves. This metaphor was created by E.P. Wellenstein (2009), the 'grand old man' of Dutch thinking about Europe. You can see 27 ships before your mind's eye, all flying both a national and a European flag. You can feel how the wind is sometimes blowing them apart and sometimes synchronising their course. You sense there is a difference between the bigger and the smaller craft, between ships on the convoy's inside and its outer edge, and their sensitivity to the prevailing wind. And what escapes the public eye but what the 27 national captains know all too well is that, below the surface, their vessels are securely interconnected in economic and monetary ways.

A metaphor like that of the convoy may help us to break out of the false antithesis between national and European interests. It is important to recognise in word and deed that the Union is an alliance of Member States that have partly arranged their mutual relations in an institutional structure but have not done so in another part. This is the practice of relations prevailing in the three European spheres.

3.4.1   CONSEQUENCES FOR THE SCOPE OF ACTION

The fact that our foreign policy is more and more embedded in a convoy of 27 countries has practical as well as conceptual consequences. First of all, it gives us a sense of perspective on the legal notion, long cherished in communitarian thinking, that Member States are always equal. This idea is valid for the role Member States had and continue to have in accomplishing a common market and related policy areas. For this is about the self-restraint of states (by agreeing on what they should stop doing, such as providing unlimited state support or imposing customs duties) in order to create a level playing field for economic actors such as manufacturers, employees, consumers, and so forth. In European foreign policy, by contrast, it is the states themselves that act and take responsibility. They send out marines, policemen and women, or lawyers in the service of security. In this case, therefore, it matters how much *responsibility* a Member State is able and willing to take on.

So should the Netherlands leave it at that? Not in principle, for the old starting point that Europe as a community offers better guarantees for rights and duties than the free play of powers remains fully valid for a small Member State. This explains why there is not a single other forum in which the Netherlands can operate with such decisiveness and impact as the EU. Its legal architecture, therefore, should be an ongoing source of concern for the Netherlands. In practice, however, it would be unwise and otherworldly to stake everything on the communitarian toolbox as this would cause unnecessary disappointment and lack of leverage in (external) European policymaking. Bilateral policy and swaying opinions in other Member States may sometimes be considerably more effective.

This means particular attention should be paid to the bigger players, as influence and consequence really count in the political arena. When France, Germany, and the UK are steering the same foreign policy course, all other vessels will be sailing in the same direction. Interests and views in Paris, Berlin and London are generally so disparate that, if they manage to agree on foreign politics, this is – virtually without exception – beneficial for the Netherlands. The Netherlands can take one more step in influencing the major countries, i.e. by only in extreme circumstances breaking the consensus viewpoint. This would underline what it means to consider the European arena as the dominant foreign policy arena.

Secondly, the metaphor of the convoy may also draw our special attention to the (other) *neighbouring* countries in Europe. Who is sailing next to us? The Benelux partnership was once flying before the wind but is currently at a low ebb. If we take the diverging political cultures in the Netherlands and Belgium into consideration, we should not be expecting miracles perhaps, but countries like France and Germany also have a lot less in common than some would like us to believe, and

the strength of their relationship is based on their mutual awareness that the one cannot take any resolute steps in European politics without the other. Benelux, therefore, even if it is a marriage of convenience, may still prove to be a fertile union. The ineradicable tendency to praise Belgium in Sunday sermons but to consider it a less than full partner on weekdays has simply cost us influence. Regardless of Belgium's internal divisions, it is considered a consistent, reliable and capable party in Europe. Leading Belgian politicians and former politicians have an excellent reputation in Europe. This is a reputation that, in Dutch defence circles, is regarded with some tut-tuts as Belgium never leads the way in the matter of military expedition efforts. This goes to show that this is one element, and one element only, of a European reputation.

Our other neighbouring country, Germany, deserves a more varied and intensive kind of attention than it is currently getting. Who is actually aware that, after the US and Canada, Germany and the Netherlands is the most economically interrelated pair of states in the world (Auswärtiges Amt 2010)? In contrast to Canada, where this has given rise to strategic policymaking for a very long time now, such a policy vision is lacking here. There are also opportunities for leverage outside the classic state-based framework. The Netherlands shares borders with some big and influential German federal states: these are certainly apparent to Arnhem, Maastricht, Assen and Groningen, but less so where this would matter a lot: in The Hague.

3.4.2   NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN AMBITIONS

European and Dutch ambitions may correspond but need not inevitably do so. We are not finding ourselves on the eve of a 'federal leap'. This is why joint foreign policy action cannot be enforced by the rules and majority voting procedures of the innermost sphere, but remains a matter of attuning, dialogue, leadership authority under pressure, and, occasionally, tough political pressure, elements for which the intermediate sphere is well equipped. In ten years time, therefore, there will not be a single European vessel sailing the geopolitical waves, nor will there be 27 vessels each sailing their own course; but there will be a European convoy of 27 vessels, which, compared to the present moment, will probably have developed a more common strategic sense of direction.

The way to go is to strike the right balance. It is common practice and legitimate for a Member State to use the European arena to accomplish its own goals. It can do so by insisting on its *own* interests in negotiations; this is how the Netherlands has been operating for the last fifteen years in debates on its net payments to the EU budget (the so-called Zalm strategy; TK 1998-1999, 21 501-20, no. 83). It can also do so by presenting its own interests as common European interests; this is how the Netherlands, as an open trading economy in the 1950s was a guiding

nation in the establishment of a common market (the Beyen strategy; Weenink 2005). Both strategies can be successful, but the latter has one major advantage: when your own ambition has been successfully laid down in a European treaty or policy objective, this is a long-term solid result, as the legal interrelationships in the intermediate sphere create great strength. Each national proposal – financial or otherwise – on the other hand, must be secured anew in each negotiation round, and a particular national exception to European policy must be ceaselessly defended against legal and political pressure to conform to common rules and regulations.

France has always been the most successful nation to present its own interests as European interests. In his memoirs, Jacques Delors tells the story of how President Mitterand (1981-1995), whenever national importance was at stake, as in a French technology project, would launch his intervention by saying: "*Nous les Européens*, we Europeans, we have an undoubted stake in…" (Delors 2004: 240). For the Netherlands too, the European arena is the most appropriate space for realising its ambitions, provided it proves to be able to bracket its priorities and its corresponding ambitions. There are countless examples of new (integration) policies that came about, on the one hand, through pressure from one or several Member States and, on the other, by calling for Europeanization from the innermost sphere. The EU also gives us an opportunity to address issues that we consider of lesser importance for the time being or that we no longer wish to do ourselves. Without getting an impulse from states, the EU will not move, but without institutional interdependence, it will lack solidity. The combination, then, is crucial.

'European' initiatives are not only launched by the Union's institutions. Whenever the Union develops policy that is not to the liking of The Hague, this is not Brussels' fault but it is due to (other) Member States not having mustered enough resistance. After all, while some individual policy measures are sometimes accepted by majority vote, the exploration of entirely new policy areas cannot be done in any way other than by full consensus of all 27 Members.

Has such a Dutch European agenda been sufficiently elaborated? Does the average parliamentarian know which ambitions the Netherlands is undertaking to realise in Europe? These days, it seems, everyone is biding their time and perceiving threats. The focus of The Hague on the Dutch net payments position ever since the 1990s has also lodged this idea in our partners' minds. Often this is down to negotiating style. If we were to defend the generic lowering of budgets for certain posts (such as agriculture) by couching it in terms of a shared European interest (nature conservation, for instance, or prioritising research funding), we would be getting closer to the same goal while stirring up less ill-feeling. Conversely, if we were actively to promote certain niches, which are interesting to us, as contributing to the European good, this would also have a positive impact on the image of

the Netherlands in Brussels. A Member State that is proactive, makes constructive proposals, and has ideas on where the Union might be heading is, in a general sense, a more attractive partner than one that, moaning and groaning, slams on the brakes all the time. This requires a mental U-turn that should not be underestimated. He who takes initiative, builds authority. The successful realisation of our own ideas, therefore, might have a much wider impact. Such an approach would help to reinforce the Dutch position in Brussels diplomatic circles and would also fortify the rather fragile public feeling that Europe is ours rather than theirs. This requires even more than a U-turn. It takes a lot of effort investing in overall relation management: in a word, it requires dedication.

3.5   THE NETHERLANDS IN EUROPE

Other international organisations outside the EU also matter to the Netherlands, NATO and the UN being prime among these, but also the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), or the rather youthful G20, to which the Netherlands has so far been invited under the heading 'other participants'. And yet, there is a qualitative difference. These international organisations are generally specialised bodies and agencies working at the service of states and addressing themselves to states. The EU, on the contrary, is addressing not only the Member States but also their citizens, affecting their rights and duties and providing a narrative about the political future. This is why, instead of being an organisation that is serviceable to states, the EU is to some extent their competitor, as it touches upon the constitutional foundations of each and every one of its Member States. This is also why national politicians and populations sometimes fear that their country 'would melt like a sugar cube in coffee' in Europe (the Czech Prime Minister Klaus), or that membership would signify the end of 'a thousand years of history' (British opposition leader Gaitskell). No one has ever felt that their country's accession to, say, the World Health Organisation would have the same effect. It is a matter of some urgency to take these Europe-related sentiments and spectres seriously.

3.5.1   SOVEREIGN AND ATTACHED

The elusive tension between one and many – the sum and its parts – will continue to exist in Europe. The idea of a European super state in which sovereign Member States shrivel into federal states (Rozemond 1989) is as inadequate as the idea of sovereign cooperating states that can do as they please. This tension can partially be resolved by distinguishing between sovereignty as a status on the one hand and the attending sovereign powers on the other. The sovereign status of the Netherlands is not at issue as long as the Netherlands does not decide to abolish itself. This is different for its sovereign powers: these can be transferred to the EU, even to the degree that this organisation has more powers and competencies than the

nation state. The tension lies in how many powers the Netherlands should trans-
fer, and opinion is divided on the proper balance between a maximum of auton-
omy and the advantages of cooperation.

In considering this matter, it is important to remember that membership of the
Union is a construction that not only involves supranational and intergovernmen-
tal cooperation but that also accommodates the principle of national sovereignty.
This is shown, for instance, in the provision on respecting national identity that
was included in the Treaty of Maastricht at the instigation of the Netherlands
(Couwenberg 1996: 139). The Treaty of Lisbon also mentions respect for 'national
identity' and 'essential state functions', such as national security (Article 4 Treaty
on European Union (TEU)). This ensures that the sovereign status of Member
States is never at issue. The Treaty of Lisbon even provides for Member State with-
drawal (Article 50 TEU).

If we look beyond the sovereign status and focus on the sovereign powers that
ensue from it, what strikes the eye is that the EU plays an increasingly dominant
role these days, even in the traditional *fonctions régaliennes.* After the single
currency, financial (markets) regulation and control of national budgets, are partly
in the hands of the EU now. The same goes for internal security, with law, legisla-
tion and law enforcement increasingly being influenced by European legislation.
This is slightly less so for external security, but in this area too there are major
developments. With the Treaty of Lisbon, European defence has come one step
closer, and the same Treaty provides for the establishment of a European diplo-
matic service. External frontier controls have been a reality ever since the Schen-
gen Agreement (1995).

If countries choose to be part of the EU, therefore, this is a choice of sovereign
states to transfer some of their sovereign rights in order to improve their opportu-
nities for actively managing their destination in an international context. EU
membership thus improves the Member States' scope of action, for instance, in
dealing with issues within their territory for which the national level is too low.
Such scope of action cannot but involve diminished autonomy so as to promote
interests in active cooperation with other Member States. To describe EU member-
ship as an equilibrium between sovereign states that give up a large share of their
sovereign rights in order to collaborate at intergovernmental and supranational
levels, is probably closest to the truth.

Some feel the scale is tipping too much towards cooperation. They fear they will
no longer be able to decide on essential issues with any degree of autonomy. For
Dutch voters, for instance, the fear of 'losing national sovereignty' was one of their
main reasons for voting against ratification of the Constitutional Treaty (Aarts and
Van de Kolk 2005). In parliamentary debates, the sovereign status of the Nether-

lands is also equated with Dutch political autonomy in a similar way. Member of Parliament Van der Staaij, for example, proposed henceforth to ratify European basic treaties not by a simple majority but by a two-thirds majority in order to prevent an "irreversible, stealthy transfer of sovereignty to Brussels" (TK 2006-2007, 30 874 (R 1818), No's 4, 5 and 6).

This tension between sovereignty and European integration is not a uniquely Dutch phenomenon, but its context differs for each Member State. Appendix 4 presents an overview of the way in which Germany, France, the UK and Belgium generally handle this tension. So what does a glimpse at our neighbours tell us? In Germany, it is now common procedure for the Constitutional Court to check European developments because it is considered nationwide as the most important guardian of national sovereignty. In the UK, this role has been reserved for Parliament. The Netherlands lacks such a self-evident institution. This is also the case in France, where the issue of sovereignty nevertheless seems to have a clearly delineated context, based on national culture as a yardstick. Such a yardstick is also lacking in the Dutch context. In Belgium, finally, internal federal relations take pride of place, which, therefore, also involve a certain tradition, sometimes linked to specific national institutions.

EU membership illustrates that the issue of national sovereignty is a thornier one in the Netherlands than in other EU countries because the Netherlands lacks appropriate institutions, yardsticks and vocabulary (De Witte 2003). The Netherlands has no tradition of constitutionalism, simply because it was not the state but denominational segregation that was at the centre of its nation-building effort. This continues to have its effect. The standard *Handbook of Dutch Constitutional Law*, for example, concludes: "The Dutch approach to issues of sovereignty deviates from that of most other Member States as the sovereignty question is not raised very often here" (Van der Pot et al. 2006: 719).

It is unclear who, in the Netherlands, should take upon themselves the protection of national sovereignty and what they should be looking out for. We are paying for this lack of clarity now that the sovereignty question is increasingly being raised in everyday political discourse in the Netherlands. If it is unclear what national sovereignty really denotes, it seems we would be wiser to change as little as possible. 'Loss of sovereignty' then really just sounds like a vague menace, leaving indistinct what exactly we are referring to and where sensitivities can be registered and assessed.

It is important to underline, therefore, that it is their sovereign status and their indissoluble ties with their citizens that allow nation states to build bridges between the domestic and foreign domains. Sovereignty gives countries a scope for action that other actors on the world stage lack. Within this scope for action,

however, states are at liberty to decide on the balance between freedom of choice in policymaking, on the one hand, and cooperation with other actors, on the other.

3.5.2   SHARED EUROPEAN DESTINIES

The distance between the Netherlands and Europe has in fact become smaller, small enough to have induced us in the above to refer to a European domestic space. It seems, conversely, that the mental distance has only gotten bigger. While this began in the 1990s with complaints about the Dutch net payments to the EU budget and Brussels' 'interference', it subsequently increased after the Union's enlargement, when open borders were beginning to be perceived as a threat rather than as an opportunity. The EU was deemed a technocracy, a Moloch, a subversion of the national parliament and democracy and a project of the elite. In the period running up to the 2005 referendum, such demagogic imagery was freely used by supporters and opponents alike.

The WRR report *Discovering Europe in the Netherlands* (2007b) undertook to address the issue of legitimacy. It mentioned representation, results, accountability, and identification as the foundations of legitimation. Though these elements remain essential, they are not, as the report also pointed out, magic formulas. Representation in the European Parliament by no means equals identification with the EU. Results are also doubtful: they tend to smack of pep talk or commercials, and, moreover, what goes as a result for one – an EU-subsidised roundabout, for instance – counts as a debit entry for someone else.

Accountability is crucial. This requires a great sense of responsibility, both towards one's own country and towards Europe. It requires ministers to discuss a negotiation mandate in the Second Chamber in advance, then to travel to Brussels, and then to be accountable for its result upon their return. More than that even, it requires ministers to play a twin role: first they travel down with a Dutch contribution and, subsequently, they need to defend the Brussels decision at home as being 'our' decision. This is how shared European destinies are shaped: as ministers, they represent our country in Europe, and as members of the European Council they represent the Union in our country. Once decisions have been taken in Brussels, ministers must defend these as their own decisions. In the peer group of European colleagues, blaming Brussels for a disagreeable decision after the fact amounts to loss of face; it may also have harmful consequences for the political interplay between the European and national arenas, and it may ruffle relations between the national parliament and the Brussels institutions. Anyhow, this remains a complex issue, as, for the Dutch Parliament, the government is the executive power, which changes into a legislative power in the Brussels arena and returns as such to Parliament in The Hague. Legitimation also requires scope for a national parliament to keep its finger on the pulse and make use of the test of subsidiarity and treatment

reservation if necessary. It is a stubborn misconception from the past era of a strictly communitarian future that the test of subsidiarity compromises European-mindedness and that its reverse promotes European integration.

Identification remains a hard issue to frame into a policymaking objective. There is no European people, there is no European history and entire libraries have been filled with evidence of our struggle with this issue. Identification is only possible if we keep engaging in strategic debate in the Netherlands: which interests do we wish to promote in Europe as our arena and our link to the world? If we apply the priority principle correctly, answers will follow. In practice, it will be advisable to prioritise themes, to identify and build niches, to exploit our expertise and to follow the lead of other Member States or the Brussels' institutions in the matter of a great many other themes. Monetary stability is crucial for a trading nation, as is the fight against protectionism. For a recognised expert in food technology and food production, Dutch involvement in food security and food safety is self-evident, but we may leave it to others to fight the European battle for system patents in mobile communication.

The issue of operational strategy conceals another issue: the question of what kind of Europe we want to live in. This seemed a simple question as long as the answer was that, ideally, Europe would be a kind of expanded Netherlands. This may sound hilarious, but it may have been commonly felt without ever having been made explicit: the Netherlands always used to be a middle country in social, economic, political and cultural respects and, therefore, tended to go for middling, compromising, connecting and extremes-avoiding strategies in Europe. This gave us the shared standards and common regulations that are always vital to a small, open economy, driven by our expertise and broker skills.

This has become much more arduous with so many Member States that have different backgrounds and find themselves at different stages of socio-economic development. It has also become more difficult because, in the eyes of many, Brussels represents 'the market' while The Hague represents social shelter from blustery international winds. In the Netherlands, as in many other European countries, this has widened the divide between groups seeking demarcation and restriction and groups pursuing integration and openness (Adriaansen and Van Praag 2010). When governments declare, on top of this, that there is no alternative to Europe, this can only serve to aggravate feelings of frustration in the former group and, hence, to enfeeble the social licence for European action. This is what we have been witnessing for quite some time now. It is an urgent imperative, therefore, for the Netherlands to find ways, together with like-minded Member States, to build a Europe that offers opportunities for identification to more than just an in-group. This, in all likelihood, cannot be done with all 27 Member States jointly, but ever since the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) (Article 11 EU Treaty, Title

VII EU Treaty, Title IV TEU), there has been the possibility for some Member States to engage in closer mutual cooperation or joint leader groups, as in the case of Schengen. It will only be possible to forge a shared destiny and to pacify globalisation fears if Europe – whether the Union or a small advance guard – not only manifests itself as the booster of competition and consumer protection but also as the cushion against the shockwaves caused by globalisation. Only then will a European orientation amount to more than a choice for a politico-economic instrument and express our choice for a system of values.

Trade unions lack the cross-border resilience to play a significant role here; civil society is mainly bent on protecting consumer interests and promoting global public goods in the European arena; and the corporate world must yet be pushed on the path towards corporate social responsibility in Europe. There is no contemporary social politics in Europe, and whoever broaches the subject is soon suspected of engaging in old-fashioned welfare state conservatism. This report cannot elaborate on this issue, but there is a major challenge here. The sociologist Beck mentioned the urgency of achieving a common industrial policy and a common social policy (*Die Zeit* 19 March 2009). If nation states are getting too small to cushion the reverberations of globalisation, this is a task for Europe (cf. Coleman and Pauly 2008). What we need, therefore, is not a debate on more Europe or less Europe, but a debate on the kind of Europe we choose to live in (WRR 2007b: 68-69).

Let us finish with a minor detail. After the vetoed referendum, the Dutch government felt it had to concede to Euro scepticism by deleting from the Constitutional Treaty most symbolic references to a European state in the making. This is how the European flag got discarded. However, perhaps this was not such a very good idea. Moreover, the EU flag is flying regularly anyway, and, in many other EU Member States, it is flying nicely side-by-side with the national flag as a rule. In a sense, this is emblematic of the way things are in Europe: the Member State exists, and the EU is a piece of domestic space. If even the French president is invariably decked in both the French and the European symbol, it can hardly count as treason to the people if we were to do so in the Netherlands. A symbol can express in one fell swoop that the issue is not more Europe or less Europe but a certain kind of Europe.

3.6   CONCLUSION

For the Netherlands, the EU is the dominant arena. The ancient Dutch pursuit of a communitarian Union was quite justifiable from the perspective of a small power that refused to be dominated by its bigger neighbours. Power was to be replaced by law. This remains a highly plausible ambition, but reality shows that it is up against its limits.

The more recent Dutch ambition to pursue just the reverse was quite understandable considering the feelings of discontent in the Netherlands. However, this reverse ambition was and is also a denial of everything the Netherlands is: part of the European reality. Denying this will never cease to cause frustration in the public arena in the Netherlands, as it will clash with this reality time and again. To recognise this European reality, however, does mean we should continue to build our common European destinies. We cannot pursue a Europe that is only a free market when our security and stability are also anchored in Europe to the same degree.

To use the European arena in order to realise our own strategies as best we can is the most important and generally the most productive way of foreign policy-making. This means we must take initiatives and forge coalitions to achieve those ambitions. This also means we should allocate tasks and cooperate in the wide domain of foreign politics, including the armed forces.

The EU should be accepted as a Union that is founded on shared law and shared power. Law alone would be unachievable; power alone would be unacceptable. Our ambition should be to be an excellent Member State. This does not mean being the best pupil in the class, but being adroit at handling Europe and its networks, building a name for oneself and being a partner of choice for others. An excellent Member State will play the game in this arena with relish, mastery and pride.

4   DIRECTING AND FACILITATING

In the previous chapters, we have underlined the necessity of a strategic foreign policy and a dedicated concentration on Europe as the most appropriate channel for realising this policy. The EU, the wealth of important non-state players in international relations, and successful niche policy require new ways of working: they require directing and facilitating.

Re-evaluation experiences have shown that it is not easy to change course, to implement recommendations, or to change political mindsets (Van Beuningen 1997). New instruments have never been fully utilised, and the range of recommendations we have seen over the past five years, aiming to draw the consequences of changing European decision-making processes in the Netherlands, have only been followed reluctantly and hesitantly. This does not aid political resolve and it unintentionally reinforces the idea that other nations are a millstone to us more than an opportunity.

To direct and to facilitate are verbs that may be at odds. A director commonly uses others as facilitators; and those who do the facilitating are generally not in charge of directing. This tension is inevitable: it is a logical effect of our analytical starting point of the hybridity of international relations. In this domain, governments have important instruments of control and decision-making power, but international relations are shaped just as much by a web of formal and informal networks of state and non-state actors. If you wish to have an influence in the first context, you need to direct; if you wish to have an influence in the second context, you need to facilitate. If you want to make a difference in the first context, you need to invest in allies and alliances; if you want to make a difference in the second, you need to invest in a mesh of friendships so as to be able to push an auspicious development at the appropriate moment.

In order to pursue a more strategic policy, there is no choice but to gear our toolbox to both these realities of foreign policy and to exercise both directing and facilitating proficiencies. The same is true if we wish to deploy strategic foreign policy in the most appropriate foreign policy channel: Europe. In domains where governments cannot act as the highest coordinating body and where networks escape top-down control, signature strategic choices may be attractive and help to ease the directing and facilitating game.

We believe that foreign policy organisation can be undertaken by adjusting and optimising some existing structures, methods of working, and instruments where necessary. Then we will sketch what skills are needed for effective cooperation with non-state actors in an international networking environment. Of course, we

must not lose sight of geopolitical interests and relations with other state actors, but if we want to seize opportunities, it is essential to enter the new field of partners and competitors well prepared.

4.1   ORGANISING STRATEGIC FOREIGN POLICY

Foreign policy is not a single-ministry matter, as theory teaches and practice illustrates: ministries all pursue their own foreign policy in those areas in which they have expertise and competencies. From a thematic perspective, it is an artificial move to separate the domestic from the foreign. There is a parallel here with many a multinational: while subsidiary companies used to be in control within their respective home countries, these now only tend to deal with certain institutional aspects such as HRM, legal affairs, or tax matters; deterritorial product divisions are in control internationally and are responsible for profits and losses. Similarly, with EU integration having advanced as far as it has, there is only very little scope left for Dutch foreign policy within the EU. In order to be able to operate decisively in this semi-domestic arena and to promote the interests of the 'region' of the Netherlands, some adjustments are called for that reflect this reality.

4.1.1   MINISTRY OF GENERAL AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

A Europe in which the European Council plays a more central and more political role will inevitably affect domestic management opportunities. At a negotiating table, results are achieved by give-and-take, by scoring one point here while dropping another elsewhere. This is the game of politics, which requires the Prime Minister to have leeway and control, pull the organisational strings and play a twin role in parliamentary practice.

The Prime Minister as Director
As a member of the European Council, the Prime Minister is the most important Euro-politician of the Netherlands. This is the inevitable consequence of the Union as a political space of 27 Member States. He is also responsible for national EU policy. The existing situation as it evolved in history, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs in charge of European politics, does not do justice to this state of affairs, as Europe has grown to be a semi-domestic area.

The debate on the relation between the Ministries of General Affairs and Foreign Affairs in the matter of European politics is an old one. In recent years, several advisory bodies have expressed their points of view on the issue (Council for Public Administration 2004; Council of State 2005; Mixed Commission on Control of the EU Matters 2005; WRR 2007b). Out of these, the Council of State made the most fundamental choice in favour of more pronounced political leadership by the Prime Minister:

"It is the responsibility of the Prime Minister to make sure that the goal, strategy, and tactics of the Dutch contribution in Brussels are dealt with by the Cabinet in time. To this purpose, he should independently prepare himself and be informed by, amongst others, though not exclusively, ministers and ministries, the permanent representation in Brussels, and the Brussels' institutions. The Prime Minister must also be able independently to raise important European topics on the Cabinet's agenda, against the wishes of the first responsible minister, if necessary. The Prime Minister must make sure that the mandate of the cabinet member for European Affairs is clear in relation to the first responsible cabinet minister" (Council of State 2005: 18-19).

The Prime Minister's competency to enter European items on the agenda has meanwhile become a fact. The position of the Ministry of General Affairs, on the other hand, and the relation of the State Secretary for European Affairs with other cabinet members have not yet been clarified.

In our neighbouring countries, European politics is strongly driven by the leader of the government. 10 Downing Street in London, the Elysée and Matignon in Paris and the Bundeskanzleramt in Berlin are well staffed with EU advisers. This cannot only be explained by a more statist political culture of these countries; the Federal Republic of Germany also has coalition governments in which the Chancellor and the Minister of Foreign Affairs can have different party affiliations. Another striking fact is that the newly acceded Member States, such as Poland, lodged the responsibility for European politics with their Prime Ministers as a matter of course. These countries took a fresh look at the Brussels' balance of power and drew a self-evident conclusion: Europe is *Chefsache*. The Treaty of Lisbon has reinforced this development by stating (in Article 10 TEU) that Member States are represented on the European Council by their heads of state or government leaders. These are themselves democratically accountable to their parliaments and citizens. In virtually all Member States, the power of the Prime Minister has increased under the influence of European membership (Magnus Johansson 2009: 2).

The Treaty of Lisbon's ratification and taking effect in 2009, therefore, implies an intervention in the workings of the Dutch government. Since the Treaty took effect, we should, in fact, be talking about a Ministry of General *and European* Affairs. However, this is not what we call it, for what has become reality in the new practice is a sensitive issue internally, even if the name 'Ministry for General and European Affairs' would be a more correct expression of how the national and European levels are interwoven and of the Prime Minister's personal European responsibility. The State Secretary for European Affairs, who currently and formally falls under the Minister of Foreign Affairs but, in current practice, already functions as the Prime Minister's political confidant in European affairs and, hence, accompanies him to the European Council, should really fall directly under the Prime Minister. What matters most is for the administrative structure to be geared

towards the best possible performance of the main Dutch representative in Brussels. For it is a fact that the institutionalisation of the European Council has created a context that is qualitatively different and that calls for an appropriate response.

At the level of the Cabinet, the more pronounced role played by the Prime Minister also ensures that greater justice is done to the expertise of the technical ministries. The Prime Minister will have to take initiatives while acting in agreement with the spirit of the Cabinet. He will have to engage in timely legislative consultations with the Second Chamber and ministries involved. These are small steps serving the same purpose: to move European concerns closer to the Cabinet's chairmanship. It is self-evident that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should remain responsible for European foreign policy in terms of content, but its role as the coordinating ministry for European policy in its widest sense has become a fiction.

Such changes will also help the Netherlands to respond with timely interventions to the developments in the architecture of Europe. In the Treaty of Lisbon, the central General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC), the monthly meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers, has been split. Internal policy co-ordination comes under the General Affairs Council (GAC); external European policy has moved to the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC). The new GAC prepares the European Council and is responsible for enlargement policy, financial and institutional affairs and all horizontal dossiers. Most Member States will delegate their minister or their State Secretary for European Affairs to this council. In the long term, its chairmanship may be held by a Member States' prime minister. (With the institution of the permanent President of the *European* Council, it is only the 27 heads of state and government leaders that have lost potentially great European exposure, while all their ministers have their six months of chairmanship as usual in the ongoing rotating chairmanship in the *ordinary* Councils.) The new FAC deals with foreign politics, including defence, foreign trade and development aid. It is chaired by the new-style High Representative. If we translate this back to the Dutch relationships, this would also argue in favour of having the Prime Minister team up with the State Secretary for European Affairs (GAC) on the one hand and with the Minister of Foreign Affairs (FAC) on the other. On this shift in the political primacy in European issues from Foreign to General Affairs, the WRR has already observed that

"Undoubtedly there are all manner of practical objections to such a suggestion which deserve serious attention, but the underlying message is crucial: EU policy is an integral part of general government policy and therefore fits in with the special responsibilities of the Prime Minister. (…) The government would then be giving a clear signal to citizens, civil society organisations and the news media that the EU no longer belongs to foreign affairs, and derives its legitimacy in part from Dutch domestic political channels of representation and accountability" (WRR 2007b: 158-159).

In line with developments of the last few years and the terms of the Treaty of Lisbon, this directing function falls under the Prime Minister. In practice, this will concern main outlines and issues that will eventually end up with the European Council through an escalation mechanism. The largest share of policy will be pursued by the technical ministries. Inasmuch as Cabinet-wide orchestration is not a fiction here, this will largely have to be done within a strategic foreign policy framework; and we should also assume that this will remain a topic for discussion in interactions between the technical ministries and the Second Chamber and its committees. If, for instance, international privacy is a high-ranking item on the strategic agenda, parliamentarians will want to know in what forums and through what networks the Ministry is going to take what action to accomplish the matter; the Minister will also need to explain what successes can be achieved, what pitfalls there are, and what compromises, finally, the Minister is prepared to defend as a European co-legislator. The views of the Euro-Parliamentarians involved will presumably also be taken on board (Dijstelbloem and Holtslag 2010). Obviously, the Prime Minister will not always be prepared to put all his cards on the table in Parliament in advance, as this may not always benefit a negotiation result. But the general drift and ambition can always be discussed; in some cases, the confidentiality rule can be applied; and, finally, there is such a thing as confidentiality and testing after the event.

Permanent Ministerial Steering Committee for Europe

A mechanism for introducing tighter political management that has been around for some time is the Ministerial Steering Committee, consisting of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Finance Minister, the Foreign Affairs Minister, the State Secretary for European Affairs, and the permanent representative to the EU. The Steering Committee was established during the Kok II Cabinet with a view to the 1999 Financial Perspectives negotiations, which allocated the European budget for a seven-year period. It functions on an ad hoc basis, that is, it can be called in 'whenever the situation demands it'. (Up until the end of 2009, the last time the Steering Committee convened was to deal with the December 2008 climate package, and, before that, to deal with the revision of the 2006 Services Directive).

This mechanism meets with opposition from ministries that are not represented and also from sections of Foreign Affairs, as it excludes parties from participation and bypasses existing structures. However, the speed and decisiveness that are required for European negotiations leave us no choice. As a matter of fact, the Ministerial Steering Committee should actually operate on a permanent basis: 'whenever the situation demands it' is far too non-committal a formula. This had better be turned around: when does the situation *not* demand it?

In addition, if a Ministry of General and European Affairs were to become a reality, a permanent Ministerial Steering Committee could help to allay fears that EU decision-making would be centralised with the Prime Minister. Besides its formal accountability to the Cabinet, the Steering Committee guarantees the political involvement of at least the Foreign Affairs and Finance Ministries and, besides, can elaborate policy options with other ministries on a flexible basis.

4.1.2   FOREIGN AFFAIRS AS A TECHNICAL MINISTRY

The existence of the disaggregated state implies, just like Europe does, a loss of function for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at least in its classic umbrella role as the responsible representative of the Kingdom outside its national borders. All ministries pursue important European or other foreign policies. This implies that the umbrella responsibility of Foreign Affairs has become something of a fiction (Moses and Knutsen 2002), at least in part and to varying degrees. For many relatively young states, for instance, where nation-building is a key goal, their Ministry of Foreign Affairs is at the core of this ambition, and their Minister of Foreign Affairs is the manifest expression of independence, outranking other ministers. A Dutch Minister of Economic Affairs who wishes to get things done in such a country simply needs the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs to open doors. In these parts of the world, state-to-state diplomacy fulfils a genuine function. In those countries that come within the compass of special Dutch attention (which need not and cannot be the entire world), we would do well to take this seriously.

In reality, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is, above all, a technical ministry. Now that the preparatory meetings for the European Council have been split up, this rather diminishes the role the Ministry plays there. However, the new Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs for external European policy, chaired by the High Representative and developing common foreign and defence policy, will in some ways evolve into a specialist council for external European policy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also a technical ministry for external security. It had always been so in the tradition of NATO, but meanwhile its scope has widened. As we indicated in Chapter 2, security is no longer primarily about national defence but comprises a wide range of activities relating to stability. This involves a subtle play of alliances and consultations, of aid and reconstruction, and police and military action elsewhere in the world (the 3D approach: Defence, Diplomacy and Development). So what is at stake here is the targeted use of a range of instruments rather than distributive justice between one or the other ministry in The Hague. This requires integrated strategic orchestration, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the manifest party to do just that.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, finally, is also the knowledge ministry for issues of multilateral architecture. International organisations everywhere are engaging in reorganisation and rearrangement exercises (Newman, Thakur and Tirman 2006; Newman 2007; Lanteigne 2009). The UN and the international financial institutions are all struggling with the mismatch between international relations and representation. It is of the utmost importance to address such issues of architecture and governance as this will determine to what degree multilateralism and its attendant responsibilities can be adjusted and preserved in a hybrid, multipolar world. To preserve multilateral connections through adjustment and innovation is both a European and a Dutch interest of the very first order. To guarantee and to access knowledge of the architecture of multilateralism is a major task for the Dutch government, and it is a task for which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must be well equipped.

If we consider its role as a technical ministry in European foreign policy and in NATO policy, we envision a Ministry of Foreign Affairs that is concentrating on its core tasks: to be a technical ministry for external security, for common European foreign and security policy, for multilateral organisations, and a knowledge ministry for international architecture. Moreover, such a ministry accepts strategic responsibility for the 3D approach. In an earlier report, the WRR proposed professionalising development cooperation into an independent NLAID organisation (WRR 2010: 224). The armed forces would then be the professional organisation representing another D.

4.2   USING EXISTING INSTRUMENTS

A strategic foreign policy requires fitting implementation and steering instruments. The government has a wide range of instruments at its disposal, and many of these can be adjusted, with relatively minor adaptations, to the new practice.

4.2.1   HGIS AS A STEERING INSTRUMENT

Bringing strategic choices out in the open for public debate requires instruments that sidestep internal ministerial logic. In the past, attempts have been made to gain an integrated perspective. The Homogeneous Group for International Cooperation (HGIS) was established in 1997 in the Re-Evaluation framework to improve foreign policy coherence. HGIS was constructed as a separate budgetary construction within the central government budget, in which foreign policy expenditures were clustered as much as possible. This allowed HGIS to be a budgetary framework for government-wide foreign policy, on the one hand, and created a coordination and coherence mechanism for international cooperation funds, on the other. HGIS meant to pursue three goals (cf. TK 2002-2003, 28 603, no. 1-2):

1   to reinforce foreign policy coherence by demarcating the financial conse-
    quences of policy plans within total funds available for foreign policy;
2   to promote inter-ministry desegregation and cooperation by combining foreign
    expenditures;
3   to keep development cooperation expenditures separate by establishing a sepa-
    rate standard for development aid: Official Development Assistance (ODA).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was made responsible for content and funding
procedures aiming to produce an annual HGIS memorandum.

All this never really came to anything. The exercise remained, in the words of
some Members of Parliament, a mere budgetary concept: an instrument involving
a high level of abstraction. The list is also incomplete and inaccessible in parts. In
the past, the government meant to prevent this from happening by formulating a
series of main foreign policy targets and then by rearranging all its activities under
those headings. Abstract as they are, however, these main targets are so wide-
ranging that anything can be subsumed anywhere. There is, for instance, the main
target of a "protected and improved environment" and that of "peace, security and
conflict management" (TK 2009-2010, 32 126, no. 1-2: 35).

The Minister of Foreign Affairs' formal coordinating function within HGIS lost
virtually all its significance in practice owing to the principle of ministerial equal-
ity. Each ministry remains responsible for its own expenditures and activities, also
in interactions with Parliament. So the result of all this is that ministries, in the
worst case, get into each other's hair and, in the best case, do not hassle each other
(cf. Mixed Commission for Steering EU Affairs 2005).

However, a clear arrangement can be a useful instrument for translating strategic
choices and priorities into policymaking budgets and action plans. If the formal
coordinating function is transferred from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the
Cabinet, the principle of equality and non-intervention will cease to be a problem.
Strategic choices and the budgets that go with such choices can be decided for each
Cabinet period, and the Cabinet can take a decision in the annual Cabinet meeting
on the specific allocations for each financial year. Instead of vertical, ministerial
budgets, we would thus get a horizontal policy decision, accommodating strategic
foreign policy choices and priorities. Or, as Evans and Steven advised the UK Cabi-
net this summer in the Chatham House report entitled *Organising for Influence:
UK Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*: "Allocate budgets by strategy, not
department" (Evans and Steven 2010: 20). This would also provide a useful entry
in debates on choices and priorities with Parliament. Once ministry-based detail
has made way for strategic choices, the annual Parliamentary review on govern-
ment policy (Algemene Beschouwingen) can then actually focus on the position
of the Netherlands in the world.

The Netherlands has a relatively wide network of embassies. In absolute numbers, there are only 13 countries that have more embassies, while the Netherlands ranks ninth on the list of embassies per inhabitant (see Appendix 3). Many have proposed to reduce this network (TK 2009-2010, 32 123 V). Indeed, in a situation of ministerial loss of function, the added value of such a network requires critical reconsideration. To reduce the network by across-the-board downsizing (the 'cheese slicer method'), however, would be to invite unwelcome mediocrity. Given the need for changed working methods and a new strategy, it would be better to focus on what deserves our attention and what does not. To this end, some key notions are relevant: flexibility, shared services and professionalism.

Flexibility
To be able to operate flexibly within and together with other states, Sweden has taken a creative approach to adapting its network of embassies. The results of this approach include 'travelling ambassadors' (who have ambassador status but not the usual budgets and capacities), 'virtual ambassadors' and 'regional ambassadors' (who have ambassador status and budgets and work from their own country or from a nearby capital), 'representation without embassy status' (the budgets but not ambassador status), and 'mini-embassies' (very short-staffed embassies fulfilling a limited number of embassy tasks for a short time).

Shared services
An embassy is an institute on the spot that helps various networks to function. Contemporary ways of communication and working allow the sharing of services, either with other EU Member States or in joint EU embassies. In some cases, it will be natural for the Netherlands to take the lead, and in other cases, the reverse might be preferred. There is also a domestic, specialist side to shared services as, for technical ministries, an embassy is also an instrument for implementing its own foreign policy. A terrorism expert from the Ministry of the Interior may be very useful at the London embassy; an energy expert from Economic Affairs may want to use the services of a Dutch diplomat in Astana. Occasionally, an embassy can fulfil a caretaker role for other technical ministries. Design and intensity are not a matter of automatism but should be based on strategic choices.

Professionalism
Within the EU, the classic role of the embassy, i.e. to represent the Kingdom, is becoming an increasingly limited one, even if we should not neglect cultural differences between Member States in this respect. Instead, we see the advance of professionals who deal with the international dimensions of policy subdomains. The embassy network should organise the frameworks for promoting such professionalism. The traditional closed circle of diplomats is rapidly losing its relevance

in such frameworks. Perhaps a skilled agricultural economist can open more doors in Algeria than a professional diplomat; a diplomat who has sufficient time to learn to speak Bahasa Indonesia fluently may be more valuable for Dutch technical ministries than the next diplomat on the list. Tailor-made work and professionalism are to be preferred to tradition and routine.

4.2.3   KNOWLEDGE BEYOND INTERNATIONAL HEADLINES

One of the most important tasks of embassies has always been to gather and disseminate information. After receiving the first telegraph message of his life, Lord Palmerton, in the mid-19th century, is rumoured to have exclaimed: "My God, this is the end of diplomacy!" (Saddiki 2006: 94). He could not have been farther from the truth: information gathering has always remained a core element in foreign policy. However, with the rise of the mass media and the Internet, the way in which this is done has changed dramatically.

These days, anyone with a SIM card, Internet access, or a satellite dish can inform themselves about the latest events anywhere in the world. Ministers and government officials in their home countries no longer need to have people in the field to have an overview of the local news. This profusion of available information, however, has led to an attention deficit: those very same ministers and government officials in their home countries are often incapable of detecting valuable signals in the avalanche of noise (Wesley 2002).

An important task for those implementing Dutch foreign policy beyond the Dutch borders, therefore, is to explain and interpret local news beyond the international headlines. They should stop producing endless surveys of political decisions and start making context-rich analyses of relevant issues. Knowledge that goes beyond the fleetingness of mass media utterances is not only essential in Dutch foreign policymaking and implementation at home and abroad. In a hybrid world, knowledge, even more so than in the past, is power. One of the most vital ingredients in gaining a prominent position in relevant networks, therefore, is sound knowledge management. It is for these two reasons that the development of policy-relevant knowledge should be a prime focus of foreign policy organisation.

For the Netherlands, specialist knowledge means, for instance, that ministries and executive services should be paying special attention to precisely such information, contacts and analyses that matter for the development of a particular foreign policy niche. If the government also directly or indirectly stimulates independent research in this policy area, this would kill two birds with one stone. First of all, it would allow the Netherlands to profile itself as a knowledge hub and to present itself as an essential interface in a number of specific networks. Such knowledge means influence, not only in the specific niche, but also in other policy areas and

networks. Secondly, specialist knowledge has a centripetal effect: people, states and organisations venturing into the policy domain of the Dutch niche will turn to the Netherlands if they wish to improve their own knowledge. In such a dialogue, they will share their own expertise with the Netherlands, serving to reinforce and consolidate the Dutch position as an interface in a natural way.

Foreign policy executives should be stimulated to store their knowledge, experience and lessons in government-wide databases. Knowledge management should once more be prioritised at all policy levels, turning institutional learning not merely into a responsibility but into an inherent part of the organisational culture. Moreover, the government should encourage independent research more than it is presently doing, and in such a way that researchers and foreign policy executives jointly decide on the focus of analysis and jointly develop methods for applying knowledge in practice (Lord and Center for a New American Security 2010).

For a number of years now, the US Department of State has combined the opportunities offered by the Internet with the necessity of widely sharing topical information. A collection of wikis was published on the Department's Intranet in 2006, going by the name of Diplopedia, and allowing staff from all branches to add or change articles. In line with the Web 2.0 philosophy and experiences with the Wikipedia.org website, shared information is controlled neither beforehand nor afterward. As each member of staff works under their own name, it is felt that collectively, people will ensure that knowledge in the database is relevant, reliable and up-to-date.

This initiative proved to be a resounding success. By February 2010, 2,000 active users together had produced more than 10,000 sizeable articles. Examples included interactive guides to inform government officials in a new country or in a new policy domain about the latest relevant developments, or contributions dealing with specific actors at home and abroad. The highest number of page views so far was achieved on 14 January 2010, when Diplopedia was successfully used to come up with an appropriate response to the earthquake in Haiti in a short time (Bronk and Smith 2010).

The strength of the system lies in its combination of low threshold and scale. Each Department of State official has access to the Department's collective memory anywhere in the world at any time of the day, and the volume of this collective memory increases rapidly because every government official can contribute within a matter of minutes, ranging from adding to the debate on the consequences of the Gulf of Mexico oil disaster for foreign policy to providing a well-wrought analysis of the Security Council's performance. Precisely in an environment in which government officials often change posts and positions, access to a collective memory is invaluable.

A final important feature of Diplopedia is that it is not a closed network. Though the site is not accessible to the general public, all information in Diplopedia is sensitive but unclassified. This means that other US governments can also use the system, which has meanwhile been facilitated by linking several virtual networks. Research into the effectiveness of networks has shown that this is a very promising way of handling the profusion of information and interpretations. Anyone who collects specialist information and shares it with others, gains access to their specialist knowledge. Anyone undertaking to collect information themselves and managing it exclusively by and for himself is worse off in the end: it is more labour-intensive and produces less relevant knowledge and influence (Metzl 2001).

4.3   SWITCHING BETWEEN STATE AND NON-STATE ARENAS

The Dutch state has always geared its foreign policy to other state actors. This was also the most self-evident approach to take in a world that was dominated for so long by states with clearly delineated territorial boundaries. The role played by the government in this approach can be characterised as that of a gatekeeper: an actor who is the chief intermediary between domestic affairs and the promotion of national interests abroad. A main share of foreign policy activity today still is to influence other states and to negotiate and cooperate with other nations, whether bilaterally or multilaterally. However, states can be influenced in a variety of ways. Contacts among diplomats or ministers are often not as effective as many other ways of reaching, convincing and galvanizing groups of people into action.

In a hybrid world, ministers and government officials should go beyond the state-based focus in foreign policy and choose an approach that is suited to the network society. The key element here is cooperation with non-state actors. Both the number of non-state actors and their influence on the policies and positions of nation states are increasing (Legeuy-Feilleux 2009: 105). Transnational non-state actors come in all shapes and sizes; there is no widely accepted qualification or categorisation, but if we follow the National Intelligence Council, there are thousands of non-sovereign groups that have a significant economic, political, military, or social impact on the international level (National Intelligence Council 2007). What unites these non-state actors is the fact that they neither possess state sovereignty nor can they lay claim to the state's territorial legitimacy.

Dealing with NGOs and transnational corporations (multinational and international companies) requires another approach than a state-based focus. In its joint activities with non-state actors, the Dutch government does not play the role of gatekeeper but rather that of liaison officer. A liaison officer not only establishes connections but also selects what connections are interesting and which of them

may help promote strategic choices. The aim here is, while keeping an eye on domestic self-interest across territorial and immaterial borders, to help connect actors and networks and to exchange goods and ideas in a way that will benefit the Netherlands and the Dutch. Table 4.1 shows the differences between state and non-state arenas.

It is important to underline that the role of liaison officer does not substitute for the gatekeeper role. Both roles are to some extent supplementary methods of working or mindsets. Depending on the topic and the arena it addresses, the Netherlands may have to choose the one or the other approach. Nor will it be exceptional for the Netherlands to find itself using both approaches simultaneously in some areas. If you look at policy areas such as energy security or national security, for instance, you will find that the distinction between state and non-state arenas and domestic and foreign arenas is sometimes very hard to make. In line with Rosenau's (1999) observation that we are living in a time that is characterised by multiple 'spheres of authority', Dutch policymakers will increasingly need to operate in different arenas simultaneously in order to secure a single extended Dutch interest.

This process may be illustrated by the way in which Canada managed to cut back the use of landmines by working together with state and non-state actors. In the 1990s, several states, led by Canada, were looking for ways of countering the further spread of anti-personnel landmines. The most obvious arena to achieve this goal was a state arena: the UN Disarmament Conference. However, once Canada realised that the superpowers, including all permanent members of the UN Security Council, obstructed every attempt to ban landmines, it decided to turn to the non-state arena. While continuing to search for consensus in the state arena, Canada joined a partnership of NGOs operating under the name International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). The goal of its activities in this non-state arena was the same as that in the state arena: a global ban on landmines. Its approach, however, was entirely different. Operating as a liaison officer between NGOs and like-minded countries, Canada attempted to build so much pressure that this would launch an irreversible process. In October 1996, Canada hosted the international conference 'Towards a Global Ban on Anti-Personnel Landmines'. Its participants included 50 states (among them the Netherlands), hundreds of NGOs, and many UN agencies. In this arena, the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Lloyd Axworthy proposed a one-year deadline for developing and signing a treaty to ban landmines. This launched the Ottawa process. In December 1997, 123 countries, including the UK and France, signed the Treaty of Ottawa, introducing a total ban on landmines. By now, 156 countries have signed up for the treaty (Rutherford 2003; Behringer 2005).

Table 4.1   Gatekeeper versus liaison officer

	State arenas (gatekeeper metaphor)	Non-state arenas (liaison officer metaphor)
Context	• The state as the ultimate, generally recognised authority • State-dominated environment with territorial borders that are hard to bridge • Priority given to 'high politics' • National interests clearly identifiable	• Multiple spheres of authority • Complex multi-actor system with boundaries that are easy to bridge and overlapping policy domains • Emphasis on relating policy agendas without hierarchy • National interests are hard to identify and/or formulate
Role/functions of national government	• Controlling transactions between home and foreign countries • Managing relations between sovereign units (bilateral and multilateral) • Defining and promoting national interests	• Facilitating access and presence through networks • Building bridges to porous policy arenas • Facilitating the management of policy-specific coalitions
Strategy	• Interdepartmental negotiations in response to bureaucratic challenges • Hierarchical coordination (both towards other ministries and toward non-state actors) • Strict and exclusive government orientation • Hierarchical information flows • Emphasis on exclusive management of external environment	• Cooperative partnerships with public and non-state actors through participation in networks • Facilitating coordination (no dominant departments in international policy) • Open and inclusive network orientation • Multi-directional information flows • Emphasis on shared, cooperative management with public and non-state actors
Participants	• Professional diplomatic service whose legitimacy is founded on the principle of sovereignty • Non-state actors are the recipients of diplomacy	• Participation of multiple actors, often tripartite (governments, NGOs, corporate world), founded on relevance and expertise • Non-state actors are co-producers of diplomacy
Rules/ standards	• Expectations are grounded on standards and rules ensuing from traditional sovereignty • Protocol is central • Confidentiality is the rule	• Underdeveloped behavioural standards and clash of sovereign and non-sovereign rules • Little or no protocol (clash of expectations) • Accountability and openness are the rule

Sources: Hocking & Spence 2002: 11; Hocking 2006.

4.3.1   CENTRALITY

The main reason for combining the role of gatekeeper with that of liaison officer lies in the rise of non-state actors on the world stage and, closely connected with this, the increasing importance of the international network society with its countless transnational ties. A network is not an abstract entity; it is a real tissue in the social world, a veritable structure that can reinforce or impede participating actors (Brown 2010).

Three principles are important here: actors and their behaviours are mutually dependent; relations among actors constitute channels for transferring material products (weapons, money, diseases) and immaterial matters (knowledge, values); and long-term relational patterns among agents create structures that can change, limit and reinforce the interests, the identity and the behaviour of individual actors (Hafner-Burton et al. 2009: 561-562).

The understanding that relations and connections on the world stage might be more important than the abilities of individual actors has far-reaching consequences for the way in which the Netherlands can implement its foreign policy. For if this is the case, the Netherlands has more opportunities for promoting its interests in the world by utilising its relations with other parties than by operating on its own (cf. Sending and Neumann 2006).

An essential precondition for such networking power is centrality: the more prominent one's position in the network (number of contacts and sterling credentials with other actors), the greater one's ability to obtain knowledge and services from other actors and the stronger one's position in regulating the transmission of information and products within the network, in setting agendas and in framing debates. Power is inherent in one's skill in making a maximum number of valuable connections (Knoke 1990; Slaughter and Zaring 2006). Centrality involves choice-making and specialisation, for only then can one take up a central position in a network with authority and added value. This means that centrality is a consequence of prioritising and acting according to priorities.

This is an important observation for the Netherlands. Traditionally, a state's power used to be determined by its GDP, army, and/or population size, and this is often still the case in state-dominated arenas. Meanwhile, however, such indicators have ceased to be crucial ones. In non-state arenas and in networks, centrality and a position as a broker or node in the network are at least as important, and this is precisely where the Netherlands should be able to excel. When Jody Williams got the Nobel Prize for her role in the above-mentioned Ottawa process, she claimed that constructive cooperation with civil society could turn small and medium-sized countries into potential superpowers (Williams 1997, in Zaharna

2007). Leaving aside her stylistic exuberance, the idea behind it is a most valid one: there are opportunities here the size of which do not correspond to a country's GDP (Willetts 2007; Thomson 2005; cf. Egeland 1984).

Realising ambitions requires investment in solid friendships founded on trust and a shared vision of the future; it does not require chance acquaintances based on incidentally shared interests. Solid relationships have wider implications for the promotion of interests and for reputation than opportunist contacts. For the Netherlands, this means it should invest in relevant NGOs and in European administrative circles. The Dutch participation in the EU would be a case in point. The Netherlands can only play a role of any significance in the European arena by maintaining solid ties with all of its European neighbours – and not merely at the state level. Outside Europe, however, the Dutch government will need to consider in advance much more often and much more acutely what the added value of a relation is and how this relation would actually advance Dutch foreign policy goals.

4.3.2   COOPERATION

Ironically, entering new playing fields is not easy for foreign policy executives. Studies in several countries have made it clear that foreign policy is particularly resistant to change (Zaharna 2007). Working in and together with other nations has always carried with it a measure of status and prestige, which has led to a certain conservatism: diplomacy, sometimes called the second-oldest profession in the world, is still largely driven by protocol and tradition, divorced from transgovernmental networks (Heine 2006; Neumayer 2008). Ministers and civil servants may consider the spread of their activities to non-state arenas as a degradation. This is a misconception. What is at stake is not degradation but dynamism. Even if liaison officers catch less of the spotlight than the parties they bring together, their role is at least as important. If we can and will act not only as gatekeepers but also as liaison officers, we will invest in the skills and positions that are essential to strategic foreign policy.

In a network, each actor is dependent on other actors by definition. Such interdependencies are complex, multiple and cluttered. In concrete terms, this means that none of the actors involved in the network can operate on their own or can use the other actors as they see fit (Kahler 2009). By using the ideas, ambitions and interests that are essential for achieving successful outcomes, cooperation develops legitimacy and generates alternative solutions. There are no ready-made answers for doing so, but the Netherlands may take comfort from the idea that many other countries are also looking for ways of realising their own interests through versatile cooperation (Cooper 2001). In the international literature and, slowly but surely, in policy documents, we now find a great many labels for such an approach: from *new diplomacy* (Riordan 2003) to *catalytic diplomacy* (Cooper and Hocking 2000); from *multi-*

stakeholder diplomacy (Kurbalija and Katrandjiev 2006) to *guerrilla diplomacy* (Copeland 2009); from *network diplomacy* (Metzl 2001) to *new public diplomacy* (Melissen 2005); and from *transformational diplomacy* (Rice 2006) to *new foreign policy* (Neack 2008). Labels, of course, are of little importance; what matters is the call for communicating and cooperating with new actors in new ways.

The Netherlands would do well to familiarise itself with this approach. In our country and in the regions around us, there is a rich substrate of civil society parties and companies operating internationally. Open cooperation with non-state actors, moreover, will increase the legitimacy and, hence, the effectiveness of Dutch foreign policy. Involving interested citizens from all walks of society – by their intensive cooperation with NGOs, for instance – is one of the ways of developing broad-based support for specific domains of foreign policy (Hocking 2008).

One should be aware that such a dual approach of state and non-state actors may also cause tensions. Hypersensitivity to the customs of classic diplomacy is not always expedient, and those who are shocked by this, may not be able to adapt to the new realities. An illustration of such a rigid position is the course of events relating to the International Criminal Court. The Netherlands was a strong advocate of this institution, but the US under President Bush Jr was against it and was at first successful in convincing other countries not to sign the treaty. For reasons of higher international politics, the Netherlands took this lying down. However, since there are many NGOs active in the Netherlands that have good relations with the US and that would have had the potential of impacting US public opinion, the Netherlands to some extent failed to capitalise on its assets.

Depending on the priority concerned, the Dutch government may be looking for suitable partners in different networks. Networks come in all shapes and sizes: from state (G8) and non-state ones (the International Peace Movement) to hybrid networks (the Basel agreements); from 'thick' networks, with frequent and many contacts between its actors (the EU environmental network) to 'thin' networks (G77); from horizontal networks (transgovernmental ties between agricultural ministries) to vertical networks of regulators; from informal (the Proliferation Security Initiative) to formal networks (the euro area). Each time, the Netherlands will need to decide which network is relevant for achieving its goals, which partners are operating within it and which would be the most eligible for the Netherlands to achieve its goals.

A strength of the diplomatic corps has always been its ability to establish contacts, collect information and create synergies. These are the skills it should also apply to other target groups in non-state arenas. The range of stakeholders in issues that matter to the Netherlands is enormous and strategic partners are not inevitably located in the capital's tallest buildings: abroad, there are partners to be found in

every nook and cranny, not only in government buildings of capital cities, but also in slums and business centres, in suburbs and in artists' circles (Murphy 2008). Here too, the Dutch government need not establish and maintain all contacts by itself; precisely in non-state arenas, foreign policy implementers can accomplish Dutch goals by connecting other actors with each other.

National governments increasingly tend to cooperate not only with NGOs but also with businesses in tripartite constructions. Sometimes they do so in institution-alised ways, for instance when non-state actors formally joined the secretariat of the World Summit on the Information Society in 2005. In the concurrent Working Group on Internet Governance, representatives of governments, the corporate world, and civil society were operating on an equal footing (Dumitriu 2006). Transnational corporations and multinationals have slowly but surely been figuring more prominently in foreign policy than they did in the past, and increasingly also without the cooperation of NGOs (Dahan, Doh and Guay 2006). In the US, some are now calling for the establishment of a separate agency at the Department of State, with the aim of 'engaging the private sector for the public good' (Lord and Center for a New American Security 2010). The Netherlands is not quite ready to do just that, and, with regard to the internal market, it would tend to prefer a European framework. Nevertheless, the corporate world and the government are fully aware that national and corporate images can reinforce each other. Country-of-origin designations do make a difference.

Besides cooperation with non-state actors, national governments are also experimenting with sub-state actors: municipalities and provinces are close to citizens, possess specific expertise, and, hence, their role in implementing foreign policy is growing. The most striking example here is the contribution made by sub-state governments in the EU; the House of the Dutch Provinces (HNP) in Brussels and the lobbyists of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) serve to illustrate this. Less conspicuous but rapidly gaining in importance are sub-national contributions to international security and development cooperation. In reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Bosnia, municipal expertise played an important part after it became clear that state-building and economic development cannot be imposed top-down but also need to be driven from the bottom up. In the Netherlands, genuine sub-state cooperation is still something of a rarity. So far, the national government has chosen mainly to play a role as a financier; it shies away from exploiting sub-national expertise and contacts in foreign policymaking and implementation. They are segregated domains in our country. Partly owing to their state structure, other countries have made more progress in this regard. The Autonomous Communities of Spain and the Regions and Communities of Belgium, for instance, make an important contribution to cross-border policymaking and policy implementation, and the German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia contributes to building a police force in Afghanistan.

Besides sub-state actors, there are also other domestic actors that deserve to be involved in foreign policy, as there are many citizens, NGOs and companies that centre their activities in the domestic area but that could most certainly make a contribution to successful foreign policy. Aiming to fill this gap, the Canadian Foreign Office, for example, has established local embassies in the Canadian federal states: small-scale representations of the Department of Foreign Affairs in various places in Canada serving to create broad-based domestic support. In the UK, predominantly working from the capital, the Partnership and Network Development Unit of the British Foreign Office has a similar function.

Selecting relations is a strategic matter. The relevance of actors is co-determined by their know-how, their unique contacts, their scientific or policymaking experience with the dossier, their influence on the dossier's development and their stake in the outcome of the process. Moreover, cooperation will be more fruitful if it is truly inclusive: all relevant stakeholders should be included in cooperative efforts as long as they endorse the approach of the process and respect other participants' starting points and interests (Potter 2008). At the same time, it goes without saying that the government may make minimum requirements of partners with whom it chooses to collaborate. Some diplomatic services, for example, have developed a checklist to be able to verify whether a particular NGO's legitimacy and capacity warrant their joining forces.

A strategy like this can only be effective if the government has sufficient knowledge of those partners it wants to team up with. If cooperation is to produce the results foreign policymakers have in mind, they should map out in advance for each partner what it will gain from the cooperation and what outcome it will try to secure. Essential in all this is what each partner considers the bottom line: at the end of the day, a private entrepreneur will want to make a profit and an NGO will always want to communicate a success to its grassroots (Potter 2008). In order to understand why each partner acts the way it does, it is also essential to examine the social context (Brown 2010), paying particular attention to a potential partner's perception of the Dutch government. The UK Foreign Office has gained experience with this approach and submits stakeholder surveys every two years (Foreign Commonwealth Office 2008). In reality, the government will hardly ever need to start from scratch, as, in many cases, networks of actors have already converged around clearly defined themes.

4.3.3   SOFT POWER

In an interwoven, interdependent world in which power is distributed over networks of state and non-state actors, each with their own approach and their own goals, often the only way forward for the Netherlands to accomplish its foreign policy objectives will be to engage in constructive cooperation based on

shared interests. Cooperation with other actors is valuable precisely because participants themselves opt to participate. Coercion is rarely a modality of power now. The tradition of foreign relation management has ingrained the art of seduction into a diplomat's genes as, in the days of state chancelleries, diplomacy was a perpetual endeavour to convince, to conciliate and to seduce. Dinners, the perfect gift, intrigue: everything served this purpose. In this day and age, however, seduction is a different matter altogether. The catchphrase is soft power.

The American influence on the world stage, as Joseph Nye put it 20 years ago, is not only a function of hard power (weapons and dollars) but also of soft power: reputation, cultural attractiveness, legitimacy and lawfulness. And what goes for the US, goes even more for a country like the Netherlands (Nye 2004; Randal 2008). If the Netherlands wants to achieve its goals in the world, it can only do so by improving its global attractiveness and by turning the art of seduction into official policy. The secret of effective cooperation is, first of all, to use your own strengths without waylaying other people's strengths and, secondly, to create the conditions for sharing responsibilities and credits (Leonard, Stead, and Smewing 2002; Cowan and Cull 2008; Snow and Taylor 2009).

A liaison officer must master the art of seduction to perfection. In the Anglo-Saxon world, the term 'enabling state' is used to designate the skill of achieving goals in indirect ways. An enabling state makes an effort to allow other parties to perform to the best of their ability and to empower them to develop activities that serve both their own interests and those of the state. The enabling state makes clear what it wants and why and then leaves other parties at liberty to implement this, knowing that full control and monitoring are illusory.

4.4   CONCLUSION

Today, in contrast to the past, the Dutch government must move in state arenas and non-state arenas alike to accomplish its foreign policy objectives. Cooperating with non-state actors requires a fundamentally different approach to the practice of foreign policy. In addition to the existing approach grounded in protocol and geopolitics, the Dutch government should take an instrumental approach in choosing its partners from networks that have little hierarchy. In a much more strategic way than it is currently doing, the Netherlands should adopt an open, flexible attitude so as to choose those actors that may be of consequence in achieving ambitions, influencing agendas and promoting extended national interests.

Implementing this new approach requires smart investments in relevant knowledge, international exposure and local presence. In the European arena, we need to wake up to the fact that Europe has partly become a domestic space; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs needs to change its wide-ranging and coordinating approach to a

more constricted and in-depth one. Designing European policy should be in the hands of the Cabinet and primarily in the hands of the Prime Minister. This is what the Treaty of Lisbon, in so many words, implies in casting such a central part to the European Council. To express this visibly, one should talk about a Ministry of General and European Affairs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would then principally be a technical expert ministry, specialising in external European policy and external security, serving as a knowledge centre for multilateral architecture and being strategically responsible for the tools of external security policy: diplomacy, development and defence.

Strategic choices and policy targets cannot be accommodated in a single ministry but should be a shared narrative or, in administrative terms, an integrated policy package. Working differently and using existing tools in different ways: these are the consequences of foreign policy ambitions in our times.

5   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the introduction to this report, we asked the question of how the Netherlands can develop a foreign policy considering the radically changing circumstances and conditions in which such a policy is now to be pursued. This is not a purely academic exercise. Society is suspicious about everything that is coming our way from other nations and the temptation to retreat behind Holland's dikes is great. However, our international orientation is and remains a crucial source of prosperity and well-being. At the same time, the new international environment requires a new repertoire to sustain the relevance, credibility and conviction of this orientation. The marketplace of international relations is overcrowded now, with many new visitors and other market superintendents. To find a niche here with a 'product' that would be endorsed by many of those involved, is quite a challenge.

In order to rise to this challenge, it is essential to convince ourselves of how much the circumstances have changed. Only then can we draw conclusions that go beyond minor adaptations here or another call for coordination efforts there. In this report, we have explored the possible consequences from three different perspectives: the nature and scope of foreign policy; the platform where the Netherlands can pursue its foreign policy; and the way in which policies are implemented. This has led to the findings and recommendations below.

5.1   THE NETHERLANDS IN A CHANGING WORLD

The analyses that underlie this report show that the character of international relations, the balance of power and the players have changed to the degree that we now, in fact, have a new, hybrid context in which foreign policy is to be pursued.

On the one hand, there is the world of geopolitics and the nation state. This is the context of power relations. The rise of Asia – China in particular – attracts widespread attention and yet, the speed of this development seems to have taken everyone by surprise. In the last WRR report on Dutch foreign policy, *Stability and Security in Europe* (1995), countries like China and India did not even deserve a mention. The acronym BRIC is now widely accepted, but it remains hard to imagine a world whose dynamic centre is no longer – let alone exclusively – located in the West. Meanwhile, current developments say it all: China is now the biggest creditor in the world, the biggest car manufacturer, will soon have the biggest high-speed train network, etcetera. This shift has far-reaching consequences for international relations: Europe will simply become a smaller place in an expanding world, and, mutatis mutandis, this also goes for its Member States, though more so for some than for others.

The significance of these developments is hotly debated in many places (Agnew 2009; Jackson 2007; Herod 2006). Some see first and foremost a geopolitical shift, with the US losing its position of hegemony and China gaining power. Such shifts, as history shows, may be accompanied by periods of great instability (Khanna 2008). A comparison with 19th-century Germany is often made in this connection: a *verspätete Nation* that claimed its rightful place in the world and thus became a threat to the established powers. Others believe the process of globalisation will continue to advance, with people and regions in the world getting so closely interlinked that thinking in such old-fashioned categories as states against states has become obsolete (Ohmae 2005). That these shifts in economic dynamics and political power in the world will have radical consequences, however, is commonly accepted.

On the other hand, we now have a network environment that is populated not only by state actors but, increasingly, by non-state actors. Although the nation state will remain a major point of reference in this environment, it is also increasingly being sucked into this network with its lack of hierarchical structure and ceaselessly changing actors and theatres. NGOs, the corporate world and campaigners, aided by media hypes, set the international business agendas, and governments would be wise to secure their position in this network so as not to be taken aback and to exert their influence and make adjustments. A growing number of actors and arrangements are manifesting themselves in cross-connections that are, as it were, borderless. In this sense, there no longer is such a thing as *the* foreign policy of the Dutch state. There are many expressions of foreign policy in what Slaughter has called disaggregated states. Regulation and codification of standards and norms are the outcomes of negotiations among professionals and government officials from many countries, who often have more in common with each other than with their respective compatriots. Interrelationships between countries cause rules of behaviour and practices to be created from the bottom up: through best practices. From accountancy rules to food regulations, from media ethics to competition ethics: these are all fields in which players meet across borders and negotiate codifications, which are then incorporated into binding regulations and jurisdiction. The *cause célèbre* of this approach is the anti-land-mine treaty, in which Canadian diplomacy jumped on the bandwagon of several NGOs at the right moment to take advantage of the momentum created by these non-state actors before actually accomplishing the treaty as a state actor.

The dissolution of boundaries in international relations is manifesting itself, more than anywhere else, in the EU. The EU is not the regular type of multilateral organisation that specialises in a particular topic and is at the service of states. It covers virtually all areas and operates not only at the level of states but also at the level of citizens, thus making it a domestic space. If the dilemma of a foreign affairs minister is manifesting itself anywhere, it surely is in Europe, where the difference

between at home and abroad is still a reality in people's minds but has actually ceased to exist in many other ways. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs officially co-ordinates the Dutch contribution to European policy, but in fact specialist domains have become separate worlds to such an extent that civil servants of different technical ministries have their own objectives and act autonomously. Considering the ever expanding aggregate of themes and specialisations, this could hardly be any different. Conversely, the EU also profoundly influences national rules and regulations, through its legislative powers, through jurisdic-tion, or through network organisations.

The policy process has become vulnerable, unpredictable, and, at times, emotional. This makes it hard to orchestrate, let alone prioritise, matters: there is a lot going on, issues arise from all directions and they are full of surprises. Inasmuch as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintains its traditional role of guardian of foreign relations, it should come as no surprise that it occasionally experiences function loss, prompting some of its officials to exclaim that "everyone is just doing as they please all over the place." To put this differently: between the attempt to coordinate foreign policy and the hybrid character of international relations, there are inherent tensions.

5.2   OPPORTUNITIES FOR SETTING OUR 'OWN AGENDA'

The far-reaching changes in geopolitics and the character of international relations require a response. They offer both threats and opportunities for Dutch foreign policy.

5.2.1   TILTING OF ISSUES

International security issues – war and peace – have for decades been a kind of dome floating over all other global issues. This dome was and continues to be the primary domain of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The issue of war and peace – security – has fundamentally changed in nature. It has come to be a theme that resorts as much under justice and law enforcement as under the armed forces, extending to terrorist threats, failed states, cyber criminality, religious radicalism, piracy and nuclear arms fallen into the wrong hands. It is, in effect, like pushing the random play button, and the responses to them are equally varied. They call for infiltration, espionage, law enforcement cooperation, building the rule of law, interreligious dialogue, aerial reconnaissance and military expeditions, to mention just a few. The development of NATO, whose loyal ally the Netherlands has been for many decades, reflects this changed nature: it operates outside the treaty area, each time in changing coalitions. Countries may be involved this time but not next time. The old antagonist, Russia, is still perceived as the enemy by the new NATO member countries in Central and Eastern Europe (not without good reason some-

times), but it has become what it is at present: an occasionally troublesome but invaluable neighbour, not an evident and undisputed ground for NATO's existence. The institution of NATO patently struggles with this dilemma. However much and however rightly we value this organisation, it can no longer serve as the overarching dome over our international relations and as the dominant anchor for the Netherlands.

Other issues are jostling for priority attention. It has become the hallmark of the international order that the hierarchy in urgency and weight in these issues has got lost. Forces beyond the control of anyone or anything now shape the international relations agenda: two aeroplanes flying into the World Trade Center can draw everyone's attention to the issues of terrorism and Islamic radicalisation for a full decade; two bank disasters and a virtual meltdown of the financial system can then shift everyone's attention to another scene on yet another stage. The disaster before the Louisiana coast in the spring of 2010 underscores yet another issue: the issue of energy scarcity and the risks involved in using fossil fuels. Fossil energy is finite, makes Europe vulnerable and dependent and runs counter to inevitable ambitions to promote sustainability. In many cases, sustainability is still too expensive and making the transition is a global mission requiring a global approach.

Finally, relatively clear-cut national and regional themes have become entangled with global issues, which are characterised by many different actors playing simultaneously in different arenas (the interstate, intra-state and non-state arenas) and no one with full control of how the issue is put together and what actors are involved. In sum, we have many new issues with fuzzy and rapidly changing hierarchies.

5.2.2   CONSEQUENCES FOR FOREIGN POLICY

The domain of international issues is fanning out in all directions, and Dutch foreign policy tends to drift along. Explanatory Statements to Parliament, coalition agreements and policy memorandums express wide-ranging ambitions in long lists of priorities and policy targets. At the same time, our country is attempting to participate in as many forums as possible, even though it is aware that, with the rise of new countries, it cannot maintain this in the long term. The tendency to do as much as possible with as many partners as possible fulfils a deeply felt Dutch need to exhibit its presence in the world anywhere and everywhere. Dutch foreign policy thus resembles a doughnut: it has a wide range of initiatives, but there is no core to keep these together. The result is fragmentation of attention and expertise, loss of profile and identification and doubts about the relation between foreign policy efforts and Dutch interests.

Accumulating initiatives and a compulsive participatory urge are not only increasingly harder to balance but may also conflict with prevailing views in society. So far, foreign policy was predominantly founded on a basis of permissive consensus. Government elites could develop and implement foreign policy, knowing that there was a general consensus about the direction of foreign policy. This consensus, however, is no longer self-evident. The size and the perspective of development cooperation are a case in point, but also issues like EU enlargement or participation in the ISAF mission in Uruzgan also suggest this. Many contemporary international issues interfere with domestic relations and ideas to such an extent that a foreign policy conducted exclusively by experts at a ministry is a thing of the past.

5.2.3   STRATEGIC CHOICES

On the basis of the findings above, it is recommended to search much more specifically for opportunities to pursue an agenda of our own, so as to achieve more in fewer domains. This involves making choices, setting priorities and defining domains where the Netherlands can make a difference. A first step in doing so lies in awareness and recognition of the hybrid world. Only when the Dutch government has fully woken up to these changes and only if it recognises that its current foreign policy is insufficiently adjusted to this situation can it decide to pursue a strategic foreign policy.

The next step will then involve choice-making and priority-establishing in Dutch foreign policy across the board. Such choices are a political matter, but a transparent decision-making framework allowing clear choices to be made and justified will be helpful, all the more because a consistent foreign policy that is also feasible requires continued popular identification and support.

Three questions underlie our decision-making framework:
1   What is important for the Netherlands?
2   What are the interests of other actors and what are they doing to realise them?
3   Where can the Netherlands make a difference?

This will allow us to distinguish between the 'permanent' fixtures in foreign policy and a 'free space' in which priorities can be established. Permanent fixtures would include the vital interests that are indissolubly linked to territorial integrity, to the protection of citizens and to political institutions. As such interests are essential, we do not need to establish priorities here. They are beyond dispute.

Beyond such vital interests, there are many interests that may be less immediate and yet essential, for which we have used the term 'extended national interests'.

From the perspective of these extended national interests, we should take a closer look at specific interfaces between national interests and global issues, to decide how the Netherlands can formulate contributions that also make a difference at home and abroad. Extended national interests can serve as a yardstick to help decide where the Netherlands, as a collective, has a genuine stake that can be operationalised in international policy and, at the same time, can contribute to global issues. Such a yardstick also serves to distinguish pure ideals and aspirations from ambitions with a more tangible interest.

This last question allows us to verify if there are opportunities to make a real difference or if others are better equipped to do so. What also needs to be considered here is whether there are possibilities for coalitions with others – states, NGOs, the corporate world – and whether such a strategic ambition is sufficiently attractive both at home and abroad.

Strategic foreign policy implies priorities and posteriorities. It would seem obvious to pursue task specialisation among European countries, also in defence efforts, to avoid the effects of fragmentation and lack of effectiveness. Dutch policymakers will need to learn that while there are many important topics in the world to which they can still contribute by joining the discussion and by leaving the action to others.

Besides promoting vital interests and strategic choices from a limited number of extended interests, it is recommended to include a third component in foreign policy: niches. In the words of the former Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs Evans, to choose niches means to concentrate budgets on a few specific areas where the likelihood of achieving valuable and significant results would be the greatest, instead of attempting to cover the entire foreign policy realm in thematic and geographical terms. Niches follow from chosen priorities and distinguish themselves in three respects from other foreign policy concerns. They are the instruments par excellence for the Netherlands to specialise and profile itself both at home and in the rest of the world. They should be allocated greater budgets than regular foreign policy activities and they should be long-term targets. Niches would offer the Netherlands the opportunity, within the foreign policy frameworks, to develop its own agenda, tapping into the conditions, expertise and ambitions that suit its (self-)image. If the Netherlands should choose to have niches, this will force it to specialise in a number of policy domains and thus to gain knowledge and experience, which it can then apply as a source of influence on the world stage. As a mental exercise – certainly not as a detailed plan – we have outlined how, in the domains of water and climate, food and security, and the international rule of law, the presence of international NGOs located here and the presence of scientific and technological expertise could forge businesses and interests into significant strategic symbioses that can make a difference both internally

and externally and that can also visibly connect internal and external domains. Such connections may also help to bridge the gap we observed between the fear and necessity of accepting the outside world wholeheartedly. This already happens on a small scale, but never as a strategic choice, never as a genuine policy priority. Making choices implies cutting budgets elsewhere to make a genuine investment here.

Making strategic choices does not imply that everything must or can change. Even if NATO is no longer the main pillar of Dutch foreign policy, the Netherlands is a NATO member country, and Article 5 – on collective defence – remains a crucial insurance policy. The Netherlands, moreover, is party to a series of international agreements and treaties. When ships are needed to protect the merchant fleet off the Somali coast, EU countries are also looking to the Netherlands, and rightly so: our world port and navy happen to create international obligations. And yet, other steps are also needed to gain a more consistent signature presence in the crowded international arena with our own core competencies, expertise and ambitions that go beyond general agreements and obligations. This would build the Netherlands a reputation and a profile and also involve its citizens in the process. In international relations, the nation state is still an essential actor and a normative institute for identification between citizens and government. Extended national interests can serve as a starting point for developing a strategic framework to do this justice and also take on board the complex interdependence of international relations.

5.3   REORIENTATION ON EUROPE

Europe is our dominant arena, and it is a political arena. Exerting an influence in Europe requires excellence. This does not mean being the best boy in the class, but it does mean excelling. For a long time, the Netherlands considered Europe essential for its prosperity but not for its security. Now that the Union is politicising all the time, this is no longer a tenable position. Moreover, the US as a kind of guarantee against the dominance of one of the major European states is now a relic of the past. The renowned antagonism between Atlanticists and European federalists, still visible at the onset of the war in Iraq, has become an anachronism. Europe is also a primary safety net in the mounting unpredictability of international relations. In each acute crisis, government leaders in Europe convene and together must find a way out. He who excels in this arena, has influence.

Europe offers a rich diversity of influential policy networks. A strategic orientation on their relevance and workings is essential for exerting influence in Europe. If we wish to make a difference in the world through our European connections, we sometimes benefit more from the International Crisis Group than from a friendly Minister of Foreign Affairs. If we want to make European agriculture more sustainable, we can make more interesting waves through the European

Parliament and European consumer associations than in a council of agricultural ministers. This requires the state to develop into an enabling state, that is, a state allowing other parties to develop activities that benefit both themselves and the government.

Europe is by far the most important gateway for the Netherlands to promote its interests and standards in the world. Europe is becoming a smaller place in a bigger world, and this applies even more so for smaller Member States in a bigger EU. From the point of view of China, countries like the Netherlands do not show up on the radar. This is why Europe is not only the dominant arena for the Netherlands but also its dominant link to the world.

Even Europe is too small for many issues, such as food security, energy, climate and financial stability, which are all globalisation problems requiring global governance, but here, too, Europe is the self-evident gateway for smaller Member States to have an influence. To do so is hard enough because Europe is divided and big Member States are reluctant to adjust to new realities. But even the big ones discover, to their shame sometimes, that they need to queue up outside, as the *président*, the Prime Minister and the *Bunderkanzlerin* discovered personally in Copenhagen in December 2009. The formalised European Council has launched a process that increases the pressure to find joint positions. For an excellent Member State, this is where there are opportunities to make connections and improve credentials.

It is futile to stay on the sideline and observe that Europe has its shortcomings, because Europe is us. This means we need to invest in a register of skills and contacts, to listen and to be proactive. This requires stamina, dedication and shared confidence that such efforts are useful and imperative. It also means investing in bilateral contacts. Of course, the Dutch influence on the German chancellor is limited as she has many neighbouring countries, but if we build excellent relations with our neighbouring federal states, our voice will be heard in the influential Federal Council. Canada has developed a smart strategy in its relations with the US to do just that and the Netherlands should act likewise. If we want to be heard, we had better act jointly as Benelux than as merely one out of 27 Member States. It is also recommended to play a constructive role in coalitions with other influential neighbouring EU countries. If we go it alone, as in the purchase of the JSF, warning lights should be flashing in advance and we should consider it the exception rather than the rule.

As the WRR already concluded (WRR 2007b), it is important to legitimise Europe by way of results, representation, accountability and identification. However, it will remain awkward for the Dutch government to be active in Europe under a cloud of public distrust. As long as sizeable groups of citizens consider Europe as

another globalisation menace rather than as a cushion against its reverberations, this will paralyse national governments in their European range of action. Therefore, the Netherlands should make an effort to set the EU (or a group within the EU) on a course that also profiles the protective element of Europe. The internal market and consumer protection alone will not suffice to do this. There is yet another question that lurks behind the obsolete discourse of more versus less Europe: the question of what kind of Europe we wish to live in and whether we want to exert our influence to help shape this Europe as best we can.

To accept Europe as the central political arena and the primary link to international issues requires us to devise strategies, make choices, work out action plans, and mobilise networks; in sum, it requires us to excel in this arena.

5.4   TOWARDS A NEW PRACTICE

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is no longer the inevitable gatekeeper of interactions between our country and the rest of the world. If we keep holding on to this idea, we will harvest nothing but frustration. The content and character of international relations make it an illusion for the national government to think it can fully orchestrate relations with other nations. At the same time, a foreign policy that abandons itself to the free play of forces is undesirable and irresponsible. A strategic framework, as outlined above, would help to make clear choices and to marshal support and commitment. This inevitably requires re-evaluating the current approach and using existing instruments in a smarter way.

5.4.1   ANOTHER APPROACH

The European Council is the most important body in the European political arena. This means that the role of the Dutch Prime Minister will become more pronounced. To operate in the European Council to the best of his ability, the Prime Minister must be able to act as the person with final responsibility and must be supplied with policy dossiers from various technical ministries. The Ministry of General Affairs will, in fact, operate as a Ministry of General and European Affairs. Its structure must be adequately geared to this, as Europe is not a foreign but largely a domestic affair. The Treaty of Lisbon, which has meanwhile come into force, requires such an intervention in the Dutch public administration.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs will then become a technical ministry, focusing on three core tasks. First of all, it will deal with the EU's common external and security policy, which is to be developed by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, chaired by the High Representative for External Policy. Secondly, it will be a specialist ministry in the field of external security, with strategic responsibility for the external security policy toolbox: diplomacy, development and defence. (The

WRR already proposed to professionalise and privatise the development domain (WRR 2010: 224)). Thirdly, it will be the knowledge department par excellence in the matter of the architecture of multilateralism. Such knowledge is crucial to the government.

Finally, it will retain several of its classic functions. There are many countries of significance in the world that greatly value state-to-state relations in the classic hierarchy of the sovereign state, as symbolised by their Minister of Foreign Affairs. In such countries, the Minister of Foreign Affairs from the Netherlands will be able to open more doors than other Dutch ministers from technical departments.

5.4.2   USING INSTRUMENTS IN A DIFFERENT WAY

Bearing in mind our recommendation to formulate a Cabinet-wide foreign policy, we feel it is imperative to develop a mechanism that will help to make priorities evident and that will offer transparency in debates with Parliament on strategic choices and their results. Instead of allocating budgets to ministries on the basis of a logic of distributive justice, we should allocate budgets on the basis of set priorities. Strategic choices and the budgets that go with them should also be proposed for each Cabinet period, allowing the Cabinet to take the final decision on the specific allocations during its annual budgetary meeting on the financial year. This would also offer an angle in strategic debates with Parliament on strategic Dutch foreign policy priorities.

A world in which diplomats liaise less with other diplomats and more with a wider diversity of actors requires a different working approach. Debates on the size of our network of embassies focus too much on possibilities for downsizing and too little on flexibility and professionalism. In some cases, an ambassador may serve as a kind of caretaker for changing representatives from ministries; in other cases, we should consider employing the services of travelling ambassadors, with mini-embassies, cultural outposts, virtual ambassadors, events managers, or service centres.

Within Europe, we should take a different approach to our network of embassies. Given the diversity of internal European interrelationships, embassies in EU Member States will increasingly tend to be flexible shared-service institutions rather than old-fashioned diplomatic posts. We could work in tandem with other nations or with other ministries. An embassy will have to justify its added value and the Dutch initiatives or policy targets it serves. Besides flexibility, craftsmanship is required. A craftsman may be a diplomat with the requisite knowledge of the area and with liaising skills, but there is no reason whatsoever not to tap into and use specific outside expertise. Civil service careers often tend to reinforce the

status quo, and a shift in the international perspective, therefore, also requires an open mind for inevitable organisational change.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is tentatively experimenting in many areas, as when it exchanges staff with other ministries or companies. Dutch ambassadors abroad occasionally perform tasks at home (the Rent-an-Ambassador scheme), and we now have some special-issue ambassadors. This is a good start. However, this report recommends going much further and opting for a more fundamental approach.

5.4.3   GOAL-ORIENTATED COOPERATION

The government's approach towards external actors should accommodate the fact that international relations have a hybrid character. In addition to negotiations and partnerships with other states, therefore, it should also engage in systematic, structural, and intensive cooperation with non-state actors, who might prove to be key channels for a small country to realise its priorities. We should, for example, not reserve the red carpet treatment for a new Criminal Court but also extend it to the new Dutch location of Human Rights Watch, as international civil society is at least as important in dynamising a cluster of activities as an international treaty among states.

To cooperate more with non-state actors requires an approach that moves beyond directing, to facilitating and liaising. A liaison officer not only makes connections but also decides in what networks extra investments need to be made to support strategic choices and who are the most suitable partners for doing so. A prerequisite here is a solid database that will allow updating and sharing knowledge and experience on relevant networks of actors. In doing so, it is also important to specify what the expectations are and which particular interests and obligations must be respected. After all, the 'support base' of a national government (Parliament) and the rules of its game differ from those of an NGO.

The Netherlands should be more aware of the advantages of occupying a central position in relevant networks with a view to linking shared interests and values to its own interests and values and thus proactively aiming to involve other parties in its policy agenda.

Managing and liaising are supplementary approaches. Depending on the topic and the arena where it is put on the agenda, the Netherlands may have to choose either the one or the other approach. In some cases, it may be expedient to use both approaches at the same time.

5.5   IN CONCLUSION

On the eve of the First World War, the world counted 52 states, 56 if we include the 'white' dominions. One century later, we have 193 states and a few that are disputable. A hundred years ago, Europe was the manifest centre of the world and, with the rise of the US, the West remained so throughout that century. A hundred years ago, the Netherlands was a minor neutral state with an empire in Asia. Fifty years ago, it lost its empire and became a prominent member of NATO and the European Economic Community of six member states. Another 50 years on, NATO has ceased to be the anchor it always was. The Netherlands is one of 27 EU Member States. And while its ex-colony Indonesia is a full member of the G20, the Netherlands is not, in spite of its mantra of being the sixteenth wealthiest nation, the ninth trading nation, and the third largest donor of development aid. The Netherlands has also lost its special position as home country of many a multi-national.

Critics of current Dutch foreign policy would do well to bear in mind the contrast between these enormous changes, on the one hand, and deeply ingrained patterns of thinking, seeing and acting, on the other. Traditions and reflexes are like cart tracks that are still visible even after a century of tarmacking.

In a way, the Netherlands has always remained a neutral Western country and one might consider its NATO membership the continuation of neutrality by other means. The old frightening image always was to be dominated by a major European power; after 1945, the US served as a safety anchor and a supranational Europe was to substitute power with law. These were and remained the foreign policy foundations after the Second World War. Framed in that way, foreign policy was also a 'high politics' discourse, pursued for and by a small, responsible, well-informed elite.

All this is now over, and this has consequences. Such consequences can be avoided by giving in to the temptation to turn our backs on other nations, but this would be at right angles to the myriad ways in which we are attached to the world. We could also choose to travel the same path, but, in an outside world that has changed so fundamentally, this would amount to venturing on an expedition without a compass. It is of essence, therefore, to search for contemporary interfaces between the Netherlands and the world. This report recommends that we develop and sharpen an agenda of our own, reorient ourselves on Europe and embrace the contemporary players in international relations. In sum, we recommend charting a course that expresses what the Netherlands is: attached to the rest of the world.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFM	Netherlands Authority for the Financial Markets
AIV	Advisory Council on International Affairs
CESR	Committee of European Securities Regulators
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration
DGES	Directorate-General for European Cooperation
DGPZ	Directorate-General for Political Affairs
EDA	European Defence Agency
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union
FAC	Foreign Affairs Council
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FDBM	Global Sustainable Biomass Fund
GAC	General Affairs Council
GAERC	General Affairs and External Relations Council
HGIS	Homogeneous Group for International Cooperation
HNP	House of the Dutch Provinces
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICBL	International Campaign to Ban Landmines
IEA	International Energy Agency
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPCC	International Panel on Climate Change
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KNMI	Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NWP	Netherlands Water Partnership
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PVV	Party for Freedom
SER	Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TEU	Treaty on European Union
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
VNG	Association of Netherlands Municipalities
WEX	Water Sector Export Index
WRR	Scientific Council for Government Policy
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Positions held at the time of the interview

Joost van der Aalst, Chief of Mission to the Netherlands, International Organisation for Migration

Jozias van Aartsen, Mayor of The Hague

Harry Baayen, Managing Director of Deltares

Rosemary Banks, Ambassador of New Zealand to the UN, New York

Fabrizio Barbaso, Deputy Director General for Energy, European Commission

Rudolf Bekink, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Beijing, China

Annegret Bendiek, Forschungsgruppe EU-Aussenbeziehungen Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik

Max van den Berg, Queen's Commissioner in Groningen

Mats Bergquist, Swedish Institute for International Affairs

Arend-Jan Boekestijn, Member of Parliament for the VVD

Monika den Boer, Professor Occupying an Endowed Chair in Comparative Business Studies, VU

Marjorie Bonn, Legislation Department, Ministry of Security and Justice

Pieter Boot, International Energy Agency (IEA), Paris

Peter Bosch, Head of Immigration and Asylum Unit, Directorate General for Justice, Freedom and Security, European Commission, Brussels

Gabor Brodi, Ambassador of the Republic of Hungary to the UN, New York

Lute Broens, Business Development Director of Norit

Evelien Brouwer, Lecturer in Administrative Law, Utrecht University, and member of the Standing Committee of Experts on International Alien and Criminal Law

Tom de Bruijn, Permanent Representative to the EU, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Colin Budd, UK diplomat, UK Ambassador in NL (up to 2005)

Termsak Chalempalanupap, Head of Research and Special Assistant to the Secretary-General of ASEAN

Lim Chuan Poh, Embassy of Canada, Chairman of Agency for Science, Technology and Research (ASTAR)

Wolfgang Clement, German SPD politician

Ko Colijn, Professor Occupying and Endowed Chair in International Relations and Global Security Issues, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Rik Coolsaet, Professor of International Relations, Ghent University

Chris Cooter, Deputy Head of Mission at NATO

Geert Corstens, President, Supreme Court of the Netherlands

Thomas van Dam, Parliamentary Party PvdA

Marlèn Dane, European and International Affairs Department, Ministry of Security and Justice

Paul Dekker, Head of the Participation and Administration Research Group at The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP)

Sander Dekker, Alderman for Education, Youth and Sports, The Hague Local Council

Bert van Delden, Former Member of the Council for the Judiciary

Aalt Dijkhuizen, Professor at Wageningen University & Research Center, President and Chairman of the WUR Executive Board (WUR)

Kees van Dijkhuizen, CFO Netherlands IBC

Lucie Edwards, Chef Bureau de la Transformation, Embassy of Canada

Olof Ehrenkrona, Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden

Hans Faber, Repatriation and Departure Service, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

John Fox, Senior Policy Fellow, European Council of Foreign Relations, London

Nicholas Franssen, Law Enforcement Department, Ministry of Security and Justice

Mark Frequin, Director-General for Energy and Telecom at the Ministry of Economic Affairs

Louise Fresco, Professor in the Domain of Sustainable Development Foundations in International Perspective, University of Amsterdam

Samuele Furfari, Lecturer in the Geopolitics of Energy at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium, and Advisor to the European Commission

Theo van de Gazelle, Deputy Director-General of Rijkswaterstaat

Louis Genet, Programme Director, International City Investments at the Administration Department, The Hague Local Council

Linda van Goor, Banking and Financial Conglomerates, DG Internal Market and Services, European Commission, Brussels

Luc van de Goor, Peacebuilding and Stabilisation Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Piet van der Graaff, Secretary, Dutch Association of Company Pension Funds (OPF)

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Peter van Ham, Head of the Global Governance Programme, Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael

Anna Hammargren, Director of Planning and Budget, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden

Ingvard Havnen, Director-General of International Affairs, Cabinet of the Prime-Minister, Norway

Duco Hellema, Professor of History of International Relations, Utrecht University

Heinz Hilbrecht, Director for Security of Supply and Energy Markets

Peter Ho, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore

D. Hoogenboezem, Netherlands National Police Agency

Aerdt Houben, Divisional Director Financial Stability, De Nederlandsche Bank

Edwin Huizing, Director, Dutch Council for Refugees

Masud Husain, Counsellor, Embassy of Canada

Jean Claude Junker, Prime-Minister of Luxembourg

Gunilla Karlsson, Official at the Embassy of Sweden in the Netherlands

Nanda Kelly, European and International Affairs Department, Ministry of Security and Justice

Jean- Pierre Kempenaars, Political Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN, New York

Piet de Klerk, Deputy Permanent Representative, Dutch Embassy, UN, New York

Marion Knoben, Assistant Deputy Director General for Energy, European Commission

Koen Koch, Professor of International Relations at the University of Groningen

Tommy Koh, Ambassador-at-large, Singapore

Wim Kok, Former Prime-Minister (1994-2002)

Daniel Korski, Author on Foreign Policy and Post-Conflict Expert, Founder of the *European Council for Foreign Affairs*

Arie Kraaijeveld, Director of the Board of the Netherlands Water Partnership

Martin Kremer, Senior Fellow, Forschungsgruppe EU-Integration Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik

Bala Kuman Palaniappan, Head of External Relations at ASEAN

Bob Lagerwaard, Head of the International Desk, International Affairs Bureau, The Hague Local Council

Maarten Lak, Strategic Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ben Lamoree, Advisor International Water and Sanitation Centre IRC

Yeo Lay Hwee, Director of EU Centre, Singapore Institute of International Affairs

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Yu-ru Lian, School of International Studies, Beijing University

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Walter Lion, Embassy Council, Embassy of Belgium

Leiv Lunde, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

Cees Maas, Former CFO ING

Kishore Mahbubani, Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, Former Diplomat for Singapore (1971-2004) and Former Ambassador to the UN

Frank Majoor, Head of the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN, New York

Stephan Marquardt, Minister Counsellor, Deputy Head of the Liaison Office of the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union at the UN, New York

Peter Maurer, Ambassador for Switzerland to the UN, New York

Wim Meijer, Chairman of the Nuon Supervisory Board, Former Chairman of the Rabobank Nederland Board of Management 1993-2002, Former Chairperson of

Novib 1984-1988, Former Member of Parliament 1971-1973 and 1977-1988, and Former State Secretary for Culture, Recreation, and Social Services 1973-1977

Jan Melissen, Head of the Clingendael Diplomatic Studies Program, Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael

Ad Melkert, UN Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of the UNDP, New York

Robert Milders, Representative in the Politics and Security Committee, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Bernd Müller, Head of International Affairs at the Representation of the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia in Berlin

Sam Muller, Director, The Hague Institute for the Internationalisation of Law (HiiL)

Eduardo Narbona Algara, First Secretary, Embassy of Spain in the Netherlands

Iver Neumann, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)

Atzo Nicolaï, Foreign Affairs spokesman for the VVD Parliamentary Party

Rolf Nikel, Deputy Director-General Bundeskanzleramt der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Auswaertige Beziehungen

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Pieter van Oord, Director of Van Oord Dredging and Marine Engineering

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Volker Perthes, Director of the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik

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Joop Scheffers, Ambassador of the Netherlands in Vietnam

Theo Schmitz, Director of the Association of Dutch Water Companies (VEWIN)

Erica Schouten, Security Policy Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

H.P. Schreinemachers, Immigration Policy Department, Ministry of Security and Justice

Nico Schrijver, Professor of International Law at Leiden University and a Member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague

Hans-Peter Schwaiger, Minister Counsellor, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Commission

Lennart Silvis, Operational Director at NWP

Hans Smits, President-CEO of the Port of Rotterdam Authority

Simon Smits, Director, Economic and Ecological Corporation directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Jeroen Steeghs, Department of Economic Affairs, Dutch Embassy UN, New York

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Andre Szász, Former Director of De Nederlandsche Bank (DNB)

Jan Terstegen, European and International Affairs Department, Ministry of Security and Justice

Frans Timmermans, State Secretary for European Affairs, Balkenende IV Cabinet

Herman Tjeenk Willink, Vice-president, Council of State of the Netherlands

Cees Veerman, Former Minister of Agriculture (2002-2007)

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APPENDIX 1

THE INTERRELATEDNESS OF THE DUTCH ECONOMY

The Figures below represent the dependence of the Dutch economy on the world economy, the EU economy, the German economy, and China's economy over the past seven years. The first Figure represents exports and the second Figure imports of goods and services (the EU, Germany, and China) as a percentage of Dutch GDP.

Dutch exports of goods and services as a percentage of GDP

Source: Statistics Netherlands (http://statline.cbs.nl)
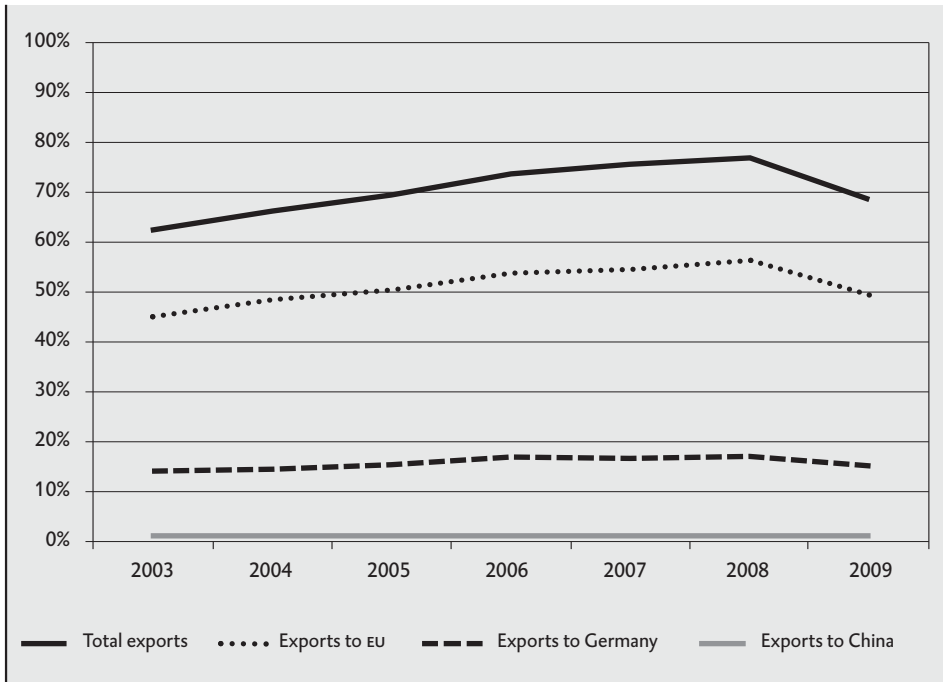
Dutch imports of goods and services as a percentage of GDP

Source: Statistics Netherlands (http://statline.cbs.nl)
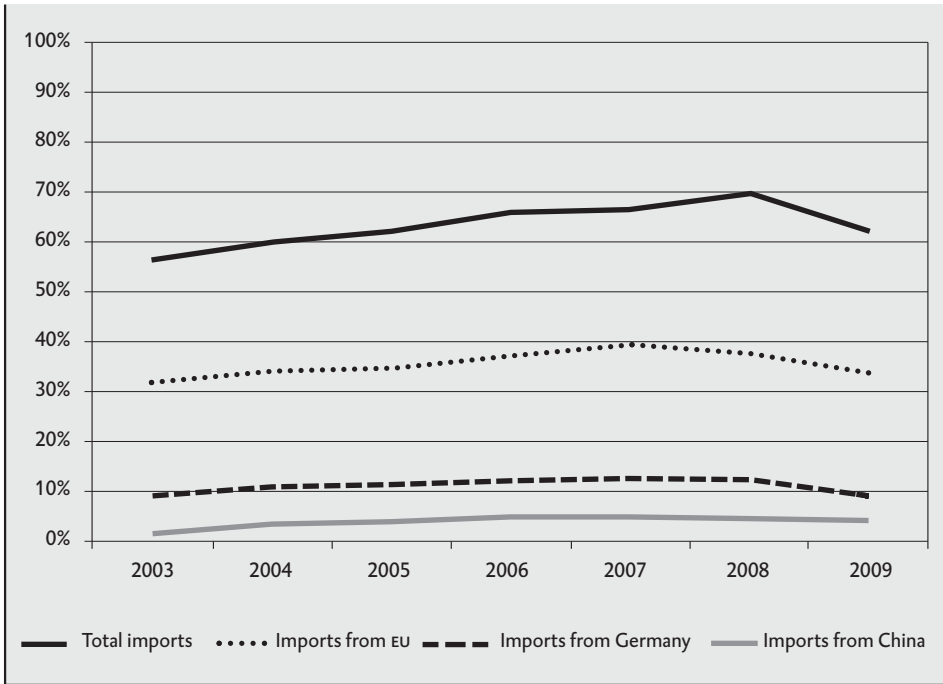
APPENDIX 2

THE INTERRELATEDNESS OF THE NETHERLANDS
WITH OTHER NATIONS

How strongly the Netherlands is attached to other nations is shown, successively, by the intensity, the width, and the depth of Dutch interrelationships with other nations. The intensity of this attachment may best be illustrated by means of one of the globalisation indexes. The KOF index of globalization is one of the most widely used. In its 2010 listing, the Netherlands ranks third (Table 1).

Table 1   **KOF index of globalization 2010**

KOF index of globalisation 2010		
1.	Belgium	92.95
2.	Austria	92.51
3.	**Netherlands**	**91.90**
4.	Switzerland	90.55
5.	Sweden	89.75
6.	Denmark	89.68
7.	Canada	88.24
8.	Portugal	87.54
9.	Finland	87.31
10.	Hungary	87.00

Source: http://globalization.kof.ethz.ch/

The width of the Dutch attachment to other nations is shown if, in the degree of globalisation, we distinguish economic, social, and political interrelatedness (for indicators of this classification, see below). The Netherlands obtained its third position in the 2010 index because of its fourth position in the economic globalization index, its fifth position in the social globalization index, and its seventh position in the political globalization index (see Table 2). A remarkable fact in comparison with other countries is that the Netherlands has no low scores in any category.

Table 2   **Position of the Netherlands in several indexes**

KOF 2010		Economic globalisation		Social globalisation		Political globalisation	
1. Belgium	92.95	1. Singapore	97.48	1. Switzerland	94.94	1. France	98.44
2. Austria	92.51	2. Ireland	93.93	2. Austria	92.77	2. Italy	98.17
3. Netherlands	**91.90**	3. Luxembourg	93.57	3. Canada	90.73	3. Belgium	98.14
4. Switzerland	90.55	**4. Netherlands**	**92.40**	4. Belgium	90.61	4. Austria	96.85
5. Sweden	89.75	5. Malta	92.26	**5. Netherlands**	**88.99**	5. Sweden	96.27
6. Denmark	89.68	6. Belgium	91.94	6. Denmark	88.01	6. Spain	96.14
7. Canada	88.24	7. Estonia	91.66	7. UK	87.05	**7. Netherlands**	**95.77**
8. Portugal	87.54	8. Hungary	90.45	8. Germany	85.97	8. Switzerland	95.09
9. Finland	87.31	9. Sweden	89.42	9. Sweden	85.95	9. Poland	94.63
10. Hungary	87.00	10. Austria	89.33	10. France	85.84	10. Canada	94.40

Source: http://globalization.kof.ethz.ch/

The Dutch attachment to other nations, finally, is deep because it is not dependent on one particular geographical location in the Netherlands. A comparative study of the degree of globalisation of cities shows that the first Dutch city, Amsterdam, is found only in 23rd position (FP Global City Index 2008). Dutch globalisation, therefore, is not dependent on one or two core areas. Finally, its attachment to other nations also appears to be strong and enduring. Between 2003 and 2010, the Netherlands never came lower than seventh position in the annual index. Only two other countries also figured among the 10 most interrelated countries on the KOF globalization index without exception in this period: Canada and Switzerland.

The indicators underlying the KOF index of globalization (Dreher 2006 and Dreher, Gaston and Martens 2008) are:

A Economic Globalization [37%]
i)   Actual economic relations (50%)
–   Trade (as a percentage of GDP) (19%)
–   Direct foreign investments, influx (as a percentage of GDP) (20%)
–   Direct foreign investments, shares (as a percentage of GDP) (24%)
–   Portfolio investments (as a percentage of GDP) (17%)
–   Wage payments to foreign citizens (as a percentage of GDP) (20%)

ii) Restrictions (50%)
–   Hidden import barriers (22%)
–   Mean tariff rates (28%)
–   International trade tax (as a percentage of current revenues) (27%)
–   Capital account restrictions (22%)

B   Social Globalisation [39%]
i)   Personal contact (33%)
–   Telephone communications (26%)
–   Transfers (as a percentage of GDP) (3%)
–   Tourism abroad (26%)
–   Citizens with another nationality (as a percentage of the entire population)
    (20%)
–   Letters abroad (per capita) (25%)

ii) Information flows (36%)
–   Internet users (per 1,000 people) (36%)
–   Television (per 1,000 people) (36%)
–   Newspaper trade (as a percentage of GDP) (28%)

iii) Cultural proximity (31%)
–   Number of McDonald's restaurants (per capita) (43%)
–   Number of Ikea establishments (per capita) (44%)
–   Book trade (as a percentage of GDP) (12%)

C   Political Globalisation [25%]
–   Number of embassies in the Netherlands (25%)
–   Membership of international organisations (28%)
–   Participation in UN security missions (22%)
–   International treaties (25%)

APPENDIX 3

THE DUTCH NETWORK OF EMBASSIES IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The Kingdom of the Netherlands has about 150 official representations abroad, including 111 embassies and 15 permanent representations to international organisations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.mfa.nl). Comparing these numbers with other countries' networks of embassies is not an exact science. Recent figures cannot always be obtained, and criteria for what counts as an embassy are interpreted in different ways. The rankings below, therefore, are indicative. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Netherlands falls just out of the top 10 of most comprehensive embassy networks (Table 1).

Table 1   **Number of embassies per country**

	Country	Number of embassies	Number of inhabitants (in millions)	Embassies per million of inhabitants
1.	France	275	64	4.4
2.	Spain	260	40	5.9
3.	UK	258	61	4.2
4.	US	248	304	0.8
5.	Italy	228	58	3.9
6.	Japan	228	127	1.8
7.	Germany	218	82	2.6
8.	Canada	182	33	5.5
9.	Turkey	171	72	2.3
10.	Poland	155	39	4.1
11.	Mexico	152	110	1.4
12.	Greece	151	11	13.7
13.	Denmark	150	6	27.3
14.	**Netherlands**	**149**	**17**	**9.3**
15.	Switzerland	147	8	19.3
16.	Korea	141	49	2.9
17.	Portugal	135	11	12.3
18.	Czech Republic	124	10	12.4
19.	Belgium	120	10	10.9
20.	Iceland	115	0.3	383.3

Sources: Lowy Institute for International Policy 2009, OECD (http://stats.oecd.org)

If we take the number of embassies per inhabitant as our starting point, the Netherlands falls just inside the top 10 (Table 2).

Table 2   **Number of embassies per inhabitant**

Country	Number of embassies	Number of inhabitants (in millions)	Embassies per million of inhabitants
1. Iceland	115	0.3	383
2. Denmark	150	5.5	27
3. Norway	108	4.6	23
4. Switzerland	147	7.6	19
5. Greece	151	11	14
6. Czech Republic	124	10	12
7. Portugal	135	11	12
8. Belgium	120	10	11
9. **Netherlands**	**149**	**17**	**9**
10. Spain	60	40	6

Sources: Lowy Institute for International Policy 2009, OECD (http://stats.oecd.org)

APPENDIX 4

SOVEREIGNTY IN EU MEMBER STATES: A COMPARISON

Germany

In Germany, the issue primarily revolves around the rule of law. The German Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe has rendered judgements on the relations between Germany and the EU several times. The approach is not unambiguous and appears to be focusing mainly on setting limits to European integration by protecting national sovereignty. However, one might also claim that the Court is using national sovereignty to influence the *direction* of European integration and is attempting to transfer nation-state values from the German Constitution to the European level. Bearing in mind the court's ruling on the Treaty of Lisbon (2009), we must conclude that the court certainly recognises a core of national sovereignty that would prevent Germany from merging into a European federation and from ceasing to exist as a sovereign state.

France

The focus in France is much more on the people's sovereignty instead of on national sovereignty: *La souveraineté nationale appartient au peuple qui l'exerce par ses représentants et par la voie du référendum* (Article 4 of the Constitution). In contrast to the German Constitution, the French text underscores the free national choice for participating in the EU. After the Treaty of Maastricht, the French Constitutional Council: a body that monitors compliance with the Constitution but plays a more political and less judiciary role than the German Constitutional Court – made a distinction between (the transfer of) sovereignty and powers (*compétences*). In the Council's view, the former is not permitted but the latter is. The French concept of sovereignty has not been given such a political frame. Other forms, such as the political *souverainisme,* are more striking. Salient in this is the role of what might be called cultural sovereignty. This interpretation might even be of greater significance than the legal and political forms and has both domestic and foreign significance. The protection of the French market against undesirable outside influences and the promotion of its own cultural produce is also known as the *exception culturelle* (Regourd 2004). The French support for Francophone matters may also be considered an attempt to translate a cultural dimension into political significance. The *exception culturelle*, however, is not immune to changes from the outside, as Farchy (1999) shows.

United Kingdom

British sovereignty coincides with the principle of the Sovereignty of Parliament. In the British tradition, sovereignty is explicitly linked to an institution that is the carrier of sovereignty. Wade and Bradley show how the British Parliament has slowly but surely taken over the role from the monarch (Wade and Bradley 1993:

65 ff.) The principle of Sovereignty of Parliament may be considered the most important principle in British constitutional law. With sovereignty being explicitly linked to Parliament, this is inevitably causing frictions with EU membership. However, this has been solved in a pragmatic way as the 1972 European Communities Act stipulates that the UK is bound to all obligations ensuing from EU law. This formally guarantees the principle of parliamentary sovereignty as an expression of the sovereign will of the British Parliament, but it fails to prevent all manner of practical problems from occurring. Entirely in line with British tradition, debates always centre on the position of Parliament. This helps to explain, for example, why the Prime Minister, in defending the Treaty of Maastricht, made no references to national sovereignty but instead maintained that 'the Sovereignty of this House is in no way infringed by the Maastricht Treaty' (MacCormick 1993).

Belgium

The debate on sovereignty in Belgium does not focus, or at least not principally, on forces coming from the outside but rather on those coming from inside. The existence of a nation, presupposed by Article 33 of the Constitution, is expressly negated these days. After its fifth state reform and awaiting its sixth, the current polity of the Belgian state is the reflection of the increasing alienation between its communities. We would not be venturing too far if we say that Belgian sovereignty, since the last reform, has also turned into a regional and community affair. This same state reform was responsible for communities and regions being able to pursue their own foreign policies, as they obtained the most important instrument for doing so: the right to conclude treaties.

With the Belgian EU membership, we in fact have a 'double erosion'. The Federation loses relevance as the importance of the federal states and of the EU increases. Membership of the EMU, for instance, prevents Flanders and Wallonia from running the risk of having a splinter currency after a possible secession. However, EU membership also has unifying effects. The preparation and implementation of European decisions require cooperation between the Union and its component parts (Beyers and Bursens 2006: 71) and also forces the federation, the regions, and the communities into line. Belgium is still known as one of the most EU-minded countries in Europe, in which the development of the EU towards a federal union is still advocated by some (Delreux 2006).

Attached to the World

Few other countries are so interrelated with the world around us in political, economic, and social respects as the Netherlands. This means that the Dutch government needs to be alert in its response to the risks and opportunities presented by a rapidly changing world.

Addressing this issue, the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) offers some reflections in this report, guided by the question how the Netherlands can develop a foreign policy strategy that matches the changing power relations in the world and the radically changed character of international relations.

The answer to this question is a reorientation. This means making transparent choices, making smarter use of Europe as our dominant arena, and, finally, choosing an approach that makes better use of the growing role of non-state actors. The report's recommendations not only underline the necessity of reorientation but also show how this could be accomplished in practice.