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GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF INTELLIGENCE

Dutch Intelligence and Security Services

by Eleni Braat

The Dutch government institutionalised the gathering of intelligence prior to the First World War in 1913. Since then the Dutch intelligence services have evolved through five stages. In the first, between 1913 and 1940, when the Netherlands adhered to a policy of neutrality, intelligence was small-scale, centralised and institutionally clearly demarcated. In the second stage, during the Second World War and the years immediately afterwards, Dutch intelligence was chaotic, decentralised and generally malfunctioning, characterized by blurred objectives and personal disputes over areas of responsibility. At the height of the Cold War in the fifties, sixties and seventies, the third stage, the various services, five in total, stabilized institutionally, facing well-defined areas of interest. They remained decentralized and did not excel in efficient collaboration. The fourth stage, between the end of the 1980s and 2002, was characterized by attempts to respond to diffuse threats and political calls for greater efficiency and transparency. Finally, since 2002 Dutch intelligence has been centralised and clearly demarcated, as it was between 1913 and 1940, though not small-scale. The surprise of the 9/11 terrorist attacks led to a significant growth in the civil intelligence and security service and blurred the differences between civil and military intelligence.

Intelligence During Neutrality, 1913-1940

At the beginning of the 20th century the Netherlands was as affluent as its neighbouring countries. It possessed a colonial empire, which clearly outsized its European territory that it had conquered largely in the 17th century. The years of conquest were followed by a period of passiveness: the government did not

aspire to new territory and did not have enemies. All it wished was for things to remain as they were. A policy of armed neutrality suited this purpose best. In order to remain neutral, however, the government needed to be well informed of the strategic ambitions of others. With this aim the GSIII was founded in 1913. GSIII, third section of the General Staff, was a military intelligence service, headed and manned by a single person, Hendrik A.C. Fabius. During the war the staff increased to 10 persons and in 1918 to 25.¹ It acquired most of its intelligence through open source material like foreign newspapers and journals. The police supplied it with counterespionage intelligence.² Bolshevik revolutionaries after the war, albeit limited in the Netherlands, led to the formation of a security service, the 'Central Intelligence Service' (CID). The separation from GSIII suggests more than the CID represented in practice: GSIII and CID personnel were the same, but occasionally operated under a different name. This vague distinction between military and civil intelligence continued throughout the interwar years.³

Ever since GSIII was dissolved in 1940 it has had a bad reputation. This was mainly due to the Venlo incident in November 1939, when the German Sicherheitsdienst (SD, security service) kidnapped two British MI6 officers in the Netherlands, with whom GSIII was closely collaborating.⁴ The collaboration with MI6 was sensitive. Despite this the government remained very keen on maintaining neutrality and 'normal' relationships with Nazi Germany. A second reason for GSIII's bad reputation was that the service failed to foresee the war and that accordingly it had not made any preparations to manage the agency in case of governmental exile. Hence, when the government cabinet and the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina fled

1. Frans Kluiters, *De Nederlandse inlichtingen – en veiligheidsdiensten*, The Hague: Sdu, 1993: 192-193. Edwin Ruis, *Spionnennest 1914-1918. Spionage vanuit Nederland, in België, Duitsland en Engeland*. Meppel, NL: Just Publishers, 2012: 37.

2. Next to GSIII, another intelligence service, GS IV, was concerned with, among others, censorship and code breaking in which it was rather successful. Ruis, *Spionnennest*: 39.

3. J.A. van Reijn, 'De wordingsgeschiedenis van de MIVD', B.A. de Graaf, E.R. Muller, J.A. van Reijn (eds.), *Inlichtingen – en veiligheidsdiensten*, Alphen aan den Rijn, NL: Kluwer, 2010: 74.

4. Unreliable informants managed to convince GSIII and MI6 representatives of the existence of an opposition group within the German Wehrmacht that was seeking support against Hitler. They fell into the trap when in November 1939 they agreed to meet the leader of this non-existent group by the Dutch-German border near Venlo. See B.G.J. de Graaff, 'Trefpunt Venlo. Amerikaans-Belgisch-Brits-Frans-Nederlandse spionagesamenwerking ten aanzien van nazi-Duitsland in 1939', *Mededelingen van de Sectie Militaire Geschiedenis*, deel 15, 1993.

to London on the day after the German invasion on May 10, 1940, they found themselves with little intelligence capacity in the occupied Netherlands, needing to establish intelligence networks from scratch.

Intelligence, Power Struggles, and Personal Loyalty, 1940-1948

During the Second World War, when the Dutch government was in exile and officially allied with the British government, numerous Dutch intelligence and subversive services succeeded one another, overlapping each other's work. A striking characteristic of Dutch wartime intelligence was that former GSIII personnel were not part of the intelligence community until 1944 and that, consequently, there was very little intelligence experience. Dutch services often competed with each other, especially for establishing relationships with British intelligence agencies. And their continued existence greatly depended on personal sympathies between Dutch and British intelligence officials, and the loyalty of their leaders vis-à-vis Queen Wilhelmina. The Queen had made Dutch wartime intelligence a matter of personal concern, in which she was keen to interfere. She considered the services the most important of all government institutions-in-exile.⁵ Willing or not, the Dutch depended on their British counterparts for the recruitment and training of their agents, the dropping of agents into the Netherlands and communications between London and the Netherlands.⁶

Dutch intelligence during the war suffered from a long period of critical instability (May 1940-mid 1943) and a subsequent gradual period of recovery until the end of the war. During the period of instability, the first 'Central Intelligence Service' (CID) was succeeded by three services with the same name, when the 'Bureau of Intelligence' (BI) took over in November 1942 until the end of the war. Part of the blame for this rather chaotic period was the presence of the unbreakable quartet of the unfathomable Francois van 't Sant as head of the first CID; the head of SIS's Dutch section, C.E.C. Rabagliati; their adventurous and confident agent Erik Hazelhoff Roelfzema; and

their personal ties with Queen Wilhelmina.⁷ On the subversive side, which included active measures of sabotage and covert actions against Nazi Germany, the period of crisis lasted longer with the 'Bureau for the Preparation for the Return to the Netherlands' (BVT), its military successor (MVT), and the 'Military Intelligence Service' (MID). They all spent quite some time on power struggles with the British services over control of operations, until the 'Bureau Special Assignments' (BBO) took over initiating a more harmonious period in March 1944.

In the Dutch East Indies the government gathered intelligence through the 'Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service' (NEFIS). Established in 1943 and operating from Melbourne until the end of the war, it moved to Batavia (now Jakarta) in 1945. Whereas NEFIS concentrated on military intelligence during the war, it moved its main focus to (underground) political organisations when resistance to Dutch colonial rule grew after the war. In 1948 NEFIS was reorganised and renamed 'Central Military Intelligence Service' (CMI). When Indonesia gained independence the next year, the CMI was dissolved.⁸

In the Netherlands the postwar situation proved to be just as tumultuous as the early forties. An influential figure during this period until 1961 was Louis Einthoven.⁹ In May 1945 he became head of the newly founded 'Bureau of National Security' (BNV), which was tasked to remove the remaining pro-Nazi espionage and sabotage networks in the Netherlands. In his memoirs Einthoven describes how difficult it was to recruit reliable personnel while lacking the time to check their often shady and violent wartime backgrounds. The fast and uncontrolled growth of the service to about 1360 people¹⁰ was the principal reason for its dissolution in December 1946. In the meantime, Einthoven had prepared secretly for the BNV's successor, the 'Central Security Service' (CVD).

7. This quartet derived its powerful position from the key positions of its members within the Dutch government (Dutch ministers were generally afraid to contradict Queen Wilhelmina, a rather dominant personality) and within the Dutch and British intelligence community. Moreover, van 't Sant, Hazelhoff Roelfzema, Rabagliati, and Queen Wilhelmina all had in common their rather outspoken preferences with whom they wished, or absolutely refused, to collaborate. They thereby successfully monopolized the gathering of intelligence in the Netherlands by refusing to work with others than themselves.

8. Kluiters, *Inlichtingen – en veiligheidsdiensten*: 129-136, 259-270.

9. For more information on Louis Einthoven, see Dick Engelen, *Geschiedenis van de Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst*, The Hague: Sdu, 1995: 60-81. See Einthoven's memoirs for a personal account of this specific period: *Tegen de stroom in, Apeldoorn: Semper Agendo*, 1974.

10. Engelen, *Veiligheidsdienst*: 83.

5. According to van 't Sant. Loe de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij: 1969-1994: 843, 973. www.niod.nl/nl/koninkrijk.

6. Eleni Braat, 'Secrecy, power struggles and personal loyalty. Dutch secret services-in-exile and relationships to their British counterparts', paper prepared for presentation at the conference *Secret services-in-exile. The secret war fought from London 1939-1945*, London, 26-27 September 2013.

Contrary to the BNV, it was supposed to have a more permanent character; that is, it was to resemble MI5 organisationally, and focus on communism rather than on Nazi collaborators and sympathizers. In 1949, the CVD continued under the Ministry of Interior as the 'National Security Service' (BVD).

Stabilisation During the Cold War, 1949-1987

During the Cold War, the Netherlands had five main services whose existence, despite their occasionally overlapping operational foci, remained stable from the end of the 1940s until the end of the 1980s. Civil and military intelligence, moreover, was more clearly delineated than during the preceding years. From 1952, Parliament had strengthened its monitoring of the BVD through the Standing Committee on the BVD, which later extended to all security and intelligence services. Despite its *de jure* authority, the Committee provided only minor *de facto* parliamentary control of the services.¹¹

The BVD grew considerably in the 1950s because of two anti-communist measures that required substantial data collection on communist political activities and individual preferences. Members of the Communist Party and related organisations were excluded from working in government organisations. And, in case of an imminent revolution or conflict, the government was allowed to intern persons suspected of being supportive of a (communist) revolution or a foreign (Soviet) power.¹² Through these measures the BVD developed a strong focus on the Communist Party, which characterized the service until the beginning of the 1980s. By then, infiltration in the Communist Party was so successful that the BVD had at least one agent in every section of the party and that it managed to found a successful rivalling Marxist-Leninist party.¹³

11. Eleni Braat, 'Recurring tensions between secrecy and democracy: arguments about the Security Service in Dutch parliament, 1975-1995,' paper prepared for presentation at the International Intelligence History Association conference, *Intelligence, Democracy and Transparency*, 2-4 May 2014. Tutzing. Constant Hijzen is preparing a Ph.D. dissertation at Leiden University entitled *Publiek geheim: de Nederlandse veiligheidsdiensten tussen 1912 en 1992*, in which he also addresses the shortcomings of the Standing Committee.

12. Dick Engelen, 'Beknopte geschiedenis van de AIVD', B.A. de Graaf, E.R. Muller, J.A. van Reijn (eds.), *Inlichtingen – en veiligheidsdiensten*, Alphen aan den Rijn: Kluwer, 2010: 64. Chris Vos, Rens Broekhuis, Lies Janssen & Barbara Mounier, *De geheime dienst. Verhalen over de BVD*, Amsterdam: Boom, 2005: 102-125.

13. Dick Engelen, *Frontdienst. De BVD in de Koude Oorlog*, Amsterdam: Boom, 2007: 83-105.

This fixed focus on communism led to some operational ossification,¹⁴ even when other threats arose in the 1970s. In the 1980s parliamentary criticism on the persistent focus on communism made the BVD finally loosen its grip on the Communist Party.¹⁵

After the Second World War the government also founded the 'External Intelligence Service' (BID, later IDB).¹⁶ It was in many respects a continuation of the wartime BI. The BID/IDB had a difficult start until the 1960s and an abrupt ending in 1994. During these years it never earned much respect within (or outside) government ministries. It never employed more than 70 officials; it had almost no operational knowledge of Eastern Europe and did not foresee major political events like the Hungarian uprising or the building of the Berlin Wall.¹⁷ The history of the IDB was characterized by lamentable working relationships, operational failure and poor political support. An exception was the recruitment of an important source in Indonesia and the ensuing long term successful Operation Virgil.¹⁸ When some of its personnel publicly voiced their dissatisfaction at the end of the 1980s, its dissolution was only one step away.

During the Cold War military intelligence remained divided along the three services: the 'Naval Intelligence Service' (MARID), the 'Army Intelligence Service' (MID, later LAMID), both founded in 1949, and the 'Air Force Intelligence Service' (LUID), founded in 1951. Embedded in the MARID was the Sigint organisation 'Mathematical Center' (WKC), named 'Technical Information Collection Center' (TIVC) after 1982. It provided the government with valuable information, for example, by decoding Indonesian communications traffic on Dutch New Guinea in the early 1960s and by intercepting European and

14. Eleni Braat, *Van oude jongens, de dingen die voorbij gaan... Een sociale geschiedenis van de Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst, 1945-1998*, Zoetermeer: AIVD, 2012: 153.

15. Engelen, *Frontdienst. De BVD*: 230-236.

16. The highly secretive nature of the IDB and the disappearance or inaccessibility of an important part of its archive have seriously hampered historical research. A significant and engaging account of the IDB is Bob de Graaff & Cees Wiebes, *Villa Maarheeze. De geschiedenis van de Inlichtingendienst Buitenland*, The Hague: Sdu, 1998.

17. De Graaff & Wiebes, *Villa Maarheeze*: 105-106, 412.

18. Operation Virgil concerned the valuable information that an important Indonesian source provided to the IDB. This information concerned, for example, Indonesian strategic plans regarding the possible take-over of Dutch New Guinea, a Dutch colony until 1962. De Graaff and Wiebes argue that the agent in question was H. Ruslan Abdulgani, Indonesian high-level diplomat and close collaborator of president Sukarno. Abdulgani denied he has ever been an agent for the IDB. (De Graaff & Wiebes, *Villa Maarheeze*: 121-182.)

Middle Eastern diplomatic correspondence during the oil crisis in October 1973.¹⁹ The Cold War and the NATO alliance determined the separate, internationally embedded tasks of the three military intelligence services and their respective armed forces. The army and air force had to defend the North German Plain by land and air, and were under effective operational command of NATO. The naval tasks were targeted against hostile submarines and mines in the English Channel. Consequently, the international orientation of the three military intelligence services did not converge with a possible centralisation or nationalisation of their tasks. Rather than cooperating, the three services had a tendency to compete for resources and, sometimes, in operations.²⁰ This competition, painfully visible through a number of incidents, led to increased parliamentary criticism and, in 1987, to the creation of a single military intelligence service. Interestingly, the foundation of this centralised 'Military Intelligence Service' (MID) was not a consequence of the nearing end of the Cold War.

Post-Cold War Transitions, 1987-2002

In the 1990s the external civil intelligence service (IDB) was dissolved, the MID painstakingly moved from a centralised service in theory, to one in practice, and the BVD underwent drastic changes in order to address post-Cold War operational and political demands. This latter 'revolution' deserves some extra attention.

In 1988, Arthur Docters van Leeuwen (1988-1995) became head of the BVD and ushered in a series of drastic changes that successfully prepared the service for the post-Cold War period. He was eager to transform the service into a more politically responsive, flexible and transparent organisation, as he deemed fit for the coming international changes. Under his lead the BVD went through a major internal reorganisation to make the service responsive to more diffuse and unexpected threats. Docters van Leeuwen appeared on television, rendering public accounts of an unprecedented amount of organisational and even operational information. The service started issuing annual reports on its interests and goals. And a historian was commissioned to write an official history of the service, disclosing a remarkable amount of infor-

19. Cees Wiebes, 'Dutch Sigint during the Cold War, 1945-1994', Matthew M. Aid & Cees Wiebes, *Secrets of signals intelligence during the Cold War and beyond*, Frank Cass & Co, 2001: 243. Kluiters, *Inlichtingen – en veiligheidsdiensten*: 239.
20. J.A. van Reijn, 'MIVD': 79-80.

mation about its operational past.²¹ As the stable Cold War threats had disappeared, the operational future of the BVD proved rather unclear in the 1990s. At the end of the decade, however, the BVD started to pay increasing attention to so-called 'integrative problems' in society and radicalism within migrant communities, anticipating its operational foci after 9/11.

Civil and Military Intelligence Since 2002

A 2002 law on the intelligence and security services and the 9/11 attacks in the US prompted significant changes that characterize the most recent stage for Dutch intelligence. The new law replaced the MID with the Military Intelligence and Security Service (MIVD) and the BVD with the General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD). This meant that civil intelligence was again institutionalized, this time under the same roof as the security service. The law also created the independent Review Committee on the Intelligence and Security Services (CTIVD). It issues public supervision reports and it advises the responsible ministers, both when asked and on its own initiative. This oversight committee successfully complemented the parliamentary Standing Committee, which had been for a long time subject to criticism for its passiveness and inertia.

The 9/11 attacks led to a major increase in personnel of the AIVD, from about 580 at the end of the 1990s to about 1600 in 2014, whereas the MIVD grew less. With the blurring differences between civil and military intelligence, the AIVD and MIVD overlapped each other more than before. Since 2004 coordination has occurred largely through the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV). This is a counterterrorism unit analysing terrorist threats by coordinating assessments of, among others, the AIVD and MIVD. Also, the increased use of signals intelligence by both the AIVD and the MIVD resulted in the National Signals Intelligence Organisation (NSO, established in 2003) merging in 2014 into a joint AIVD-MIVD project, the Joint Sigint Cyber Unit (JSCU).

This collaboration between the AIVD and MIVD is characteristic of a trend of the last few years. Since 2008 the economic crisis and the associated financial constraints of the government halted the growth of the AIVD and led to a number of reorganisations within the service. Most importantly, budget cuts have been minor but Parliament seems to be more concerned

21. Dick Engelen's key publications include his Ph.D. dissertation *Geschiedenis van de Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst*, The Hague: Sdu, 1995 and *Frontdienst*, Amsterdam: Boom, 2007.

about efficiency and collaboration than in the past. Some parliamentarians even contemplate a merger between the AIVD and MIVD. The combination of the blurring of civil and military intelligence on the one hand, and the economic crisis on the other, will probably shape the principal challenges for the years to come.

Conclusions

From a historical perspective the present-day situation is remarkable in four respects. First, the Netherlands has only two main services, compared to the multiple (competing and overlapping) services from the past. Second, the two services have now been centralised, whereas this has not happened for both civil and military intelligence since the beginning of the Second World War. Third, the need for external intelligence now seems politically more accepted than during the Cold War, and between 1994 and 2002 when the government had no external intelligence service at all. Fourth and last, the distinct security and intelligence activities are now being carried out under the same roof, on both the military and the civil side. Such monolithic services were common in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe during the Cold War, while they have become particularly uncommon after the Cold War in Russia, the US, Eastern and Western European countries.²² The Netherlands, in this respect, is a notable exception. ✎

READINGS FOR INSTRUCTORS

The field of intelligence studies in the Netherlands is a small but growing area of research. The majority of the literature in this field has been written in Dutch and is therefore largely inaccessible to non-Dutch speakers. For example, indispensable overviews by Dick Engelen on the BVD and by Bob de Graaff and Cees Wiebes on the IDB are in Dutch. This severely restricts comparisons between Dutch and foreign intelligence services, as foreign scholars find it difficult to include a 'Dutch' case. Research on Dutch intelligence, moreover, risks parochialism when focusing on the Dutch environment uniquely. Another factor that hampers the scope of research on Dutch intelligence is the limited access to secret services' archives. This is due to an exemption in the Dutch freedom of information act for security and

22. This last point is made by Engelen, 'Beknopte geschiedenis van de AIVD': 69.

intelligence services, the painstakingly long process to make parts of the BVD-archive publicly accessible in the National Archives, and the more general lack of transparency of the AIVD regarding publications on its past.²³

Nevertheless, interested non-Dutch speakers may have a look at various AIVD publications on the service's topics of interest and, more interesting, the service's annual reports since 2001 in English.²⁴ Despite the lack of an English-language survey publication on the Dutch services, there are a small number of interesting publications, primarily on the BVD/AIVD. These are:

- Graaf, B.A., 'The Netherlands', Stuart Farson, Peter Gill, Mark Phythian, Shlomo Shpiro, *PSI Handbook of Global Security and Intelligence: National Approaches*, Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008: 339-360.
- Graaff, B. de & Wiebes, C., 'Intelligence and the Cold War behind the Dikes: the relationship between the American and Dutch intelligence communities, 1946-1994', *Intelligence and National Security*, 12, 1997: 41-58.
- Graaff, B. de, 'Dutch-American intelligence relations', Krabendam, H., Minnen, C. van & Scott-Smith, G. (eds.) *Four Centuries of Dutch-American Relations 1609-2009*, Boom: Amsterdam, 2009: 674-682.
- Graaff, B. de, 'From security threat to perception of vital interest. The changing perceptions of the Dutch security service, 1945-1991', *Conflict Quarterly*, 12, 1992: 9-35.
- Hijzen, C.W. & Graaf, B.A. de, 'Bound by silver cords. The Dutch intelligence community in a transatlantic context', Scott-Smith, G. (ed.) *Obama, US Politics and Transatlantic Relations: Change or Continuity*, New York: Peter Lang, 2012: 201-217.
- Hijzen, C.W., 'The perpetual adversary. How Dutch security services perceived communism (1918-1989)', *Historical Social Research*, 38 (1), 2013: 166-199.
- Hijzen, C.W., 'More than a ritual dance. The Dutch practice of parliamentary oversight and control in the intelligence community', *Security and Human Rights*, 24 (3-4), 2014: 227-238.
- Platje, W., 'Dutch Sigint and the conflict with Indonesia, 1950-1962', Matthew M. Aid & Cees Wiebes, *Secrets of Signals Intelligence During the Cold War and Beyond*, Frank Cass & Co, 2001: 285-312.
- Wiebes, C., 'Dutch Sigint during the Cold War, 1945-1994', Matthew M. Aid & Cees Wiebes, *Secrets of Signals Intel-*

23. Bob de Graaff, 'Accessibility of secret service archives in the Netherlands', *Intelligence and National Security*, 12:2, 1997: 154-160. Ben de Jong, 'Hoe transparant is de AIVD?', *Liberaal Reveil*, 50/3, 2009: 133-139. Ben de Jong, 'De AIVD houdt zijn verleden binnenskamers', *Socialisme & Democratie*, 29 September 2014. Also, the AIVD refuses to cooperate in the publication of memoirs of its retired officials (for example, Frits Hoekstra), in contrast, for example, to the CIA.

24. <https://www.aivd.nl/english/publications-press/aivd-publications/> (last visited on 20 December 2014)

ligence During the Cold War and Beyond, Frank Cass & Co, 2001: 243-284

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25. www.inlichtingendiensten.nl/literatuur/oudejongens.pdf