

## The Dutch Approach:

### Preserving the trinity of politics, security and development

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Speech by the Dutch minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bot at the SID and NCDO Conference on Security and Development

#### **Morality and self-interest**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Are we deploying soldiers in Afghanistan to defend our own national security against a renewed terrorist threat, or are we seriously interested in improving the living conditions of people in Afghanistan?

This question, in a slightly different form, was raised in a document that was distributed to all of you by the Society for International Development in preparation for this conference. [\[1\]](#)

Elsewhere the document says that "development practitioners have traditionally held a *moral* perspective for justifying interventionist policies", but that now "*realpolitik* has arrived on the development scene" as a result of the campaign against terrorism.

I will give my views on the role the Netherlands and international organisations can play in the area of security and development, in particular in Afghanistan. But let me first briefly discuss this perceived tension between morality and *realpolitik*, or between morality and self-interest.

To my mind, self-interest and morality are not two separate motives, but two sides of the same coin. If a trading nation like the Netherlands fights for a more peaceful, more stable, more prosperous world, and for the strengthening of the international legal order, it is also acting in its own national interests.

At a more practical level, in day-to-day foreign policy decision-making, the dichotomy does not work well either. The road to hell is paved with good intentions, it is said. Indeed, it is dangerous for a country to act on the principle that it should serve as a moral guide to other countries, as we Dutch learned the hard way.

A political leader cannot rely solely on the ethics of good intentions. After all, he is responsible for the well-being of all those who have placed their trust in him. The most important ethics for a politician must therefore be the ethics of *consequence*, as Max Weber once explained.

What makes the contrast between morality and self-interest even less relevant is that in today's interconnected world we all need *cooperative* strategies. Many of the threats and challenges we face, we face together. National interests no longer cancel each other out, if they ever really did. Today, true *realpolitik* is about seeking mutual gains.

Even in conflict situations we must look for mutual gains. In a globalised world, today's opponent is tomorrow's negotiating partner.

## The trinity: politics, security and development

Ladies and gentlemen,

A generally held belief is that security is a precondition for development and that development contributes to lasting peace and security.

So the *real* issue at stake here today is how to reconcile *ends* and *means*. What is it we want to achieve in the crisis regions we operate in? Which strategy do we employ to achieve it? Which instruments do we have at our disposal to achieve success?

The key to success in conflict prevention and resolution is the overall political framework that gives logic and coherence to the political, military and developmental efforts we undertake. I call this the *trinity* of politics, security and development - in reference to the Clausewitzian trinity of army, people and government. (The business of Clausewitz was war; our business is to make peace.)

When the trinity of politics, security and development is *broken*, the work of soldiers, police officers, diplomats and development workers will lack direction, lack coherence and lack impact, and, at worst, will become counterproductive. Maintaining cohesion between our political, security and development efforts is especially relevant in regions affected by conflict, or regions that serve as safe havens for extremists and terrorists. In places where we are trying to strengthen democracy and the rule of law, our *military* efforts should support and be seen to support this overall effort. Where we are trying to win over the population for a more peaceful and stable order, our *developmental* instruments should support and be seen to support the overall effort.

This brings me to the efforts made by the *Netherlands* to support peace and development.

When a country has emerged from armed conflict, its social fabric has often been torn apart. The humanitarian situation is poor, the economy has collapsed, public administration has been weakened, large numbers of people are unemployed, displaced and traumatised, and the profusion of small arms and high crime rate engender feelings of insecurity. Experience has shown that, in 30% of post-conflict countries, violence flares up again within ten years. In Africa, that rate is as high as 50%.

To address such a multidimensional set of issues, you require an integrated approach that makes full use of your political, developmental, economic, military, police and intelligence instruments.

At national level, an approach of this kind entails very close cooperation by the ministries involved. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation and Defence, as well as their staff, hold regular consultations with each other at various levels. There are also exchanges of staff. At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this is done systematically, so that our people learn to take both political and development factors into account.

It was to put flesh on the bones of our integrated approach to peace, security and development that the Stability Fund was set up in 2004. A fund that has since attracted international admiration. This fund enables us to support activities that, previously, did not fit within budgetary parameters. Important activities such as the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of soldiers (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR).

Another important innovation is the creation of an SSR team that consists of employees of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence. This SSR team's remit is to assist governments in formulating and implementing plans to improve the provision of security for their citizens. The SSR team can draw from a pool of qualified experts on security issues.

The SSR team is new. There is a lot to learn and we have ample reason to look for best practices elsewhere.

But all in all, the Dutch system currently in place serves its purpose rather well. Naturally, policy dilemmas will always arise, as will the dilemmas of the real world. For instance, as conflict prevention rises on the list of international priorities, the tension between good governance criteria and the wish to invest in failed or failing states, where good governance is *absent*, will occupy our minds. But this is not the type of problem you solve through institutional or bureaucratic changes.

Development is politics. Without stability and security, development simply cannot take off. In crisis areas, development cooperation inevitably becomes *political* cooperation. The goals of peace, stability and security are to a large extent political goals. We must accept that we cannot separate development cooperation from foreign policy. And that this is not a cynical form of *realpolitik*, but the reconciliation of *morality* with *reality*. One could also argue that *security and development, as much as war, are a continuation of politics by different means*.

## Afghanistan

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

In Afghanistan, at the international level, all three elements of the trinity have been active for a number of years now. But cohesion between them did not come automatically. Operation Enduring Freedom, necessary and successful as it was, was a mainly military effort. Development cooperation was taking place at the same time, but the two tracks were largely separate. That is changing now. Enduring Freedom is being phased out, as ISAF and NATO are being phased in. ISAF aims to establishing the authority of the central Afghan government in the whole of its territory. And this, in turn, is a precondition for successful reconstruction efforts.

It is increasingly obvious that, if all these efforts are to have the right impact in the long run, they must be part of a mature political framework, with the new democratic government of Afghanistan playing a central role. The London Conference of January this year confirmed and reinforced this approach. It replaced the various lead nations in the reconstruction effort by a single lead nation: *Afghanistan* itself.

As for our own, *Dutch efforts* we too have been trying hard to maintain the trinity of political, military and developmental instruments in our efforts, and have promoted it at international level with reasonable success.

*Political*: The Netherlands takes part in the fora that determine the overall international approach for Afghanistan, such as the so-called "G8-plus" format. We have consistently made sure to be in continuous dialogue with the Afghan authorities about what we do on the ground. The Australians, who will deploy some 200 troops in the Dutch area of operations in Uruzgan, are going to share an embassy with the Netherlands, which will make it easier to coordinate our efforts. The Dutch, with the Danes, have led the way in improving conditions for people taken prisoner by ISAF forces. Now that ISAF is broadening its presence and the

Netherlands is to be one of the lead nations in the south, we are investing not only in written assurances, such as the handing over of prisoners to the Afghan authorities within 96 hours, but also in improving vital elements in the judicial chain, including training prison wardens and improving prisons conditions to a level commensurate with international standards. The Canadians are supporting these efforts. There is growing sympathy within NATO for taking the treatment of prisoners seriously as part of the political effort to win hearts and minds.

*Military* : The Netherlands has formed part of ISAF from the start and, together with Germany, held its command from 2003 to 2004. When ISAF expanded its presence through Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), to help the central government in Kabul strengthen its authority *elsewhere* in Afghanistan, the Netherlands took responsibility for the PRT in Baghlan.

One of the important supporting activities for our PRT in Baghlan has been for our military police to offer basic police training. The former Turkish Commander of ISAF considered this project to be so successful that he held it up as an example to other PRTs.

*Development* : The Netherlands is one of the biggest bilateral donors in Afghanistan. Since 2001, it has contributed some 260 million euros for humanitarian relief and reconstruction. Our approach here is in line with the main thrust of Dutch development policy, being directed at strengthening governments whose policy we support. This means 'ownership' for the Afghans, through financial contributions to programmes run by their *own* government in Kabul. But if circumstances so dictate, we are also prepared to commit funds without going via central government. We do this in particular at provincial level, in connection with our troop presence in Baghlan. For instance, the repair of a damaged television transmitter mast restored Baghlan province's reception of Kabul television and provincial television programmes. And, just as important, it gave the Dutch PRT the opportunity to explain to a wide audience the purpose of our presence and the logic behind our actions.

## **Uruzgan**

In Uruzgan, too, we will endeavour to preserve the trinity in our approach. I have agreed arrangements with President Karzai on the local administration and the new governor he is sending to Uruzgan to bolster his authority there. He has also given an undertaking that more police units and units of the Afghan army will be stationed in Uruzgan.

This is all ties in with the upcoming deployment in the field of Dutch expertise and manpower by my colleagues, Henk Kamp and Agnes van Ardenne. We are no longer focused exclusively, as in the past, on our own particular dimension of the bigger picture, but are now acting in unison, both in the formulation of policy and its implementation.

For example, the PRT, immediately following its deployment in August, will make a start on CIMIC activities and reconstruction in the security sector. As soon as circumstances permit, it will launch socioeconomic reconstruction projects. The Dutch PRT will play a facilitating role in the implementation of these projects, which will be undertaken in the first instance by the Afghans, but also by Dutch and international NGOs and international organisations. We also assemble people who have influence in Uruzgan, in order together to devise a provincial

reconstruction strategy. We will focus initially on reforming the justice system, police and army and the disarmament and disbandment of illegal militias.

## Positive news

Working for peace, security and development can sometimes call to mind to the labour of Sisyphus. Just when you're nearly at the top, the rock rolls back down to the bottom. Nevertheless, we have no option but to try. After all, "difficulty is the excuse history never accepts". And we should be conscious that we are doing so in the interests of others and ourselves at the same time. But I am glad to say that there is also *positive* news to report on the peace and security front.

According to the 2005 report on Human Security by the University of British Columbia, [\[2\]](#) since the end of the Cold War:

more armed conflicts have ended than started;

the value of the global arms trade has gone down by 33 per cent;

and the number of refugees has dropped by 45 per cent.

Perhaps some of these results are not completely unrelated to what we as an international community are doing to improve human security across the globe.

Since the end of the Cold War, the number of UN missions for conflict *prevention* has increased sixfold, while the number of missions for conflict *resolution* has quadrupled. The number of *military* peacekeeping missions too has quadrupled.

## NATO

What can we do to build on this positive news and to further improve the international community's record, and especially the contributions made by the European Union and NATO? How is the Netherlands trying to promote the trinity of politics, security and development in NATO and the EU? And what are these organisations' specific strengths that we should harness?

Let me start with NATO. NATO is an alliance, formed to realise common political goals, backed up by military means where necessary. As such it covers somewhere between one and two of the three elements that make up the trinity. It does *not* possess an intricate tool box for development and reconstruction. Other organisations, such as the United Nations, the European Union and the bigger NGOs, are better equipped than NATO for sustaining longer-term reconstruction and development. Therefore, NATO should continue to focus on what it does best. NATO pools capabilities that are indispensable in the earlier phases of crisis management. With its tried and tested command and control structures, NATO is better placed than any other international organisation to stabilise an unstable region and create the conditions in which reconstruction can be attempted. NATO is also well suited to contribute to Security Sector Reform. Its experiences in reforming the armed forces of its new members in central and eastern Europe are valuable in this respect. That is why I would like to advocate a bigger role for NATO outside the Euro-Atlantic area, especially in Africa and the Middle East. For example, NATO's Defence College and the NATO School in Oberammergau could assist African countries in setting up college programmes in security studies.

## The European Union

One organisation NATO will frequently encounter in the coming years is the European Union, be it in Kosovo, Afghanistan or possibly even Africa. This demands from both organisations a willingness to invest in EU-NATO coordination, both on the ground and at policymaking level. The Netherlands has consistently advocated close cooperation between the European Union and NATO and will continue to do so.

Civil-military cooperation is a field in which the EU and NATO could work together well, as we have argued in a joint Dutch-Danish-Hungarian policy paper. Within the European Union's own Security and Defence Policy, ESDP, civil-military cooperation is being improved all the time, as a result of the growing number of *civilian* crisis management operations the EU has been conducting in different parts of the world. A civil-military cell - insiders call it the civ-mil cell - has been created within the EU military staff.

From the Dutch perspective it is not unthinkable that the Berlin-Plus agreement, allowing the EU to make use of NATO capabilities, will in future be mirrored by an agreement allowing NATO to make use of EU capabilities, most likely civilian capabilities.

I believe that to further improve its performance in crisis management and peacebuilding, the European Union should appoint a Special Representative with special responsibility for overseeing the development and implementation of ESDP.

## Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen,

Where anarchy rules and warriors intimidate civilians, our guiding principle should be that the *people* are *never* the enemy, but that the enemy *is among* the people. We must win the hearts and minds of the people, so that the forces opposing peace become isolated from the population, instead of being given shelter.

If we fail to win the hearts and minds of the people then our efforts to bring peace and stability, to strengthen democracy and the rule of law, will be doomed from the start, no matter how many soldiers are deployed or how much money is spent.

To achieve success, we will have to make sure that we establish a coherent overall political framework in which our political, military and development instruments can be put to good use in a logical and coherent manner. That is why I spoke today of the *trinity* of politics, security and development, which we should treat as an *inseparable* trinity. That is, if we are serious about ending conflict, bringing stability, building peace and encouraging development.

And remember, to enhance someone *else's* security is to enhance your *own* security. And there is nothing immoral in admitting that.

Thank you.

[1] Clingendael Institute - SID Netherlands, Discussion Paper, 20 March 2006

[2] Human Security Centre, University of British Columbia: *Human Security Report 2005 - war and peace in the 21st century*, (Oxford University Press, 2005).