American-Dutch Political Relations since 1945

What Has Changed and Why?

ALFRED VAN STADEN

AN account of the evolution of the political relations between the United States and the Netherlands since World War II is much like the story of two disappointed lovers making a sentimental journey. To be sure, at this moment, both partners are still together, tied by undeniable military and economic bonds, but the former marriage of the heart has broken down and turned into one of convenience, if not a case of living-apart-together. Indeed, mutual feelings of solidarity and attachment have weakened and given way to coolness and reproaches to and fro. Looking at recent, sharp disputes on important security issues, one is almost tempted to think—not for the children's sake but out of a desire not to besmirch the parents' memory—the two parties have decided not to part. Of course, the American-Dutch estrangement, grown since the late sixties and particularly perceptible at the level of political opinion leaders, is being muted and disguised by the polished language of official diplomacy. Nevertheless, it is but too real and, I venture to say, potentially dangerous for the future relationship between both countries.

It is the purpose of my lecture to explore the nature and dimensions of the changes which have taken place, as well as to shed some light on their causes. At the outset I must make two preliminary points. First, the subject under discussion has a built-in imbalance of some sort. Postwar U.S.-Dutclr political relations are inherently asymmetric, because they are about the interactions of a superpower and a small country. Nobody would argue the contrary. This means, among other things, that what is important or even vital from a Dutch point of view may be rather marginal or insignificant in American eyes. Second, as I was born, bred, and socialized in Holland, the perspective of my observations is inevitably a Dutch one, and rather than deal with

American attitudes toward the Netherlands, I shall concentrate on Dutch attitudes toward the United States.

Let me take your minds back to the international situation just after the end of the war. Both nations were on the threshold of a fundamental change in their external orientation, breaking with established and at the same time cherished, prewar foreign policies, which, incidentally, bear a striking similarity. The leading themes of those policies, isolationism on the one hand and neutrality on the other, share a common aversion to entangling alliances. And just as American isolationism was not a total abstinence from world affairs, Dutch neutrality did not preclude an active involvement in matters of international trade and finance or travel and humanitarian concern.

Both concepts were no longer considered to be viable policy options in 1945, even though the forces of isolationism were still surprisingly strong in the United States. Because of its crucial role in the liberation of Western Europe and, afterward, its large-scale economic assistance through the Marshall Plan, the United States enjoyed a tremendous popularity in Dutch society. Nevertheless, in the immediate postwar period, political relations between the United States and the Netherlands were not particularly close and cordial. One reason lies in the divergent approaches of both countries to building a new international system. It seems worth dweiling awhile on this point.

As early as the war years, the Dutch government had repeatedly spoken of the need for political and military cooperation with powerful and like-minded countries once the war was over. There is no doubt that the government was thinking first and foremost of Great Britain and the United States. Thus, in May 1942, Foreign Minister van Kleffens, having reflected on the foundations of a postwar world order, submitted a plan to his Norwegian and Belgian colleagues, Lie and Spaak, for the formation of regional security organizations unifying all non-aggressive states and to be led by those Western powers.[1] In late 1943, speaking before a BBC microphone, he outlined the idea of a Western bloc with North America and the Dominions as the arsenal, Great Britain as the base, and Western Europe (France, Belgium, and the Netherlands) as bridgehead.[2]

Since the permanent involvement of the United States in European security affairs was a main feature of van Kleffens' suggestions, the reaction on the part of the American administration was naturally essential. During his visit to the United States in the summer of 1942 and after (by the way, American-Dutch diplomatic relations had been elevated to the level of ambassadors; as a matter of fact, the United States was the first country to grant the Netherlands this honor![3]), the Dutch Foreign Minister discussed the idea of regional security organizations with Secretary of State Cordell Hull and his deputy, Sumner

Welles. Both Americans agreed to the principle of Atlantic cooperation, but clearly refused to commit themselves. They promised to have van Kleffens' scheme studied and worked out by panels in the State Department and the War Department.

I would certainly strain historical truth if I suggested here that the exercise started by this produced a noticeable effect on the planning of postwar American foreign policy. As the war continued Washington joined London in the latter's outspoken preference for a more exclusive approach to the building of a new world. It supported the so-called Four Power Plan, basically meaning that the four Great Powers (the United States, the Soviet Union, China, and Great Britain) had to arrive in concert at common proposals prior to consulting other governments. As a result, small nations such as Holland were to lose any substantial influence upon important postwar blueprints such as the framework of the United Nations Charter. Nor were they able to place their marks on the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration,[4] which was created in 1943 and functioned until 1947.

The initial American enthusiasm for a system of collective security within the UN framework put the Dutch government in a difncult position. At the end of the war, it was still strongly in favor of a security policy based on an alliance with the other democratic countries of Western Europe and it also wanted the United States to be involved in the protection of the Old World. Van Kleffens, in particular, considered it of the utmost importance that no policy should be pursued which might alienate the United States from Europe. The Dutch government was not in a position, however, to make the American administration change its mind on its predilection for the new world organization. Moreover, it feared that by pushing too hard in the direction of an alliance in Western Europe, an isolationist backlash might be produced in America. So, in spite of its own inclinations toward a regional security arrangement, backed up by the United States, the Netherlands—at least for the time being—could not but base its security policy on the international cooperation that was supposed to take shape in the United Nations.[5]

As it happened, this policy, born of necessity, was in several ways rationalized by the Dutch government. For one thing, Soviet ambitions in Eastern Europe were being played down. Thus, for example, in November 1945, van Kleffens tried to reassure members of the Dutch Parliament by saying: "I am able to state that the government of Russia by no means harbors imperialist ambitions but that it is trying in its own way to ensure its security."[6] For another, the dangers of the formation of bloes were suddenly emphasized. It was suggested on several occasions that the creation of an alliance might provoke

the Russians to mold a counter-coalition, as well as damage cooperation on a global scale and cause international tensions.[7]

Let me now return to my starting point. There is another and probably more important reason why the political relations between the United States and Holland were not particularly close in the first years after the war. This reason relates, of course, to disagreements on the ongoing struggle for independence in Indonesia. Those disagreements were very profound indeed and gave rise to bitter explosions in Holland against what was regarded as undue American interference. At first, though, American policy with regard to the acrimonious conflict between the Dutch and the Indonesian nationalists had been one of hands off. But in June 1947, when alarming reports on the situation in the Netherlands East Indies were reaching the State Department from Batavia, the United States concluded that the time had come for a more active participation in Indonesian affairs.[8]

In light of American anti-colonial traditions and in view of widespread sympathies in Congress for the cause of Indonesian nationalism, it was very hard, if not impossible, for the U.S. government to take the Dutch side in the escalating conflict. In addition, the Cold War having broken out, this very conflict had become a function of East-West rivalries, and for fear of driving them into the arms of Moscow, America did not want to antagonize the forces of nationalism in Asia and the Middle East. Especially after the prompt suppression of the Communist rebellion at Madiun, in September 1948, the Indonesian nationalist movement was perceived by the United States as a bulwark against the rising tide of international Bolshevism. From this point of time, American-Dutch relations became outrightly strained, reaching their nadir during and just after the second Dutch police action of December 1948. The United States was among those who sharply critized this action.

In the same month that the Indonesian nationalists crushed their Communist countrymen, the new Dutch Foreign Minister, Dirk U. Stikker, had an interview with Secretary of State George Marshall. Stikker was given a cold reception by Marshall. He had been plainly given to understand that there would be no American support whatsoever for the Dutch. They were expected to confer independence on the Indonesian population on short notice, and, on top of it, the Republic of Indonesia was to get American help. In his memoirs, Stikker indulges in bursts of collective self-pity over Marshall's snub. He reminds us of the Battle of the Java Sea (February 1942), in which the Dutch fought shoulder to shoulder with the United States (and for that matter Britain too) against the Japanese navy, and accuses the Americans of showing a "we know better" or "holier than thou"

attitude.[9] (It is ironic, at the least, that the same notes are now being struck on the other side of the Atlantic.)

Resentment on the part of large sections of the Dutch population grew as the Americans decided to apply pressure. Immediately after the beginning of the second police action, Marshall aid for Indonesia was cut short. The United States even threatened to withhold the weapons needed by the Dutch for their contribution to the Western defense system, as provided for by the Treaty of Brussels.[10] In March 1949, one year after the signing of this treaty and only shortly before the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington, Stikker, who happened to be in Paris for a meeting of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, received an official call by Averell Harriman. The latter, acting under instructions from the State Department, made it perfectly clear that the United States, while prepared to create an Atlantic alliance and to give military aid to its future allies, would not be willing to give such aid to allies such as the Netherlands, as long as they had not solved their colonial difficulties.

Stikker's testimony on this important new development is most surprising. He claims that had he explained the American attitude to the Dutch Parliament (either in public session or in private committee meetings), Holland would not have joined NATO. He, therefore, decided to see the party leaders individually. They agreed that if the Americans were to withdraw their threat before the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in early April, they would probably be willing to vote in favor of ratification.[11] There is reason to call Stikker's assessment into question with respect to the likelihood that the Netherlands might not have entered NATO as a consequence of its colonial perils. Indeed, it is remarkable that in his *Present at the Creation* Harriman's superior at the time, Dean Acheson (a close personal friend of Stikker's), makes no mention whatsoever of the entire affair, while the official record of American foreign policy, the well-known *Foreign Relations of the United States* compilation, devotes relatively little attention to the point at issue.[12] (Of course, both may be ascribed to the asymmetry of interest which I spoke of earlier.)

In any case, the irritation and hard feelings on the part of Stikker, one of the Dutchmen who turned out to be firm Atlanticists, are a perfect illustration of the poisoned political climate in the Netherlands on the eve of the creation of the Atlantic Alliance. As late as 1974, in a personal letter to Philip Jessup (who as U.S. representative had strongly denounced the second Dutch police action in the Security Council), he wrote he still believed that "the U.S. government knew nothing about the Indonesians, about their charm or complicated character, and had little regard for their small ally

(stubborn as it may be) that was in 1948 at the brink of collapsing after having suffered five years of Nazi occupation at home and in the awful Japanese concentration camps in Indonesia."[13]

Military alliances are mainly based on common perceptions of threat and identity of interests. It was thus hardly the long historical ties that brought America and Holland together in NATO. But once the Indonesian issue was settled (I am not speaking of New Guinea yet), both countries started to join hands, or better: the United States was allowed to press the Netherlands to its bosom and successive Dutch governments, as well as the overwhelming majority of Dutch population, were quite happy about' that. In fact, during the fifties and the sixties, the United States found in Holland one of its most loyal allies and staunchest supporters. For example, in 1950, the Dutch gave wholehearted support to U.S. policies in the United Nations concerning the Korean War. In sending a combat unit composed of volunteers, the Netherlands was one of the fifteen countries that joined America in the UN forces to help South Korea to repel the attack from the north.

Similarly, on the recurrent question of which Chinese government should represent the state of China in the UN, the Taiwan-based nationalist regime or the Communist regime holding power on mainland China, Dutch voting behavior in the General Assembly of the world organization was dictated by the wish not to deviate too much from the United States.[14] Even though the Netherlands had formally recognized the government of the People's Republic of China in 1950 and continued to maintain diplomatic relations with this government, it successively abstained on the seating of the PRC in the UN. By supporting American moratorium resolutions which marked the Chinese question an "important matter," thus requiring a two-thirds majority, the Dutch actually contributed to keeping Peking outside.

Thus, on the long and tiring road to the unity of Europe, Dutch willingness to collaborate with the other Western European countries was subordinated to the principle of Atlantic cooperation, being the cornerstone of Dutch foreign policy. In contrast to economic integration, the Netherlands has been very lukewarm toward politico-military cooperation with its European partners; it defended keeping the European Community open to the Atlantic world and it effectively opposed schemes that could have sent Europe drifting away from America. In the early sixties, Joseph Luns, the former diplomat who dominated the Dutch foreign policy scène for a long time and who had stubbornly refused to go along with the French plan for the creation of a European Political Union (which would have performed military tasks as well), was perceived by President De Gaulle as a caretaker of Anglo-American interests. Next to power-balancing con-

siderations as regards France and West Germany, a main motive behind Dutch insistence on Britain's entry into the Common Market was related to the conviction that the participation of the United Kingdom would sustain the Community's Atlantic orientation.[15]

On matters of strategy within NATO, the Dutch have displayed a remarkable readiness to leave the major responsibility for Europe's nuclear protection to the United States.[16] Also, from the moment the United States itself became vulnerable to the nuclear weapons of the Soviet Union, the Netherlands continued to trust in the American President to make all decisions to use nuclear weapons in full accord with the defense needs of Europe and those of America. In fact, statements or opinions expressed in the larger European countries which voiced doubts concerning the reliability or credibility of the so-called strategic guarantees of the United States to Europe were regarded by successive Dutch governments as both improper and dangerous because of their potential for self-fulfilling effects.[17] Dutch decision makers denied the existence of any basic conflict of security interests between the United States and its overseas allies. For this reason, the formation of an independent European nuclear force was also firmly rejected. Highly characteristic of the Dutch position on nuclear affairs during the period under discussion was the fact that the Netherlands was in 1957 the first NATO country to react positively to an American offer for the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons on European soil and for placing these weapons at the disposal of the European NATO armies.

Finally, in return for American military protection and as a clear sign of solidarity, Holland lent all but unconditional support for political and military actions taken by the United States throughout the world. In the years America, because of Vietnam, was overwhelmed with criticism and almost ostracized by the international community, the Dutch government was one of those few governments which refused to leave Washington in the lurch. To the detriment of his popularity in the Netherlands, Foreign Minister Luns resisted strong appeals on the part of the Dutch Parliament to press the U.S. government to discontinue the bombardments of North Vietnam without prior conditions. As late as 1970, the Dutch government was in sympathy with President Nixon's decision to expand U.S. military operations to Cambodia. Elliot Richardson, the Undersecretary of State at the time, declared on American television that Holland was the sole country which had instantly supported the controversial American move.[18]

The enumeration of examples should not, of course, be a substitute for sound, exhaustive historical research, but it is beyond doubt that in the fifties and sixties the basic attitude of successive Dutch

governments toward the United States was one of loyalty and faithfulness, if not outright docility. Only the New Guinea[19] dispute in the early sixties put a temporary damper on American-Dutch political relations. To a certain extent, we may notice in this case some of the features of the collision between the two countries on the eve of Indonesia's independence more than ten years earlier. The Dutch, and especially Mr. Luns, profoundly misjudged power realities in the world and clutched at an American promise of logistical support for possible Dutch military operations which had been made by John Foster Dulles on a special occasion in 1958[20] but turned out to be worthless at the very moment the Netherlands actually became engaged in hostilities with Indonesia. The Americans, for their part, as always preoccupied with their worldwide confrontation with the Soviet Union, were hoping to wean Sukarno away from Moscow by gratifying his special desire (the ceding of Dutch New Guinea to Indonesia) and put pressure on the Dutch government.[21]

Like Mr. Stikker before him, Foreign Minister Luns was very disappointed in the U.S. administration. He vented his spleen particularly on President Kennedy's brother Robert, who played an important part in the outcome of the New Guinea dispute. Indeed, in an interview Mr. Luns stated:

> I have always had the feeling that if he [President John Kennedy] had not been so much under the influence of his brother Robert, his policies would have been better. Also with regard to the Netherlands. The President reversed his course on the question of New Guinea on the advice of his brother. Robert Kennedy was in Indonesia for three or four days during the period of conflict. He was so much impressed by Mr. Sukarno's charm that after his return he was firmly convinced that Indonesia would immediately become an ally of the United States if only New Guinea was turned over to Sukarno. Obviously, as happened to so many others, he was deceived by Sukarno. Moreover, he assumed that he could do anything to the Netherlands without us protesting or doing anything about it. He was right in that assumption, by the way.[22]

However, the American-Dutch rift on the New Guinea issue is an exception rather than the rule of warm and friendly political relations during the period under discussion. The fact that the issue caused only a temporary diplomatic chill and did not produce lasting hard feelings demonstrates the fundamental pro-American disposition of Dutch policy makers. It may be wondered why the Netherlands was attached and wedded so much to its American ally. It is hard to distinguish here between considerations of self-interest and ethical principles. On the one hand, perceiving a real Soviet threat, Dutch policy makers were absolutely convinced that the Western European

countries were not able to defend themselves and thus were entirely dependent upon American military protection. In such circumstances those countries could not afford to damage political relations with their powerful life-insurer. The willingness of the United States to assist Western Europe in the event of war, with all the means at its disposal, was assumed to depend upon the extent to which the European allies were showing solidarity.

On the other hand, Dutch loyalty to America also had moral overtones. It was partly the expression of the debt of gratitude which Holland owed the Americans for their role in World War II and of the belief that a small country ought to display respect to the state on whom it is dependent for its continued existence. It was felt that gratitude and respect obliged Dutch politicians to criticize the Americans only in the careful and moderate tone one uses with a dear friend who has taken the wrong path in life.

The departure of Joseph Luns from Dutch political life in 1971 symbolized the end of an era of close American-Dutch political cooperation. Since then, the Netherlands has become increasingly critical and independent vis-à-vis the United States. Thus, when around Christmas 1972 the American government decided to resumé the bombing of North Vietnam as ferociously as before, Mr. Luns's successor at the Foreign Ministry, Norbert Schmelzer (certainly not a political radical), publicly denounced the American decision in most certain terms. The contrast with previous official reticence was most striking. In *The White House Years* Henry Kissinger strikes very bitter notes in describing the criticism of Holland and other European countries at the time. He writes:

> The Swedish government compared us with the Nazis (having, of course, been neutral during the Second World War). The Danish, Finnish, Dutch and Belgian governments also castigated the alleged bombing of cities. The French Foreign Minister made allusively critical comments. Not one NATO ally supported us or even hinted at understanding of our point of view—especially painful from countries who were insisting in their own defenses on a strategy involving massive attacks on civilian targets.[23]

Similarly, one year later, many Dutchmen accused the United States of involvement in and covert support for the military coup in Chile which ended the Allende regime. The political left in Holland came to worship the deposed Chilean President as a hero and a martyr of social justice, overthrown by outside imperialist forces. The left-of-center Den Uyl cabinet, in power from 1973 to 1977, irritated the Americans by giving development aid to Cuba and North Vietnam.

In late 1973, this cabinet was embarrassed by a generous American offer to help the Dutch overcome the consequences of ari oil embargo imposed upon them by the Arab members of OPEC as 'a penalty for allegedly pro-Israel sympathies. Referring to Dutch reluctance to make use of the offer, a leading Dutch newspaper wrote: it appeared the Netherlands government had received an indecent offer.[24]

Then, in 1977, the Netherlands led the drive against President Carter's intention to produce the so-called neutron bomb and to introducé this weapon into Western Europe. Well over one million Dutchmen signed a petition against it.[25] Two years later, in December 1979, the Dutch government disappointed the United States very much (and for that matter other NATO countries too) by having reservations concerning its share in the deployment of 572 new nuclear delivery systems in Western Europe. In December 1981, it again refused to commit itself on that score. One month before, an unprecedented number of about 400,000 demonstrators had marched through the streets of Amsterdam in protest against an imminent new nuclear arms race in Europe. The term "Hollanditis" was coined and, whether a misnomer or not, became common currency as an international symbol of European neutralism and people's resistance to nuclear armaments. In the meantime, the Dutch government, in the person of its present Foreign Minister, Max van der Stoel, took pride in being a critical rather than, as in the old days, a faithful ally of the United States.

After having led up gradually to the subject, I have now come to the main question of my lecture: what is the nature and what are the causes of the changed political relationship? At the outset, I must emphasize that the changes in American-Dutch political relations during the past decade are by no means unique and may be seen as part of a more general pattern of estrangement between America and Europe. Still, I do not hesitate to say that the Netherlands began to dissociate itself from U.S. actions and opinions earlier and more strongly than, for instance, West Germany and that, in addition, the current gap between Holland and America on security matters and—not to be forgotten—on Third World issues is wider than that between the United States and other Western European countries.

Indeed, recent Dutch pleas for arms control agreements regardless of Soviet behavior in Afghanistan, Poland, or elsewhere, as well as calls for the reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in NATO's military strategy and for unilateral restraint in the production of new weapons systems, contrasted violently with Reaganite views—rhetoric or not—on regaining military strength, bargaining chips, and linkage. And so did Holland's commitments to human rights policies, large-

scale development assistance, and sympathies for reforms of the international economic system as opposed to American support of rightist military dictatorships and beliefs in the value of laissez-faire liberalism and the free-enterprise system as a universal remedy for problems of economic development.

Yet what counts perhaps even more for the present and future relations between the two countries is not merely the fact that America is no longer seen in the Netherlands as a nation without sins, or as the blameless leader of the free world, but that many Dutch opinion leaders (and some foreign policy makers as well) have come to speak without hesitation of characteristics common to superpowers as though their similarities go much further than parallel nuclear might and their differences add up to litüe more than ideological dazzle-painting. A strong tendency of creeping neutralism has arisen in Holland in recent years—a tendency to put the foreign policy behavior of the United States on the same footing with the external behavior of the Soviet Union, to equate American dealings with Central and Latin American republics and Russian actions in Eastern Europe. Concomitant with the rise of a U.S.-Soviet mirror image is the spread in Dutch society of feelings of moral superiority regarding both superpowers, a feature fitting so very well in deeply rooted foreign policy traditions of Holland.

Certainly, a clear majority of the Dutch population is still in favor of NATO membership and continuation of military cooperation with the United States. But what is this to mean when at the same time an almost equal majority is very reluctant to accept the consequences of this cooperation and responsible Dutch politicians (not only of the left) are keeping themselves at a distance from American strategies and view the United States and the Soviet Union with an attitude of "a plague on both your houses"? Although it would be incorrect to confuse the growth of anti-Americanism in the Netherlands with any increase in sympathy for Soviet Communism, it is amazing to observe well-meaning idealists focusing strongly on the outrages of so-called American imperialism on the one hand and being agnostic about Soviet foreign policy goals and apparently unaware of a Soviet military buildup on the other hand.

This is the situation we find in Holland at present and, following up this description, I shall finally discuss the factors that made the country change from its former role of loyal ally to one of reluctant ally. As little as the transformation of American-Dutch political relationships is a phenomenon confined to the relations between Holland and the United States only, neither are its underlying causes entirely typical of the Dutch foreign policy setting and merely to be understood as national idiosyncrasies. Thus, American-Dutch political rela-

tions have also been affected by a new war scare prevailing in many countries of Western Europe, widespread feelings that the development of military technology has outrun the control of statesmen, that the modern balance of terror is too fragile, and that Europeans could be incinerated in a war between the superpowers. To many of them, nothing seemed worse than the prospect of a possible nuclear holocaust.

Indeed, it was genuine fear and anger at the prospect of a nuclear war leaving little more of Europe than the ashes and radiation where 350 million people now live which swelled the so-called peace movement beyond its traditional constituencies in the Netherlands, as well as in other Western European countries. One would, therefore, deceive oneself in interpreting the rise of this movement in terms of a Communist conspiracy or calling it a gimmick to restore sagging church attendance. And, of course, whether in reality chances of war have increased or not is rather irrelevant. As the saying goes, if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.

It is evident that American-Dutch political relations have also been influenced by the advent of new generations of voters and a new political elite whose images of the world and of America bear the marks of quite different historical experiences from those of previous generations. I realize that this is a terribly obvious and commonplace explanation, but we should not forget that many platitudes contain elements of truth. Equally those relations underwent the influence of what has been described as the "dialectics of détente" between the East and West.[26] It is true, the process of détente in the first half of the seventies created new realities meaning quite different things to Europeans and Americans. Many Europeans like the word "détente," have come to associate it with more stability, economic advantage, and normalization of East-West relations. On the contrary, to many Americans "détente" means: spectacular giowth of Soviet military capabilities, Soviet geopolitical offensives in Africa and western Asia, and, last but not least, a decline in the U.S. power position.

As to the latter, it has been suggested that the relative weakening of American economic and military strength is a main cause of Western rift and tensions. This 1 do not believe. Such an explanation presupposes that Western European countries are seeking, at the expense of relations with the United States, a policy of accommodation toward the Soviet Union out of fear of Russian military superiority. The point is simply that not many Europeans still regard the Soviet Union as basically dangerous to their freedom. It is the development of weaponry, the ongoing nuclear arms race rather than Russian intentions, that frightens most people. Bert Röling, a Groningen peace researcher with a great following in Dutch society, once wrote:

> The danger that threatens us is not the deliberate attack by the Soviet Union, but the war unsought by both bloes, arising out of misperception or miscalculation, or the getting out of control of a crisis. In sucli a case of inadvertent war . . . weapons are being used that have been deployed to prevent the use of arms by deterrence.[27]

Even though more general European conditions, touched upon earlier, also explain the changed American-Dutch relationship to a large extent, no explanation seems to be complete without taking into account more specific factors. It is these factors, stemming from the Dutch national situation, that may account for the relative precocity and intensity of strains between both countries. For a better understanding, the following may serve.

Up to the middle of the sixties Dutch society had been profoundly stable. The social invention that held together a religiously divided country was "pillarization" *(verzuiling).* Each major religious and secular grouping formed a "pillar"—a separate social order in which its social, religious, and political institutions were closely interwoven. Dutch politics was the politics of accommodation *(pacificatiepolitiek),* characterized by overarching cooperation at the elite level and a strong deference of the rank and file to the bloc leaders, as well as a great deal of political passivity and non-participation on the part of the public at large.[28] As for foreign policy in particular, though this field was pre-eminently the exclusive domain of a handful of diplomats and other professionals, its basic tenets rested nevertheless on a broad, permissive consensus in the country. Dutch foreign policy was national or transpartisan policy and stood outside daily political stirrings. It was, in that sense, depoliticized.

Almost all observers of Dutch political and social life agree that in the second half of the sixties Dutch society underwent major changes. With journalistic hyperbole Walter Laqueur, in his famous "Hollanditis" article, even speaks of a cultural (or pseudo-cultural) revolution taking place at the time.[29] What we are witnessing, in fact, is a partial breakdown of the pillarization model, a strengthened process of secularization, efforts to exposé political differences, as well as an unmistakable shift among younger people from acquisitive values to a post-materialist life style. The latter did not fail to exercise its influence upon the appraisal of America, the symbol of unfettered capitalism and of the so-called achieving society.

What we are also seeing is a rebellion against the establishment and a drive for more political participation, culminating in a gulf of democratization which did not halt at the borders of foreign politics. And all of this happened in the years when ordinary people, for the first time in their lives, were confronted with moving and dramatic

television coverage of the less pleasant side of American society—race riots in the big cities and U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. It is the interaction of these external and internal developments that provides clues for understanding the transformation of Dutch foreign policy and, derived from it, the change in American-Dutch political relations.

The process of democratization in Holland had two interrelated effects, namely a domesticization and an ideologization of foreign policy.[30] As far as the first outcome is concerned, Dutch foreign policy became more and more the object of internal political strife and a main issue-area in interparty coalition bargaining. In addition, a welter of "action groups" made their appearance on the foreign policy stage. These rather informal promotional groups (as distinguished from more long-standing and established goal organizations such as the Dutch section of the European Movement, the Atlantic Committee, and associations supporting the United Nations) were to use unorthodox methods and levers for political action outside the normal institutional channels. As Dutch foreign policy ceased to be the exclusive hunting grounds of a small band of experts, the postwar consensus crumbled away.

The process of democratization, which had made political authorities both very nervous and responsive to political demands coming from almost all sectors of Dutch society, also led to an ideologization of foreign policy. It enabled radical groups, whose members generally came from the middle and lower classes and whose impulses were most often missionary, to carry political weight. What we know of the relationship between foreign policy attitudes and social position suggests that people occupying high social positions tend to hold pragmatist and gradualist foreign policy opinions, whereas people with low social positions are inclined to espouse moralist and absolutist ideas on international questions.[31]

Indeed, in Holland, moralist ideas permeate pre-eminently the thinking of groups who had not been part of the traditional foreign policy establishment and who began giving dissenting opinions on Dutch foreign policy. The inclusion of representatives of those groups in the policy-making process that democratization brought about, in juxtaposition with the impact of heavily religious thinking for centuries, offering them fertile ground, is highly responsible for the augmented ideological loading of Dutch foreign policy since the early seventies.

What is the relevance of these remarks to American-Dutch relations? Ideologization of foreign policy is tantamount to the application of rigid moral standards to the making of foreign policy decisions. It comes down to the judging of international developments in terms of

good and evil, rather than in terms of what is feasible and what is not. In the eyes of many Dutchmen, U.S. foreign policy no longer answered their elevated expectations as to how the leader of a democratic alliance ought to behave in international affairs. The impact of Vietnam can hardly be underestimated in this regard. Jerome Heldring, a leading foreign policy analyst in Holland, struck home when he wrote:

> When the big protector America, whose "faithful ally" the Netherlands has always been, is caught—indeed thanks to the American Communications media and American democracy itself—in the atrocities and backstairs work it has committed in the Vietnam War, one has to be a seasoned "Realpolitiker" not to be shocked by it and not to draw certain lessons from it. And the Dutch people . . . were not exactly educated in and by their past to such a "realpolitische" outlook on international politics.[32]

May I add that a great part of the interested public in Holland has failed to recognize that a powerful nation like America, to a large extent because of its responsibility for protecting the independence of dozens of states, was forced to dirty its hands? Many years ago, Irving Kristol asserted that the championing of a highly idealistic, morally clean foreign policy could be the privilege of only small countries.[33] Indeed, unlike great powers, which are entangled in a web of responsibilities from which there is no hope of escape, small states can afford the luxury *not* to act and to pursue a pseudo-foreign policy based upon solemn exhortations to the rest of the world to save itself. It was H. A. Lorentz (1853-1928), the Dutch physicist and Nobel laureate, who once stated he was glad he belonged to a nation which was too small to commit any major blunders.[34]

In the beginning of my lecture, I airily compared the current state of American-Dutch relations to a certain development of married life. Thinking of the strained relationship between these countries, perhaps some would like to recall the American saying that a good marriage is rooted in creative tensions. Even though it is tempting to accept its underlying wisdom in this American-Dutch bicentennial year, I shall resist the temptation. The point is, I do see many tensions, but—unfortunately—less creativity.

NOTES

1 A. E. Kersten, "Van Kleffens' Plan voor Regionale Veiligheidsorganisaties" ("Van Kleffens' Plan for Regional Security Organizations"), *Jaarboek van het Departement van Buitenlandse Zaken, 1980-1981 (Year-*

book of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1980-1981) (The Hague, 1981), P.157.

2 S. I. P. van Campen, *The Quest for Security: Some Aspects of Netherlands Foreign Policy, 1945-1950* (The Hague, 1958), pp. 13-14.

3 For this item, see Albert Kersten, *Buitenlandse Zaken in Ballingschap: Groei en Verandering van een Ministerie (Foreign Affairs in Exile: Growth and Change of a Ministry) 1940-45* (Alphen aan den Rijn, 1981), pp. 137-38.

4 Kersten, "Van Kleffens' Plan," p. 164.

5 H. A. Schaper, "The Security Policy of the Netherlands, 1945-1948," in J. H. Leurdijk, ed., *The Foreign Policy of the Netherlands* (Alphen aan den Rijn, 1978), p. 91.

6 *Proceedings of the First Chamber, Interim Session, 1945,* p. 31.

7 See, for instance, *Proceedings of the Second Chamber, 1946-194],* National Budget for 1947, 3rd chapter, Memorandum of Reply, p. 15.

8 P. J. Drooglever, "The United States and the Dutch Applecart during the Indonesian Revolution," in Rob Kroes, ed., *Image and Impact: American Influences in the Netherlands since 1945* (Amsterdam, 1981), P-34-

9 Dirk U. Stikker, *Men of Responsibility: A Memoir* (London, 1966), pp. 115-18.

10 Drooglever, "Dutch Applecart," p. 43.

11 Stikker, *Memoir,* pp. 145-46.

12 Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York, 1969) and *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1949, Vol. VII: The Far East and Australasia* (Washington, D.C., ig76), *passim.*

13 Letter of Dirk U. Stikker to Philip C. Jessup, September 26, 1974 (copy given to the author by Mr. Stikker).

14 Joris J. C. Voorhoeve, *Peace, Profits and Principles: A Study of Dutch Foreign Policy* (The Hague, ig79), p. 209.

15 For Dutch European policies, see Susanne Jonas (Bodenheimer), "The Denial of Grandeur: The Dutch Context," and Robert S. Wood, "Europe and the Communitarian Image in Dutch Foreign Policy," in Leurdijk, ed., *The Foreign Policy of the Netherlands,* pp. 235-303.

16 Robert W. Russell, "The Atlantic Alliance in Dutch Foreign Policy," in *ibid.,* p. 170.

17 A. van Staden, *Een Trouwe Bondgenoot: Nederland en het Atlantisch Bondgenootschap, 1960-1971 (A Faithful Ally: The Netherlands and the Atlantic Alliance, 1960-1971)* (Baarn, 1974), pp. 81-121.

18 Van Staden, *Een Trouwe Bondgenoot,* p. 78.

19 The Indonesian name for this territory is West Irian.

20 J. G. de Beus, *Morgen, Bij het Aanbreken van de Dag: Nederland Driemaal aan de Vooravond van de Oorlog (Tomorrow at Dawn: The Netherlands Three Times on the Eve of War)* (Rotterdam, 1977), pp. 272-88. See also on this subject *De Volkskrant,* August 2g, 1981.

21 De Beus, *Morgen,* pp. 334-403, and Arend Lijphart, *The Trauma of Decolonization: The Dutch and West New Guinea* (New Haven, Conn., 1966), p. 278.

22 Han J. A. Hansen, ed., *Luns, Drees, De Quay, Marijnen, Cals over Luns (Luns, Drees, De Quay, Marijnen, Cals on Luns)* (Hilversum and Maaseik, 1967), pp. 44-45. Translated from the original Dutch.

23 Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years* (Boston, 1979), pp. 1453-54.

24 *NRC Handelsblad,* December 1, 1973.

25 Philip P. Everts, "Reviving Unilateralism: Report on a Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in the Netherlands," *Bulletin on Peace Proposals,* I (1980), 40-56.

26 M. C. Brands, "The Dialectics of Detente and the Involution of the Netherlands," in Kroes, ed., *Image and Impact,* pp. 80-90.

27 B. V. A. Röling, *Het Wapenprobleem (The Problem of Armament)* (Assen and Amsterdam, 1977), p. 27. Translated from the original Dutch.

28 Arend Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (2nd rev. ed.; Berkeley, Calif., 1975).

29 Walter Laqueur, "Hollanditis: A New Stage in European Neutralism," *Commentary,* August 1981, pp. 19-21.

30 J. L. Heldring, "Between Dreams and Reality," in Leurdijk, ed., *The Foreign Policy of the Netherlands,* pp. 317-18. For a comparison of the foreign policy processes in Holland and America, see Bernard C. Cohen, "Political Systems, Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: The United States and the Netherlands," *International Journal,* XXXIII (1977-78), 195-216.

31 See, for example, Johan Galtung, "Foreign Policy Opinion as a Function of Social Position," in James N. Rosenau, ed., *International Politics and Foreign Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory* (New York, 1969), pp. 551-72.

32 J. L. Heldring, "De Nederlandse Buitenlandse Politiek na 1945" ("Dutch Foreign Policy since 1945") in E. H. van der Beugel et al., *Nederlandse Buitenlandse Politiek: Heden en Verleden (Dutch Foreign Policy: The Present and the Past)* (Baarn, 1978), p. 39. Translated from the original Dutch.

33 Irving Kristol, "American Intellectuals and Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs,* XLV, No. 4 (July 1967), 602.

34 As quoted by Amry Vandenbosch, *Dutch Foreign Policy since 1815: A Study in Small Power Politics* (The Hague, 1959), p. 303.

The Dutch in New Netherland

HENRI AND BARBARA VAN DER ZEE

REACHING the top of the World Trade Center one evening four years ago was an experience we will not soon forget. It was a few days after the publication of our book *A Sweet and Alien Land,* the story of Dutch New York, New Amsterdam. But from the restaurant's windows up on the 110th floor, it was almost impossible to see that little corner of Manhattan that had preoccupied us, as authors, for so long. Stretching away to the horizon we could see a vast modern city; but what had once been New Amsterdam itself was now almost hidden away at the foot of this towering symbol of modern New York.

When we walked for the first time through Lower Manhattan, three years earlier, the Dutch past had seemed closer. It was Labor Day, and the streets were deserted—just like any Dutch town on a Sunday. The old warehouses, decrepit and neglected, that still stood between newer skyscrapers might have been in Leiden or Delft, although they were built in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, long after New Amsterdam became New York.

But what was even more striking was the fact that the streets still ran according to the old plan laid out by Master Kryn Fredericks, the engineer from Amsterdam who arrived in Manhattan in 1625. He was sent by the newly formed West India Company, which had received a charter for this first Dutch settlement in the New World and was now anxious to protect its province, a promising source of the precious beaver furs.

A fort was, understandably, the first priority and Fredericks brought with him a grandiose design. Starting an American tradition perhaps, it was to be a pentagon in shape; its circumference would measure more than 1,000 feet and the moat surrounding it would be eight feet deep. In the middle of the fort enclosure, there was to be a marketplace; around it, houses for the Council and the town notables, as well as a schoolhouse, church, and hospital all under one roof; and there were plans for a small town outside the fort.

The project was never fully carried out, and the fort was never the size Fredericks had intended. But the street names in Lower Man-