# “An idea whose time has come”

The Comprehensive Approach and Conflict Prevention in Dutch Foreign Policy Discourse

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**List of Abbreviations**

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| **3D** | Defence, development and diplomacy |
| **AJP** | Allied Joint Doctrine Publication |
| **BA** | Bachelor |
| **BIV** | International Security Budget |
| **COPD** | Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive |
| **EU** | European Union |
| **FT&DC** | Foreign Trade & Development Cooperation department |
| **ISS** | International Security Strategy |
| **IOB** | Policy and Operations Evaluation Department |
| **MFA** | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| **MOD** | Ministry of Defence |
| **MS&J** | Ministry of Security & Justice |
| **NATO** | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| **SMO** | Steering Group Missions and Operations |
| **SOFA** | Status of Forces Agreement |
| **UN** | United Nations |

## Preface

Working at the Ministry of Defence from mid-February to mid-July has been a truly inspiring, interesting, instructive and fascinating experience. I remember the dazzling first week that now seems ages ago. How little I knew then and how little I know now about the Ministry of Defence in all its different forms. As an anthropologist, I began with noting down all that I could observe: from the rhythm of the daily routine to the behaviour of my colleagues. Soon I began to understand and even adopt the abbreviations and general ways of behaviour at the MOD. For me this became especially clear during the numerous visits to the MFA. 'We' from the MOD were sure to be ten minutes early to the weekly meetings, while 'they' were only just in time. 'They' at the MFA drink mint tea during meetings in a fancy coffee corner while 'we' meet and drink coffee in our office. The jokes that 'we' made about these differences made me realise how easy I got comfortable with the discourse at the MOD. How easy it is to adopt a discourse and act accordingly. It strengthened my argument that a constructivist approach suits the topic of this research best, while it made me critically reflect upon qualitative research designs at the same time. As I am partially part of the discourse that I investigate, I was hesitant with critical remarks on the policy documents, the way my colleagues think and making generalisations. While I remember having no problems with these three issues doing qualitative research during my BA, in an exotic country called Belgium where I felt distanced from my research population. Being part of a discourse makes it more difficult to think outside of it, as Doty perfectly remarked: "discourse is a system of statements in which each individual statement makes sense, produces interpretive possibilities by making it virtually impossible to think outside of it" (1993.: 302). Although I am going to leave this incredibly interesting research setting way too soon in my opinion, it is best for the impartiality of the research. It rests me to thank my colleagues at the MOD and the interviewees at the MFA and Clingendael. I am especially grateful of my supervisor at the MOD, Lt. Col de Heer, who patiently guided me through the MOD and the MFA during my six-month internship. Furthermore I like to thank my supervisor Georg Frerks, Maaike Warnaar and Jort Statema.

## Introduction

Since the beginning of the 1990's, the nature of armed conflict transformed rapidly. Whereas traditional conflicts were conceived of as traditional war under Clausewitzean terms based on definable geo-political interests between states, conflicts now mostly take place within states. Intra-state conflicts know many vested political and economic interests as well as social relations with complex notions of identity, religion and culture (Kaldor 2013). This war, which is not fought between definable armies on a traditional battlefield but instead amongst people in constantly changing alliances and areas, demands an equally complex intervention strategy. Often, intra-state instability leads to a spillover effect that instigates instability in surrounding countries too. Besides familiar issues over arms control and crisis management, other issues such as cyber security, cross-border crime and the threat of terrorism deserve attention as well.[1] These developments pose a possible threat to the Netherlands and demand simultaneous interventions on multiple areas; security, rule of law, the (re-)building of institutions and socio-economic development.[2] The 'comprehensive approach' has been adopted by this cabinet and by the international community in general, as the approach to better suit current conflict situations. The Dutch government has developed the 'International Security Budget'[3] (BIV) to further the comprehensive approach in which the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development (FT&DC), as a part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) will work in close cooperation with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the Ministry of Security & Justice (MS&J) to work on international peace and security. When employing this budget, the strategic interests on foreign security are also considered. These strategic interests are as follows:

1. The defence of the Netherland's own and allies' territory;
2. An effective international legal order;
3. Economic security.

[1] International Security Strategy (2013: 3).
[2] Kamerbrief voor het Budget Internationale Veiligheid (2013: 1).
[3] 'Budget Internationale Veiligheid'.

When the strategic interests are taken into consideration together with the cutbacks that require the Netherlands to become smarter in the use of resources[4], new focus areas in foreign security policy are introduced. Alongside constant policy features such as investment in strong transatlantic ties and multilateralism, new policy foci include more responsibility for Europe; unstable regions close to Europe; disarmament and arms control; cooperation with the private sector; a comprehensive approach and conflict prevention.

These last two foci will be the topic of this research. A gap exists between the comprehensive approach and the new priority of conflict prevention. Especially in the first phases of a conflict, when violence intensity is low and chances for peacebuilding are still high, the comprehensive approach with its mix of diplomatic, military and development instruments provides several opportunities. While the importance of the comprehensive approach to crisis management operations is reflected in the BIV and although 'early warning' and 'early action' strategies exist, conflict prevention techniques have not yet been sufficiently operationalised by the MOD in relation to the comprehensive approach.

The goal of this research on conflict prevention within the MOD is twofold. The first goal is to combine theory with the practice of policy making through a discursive lens. The second goal is to provide the MOD with an in-depth analysis of the BIV fund in relation to conflict prevention strategies. Through a literature study on conflict prevention, a policy analysis of existing strategic documents of the MOD and MFA and in-depth interviews with policymakers from these three ministries, I aim to answer this question:

*How is the comprehensive approach made possible within the context of the MOD?*

The first goal of this research is to illustrate how *ideas* provide a context for the MOD to make various practice possible, while excluding others. This has resulted in a second question that (hopefully) provides the MOD with insights that are relevant for developing their policy:

*What can the contribution of the Ministry of Defence be within the International Security Budget with regard to conflict prevention strategies?*

[4] International Security Strategy (2013: 11).

Following Doty (1993) I hope to illustrate *how* a reality is produced and maintained by policymakers and *how* this makes various practices possible: in this case how the MOD came to be one of the actors responsible for preventing violent conflict (theory), and how the MOD can actually engage in conflict prevention (practice), given the answers on the theoretical question. All in all, this goal can best be captured as the core concern of policy studies, i.e. the "understanding (of) the world and trying to change it at the same time" (Nelson 1996).

The first part of this thesis presents the underpinnings of the two research questions presented above, as well as notes on the methodology. In the second part of this thesis I provide an overview of the academic debate on conflict prevention including a brief overview of conflict prevention policies of institutions and European countries on both a strategic and operational level. The third part will consist of an empirical investigation of what the policymakers I interviewed think of conflict prevention and the BIV and it is here that I will make an attempt to bridge the gap between policy and practice. First, I will answer the first question by analysing how policy is made possible within the discursive space of policymakers. Then I will answer the second question by reflecting on how the findings of the discourse analysis can be combined with concrete conflict prevention tools in developing the BIV instrument.

## 1. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the framework for analysis will be discussed. The chapter starts with a theoretical discussion on constructivism, as this school of thought provides the lens through which this research is viewed. This discussion is followed by an exploration of the concept of discourse and the methodology through which discourse will be analysed, namely the discursive approach.

### 1.1 Ontological and epistemological groundings of constructivism

In order to study the complex organisational environment of the MOD, it is necessary to begin this theoretical discussion with a remark on the ontological and epistemological lens through which this research is performed. There is a fundamental ontological debate within the social sciences between approaches that account for human action (Demmers 2012: 15): do structures primarily determine action, or do actions determine structures? Put differently, the ontological debate revolves around the question whether the individual has the agency to initiate change and determine his/her own life, or whether structures determine the individual's action. The ontological debate is closely connected to the epistemological debate: should the social world be *explained* from *without*, or *understood* from *within?* The latter epistemological stance claims that we should look for the meaning of action and study action from within a certain context, while scholars that state that the world should be explained from without, depart from the idea that there are general explanations for human behaviour that come forth from a combination of causal laws and regulations (ibid.: 15-16).

Accordingly, the ontological and epistemological divide in the social sciences has resulted, broadly defined, in on the one hand a realist school of thought and on the other hand a constructivist school of thought. Realist scholars argue in line with an individualist ontology that actors are self-contained units. The policies of institutions like the MOD can, from this perspective, be explained according to their interests that are hardly subject to change. Power relations and the state's ultimate goal of self-preservation are taken as a given. According to

Wendt (1992), this is exactly the problem of realism: self-interest is taken as the starting point for theory while too little attention is paid to the interactional dynamics between actors.

For the constructivist school, on the other hand, *interaction* is a basic theoretical premise. Constructivists adopt a relativist (as opposed to realist) ontology, and a subjectivist (as opposed to an objectivist) epistemology. In the first place, this means that within the process of interaction, meanings are formulated according to *norms* and *principles*. Power, according to constructivists, is not taken as a given but seen as a process of interaction that is the object of investigation (Warnaar 2011: 27). Like power, identities are also constructed on the basis of norms and principles. Second, by participating in the *exchange of meanings*, actors might acquire or change elements of their identities. This leads to the third element that is inherent to constructivism, that there is a capacity for *change*. Actors are constantly engaged in a process of interaction where they are able to transform structures bit-by-bit. At the same time these structures also institutionalise certain norms and values that both enable and constrain actors operating within these structures. Finally, it is important to note that through the constant process of interaction identities are maintained and/or adapted and have a strong normative, but also material component; interests are thus not disregarded but also not taken for granted.

### *1.1.1 Constructivism and the study of foreign security policy making*

Following the brief discussion on the ontological and epistemological groundings of this research, the choice for a constructivist approach rather than a realist approach to the study of policy needs to be explained. It is therefore necessary to refer to the goal and the two research questions that guide this thesis. The goal of this research is to bridge part of the gap between theory and the practice of policymaking by means of answering two questions. The second question is a straightforward policy question: *what can the contribution of the MOD be within the International Security Budget with regard to conflict prevention strategies*? When answering this question from a realist perspective, it would suffice to study the power or influence the MOD can gain in material terms from conflict prevention and then design certain policy instruments that

will help the MOD obtain these material interests, for example in terms of budget allocation or increased military capacity. The second question is grounded in theory and provides a more abstract context in which the first has to be answered: *How is the comprehensive approach made possible within the context of the MOD?* For realists, who answer all questions more or less in terms of interests, this question is irrelevant. Although they may agree *that* ideas matter outside the pure material interests, they do not explore *how* they matter (Warnaar 2011: 34). In this research, it is relevant to understand *how* policy is made possible. The study aims to understand the norms, values and ideas that constitute policy from within the MOD and go beyond a mere account of the interests of the MOD. This is relevant as it suits the current *context* in which foreign security policy making takes place. This helps to explain what options the MOD has with regard to conflict prevention, why they prefer some options above others and why they think of certain options in the first place.

Referring back to the various elements of constructivism mentioned above, studying the interactional process is of great importance. This study takes place in the Dutch context of the comprehensive approach, meaning that the MOD has to work in close cooperation with the MFA and FT&DC department. During the fieldwork that was conducted for this study, it became clear that the weekly meetings between the different ministerial departments did not only serve the process of writing one joint document. The process of joint writing also facilitated the exchange of ideas on the different current and past (military) interventions and how the different ministries should ideally work together. In addition to the exchange of ideas, the different departments also learned how their styles of thinking and writing differed from each other and began to anticipate on these differences. For example, throughout process the MFA and FT&DC department gained more insight into the very organised style of thinking and writing of the MOD, while at the same time the MOD respected the wish of the other departments to leave some issues in the document open for interpretation.

The context of the comprehensive approach demands that the different actors involved in foreign policy making go beyond the pursuit of their self-interest, but create common goals

and a common vision. These examples clearly gave insight into the *interactional* dynamics between the agents of the different institutions. Through these meetings, there was a subtle exchange of institutional norms and principles that had little to do with material interests and a realist approach to the comprehensive approach would therefore add little. In addition, these meetings showed the policymakers' capacity for change. The policymakers of the different departments began to understand each other's norms and principles and acted upon them. While institutional norms and principles guide the individual policymakers to a certain extent and both enable and constrain them, they are indeed capable of initiating change in their way of thinking about conflicts and concomitant interventions. This leads to what Wendt (1992) calls one of the basic tenets of constructivism namely that primarily shared ideas rather than material forces determine structures. These shared ideas come to expression within a discourse. According to Frerks (2007: 46) it is often through discourse that ideas are shaped and solutions to problems are envisaged. Similarly, Frerks continues:

> "(E)xisting policies (…) may be better understood if we know what the underlying discourses entail. Such a deconstruction of discourses is even more essential when we move into a world of conflict intervention comprising a multiplicity of actors with diverse cultures, understandings, interests and perceptions".

Thus, in conclusion, this study is viewed through a constructivist lens as it suits the context best. The context of the comprehensive approach is in itself *not* about the pursuance of interests, at least not at an inter-ministerial level. Instead, it is about interaction, the exchange of norms and principles and the process of change. In order to answer the research questions that guide this thesis, it is necessary to look at the underlying discourses in order for the MOD to adapt itself to this comprehensive approach. When studying the underlying discourses, it becomes apparent what ideas there exist within the MOD on the role they have with regard to intervening in conflict. Understanding this will help in the formulating of new policies that fit within the comprehensive approach.

### 1.2 What is discourse and where does it get us?

There are many different traditions within the field of discourse analysis, which are all derived from different visions on ontological and theoretical issues that come along with defining discourse (Doty 1993; Hewitt 2009). Twentieth-century thinking moved away from the positivist idea that an objective reality exists and that this world is expressed through language, into the idea that language shapes reality. Language as a neutral medium through which facts can in principle be transparently conveyed (Shapiro 1985 in: Carver 2002) became language as a medium to inscribe meanings into the world. As such language is not a medium that expresses the 'truth' about the world. On the contrary, language is a way through which various 'truths' are construed about social phenomena. The fact that different truths about social phenomena are constructed does not mean that the social phenomena in themselves do not exist (Hajer in: Fischer & Forester 1993). To give an example, victims of violent conflict are real, they are not a social construct. However, the way in which one makes sense of these victims may vary. The Dutch government explains this phenomenon as a complex mix of factors: the victims of violent conflict live in states that are not able or not willing to provide the development and the security of its citizens. While this seems like a suitable explanation now, fifty years ago violent conflict would be explained in terms of historical ethnic rivalries. So what this example highlights is that actors have the ability to shape the world depending on the position from which they speak and the language they use to convey this message. This way, the study of discourse gives us insight in how issues are represented and consequently what possible solutions are brought to the fore. Referring back to Frerks (2007: 47), understanding the multiplicity of actors with their different cultures and perceptions also gives us insight in what possibilities actors see to resolve these problems.

Ensuing this idea, Hajer's definition of discourse (1993: 45) as "an ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to phenomena" is helpful to summarise this discussion. The ideas, concepts and categories, Hajer highlights, can be normative or analytic convictions, based on historical references (ibid.: 45-46). Hence,

discourses are being derived from, and dependent on, social practices that in their turn form sets of rules upon which discourses are formed and shaped (Hewitt 2009). From this discussion on what discourse is follows that discourse is a very relevant concept to study within the political domain. It is here that meaning is given to social phenomena, different interpretations of these phenomena are discussed and solutions to problems are invented. As Fairclough (2001) observes, identifying problems is a powerful discursive tool as it creates the opportunity to present solutions to problems, and in doing so influence the course of action.

There are many different ways to study discourse in politics and all theories have a different emphasis. The different possibilities to 'do' discourse analysis, can be seen as something that is inherent to constructivism. Constructivists highlight the importance of subjectivity and interpretation, and hence there exist different ways to interpret a text. First, the above-mentioned author Fairclough, for example, has designed the *Critical Discourse Analysis* method, that focuses on the specific linguistic constructions that make up the text (2001). As a second distinct form of discourse analysis, *Political Discourse Analysis* (Laclou & Mouffe 1985) is concerned with the reproduction of political power, power abuse or domination through political discourse (van Dijk 1993b). In particular, it deals with the consequences of social and political inequality that results from domination through political discourse. The third main stream within discourse analysis is the *Interpretative Policy Analysis* approach. This approach lies at the intersection of discourse and policy analysis and tries to capture the plurality of existing forms of analyses. A considerable degree of internal variation exists within this approach and for the purposes of this research only two of the many authors that fall into this category will be discussed below. At the same time, these two authors form the foundation for the analysis of the Dutch foreign security policy with regard to the comprehensive approach and conflict prevention.

### *1.2.1 Hajer's Argumentative Policy Analysis*

Hajer's definition of discourse has been used at the beginning of the discussion on discourse, but one important aspect of his definition was purposively left out. After the brief discussion on the different forms of discourse analysis, it follows that *interpretative policy analysis*, or discourse theory, is not only concerned with the ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to social phenomena. Although *meaning* is given to phenomena through a specific discourse, Fairclough's observation (2001) that the identification of problems also provides the opportunity to bring solutions to those problems, is a central aspect of interpretative policy analysis. That is to say, discourse is not only about the analysis of language in text but discourse also *does* things. Hajer (2005: 300) therefore complements his definition by stating that discourse is:

> "An ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an *identifiable set of practices"* (emphasis added).

Within a discourse, Hajer (ibid.) discerns various concepts. As a start, Hajer states it is necessary to look for *storylines.* Storylines refer to a form of narrative in which *metaphors* are used. Metaphors in this sense can be understood in the conventional meaning of the word, as a "word or phrase for one thing that is used to refer to another thing in order to show or suggest that they are similar".[5] Storylines, Hajer continues, summarise condensed statements that are used by people as short hand in discussions (ibid.: 301). An example is the storyline of the phenomenon of 'fragile states', suggesting that a lack of development results in a lack of security, leading to the Dutch foreign security policy mantra that there is "no development without security, no security without development". Of course, this is a simplification of the truth and in addition the frequent use of the so-called 'security-development nexus' logic in policy documents assumes that the reader knows what is meant with the 'security-development nexus'. Hajer argues (ibid.: 302) that this assumption of *mutual understanding*, where the sender

[5] Merriam Webster Dictionary: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/metaphor accessed on: 17-05-14.

assumes that the receiver understands the message in the same way as the receiver understands it, is false. Discourse analysis reveals time and again that people speak cross-purposes. In an institutional setting, this can have implications for policymaking. Policymakers may think they understand what another department means by, for example, the word 'intervention' or 'civil-military relations', but depending on the position of the policymaker, these words convey different assumptions. What is interesting to note is that despite the fact that people and the institutions that they represent speak cross-purposes they can still form a *discourse coalition* together.

A *discourse coalition* refers to the ensemble of a set of story lines, the actors that utter these storylines, and the practices that conform to these storylines, all organised around a discourse (Hajer 1993: 47). In this sense, politics is a process in which different actors from different backgrounds form coalitions around specific storylines. For example, the MOD and the MFA share a storyline around the *problématique* of the 'security-development nexus'. Within an international context, they are part of a discourse coalition that practices the comprehensive approach. The storyline of the security development nexus serves as the medium through which actors such as the MOD and the MFA inflict their view of reality on the public, suggest certain social positions and practices and criticise alternative practices. For example, these two ministries share the discourse that in the end, unconditional development aid will not help fragile countries to (re)build themselves. Instead, both ministries state that local capacity building is essential in these countries (ISS 2013: 14). Hence, these ministries share, together with many other international actors, a discourse coalition and act upon their storyline of the 'security-development nexus'.

The last two concepts that Hajer (2005: 303) discusses are *discourse structuration* and *discourse institutionalisation. Discourse structuration* occurs when a discourse starts to dominate the way a policy domain or an institution conceptualises the world and if this discourse solidifies in institutional arrangements, such as a specific intervention policy, this is called *discourse institutionalisation*.

In sum, Hajer speaks of a *discourse coalition* when actors employ similar simplified storylines and put them in practice. Hereby they (re)produce a particular discourse. If many people or, in the case of this research, policymakers within institutions use the discourse to conceptualise the world this is *discourse structuration*. If this solidifies into the practices of institutions it is called *discourse institutionalisation.* These concepts will help to structure the policy discourse around the comprehensive approach and conflict prevention within the MOD and the MFA. Although Hajer's concepts will help to structure the policy discourse under study, his theory does not provide concrete indicators, or a method on how to distinguish whether one can speak of a discourse coalition, discourse structuration and discourse institutionalisation. In order to structure the interpretative discourse analysis, Hajer's theory will therefore be combined with Doty's (1993) discursive practices approach.

### *1.2.2 Doty's Discursive Practices Approach*

Discourse analytic methods facilitate the examination of the various mechanisms at work in texts (Doty 1993: 305). According to Doty, the concepts of *presupposition, predication* and *subject positioning* provide analytic categories to 'do' discourse analysis. These concepts are interrelated and cannot be seen in separation from each other. Accordingly, although sentences and abstracts from policy documents fall into the categories of 'presupposition', 'predication' and 'subject position', they always convey a relation with another set of words, or refer to other texts which in their turn refer to other texts. This means that the discourse analysis presented here shows only a fragment of the visions of the MOD and the MFA as these texts always rely on previously written work. The fact that analysing discourse is an infinite practice is not a limitation per se, but is also the core of the approach itself. As Doty (ibid.: 302) states: in the Discursive Practices Approach, signifiers refer to other signifiers by which a complex and infinitely expanding web of possible meanings is created through linguistic practices. The notion of intertextuality is important. The language in a text is not something that is centralised, but emanates from other texts. Hence, the power that is inherent in language is dispersed, and, most

important, "is *productive* of subjects and their worlds". Taking it one step closer to the daily practice of policymakers, the policy they write or implement always refers to previous policy documents or statements coming from the ministry they work for. In the daily practice at the MOD, new policy documents always heavily rely on previous documents. That what has been written before, is taken as the basis for the writing of something new and this is an example of a discourse *par excellence*:

> "A system of statements in which each individual statement makes sense, produces interpretive possibilities by making it virtually impossible to think outside of it" (ibid.: 302).

A discourse thus provides *discursive spaces*, in which ideas on various kinds of subjects overlap and refer to one another. Policymakers act within these discursive spaces and in doing so actively construct the reality upon which foreign policy is based. The Discursive Practices Approach as presented by Doty, focuses on *how* this reality is produced and *how* it makes various practices possible.

### *1.2.3 Conclusion*

While this has been an extensive discussion on the theoretical position that is taken in this thesis, it does not discuss the broad range of discourse analytic approaches that exist within the field of social sciences. Unfortunately, this is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, the two authors within interpretative discourse analysis will provide a solid foundation for the rest of this research. From the above discussion, three inferences can be made.

First, both authors stress the *interrelatedness* of discourse. Hajer shows this through the concept of *discourse coalition* and Doty does this likewise by her notion of *discursive spaces.* They both argue that policymakers organise themselves around what Doty calls ideas and Hajer calls storylines and act upon these ideas and storylines. These practices shape the reality in which the actors work and in turn this reality shapes the practices of the policymakers.

Second, and related to the first inference, while both scholars argue that discourse shapes the practices of the actors, they do so in a different way. Doty focuses on *identity* within

her discursive approach and how the discursively created identity makes certain practices possible. Hajer, on the other hand, points his discursive approach towards argumentative policy, focusing less on identity and more on how different actors organise themselves around a same logic of thinking.

Third, as these theories are similar in their way of approaching discourse analysis, they complement each other in this research. Hajer's concepts will be used to show the macro processes that can be abstracted from the policy documents and interviews conducted for this study, while Doty will provide, on a micro level, the specific method to study the macro level processes. In the following paragraph, the specific method that is used for this study is explained.

### 1.3 Notes on methodology

While there are many different methods to analyse discourse, in this thesis, following the work of Doty (1993) a very specific method that is briefly explained below, will be used to distil meaning from the strategic policies. The analysis that is presented in this thesis is largely inspired on the dissertation written by Warnaar (2011), who has written an eloquent account on Iranian foreign policy discourse. Warnaar has applied Doty's theory in a very clear and coherent manner and was an inspiration and great help for this analysis as such.

As mentioned above, Doty distinguishes the concepts of *presupposition*, *predication* and *subject positioning*. *Presuppositions* refer to background knowledge that is taken to be true. It is therefore important as it constructs a certain reality in texts upon which other premises are made. For example, in the ISS (2013: 3) it is stated that:

> "The international security environment has become more complex. (…) Besides familiar issues like arms control, crisis management and preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, other issues like cyber security, piracy, cross-border crime and the threat of terrorism have also become very timely".

When studying this through a discursive practices lens, this creates the knowledge that there is something like an international security environment in the first place, that this has become

more complex (how, why, when?), that there are threats to this international security environment, and that new threats can be added to the 'familiar issues'. This abstract from the ISS provides an example of various presuppositions at work, but also of *predication.* A predicate affirms a quality, attribute or property of a subject. In this case, cyber security, piracy, cross-border crime and terrorism have become timely threats to

> "(T)he Netherlands' open economy and upholder of the international legal order, with its long tradition as a democracy" (ibid.: 9).

The predicates at work establish the Netherlands as a subject with these qualities, contrasting it with the aforementioned developments that are identified as threats. Herewith, this abstract also functions as *subject positioning.* Meaning that the subject of the Netherlands as "upholder of the international legal order" stands in opposition to, for example piracy and terrorism. The texts thus does not attach another predicate than 'threat' to piracy and terrorism, but implicitly also defines these threats in opposition to the Netherlands' international legal order.

Taken together, these textual mechanisms thus produce a world upon which policy is based. As illustrated in the example, the abstracts cannot be seen in separation from each other as they all work together simultaneously. Important to note is that it is not implied that these threats are not real, and that they are "just" textual mechanisms. On the contrary: discourses provide us with a reality upon which we all (in this case: policymakers) act. The purpose of this research is to untie these discourses, demonstrate the interrelatedness and provide the MOD with concrete conflict prevention 'tools' within the BIV instrument. Hajer's theory (1993) as discussed above will provide concepts for analysis at the macro-level and Doty (1993), as put in practice by Warnaar (2011), will untie the discourse at a very detailed level.

## 2. The academic debate on conflict prevention

In order to understand the opportunities for the MOD to engage in conflict prevention, it is necessary to provide an overview of the academic debate on conflict prevention. The academic debate exemplifies the issues that are also present in policy circles. While there is an impressive amount of literature available on conflict prevention, the debate on what the scope of conflict prevention should be; what the role is or should be for early warning mechanisms; and what the role of international institutions is or should be, leaves room for discussion. This chapter will summarise the key literature on conflict prevention and ends with a discussion on the actual measures that can be taken by the ministries that are concerned with foreign security policy.

### 2.1 The development of conflict prevention thinking

In 1992 the former UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali called for conflict prevention in 'An Agenda for Peace', which provided the starting point for the UN and other international organisations to develop policy on conflict prevention. While pioneers examined the idea of conflict prevention fifty years earlier in the first issue of the Journal of Conflict Prevention, it was after Boutros-Ghali's call for conflict prevention that the thinking on conflict prevention developed. Throughout the 90's (Lund 1996; Wallensteen 1998; Leatherman et al. 1999) and the 00's (Zartman 2001; Aggestam 2003), literature on conflict prevention blossomed simultaneously with the development of conflict prevention policy. These authors have primarily published findings on the phases of conflict, tools and techniques for monitoring, political will and policy options (Carment & Schnabel 2004: 5).

To bridge the gap between the academic works published by the above-mentioned authors and policy, several commissions have been installed over the years. Important commissions were the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty and the International Peace Academy. The book that the Carnegie Commission has written is acknowledged as the most influential in the

field of preventive action. Notably, the commission divides the scope of conflict prevention in three categories (Carnegie Commission 1997 in: Othman 2013: 200):

- Preventing the outbreak of armed conflict and addressing non violent measures of dealing with conflicts;
- Preventing existing hostile conflicts from spreading, and preventing a recurrence of armed conflicts;
- Preventing a recurrence of armed conflicts.

Based on these categories, the Carnegie Commission developed strategies for conflict prevention and classified them into two types, that have dominated academic thinking ever since. The first part is categorised as 'operational' prevention and the second part as 'structural' prevention. Ramsbotham et al. (2011) also divide preventive measures in two types, categorised as 'light' and 'deep' prevention. This categorisation in measures to be taken shows the broad scope of conflict prevention. Lund (1999 in: Carment & Schnabel 2012: 5) gives an all-inclusive definition of conflict prevention that reflects this:

> "Conflict prevention entails any *structural* or *interactive* means to keep intrastate and interstate tensions and disputes from *escalating* into significant violence and to strengthen the capabilities to *resolve* such disputes peacefully as well as alleviating the *underlying* problems that produce them, including forestalling the spread of hostilities into new places. It comes into play both in places where conflicts have not occurred recently and where recent largely terminated conflicts could recur. Depending on how they are applied, it can include the particular methods and means of any policy sector, whether labelled prevention or not (e.g. sanctions, conditional aid, mediation, structural adjustment, democratic institution building etc.), and they might be carried out by global, regional, national or local levels by any governmental or non-governmental actor" (emphasis added).

While this definition does not fit academic purposes as it remains too vague on many details, for example on the definition of 'significant violence' and 'structural' and 'interactive means', it is useful as a definition within policy circles. This is because it defines, but not too narrowly, that conflict prevention is to *prevent* the eruption of violence. Lund's definition assumes that conflict

prevention is malleable as a policy and as a concept and that it is multi-sectoral in the measures to be taken, but also in the actors that are involved.

### *2.1.1 Problems concerning conflict prevention*

Lund's assumptions that conflict prevention is a malleable and multi-sectoral concept, both constrains and enables the practice of conflict prevention. There are three major interrelated issues that constrain this practice and prove to be an impediment for designing and implementing conflict prevention strategies. The issues will be discussed in the following order: (1) the scope of conflict prevention; (2) the early warning – early response gap; (3) the question of political will.

*(1) The scope of conflict prevention*

First, there are competing understandings of what conflict prevention is and what the scope should be. The above-mentioned divide in categories, structural and operational prevention, reveals diverse understandings and norms of strategies. *Structural prevention* focuses on the underlying causes as to why conflicts arise in the first place. It addresses social, political, economic and infrastructure problems on a long-term involvement basis (Aggestam 20031: 13). *Operational prevention* is based on short-term strategies and aims to control and remove imminent causes to violent escalation between parties (ibid.: 13). The issue of operational versus structural prevention relates to the assessment of the complex character of conflicts. What lacks is a coherent approach amongst the actors that engage in conflict prevention. As Cockell (2002: 191) states:

> "Effective preventive responses should be strategic in that all primary conflict factors are placed into an *integrated* framework such that their preventive management results in successful de-escalation, rather than a narrowly focused intervention that leaves certain key causes unresolved" (emphasis added).

Arguing in the same line as Cockell, Aggestam (2010) argues that traditional tools are often state-oriented and limited in time. Whereas state actors focus on direct preventive measures

such as mediation, sanctions or elite-based negotiations, NGO's aim to address the root causes working bottom-up. The different approaches of these actors pursuing different policy goals may frustrate the overall achievement of prevention strategies. As Lund (2009: 297) summarises: "(a)ll good things do not necessarily go together".

*(2) The early warning – early response gap*

The diversity of actors provides both a problem and a solution to the second major impediment to conflict prevention: the early warning – early response gap. The ultimate goal of early warning is not the ability to predict conflicts, because the methods to predict conflicts are sufficient. Rather, the ultimate goal of early warning is to facilitate the actual prevention of these possible conflicts.

There are two main issues that obstruct the step from early warning to early prevention. First, early warning analyses are widespread contrary to the conventional wisdom that there is not enough early warning (Carnegie Commission 1997). Both governmental and non-governmental organisations have their own information sources, but a global systemic early-warning system is lacking. Even on inter-governmental level information sharing on potential conflicts is done on an *ad hoc* basis, herewith also obstructing the design of preventive action plans.

This relates to the second gap between early warning and early response, namely the question of timing. When are conflicts 'ripe for prevention'? Jentleson (2000) states that violence 'crosses a Rubicon' from which it is very difficult to return. From this point of view, it is favourable to act *before* the outbreak of significant violence. Others believe that 'a soft stalemate' is necessary once initial violence breaks out to show the parties that they do not gain anything with violence (Lund 2009: 305). The answer to the question as to when conflicts are ripe for prevention is dependent on the roles of the different actors within the international system. NGO's will opt for the above-mentioned structural prevention measures, while governments are tempted to use more operational measures to prevent an eruption of violence. Authors such as

Lund (2002) and Beyna et al. (2001) therefore argue that it is necessary to formulate a comprehensive prevention strategy in which the different relevant actors come together and organise themselves strategically.

*(3) Political (un)willingness?*

The strategic organisation of preventive measures is largely dependent on political will: to state that conflict prevention is a-political is a myth. Early warning alerts are in the first place inherently political, as international actors choose certain countries that deserve their attention. For example, government institutions place their intelligence and embassy personnel in countries that are relevant for them and fit within their overall foreign security policy. It is apparent that early warning reports are more likely to come from the fragile countries in which the home country has its representatives than in countries in which they do not have representatives working for the government. In addition to selective warning, the formulation of early response strategies is even more selective. Jentleson argues (in: Carment & Schnabel 2012: 4) that one of the main reasons for the slow development of conflict prevention is that the risks for the UN, EU or any state are too high in comparison to the interests at stake. The lack of political will to intervene in a country where conflict has not yet broken out is difficult to explain to the country where the intervention takes place in the light of state sovereignty. In addition, the intervening country can often not prove that it has indeed prevented a conflict making it even more difficult to gain support for the mission. Ackermann (2003) acknowledges the scepticism of institutions with regard to conflict prevention measures in the light of legality and viability. She continues that nevertheless preventive policies and strategies be enhanced in policy over time so that conflict prevention becomes routine. Preventive policies need to be adopted in foreign security policies, but also operationalized across intra- and intergovernmental levels. As Lund (2009) correctly observes: conflict prevention is more a matter of re-engineering diplomatic, development and defence programmes so that they directly serve conflict prevention in a more concerted way. This observation seems to reflect the

academic trend stating that conflict prevention is old wine in new bottles (Aggestam 2003): the conflict prevention instruments exist, but it is a matter of implementing these measures at the right moment and in the right place in order to be effective. The next paragraph will discuss the various organisational measures that the three most important institutions for Dutch foreign policy have taken next to a brief overview of the measures taken by other European countries.[6]

## 2.2 Institutions and conflict prevention

International organisations such as the UN, EU and NATO, as well as national governments have created their own conflict prevention units (in the case of the UN and the EU) and several European governments have made funds available for activities that are directed at preventing violent conflict. The following paragraph will give a broad overview of the institutions that have the most influence on Dutch foreign policy, as well as on European countries that have designed specific policies on conflict prevention.

### *2.2.1 UN at the Strategic Level*

Prevention of conflict is the first promise in the Charter of the United Nations (1945), stating that the UN is determined to take measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace in an international setting in order to maintain peace and security.

The Brahimi Report (2000) and the Secretary-General's report on conflict prevention (2001) made conflict prevention a priority of the UN. In the Brahimi report (2000: 2), it is stated that long-term conflict prevention addresses the structural sources of conflict and is by definition a low-profile activity; if successful it may even be an activity that can go unnoticed. The Brahimi Report endorsed the Secretary-General note in the Millennium Report[7]:

> "Every step taken towards reducing poverty and achieving broad-based economic growth is a step toward conflict prevention".

[6] As this research also has the objective of informing the MOD on conflict prevention, the documents have been categorised as either 'strategic' or 'operational' documents and the role of the military in conflict prevention strategies is highlighted.
[7] Millennium Report (A/54/2000)

At the strategic level, the UN attaches great importance to the development entities within the organisation, and argues that these entities, with their focus on humanitarian and development work, should design their activities through a "conflict prevention lens" and make long-term prevention key to their work. To this end, the Headquarters Departments that sit on the Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS) created an Interdepartmental Framework for Coordination on Early Warning and Preventive Action. The Framework is there to ensure that departments, programmes, offices and agencies are aware of potential complex emergencies and can provide unique contributions to the analysis of these situations from their own point of view. The Framework Team consists of senior staff members that represent the participating UN bodies. They come together at least one time a month to review country situations and discuss country information, seek consensus on the level of risk of a potential crisis and identify possible preventive and/or preparedness measures that can be undertaken by the UN.

In addition, in the 2008 UN Peacekeeping Operations doctrine framework, it is stated that peacekeeping differs from conflict prevention. While the UN recognises that the boundaries between conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and peace enforcement have become increasingly blurred and that peace operations are rarely limited to one type of activity, conflict prevention (2008:17) is nonetheless understood as:

> "(T)he application of structural or diplomatic measures to keep intra-state or inter-state tensions and disputes from escalating into violent conflict. Ideally, it should build on structured early warning, information gathering and a careful analysis of the factors driving the conflict. Conflict prevention activities may include the use of the Secretary-General's "good offices", preventive deployment or confidence-building measures".

While the UN has prioritised conflict prevention in its policy documents since Boutros-Ghali *Agenda for Peace* in 1992, a concrete strategy remains lacking. The limited strategy of the UN with regard to conflict prevention has several reasons. First, responsibility for prevention has not been concentrated in a particular agency in the Secretariat. Second, influential states such as Russia and China are hesitant towards the notion of conflict prevention, as they argue that it

interferes with the sovereignty principle. In addition, the countries that are eligible for conflict prevention are themselves hesitant for great power interference when violence has not yet occurred (Ramsbotham et al. 2011: 139). The lack of political will at global level remains one of the main challenges, and this has translated in a lack of operational policy.

### *2.2.2 UN at the Operational Level*

The latest report on conflict prevention, the 2001 *Preventing Violent Conflict* Report, lists a variety of approaches, including:

> "(M)easures aimed at building mutual confidence, reducing threat-perceptions, eliminating the risk of surprise attack, discouraging competitive arms accumulation and creating and enabling environment for arms limitation and reduction agreements as well as the reduction of military expenditures".[8]

This document, however, cannot be seen as a planning outline, but rather as a document that urges more coherence within the UN system. The report identifies fact-finding missions as the continuing important task of the organisation. Next to fact-finding missions, there are two other activities that have a prominent place within the preventive toolbox of the UN. The Secretary-General has reinvigorated the use of mediation in the report on enhancing mediation and its support activities (S/2009/189), as well as preventive diplomacy (S/2011/552). Both mediation and preventive diplomacy need to be the key activities of the UN, summarised in the report 'Guidance for Effective Mediation'. Again the UN stresses that its role in these activities is dependent on the willingness of the international community and that it cannot fulfil this task alone.

### *2.2.3 NATO at the Strategic Level*

NATO commits the Alliance to prevent crises, manage conflicts and stabilise post-conflict situation, by cooperating with international partners such as the UN and EU. In the Strategic

[8] Preventing Violent Conflict A/55/985 S/2001/574

Concept of 2010, NATO states that in order to protect the security of Alliance territory and populations,

> "The best way to manage conflicts is to prevent them from happening. NATO will continually monitor and analyse the international environment to anticipate crises and, where appropriate, take active steps to prevent them from becoming larger conflicts".

In order to prevent conflicts from happening, NATO seeks its security at the lowest possible level of forces and therefore attaches great value to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation (ibid.: 23). In addition, the Strategic Concept pleads for more partnerships and the enlargement of NATO through the membership of more EU countries.

### *2.2.4 NATO at the Operational Level*

In the extension of NATO's aim to prevent conflict, AJP 3.4(A), *Allied Joint Doctrine for Non-Article 5 Crisis Response Operations*, describes the fundamental principles and types of operations at the operational level outside Article 5 operations (NA5CRO). NA5CRO includes multifunctional operations that contribute to conflict prevention and resolution, or serve humanitarian purposes and crisis management in the pursuit of declared Alliance objectives.[9] Peace Support Operations (PSO's) fall within activities listed under the NA5CRo's and may be described as operations that make use of diplomatic, civil, and military means, normally in the pursuit of UN Charter purposes and principle, to restore or maintain peace.[10] On the operational level, conflict prevention activities include diplomatic, economic, or information initiatives. Activities in these areas are, amongst others, designed to reform a country's security sector and prevent disputes from escalating to violence. In this case:

> "Military assets used for conflict prevention should generally be focused on the support they provide to the political and developmental efforts to mitigate the cause of societal tensions and unrest (…) Military activities will be tailored to meet political and developmental demands but include: early warning, surveillance, and preventive deployment".[11]

[9] AJP 3.4(A) xi
[10] AJP 3.4(A) 3-1
[11] AJP 3.4(A) 3-2

Hence, the role for the military is limited and preventive activities can even be conducted without the presence of military forces, as the aim is not the defeat of an adversary but the maintenance of security on the territory of NATO allies. Possibilities for military forces in conflict prevention are further elaborated in AJP 3.4.1 on PSO's. In this doctrine, sanctions and embargoes can also be perceived as an aid to conflict prevention and these can be enforced with varying degrees of military pressure. For example, NATO air and maritime assets are capable and trained to execute embargoes and ground forces may be employed for the surveillance of borders.[12] The military approach and command style are mentioned briefly in AJP 3.4.1, and further explored in ATP-3.4.1.1, *Peace Support Operations Tactics*.

### *2.2.5 EU at the Strategic Level*

Since 1999, three documents have shaped the conflict prevention policy of the EU.[13] First, the 2001 *Communication on Conflict Prevention* which stated that the EU has a big role in long-term prevention activities as well as the coordination of responses to pre-crisis situations.[14] In 2003, the European Council (EC) adopted its first foreign policy strategy, *A Secure Europe in a Better World* and in December 2010, the European External Action Service (EEAS) was launched. Previous prevention mechanisms such as the Instrument for Stability, the Prevention, Crisis Response and Peacebuilding units as well as the CSDP structures are now incorporated in the EEAS. The merging of crisis management institutions such as the CMPD, the EUMS and CPCC is ought to improve the coherence and coordination between the different policy fields, herewith facilitating early warning and early response mechanisms. In the 2013 Joint Communication on the EU's comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises[15], it is stated that:

> "A coherent political strategy for conflict prevention, preparedness and response starts with all relevant players sharing a common understanding of the situation or challenge. A shared analysis should set out the EU's understanding about the causes of a potential conflict or crisis, identify the

[12] AJP 3.4.1 2-4
[13] Overview of the Conflict Prevention policy of the European Union (2010: 3).
[14] Communication from the Commission on Conflict Prevention 11.04.2001 COM (2001)211 final.
[15] Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. The EU's Comprehensive Approach to External Conflict and Crises. Brussels, 11.12.2013 JOIN(2013) 30 final.

key people and groups involved, review the dynamics of the situation and assess the potential risks of action, or non-action".[16]

Apart from the Joint Communication, there exists no clear strategic policy regarding the EEAS and its role within conflict prevention. However, the European Union Military Staff (EUMS), which is working directly under the European Union Military Committee (EUMC), has designed a working paper focusing on the action that should be taken in light of the comprehensive approach to CSDP missions. This paper will be discussed below.

### *2.2.6 EU at the Operational Level*

The EU does not have a military doctrine, but it has a number of procedures for crisis management operations. The NATO currently influences EU military thinking regarding operational planning, but the EUMS have publicised documents on the matter as well. The EUMS paper on the operating implications of a comprehensive approach, including thinking on conflict prevention on the operational level, is the third in a series, following on the Military Implications of a Comprehensive Approach (MICA) and the Operating Implications of a Comprehensive Approach (OICA).[17] In this paper, it is suggested that within a comprehensive approach, diplomacy should be in the lead while military efforts complement diplomatic strategies. Activities should lead to a desired end state benchmarked by a safe and secure environment, the rule of law, stable governance, sustainable economy and social well being, but no details on the operational level are provided in this paper.[18]

## 2.3 Countries and conflict prevention

In this section, Sweden and the UK, countries that have made considerable steps in incorporating conflict prevention strategies in their foreign security policy, will be briefly discussed. Again, a distinction will be made between the strategic and operational level.

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[16] Joint Communication to the European Parliamant and the Council. The EU's Comprehensive Approach to External Conflict and Crises (2010: 5).
[17] "Towards a CA – The Operating Implications" – EUMS Document for the EUMC 17.05.2010.
[18] Towards a CA – The Operating Implications" – EUMS Document for the EUMC 17.05.2010 (35).

### *2.3.1 Sweden at the Strategic level*

The first step towards formulating a conflict prevention strategy was in 1994, when the Swedish government concluded that efforts in this specific area needed to be intensified. Concrete steps towards formulating an actual conflict prevention strategy were taken in 1996, when the Swedish minister for Foreign Affairs commissioned a report on conflict prevention (Bjorkdahl 2007: 178). In 1997 the first report 'Preventing Violent Conflict – A Study' was presented, aimed at identifying long-term objectives for Swedish foreign policy. This developed into the report 'Preventing Violent Conflict – Swedish Policy for the 21st Century' (2001). In this report Sweden identifies five main tasks for long-term conflict prevention efforts (2001: 14). The tasks fall in the broad scope of an integrated approach as both international economic co-operation in the form of trade and investment, as well as principles of the rule of law and the strengthening of human rights and democracy are identified as main tasks:

> "Sweden's policy aims to contribute, at the international level, to peace and security and to integration, co-operation and sustainable and gender-equal political, economic and ecological development" (ibid.: 18).

The most important government's priorities lie in the (re-)structuring of the conflict prevention dimension in both national and international institutions (ibid.: 15). This corresponds with general Swedish foreign policy, stimulating an internationalist vision, the support for multilateralism and international organisations, as well as the participation in peace support operations (Bjorkdahl 2007: 176).

### *2.3.2 Sweden at the Operational level*

The international role of Sweden in conflict prevention, first pioneered by Dag Hammerskjold when he launched the reinterpretation of preventive diplomacy as Swedish UN Secretary-General, is not just rhetorical. To ensure the implementation of conflict prevention strategies, it was entrenched within development cooperation policies and programmes of the Swedish

International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Sida got the mandate to develop a strategy in 1998 and as a consequence it was integrated in Sida's country strategies. In addition, a Secretariat for Conflict Prevention was established within the Policy Planning Unit, which was supported by an interdepartmental Steering Group. Unfortunately, the Secretariat and the Steering Group proved to be short-lived. Instead, a sum of about USD 10 million was allocated for both direct and structural conflict prevention activities (ibid.: 179). The earlier mentioned government report, lists some very concrete examples where Sweden has taken measures to prevent 'antagonisms escalating into violent conflicts or a resurgence of large-scale violence' (2000: 51). Examples include Sweden's participation in the first UN Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) where forces were deployed in Macedonia, as well as prevention efforts in Hungary, Estonia and Central America. The most recent development is the increased appropriation to military units of 1,4 billion SEK for training capabilities and rapid deployment.[19]

### *2.3.3 The UK at the Strategic level*

Unlike Sweden, the UK does not have a specific conflict prevention strategy. However, in their latest National Security Strategy "A strong Britain in an age of uncertainty: The National Security Strategy" (2010) the notion of prevention plays a central role. In this document, emphasis is placed on the threat that international terrorism poses to the UK. Priority is given to the instruments that have the power to prevent or avert these threats. The main instrument to prevent and avert threats is the 'whole-of-government approach' (2010: 10):

> (…) it places greater emphasis on domestic resilience and a stable global environment. Where we can, we will tackle the causes of instability overseas in order to prevent risks from manifesting themselves in the UK, while being prepared to deal with them if they occur.

Combined efforts of diplomacy, development assistance, and military and intelligence capacity are aimed at ensuring that a potential area of instability does not degenerate to the extent that it

[19] http://www.government.se/sb/d/14471/a/231829 accessed on: 26-05-2014

becomes a threat to the UK. This is furthered in the Strategic Defence and Security Review (2010) where it is stated that the UK will significantly increase their support to conflict prevention and poverty reduction. This includes more direct non-operational defence engagement such as security sector reform, capability building, establishing new training teams, running joint exercises and attaching civilian policy advisers to foreign defence ministries (2010: 45).

### *2.3.4 The UK at the Operational level*

The British Defence Doctrine (JDP 0-01: 2011) defines conflict prevention for the military as a contribution to soft power:

> "Non-combat defence engagement is the military contribution to soft power. It may reduce or negate the need for military intervention to deal with emerging crises, develop an understanding of emerging threats or provide broader humanitarian assistance. Defence exports, key leader engagement, capacity building through the establishment of training teams, the delivery of exercise programmes and arms control engagement can all promote regional stability and reduce the risk to conflict".

This is furthered in the most prominent measure the UK has taken: the so-called Conflict Pool. This is a flexible pool, using ODA and non-ODA resources, rapid response measures and has scope for innovation and risk-taking. The budget is jointly managed by the Department for International Development (DFID), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the MOD (Strategic Guidance 2013: 3). The first priority of the conflict pool is 'upstream conflict prevention' and within this context, three priority areas are identified. These include the working on free, transparent and inclusive political systems on the long term; developing effective and accountable security and justice (including defence engagement); and developing the capacity of local populations and regional and multilateral institutions to prevent and resolve conflicts (ibid.: 9).

### 2.4 Conclusion: from idea to practice?

In this chapter, a brief overview of the academic debate regarding conflict prevention was given in addition to an overview of the most relevant institutions and countries to Dutch foreign policy that practice conflict prevention. From this overview, the following can be concluded.

First, by summarising the conflict prevention policies in practice, it becomes clear how new sets of ideas become to constitute the foreign policy identity and actions of the state and institutions alike. When studying a country like Sweden, their policies at a strategic level have also been implemented at an operational level. The powerful idea of conflict prevention at a strategic level for example, came to influence Swedish prevention practices to such an extent that it even guided practice when a preventive mission to Macedonia was launched. The Swedish foreign policy elite, that held the EU Presidency at the time, promoted the idea of prevention and this largely influenced the decision to take part in the preventive mission (Bjorkdahl 2007: 180). In turn, the success of this mission empowered the idea of conflict prevention even more. The mission ran parallel to the statements made by the UN on conflict prevention and hence the practice of a successful conflict prevention mission also furthered the institutionalisation of the idea within institutions like the UN (ibid.: 181).

The second important feature of this example is that the idea of conflict prevention became further institutionalised precisely through the successful practice of conflict prevention in Macedonia. Adopting new ideas, according to Crenshaw, can be regarded as 'a result of a gradual learning process, not a sudden outburst of enlightenment (2000: 416). An idea is therefore unlikely to become practice when it has not been part of an idea that relies on some common ground. The idea of conflict prevention was one of the founding principles of the UN and has developed ever since. Not only within the UN but also in other institutions and foreign policies the idea got the time to grow, until the right moment was there to truly practice conflict prevention in the case of Macedonia.

Third, the successful case of Macedonia and the concept of conflict prevention in general have also been framed in such a way that both the idea and practice of conflict prevention

become attractive. In all strategic documents the normative elements of prevention are highlighted: it is thought of as a moral thing to do. It fits the general mission of institutions like the UN, NATO and EU as they strive for ideals such as 'freedom', 'security' and 'removal of threats to peace'. Bjorkdahl (2007: 173) adds that no matter how morally appealing ideas are, they need to be framed in the right manner. In the case of countries like Sweden, the UK and France prevention is not only framed as 'the right thing to do' but also as cost effective and less consuming than force deployment on a high violence scale. With the current budget cuts on military expenses and less political will to deploy troops, framing prevention in terms of rational economics proves successful.

While the above discussion on institutions, countries and their policies regarding conflict prevention seem to illustrate the successful practice this idea is not widely held. While Sweden succeeded the overall score of effective prevention operations remains low. It is safe to say that although the *idea* of prevention has taken off in most foreign security policies, *practices* are lacking. The three main problems that were identified at the beginning of this chapter remain. The scope of conflict prevention remains too broad and although prevention is framed in moral and rational economic terms, political will is lacking. One possible explanation for this is that there are still too little successful precedents. As Bjorkdahl (ibid.: 173) argues, an idea needs promotion if it is to take off. Promotion on the level of strategic and operational documents is there but as is shown in the case of the UK and France, the practices that are to promote prevention remain within the own institutional domain. Ideas are put into practice through national policy reforms such as the so-called 'Conflict Pool', but new patterns of behaviour by for example deploying the military in conflict prevention operations on a regular basis are not induced. Hence, it can be concluded that while the idea of conflict prevention is a powerful one in policies as it is constantly referred to in rhetoric, policy documents and action plans it has somehow not become institutionalised in foreign policy behaviour. The relevance of the study of foreign policy through a constructivist lens comes to the fore once again as the answer to why widely held ideas have not turned into practices remains unanswered. More

attention needs to be paid to the reconstruction of the meaning of norms and ideas through language (Fierke 2001) and therefore the next chapters will attempt to answer the question *how* Dutch foreign policy with regard to conflict prevention has been constructed and how this leads to certain practices.

## 3. The policy discourse

As discussed in the first part of this thesis, foreign policy with regard to security issues is treated as a social construct. This means that discourse is:

> "Studying how meanings are produced and attached to various subjects/objects, thus constituting particular interpretive dispositions which create certain possibilities and preclude others" (Doty 1993: 298).

Keeping in mind the aim to bridge the gap between theory and policy practice, this chapter will explore the ideas and storylines of the above-mentioned institutions as recorded in the language of their documents in order to see how this affects cooperation in the field of Dutch foreign security policy. The outcome of the discourse analysis will then be used to explore how the MOD can use the BIV instrument for conflict prevention activities.

### 3.1 Studying the policy discourse

The following steps, abstracted from Warnaar (2010) were taken to untie the discourses with the theory presented by Doty (1993) and Hajer (1993). First, the strategic documents that guide the current Dutch foreign security policy were selected. They include the 'International Security Strategy' (2013); 'In the interest of the Netherlands' (2013); 'A world to gain: A new agenda for aid, trade and investment' (2013); The Dutch Defence Doctrine (2013); and the 'Guidelines on the Comprehensive Approach' (2014) amongst other policy notes.[20] These documents were thoroughly studied to get a sense of the recurrent themes that are addressed in these documents. With the use of NVivo, these documents were inductively coded on the main themes. These main themes and subjects were then linked to predicates in the form of qualities, attributes and properties. Finally, these subjects and predicates have been taken together in order to analyse the subject positioning at various levels. The printscreens below show this method:

[20] The first four documents mentioned above are originally written in Dutch but also published in English. The fifth document on the Comprehensive Approach was not published yet at the time of writing. The policy notes include the 'Nota internationale militaire samenwerking'; 'Kamerbrief Budget Internationale Veiligheid'; 'Antwoorden naar aanleiding van het Verslag van de vaste commissie voor Buitenlandse Zaken inzake Kamerbrief 21501-201, nr. 837 en Kamerbrief 22112, nr 1778'.

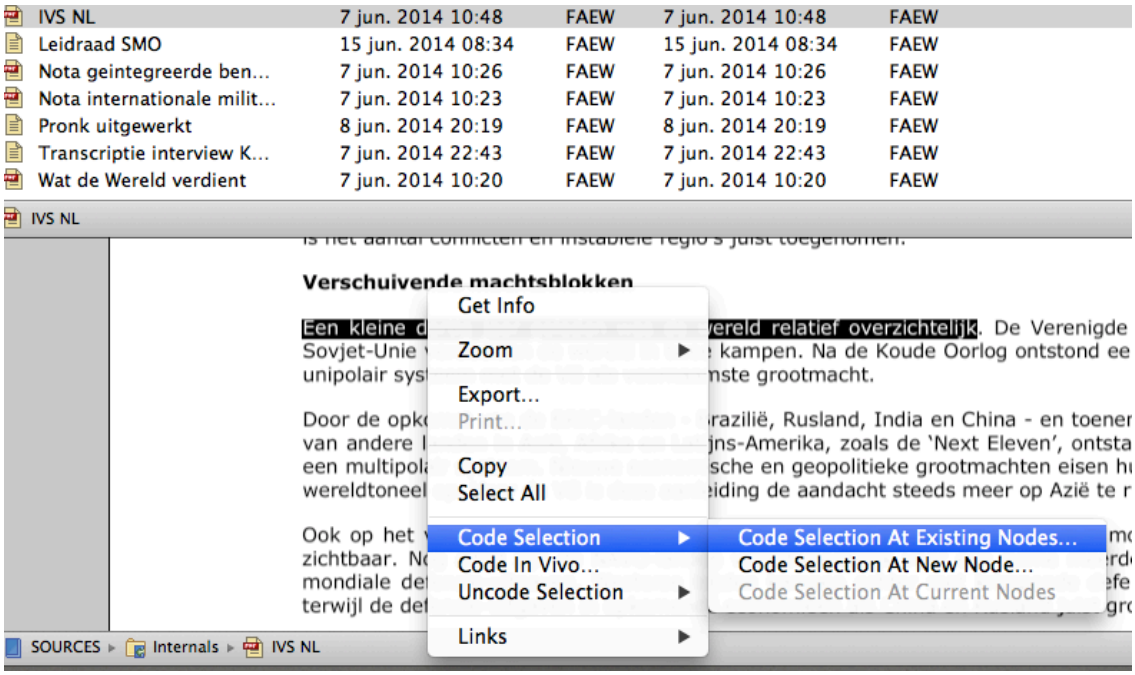


*Fig. 1: Coding process in NVIVO.*

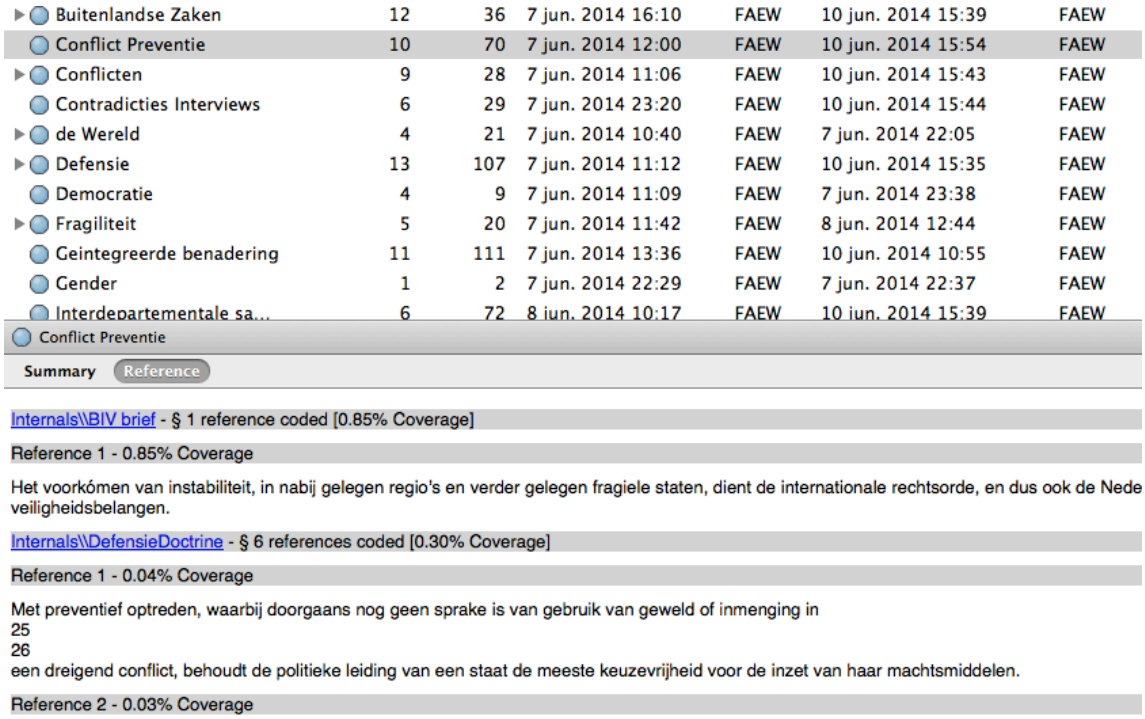


*Fig. 2: A selection of the nodes created.*

The printscreens illustrate the coding process. First, all Dutch policy documents mentioned were uploaded in NVivo. Then, the most important topics within these documents were identified, in

NVivo called “nodes”, sub-topics are so-called “sub-nodes”. Upon the creation of these nodes, every text was read and re-read and every single sentence in all documents were categorised under one or more nodes and/or sub-nodes. After this phase of this coding, various analyses were made, such as a wordcount of the most frequently used words and a word tree in which the most frequently used words were combined with predicates. These analyses helped to discover patterns in predicates, presuppositions, subject positioning in particular and discourse coalitions in general. The results of these analyses are presented from chapter 3.1.1 onwards.

### *3.1.1 The Dutch foreign security policy discourse*

In order to understand the choices and options that the MOD has regarding conflict prevention, the way the Netherlands portrays security challenges needs to be understood first. In this paragraph it will be shown how the comprehensive approach is formulated within the Dutch foreign security policy in order to understand which certain possibilities the MOD has or does not have with regard to conflict prevention. Following Warnaar (2011), the worldview of the Netherlands with regard to foreign security and Dutch foreign policy identity in general, will be discussed along the main themes that were identified in earlier phases of the research.

### *3.1.2 Worldview: past and future*

All the policy documents that have been studied start with an account of the present security environment. According to these documents, the future of the Netherlands and Western Europe in general is one of insecurity. It is implied that the past was conveniently arranged: the US and the former Soviet Union divided the world into two parts and only after the Cold War the world became more and more complex (ISS 2013: 3). Whereas Warnaar (2011) shows how Iranian policy discourse speaks of the US ‘as if’ US hegemony is over and presents Iran as a growing power, the Dutch policy documents do the same, but put the Netherlands and other Western European states in an extremely fragile position:

> "The world has become less transparent and predictable through the rise of new geopolitical and economic powers and changing international power relations" (ISS 2013: 2).

It is argued that the rising BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) demand their place on the world stage while the influence of the Netherlands decreases. Issues like cyber security, piracy, cross-border crime and the threat of terrorism have become timely threats (ibid.). From the list of threats and the past – future dichotomy, the image arises that the Netherlands already finds itself in a very fragile positions and hence 'as if' other countries are the ruling world powers that pose a threat to Western European countries like the Netherlands. Interesting to note here is that while the *subject positioning* of the Netherlands vis-à-vis the BRIC countries and other undefined 'new actors' is extremely fragile and modest, the *predicates* the Netherlands assigns itself and other actors are less fragile and modest. For example, with the changing geopolitical and economic world order, the Netherlands is insecure about its freedom, security and prosperity: the responsibility for *global governance* that came with the *position* of the Netherlands and Europe in general, now shifts to the new powers, that, according to the ISS, might not take this task as serious as the Netherlands did:

> "The new actors on the international stage are ready to engage with the world. They are advancing their own interests, ensuring that they acquire and retain access to raw materials, energy, advanced technology and knowledge. They are also investing more and more in strategic infrastructure – like ports – beyond their borders and in other continents, including Europe. At the same time, however, they do not always shoulder their responsibility for global governance (which comes with power) or they do not always do so in a way the Netherlands considers appropriate." (ISS 2013: 3)

From this abstract it becomes clear that *subject positioning* takes place on two levels. The first level of subject positioning takes place on the moral level. Although the 'old' powers slowly make place for the 'new' powers, in the abstract from the ISS shown above it can be concluded that the Netherlands believe the new powers will pose a threat to certain Western values such as freedom, security and prosperity and the responsibility of global governance in general. At the same time this implies that the Netherlands does take this responsibility. Moreover, with regard

to the threat of (bio)terrorism, the Netherlands states it is developing medicine against infectious diseases but warns that it may fall in the "wrong hands" with scientists that want to misuse this knowledge in developing new weapons (ISS 2013: 5). Thus, with regard to the past and future, the Netherlands does not take its own position in the world for granted because of geopolitical shifts, but at the same time the Netherlands fears that these shifts come with a degradation of (western) morals such as democracy, human rights and international responsibility in general.

The second level can be regarded as a time-space dimension where the 'old' powers that have ruled the world from before the Cold War, are pushed aside by the 'new' powers. In some documents these powers are defined more clearly than in other documents, but in general they are defined as either the BRIC countries or the 'New Eleven'. A distinction is made between these two broad categories and the categories 'Africa' and 'Middle East', which will also have a place in the future as described in the documents. Because of these categories, space can be divided into three broad categories: Western Europe (the US is sometimes included and sometimes excluded); the 'New Eleven' and/or BRIC countries; and Africa and the Middle East as a last category. Different assumptions with regard to insecurities, securities, threats and opportunities come with these three categories and will be discussed below.

### *3.1.3 Worldview: insecurity and security*

The dichotomy insecurity/security is central to all documents that have been analysed for this research: in total 414 times a reference is made to the words 'security' and 'insecurity'. In the table below, an overview represents the subjects that were most frequently linked to the predicates 'insecurity' and 'security'.

| Insecurity | Security |
|---|---|
| **Weapons of mass destruction** | Strong allies (EU, NATO, US) |
| **Cyber security** | Advanced technology |
| **Piracy** | Prosperity |
| **Transnational crime and non-state actors** | Democracy and the rule of law |
| **Threat of (nuclear, chemical and** | Non-proliferation treaties |

| | |
|---|---|
| **biological) terrorism** | Solidarity |
| **Competition for natural resources** | Development |
| **Changes in the global economy and climate change** | Legitimate and responsible governments |

*Fig. 3: Insecurity and Security.*

In the paragraph on 'past' and 'future', it was argued that the world is roughly divided into three categories, the Netherlands and its Western allies; the BRIC countries and/or 'Next Eleven'; and Africa and the Middle East. These categories also apply when it comes to threats of insecurity and guarantees of security. Africa and the Middle East are linked to the threats of piracy, terrorism, non-state actors, competition for natural resources and transnational crime:

> "There are two sides to Africa (…). This can be seen clearly in West Africa, where strong economic growth – in Nigeria and Ghana, for example – is accompanied by terrorism, organised crime, trafficking in persons, drugs and arms, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and rising fundamentalism. The Western Sahel, in particular, is an increasingly unstable zone, with the threat of spillover into North Africa, as illustrated by the situation in Mali (…) (t)errorist networks have been able to flourish in places where state power has completely or partly disappeared. New and existing conflicts fuel radicalisation (both in the Muslim world and in the West) drawing new jihadists – some from the Netherlands – to the cause" (ibid.).

Another kind of insecurity is linked to the BRIC countries and/or 'Next Eleven' as they are the initiators of change in the global economy, have the possibility to develop weapons of mass destruction and pose a threat to cyber security in addition to transnational crime:

> "Latin America and the Caribbean have seen increasing democratisation, but drugs and arms trafficking continue to threaten security (…) (t)he evolving nuclear arms race in South Asia also warrants attention (…) China and Russia are keeping pace with US technological progress, investing in aircraft carriers, missile technology, space travel, cyber warfare and other innovations" (ibid.: 4-7).

The Netherlands and its Western allies are linked to the subject of security and predicates such as prosperity, democracy and the rule of law. But, the Netherlands portrays itself more nuanced than this. Insecurity and security are intertwined. Insecurity can also mean security. For

example, advanced technology is regarded as a future provider of security to the Netherlands in the form of medicine or cyber space. At the same time these developments are also a source of insecurity when they are misused by an at times specific (Iran, China, North Korea, Russia) and at times unspecific (fragile states, poor countries) other. The Netherlands does not appoint the source of all insecurity to specific countries or developments. A nuanced view is maintained throughout the documents, which on the one hand makes the claim that the world becomes more and more insecure reasonable and therefore assumable. On the other hand, by remaining unclear about the *specific* threats and countries that pose a threat to the Netherlands, an overall sense of urgency is enforced: the threats come from everywhere and the Netherlands needs to prepare itself. Closely related to this sense of urgency and classification of insecurity and security is the definition of problems and solutions. This will be discussed in the coming paragraph.

### *3.1.4 Worldview: problems*

Referring to Frerks, quoted in the first chapter of this thesis, it is often through discourse that ideas are shaped and solutions to problems are envisaged (2007: 46). Or as Fairclough remarks (2001 in: Warnaar 2011: 145), identifying problems is a powerful discursive tool, not in the last place because it creates the opportunity to present the audience with solutions.

The Netherlands positions itself strongly in the globalised world in multiple ways and this globalised world is sometimes framed as a problem and sometimes as a solution. The core argument is that internal and external security can no longer be easily distinguished from each other. The main problem to internal security is external insecurity and instability, marked by the terrorist attacks of 9/11. The source of external insecurity and instability can be traced to the security-development nexus; the premise that there can be no development without security, or security without development. Underdevelopment often leads to conflicts and conflicts cause underdevelopment. Some documents also take a look closer at home to look for problems of insecurity. In the document 'A world to gain: A new agenda for aid, trade and investment' (2013)

reference is made to the financial issues and high levels of unemployment in some European countries. The main problem, however, lies elsewhere. *Other* countries have problems and these problems can become *our* problems. Identified problems are poverty, conflicts, migration, water scarcity, climate change, lack of nutrition, transnational criminality, instability, radicalisation, terrorism and illegal trade. These problems become problems of the Netherlands when extremists choose Dutch targets or when 'we' experience the consequences of the lack of rule of law in countries, for example through piracy or transnational crime.

The problems are all identified in relation to the three strategic interests that the Netherlands has clearly defined for itself. These are:

1. The defence of the Netherland's own and allies' territory;
2. An effective international legal order;
3. Economic security.

The Netherlands reflects on its own vulnerability. It is stated for example that the Dutch economy is vulnerable if the supply of energy, raw materials and fossil fuels is threatened. The identified problems affect the strategic interests of the Netherlands on two different levels, namely the physical and institutional level. External instability can pose a physical threat to the Netherlands on both the territorial and economic field. It is argued that instable regions near Europe, cause problems with regard to illegal immigration in Europe and heightens the risk of a terrorist attack. Also, with regard to economic security, the problem is that the Netherlands, and Europe in general, is almost entirely dependent on imports (ISS 2013: 10). Again, there are two categories of countries that possibly pose a problem to the Netherlands' import economy. First, the 'new powers' might block our access to raw materials and may pose a problem to our trading routes. Subtle references to these problems are made throughout the text:

> "The new actors on the international stage are ready to engage with the world. They are advancing their own interests, ensuring that they acquire and retain access to raw materials, energy, advanced technology and knowledge. They are also investing more and more in strategic infrastructure – like ports – beyond their borders and in other continents, including Europe" (ISS 2013:3).

By making a reference to ports, the Netherlands indirectly addresses an important feature of the Dutch economy, namely the port of Rotterdam. Hence, the new actors may want to ensure their interests in strategic infrastructure, including ports such as the port of Rotterdam. In addition to the new powers, the 'underdeveloped' or 'poor' countries in conflict also pose a problem to Dutch (security) interests. For example, piracy, that is the consequence of illegitimate governance and protracted conflict in general, is a problem to Dutch companies that are present in the Gulf of Aden or the Gulf of Guinea. In addition, conflicts in this region can hamper traditional trading routes through economic blockades or simply unsafe and unstable trade relations. These problems then, demand solutions that are also provided in the documents. While many solutions are proposed, two are of special importance for this thesis.

### *3.1.5 Worldview: Solutions*

In the policy documents, the word 'solution' is in most cases found jointly with the word 'durable'. The solutions that the Netherlands has to world problems are and should be durable. Two durable solutions are of special importance to the Netherlands are conflict prevention and a so-called integrated approach, meaning that solutions should be holistic, addressing all causes of the problem. These two solutions should all take place within an international framework. The Netherlands should aim to work together with the EU, NATO and to a lesser extent with the UN. Other regional organisations such as the AU and ECOWAS are not considered as partners:

> "Encouragingly, regional organisations like the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS are increasingly taking the lead in tackling regional conflicts, with the support of the EU and others. As a result, African countries are now better able to ensure their own peace and security" (ISS 2013: 7).

The relationship between these organisations is not equal as the EU supports the AU and ECOWAS in handling their *own* conflicts. They do not plan and execute interventions together, according to this abstract (nor was this found elsewhere in the documents that were studied). The EU and NATO, on the other hand, are central to Dutch policy. The strategic documents of the EU and NATO that were discussed in the previous chapter define identical problems and

solutions and also do appeal to the individual member states. The Netherlands takes this task seriously:

> "It is of great importance that the Netherlands actively contributed to the deployment in crisis situations and gives meaning to the allied obligations such as NATO and EU in a concrete manner" (BIV letter 2013: 1).

The predicates in this abstract are proactive. Membership to the NATO and EU is not an empty sleeve. The Netherlands will contribute in an *active* and *concrete* manner and adhere to the obligations. It provides the best guarantee to Dutch security, stability and prosperity not only on a political, but also on a military level in the common European Security and Defence Policy. The Netherlands wants to see the EU to become an even stronger force in the area of security in order to press more coherence in the activities. This leads to the policy aim of the comprehensive approach.

The comprehensive approach is an often heard term and its meaning differs per context. According to the different documents, the Comprehensive Approach means…

| | |
|---|---|
| **Guidelines on the Comprehensive Approach** | **…A pragmatic and flexible means.**<br>**…A whole-of-government approach: applying or strengthening cohesion in the organisation and conduct of the Dutch Government. A process by which the Dutch government in collaboration with others strives to find the most effective combination instruments and actors with the aim of promoting security and stability in fragile states and conflict.**<br>**…The Netherlands does not use all instruments, or not at the same time. It could be that Dutch efforts concentrate on one field.** |
| **International Security Strategy** | …An optimal mix of diplomatic, military and development instruments.<br>…Personal and financial contributions, where possible via multilateral and bilateral programmes, where attention is paid both to the short term (humanitarian aid) and long term (durable development).<br>…Civil and military instruments embedded in a broader policy that focuses on good governance, security and development on the long term. |
| **BIV letter to the Chamber** | …An effort of both civil and military capacities. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | …A 3-D Approach in international crisis management operations and peace missions.<br>…Coherence between the activities of the MOD, MFA and, when necessary MS&J. |
| **Dutch Defence Doctrine** | …That military power is only especially effective in combination with other means.<br>…That activities of all capacities need to be embedded in a comprehensive strategy that aims to realise strategic goals.<br>…That a common strategy and end-state are excluded from the comprehensive approach.<br>…Joint, multinational and interagency. |
| **Note on the Integrated Approach** | …A way to realise the goals of the extern policy of the EU.<br>…A way to complement and strengthen the goals and activities of the actors involved.<br>…The coordination of activities, such as the exchange of political and security analysis and military logistic support. |
| **Interviews** | …The art to combine the local and long-term perspective with military efforts.<br>…The coordination of activities via a comprehensive planning process.<br>…Sometimes an overwhelming discourse.<br>…A method in which the different actors act upon a shared analysis of the problem.<br>…A mind-set rather than a method.<br>…Analysing problems from multiple dimensions. |

*Fig.4: Visions on the Comprehensive Approach.*

From this brief overview it becomes apparent that there is an overall idea of what the comprehensive approach entails, but the definitions differ per strategic documents and per interviewee. They sometimes even contradict each other. For example, the Dutch Defence Doctrine first calls it a common strategy and a few pages later it is stated that the comprehensive approach does not entail a common strategy. Also, whereas some documents state that comprehensive approach is a 3-D approach (BIV letter to the Chamber), other documents, such as the International Security Strategy and the Guidelines on the Comprehensive Approach explicitly state that the comprehensive approach is not 3D, or more than 3D. What should be noted here is that time plays an important role. The concept has developed over the years, through the different documents that have been published on the matter. This shows that the concept is malleable and subject to change, dependent on the context. In general, the

comprehensive approach can be seen as a means of collaboration between the different ministries in fragile states and conflict situations. What all documents do stress is that the comprehensive approach can prove very valuable in the context of conflict prevention. When the different ministries share their analyses of fragile states and conflict situations, they are able to design policies that fit the so-called conflict curve. This way, they can attempt to prevent conflict.

### *3.1.6 Conflict prevention*

Conflict prevention is a central theme within the comprehensive approach. The BIV letter to the Chamber summarises the use of conflict prevention:

> "The prevention of instability in neighbouring regions and fragile states further away, serves the international legal order and therefore the Dutch economic and security interests" (2013: 1).

Hence, the Netherlands puts its own interests central to the policy focus of conflict prevention within a comprehensive framework. For example, the first sentence in the ISS on the policy focus of prevention (2013: 3) is as follows: "Prevention is not only better than cure, it is also cheaper". This sentence relies on the presupposition of the adage that it is better to prevent something than to cure it, and states in addition that it is cheaper relying on the common sense notion that preventing violent conflicts is better than to intervene in them. This policy focus is then related to the threats that were identified earlier in the ISS. For example, prevention is the most effective strategy in the fight against organised crime; important in the face of new challenges resulting from climate change; and an effective counterterrorism policy. *How* conflicts are prevented remains quite open. A timely integrated analysis (early warning) and strategy development (early action) are required and the International Security Budget and the Stability Fund can facilitate this.

First, with regard to the *predicates*, prevention is, according to the various policy documents, *cheaper*. Also, *innovative* and *flexible* means to support prevention such as the International Security Budget and Stability Fund are part of conflict prevention. In addition, prevention is the *most effective* way in countering nuclear terrorism and *important* in the face of

new challenges. Prevention furthermore prevents the harm of Dutch interests, or conflicts in general. While the attributes of 'early warning' and 'early action' are given to conflict prevention in the documents, the interviewees were concerned over the actual meaning of prevention. For example, former Minister of Development Cooperation and Defence, Jan Pronk[21] argues that conflict prevention is not possible. Instead, we should speak of the prevention of conflict escalation. Some policymakers within the ministries argued that prevention also means *awareness* of situations in the world. Others immediately attribute activities of the Dutch government to the meaning of conflict prevention, for example capacity building or SSR programmes. Thus, while everyone agrees on the rational and (more or less) moral ideas behind prevention, that it is cheaper and better, exactly *what* conflict prevention *is* remains unclear.

Second, the *presuppositions* can be found in the predicates. Prevention relies on the common rational and moral ideas that do not need further explanation. These presuppositions that conflict prevention is also the tackling the exhaustion of natural resources and the tackling of the causes of insecurity rely on the idea of the security development nexus, meaning that there can be no development without security and no security without development.

Third, with regard to the *subject positioning* the role of the Netherlands is important. Within the international context, the Netherlands has put itself forward as candidate for the Security Council as it hopes to ensure coherence with the legal institutions and promote Dutch priorities such as the rule of law and human rights. At the same time, it states that the Netherlands "sets great story by early warning and early action, *where possible* in close collaboration with other countries and organisations". This is interesting, as throughout the strategy, the Netherlands cannot stress interventions within an international framework enough. For example, it positions itself as an influential actor within the NATO and EU framework, stating that the Netherlands has contributed significantly to the EU's cyber strategy and that it is in part at the Netherlands' insistence that NATO considers the need for closer information exchange (ISS 2013: 14). Despite this contradiction, the Netherlands positions itself

[21] Interview held in the Hague with former Minister of Development Cooperation and Minister of Defence, Mr. Pronk on June 4, 2014.

consistently on two topics. First, that it is embedded in the international framework and especially embedded within the NATO and EU. Second, that its priority is the promotion of the rule of law and human rights, which is not only a priority in fragile states, but also in counterterrorism: this must respect the rule of law and people's fundamental freedoms even though terrorism is a threat to the Netherlands (ibid.: 15).

In sum, conflict prevention is a priority to Dutch foreign policy, and the Netherlands believes that it can play an important role in this priority with regard to the promotion of the rule of law and within an international context (as a candidate for the Security Council and with the NATO and EU allies). What conflict prevention actually entails is unclear in both the documents and the interviews. Preventing conflicts is not only a moral thing to do in fragile or conflict-ridden countries, but also in the interest of the Netherlands as external (in)security is interlinked with internal (in)security. Prevention is effective in countering threats and immediately thought of as 'capacity building', 'SSR', 'early warning' and 'early action'. What these activities precisely entail and how they help to prevent conflicts, or the escalation of conflicts, remains vague. We know that prevention should entail a combination of diplomatic, military and development instruments and that these need to be flexible. But how, when and by whom these instruments are deployed is unknown. The next paragraph will analyse the Dutch Defence identity and cooperation with the MFA in relation to conflict prevention.

### 3.2 The identity of the Ministry of Defence

The title of this paragraph does not capture the content of this paragraph, nor does it capture the meaning of the word 'identity'. 'The identity of the Ministry of Defence' implies that there is an identity of the Ministry of Defence in the first place and presupposes that the Ministry of Defence is a whole. Although the military is known for its characteristic organisational culture, differences exist within the organisation. In line with the constructivist tradition, it is therefore argued that identities are not fixed or static. Instead they are flexible, multiple, differ per context and change over time. As Eriksen (2002: 32) notes, identity is a fluid and ambiguous concept

which can be controlled to a certain level by the agents themselves, depending on the social situation. The discourse of the MOD partially defines the identity of the organisation. Certain frequently used words, statements and pictures in public documents portray the MOD in a strategic way. During the interviews held for this thesis, the ideas and opinions expressed on matters such as conflict prevention, the comprehensive approach and cooperation in general coincided for a large part with the official discourse. Although they largely coincided, it should be noted that the opinions expressed during the interviews cannot be generalised to the entire organisation and also that the multiple identities of the MOD change over time and even per setting. That is to say, the interviews that were held on the military barracks in Apeldoorn and Wezep bring along a different context than the the Hague office. This paragraph will illustrate how the MOD describes itself in documents and interviews. Doing this will show where the MOD sees where they relate, and how they distinguish themselves from the other departments. This helps to understand where cooperation with regard to conflict prevention is possible in the future and where it is not.

### *3.2.1 Us, at the Ministry of Defence*

The military is an instrument of the Dutch government. In all documents and interviews it is stressed that the MOD is the part of the government that executes policy and in most cases the policy of the MFA. As the MOD always defines itself as an organisation that executes policy, it also gives itself a special status that cannot be found amongst documents of other departments. The current Minister of Defence, Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert, introduces the document 'In the interest of the Netherlands' (2013: 1) and states:

> "Defence is not a luxury but a fundamental investment in our freedom, security and prosperity. Pride is legitimate concerning the on going performance of the Dutch armed forces. Our soldiers provide important contributes to international security and stability, they represent humanitarian and economic interests, strengthen our allies and assist in securing the national security".

From this abstract it follows that the MOD is not only fundamental to Dutch interests, but also assists in humanitarian crisis. It is a strong organisation that the Netherlands can be proud of, as the goals of the organisation are not limited to international security but also include less obvious activities. The necessity of the organisation is stressed in these times of austerity measures. Also, a sense of solidarity comes to the fore by linking *our* soldiers to *pride* and *important contributions*. In addition, both the document 'In the interest of the Netherlands' and the National Defence Doctrine are clear on the goals of the armed forces and the tools it has to obtain these goals. The predicates attached, in addition to the clear definition of goals, separate the ministry from the MFA and MS&J. Following Warnaar (2011) a distinction can be made between 'others like us' and 'others unlike us'.

On the political-strategic level, the MOD considers itself to a large extent the same as the MFA and MS&J. That is to say, in the Defence publications and in the interviews held with colonels, lieutenant colonels and civil servants, the MOD does not explicitly define itself as 'different'. They interact on a regular basis in common projects, such as the BIV and the writing of the Guidelines on the Comprehensive Approach. In addition, the MFA hosts a permanent Defence advisor, a colonel who is familiar with both the procedures within the MOD and the MFA. On the more operational level and descriptions of procedures at the tactical level, the MOD does distinguish itself from the other actors in the field. Below, an overview is given of the predicates that the MOD attaches to itself and accordingly the subject positioning of the MOD will be discussed.

| Sources | The armed forces consist of… | The task of the armed forces is… |
|---|---|---|
| **Dutch Defence Doctrine** | …Preparedness, cohesiveness, effective leadership, doctrine, adaptability.<br>…A hierarchic structure.<br>...Mental, physical and conceptual aspects. | …To secure flexibility, adaptability and resilience.<br>…To deliver motivated, trained and skilled personnel.<br>…To be capable to execute all military tasks defined by the government.<br>…To realise or obtain goals that are unambiguously described and achievable. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **In the interest of the Netherlands** | …Capabilities to complement and expand civil capacities with technological means and professional, trained personnel.<br>…Basis and niche capacities.<br>…Seven strategic functions. | ...To handle diffuse threats and risks and to be employable in all phases of conflict.<br>…To serve Dutch security interests.<br>…To protect the own and allied territory; enhance the international rule of law and stability; support civil authorities with the rule of law; emergency measures; and humanitarian relief on both the national and international level. |
| **Guidelines on the Comprehensive Approach** | …The right capacities in short-term stabilisation missions. | …Shape a secure (work)environment for solving conflict situations.<br>…Contribute to the reform or building op the security sector by means of advise, training and mentoring.<br>… |
| **Interviews MOD** | …Skilled personnel trained to obtain predefined goals.<br>…A coherent, but peculiar organisational culture.<br>…Processes and clearly defined steps to take towards end states. | …To be trained to find an opponent and defeat him.<br>…To work towards clearly defined goals.<br>…Obtain short-term goals in order for other actors to step in (*We kick some ass and get out again)*.<br>…To deter. |
| **Interviews MFA** | …A hierarchical structure that is hard to get through.<br>…Practically skilled personnel, with a less broad perspective than the MFA.<br>…The aim to curb the scale of violence, MFA addresses socio-economic issues. | …To simplify it to the extreme, the military is there to defeat the enemy and the MFA is there to aid the local communities.<br>…Carry out their mission and stick to their mission. |

*Fig.5: Subject positioning of the MOD.*

Following this comprehensive schematic overview it is illustrated that identity is a relational concept. In the interviews held outside The Hague, at the more tactical level, the interviewees clearly defined the (simplified) task of the armed forces: to find and defeat the enemy. These statements were most of the time nuanced later on in the conversation, but all interviewees referred to this simplification. When they elaborated on the identity of the MOD both in the

interviews and during the conducted fieldwork at the MOD, employees always refer to processes, goals and preferred end states. Predicates that relate to these include: skilled and trained personnel, coherence, preparedness, adaptability and flexibility to achieve those end goals. The Defence publications define the MOD, the armed forces and the military in the following predicates (Dutch Defence Doctrine 2013: 10):

- "What we do, we do *well*";
- Led by *structures* and *processes*;
- Able to *adapt* ourselves *quickly* under changing circumstances and able to work *effectively* in chaotic and life-threatening situations;
- The military must deal with *complex situations* under *extreme* circumstances and *proceed judiciously* taking into consideration *ethical* and *moral* principles, *unity of effort*, *professionalism* and *determination.*

While the identity of the MOD is further explored in for example components of fighting power and capacities (ibid.: 74), the above-presented predicates are the most frequent ones. The discourse in the Dutch Defence Doctrine speaks for itself. The MOD defines itself as a disciplined organisation with ethics and a high morale. The personnel is trained to work under extreme circumstances and able to follow up procedures towards end goals. The documents demonstrate (1) certitude about the organisation, for example through the predicates attached to the MOD that are illustrated above; (2) the hierarchical and organised structure of the MOD; and (3) the subservience of the organisation to the Netherlands as a whole, and the MFA in specific.

It would require an additional thesis to describe and explain the different ways in which these three elements come to the fore during the daily routine at the MOD. As one of the few civilians at the Operations Directorate, it was not hard to note that the official discourse of the documents continues in practice. The companionable and disciplined atmosphere, elaborated on in the preface of this thesis, was a certainty in this six-month period at the MOD. The most relevant observation for the purpose of this research is that the structures, processes and end goals described in the strategic and operational documents are found in day-to-day tasks in the

same manner. When my supervisor, a lieutenant colonel, explained me something, he always referred to goals and steps to take. He drew figures, lines and connections and worked with colours. He did not only do this to explain situations to me, but also did this for himself even during meetings; to me it seemed as if he translated oral information directly into visual information. I observed the same procedure during the interviews I held at the MOD, every person I spoke started to draw the situation for me. One lieutenant colonel shared an anecdote and told me that he had an informal meeting with civil actors in the field in which the lieutenant colonel immediately started to draw lines and processes with sticks in the sand and then came to the conclusion that the civil actors did not think in the same way; they did not have a timeline, nor clearly formulated processes let alone end goals. All in all, in this research it is found that there is a sharp resemblance between the written discourse and the practical discourse at the MOD. Both the MOD and the MFA also noticed that this line of thinking not only distinguishes the departments from each other but also influences the cooperation. The uniform planning directives on the next page are abstracted from the COPD and visualised in figure 6. The figure exemplifies the way of thinking of most officers:

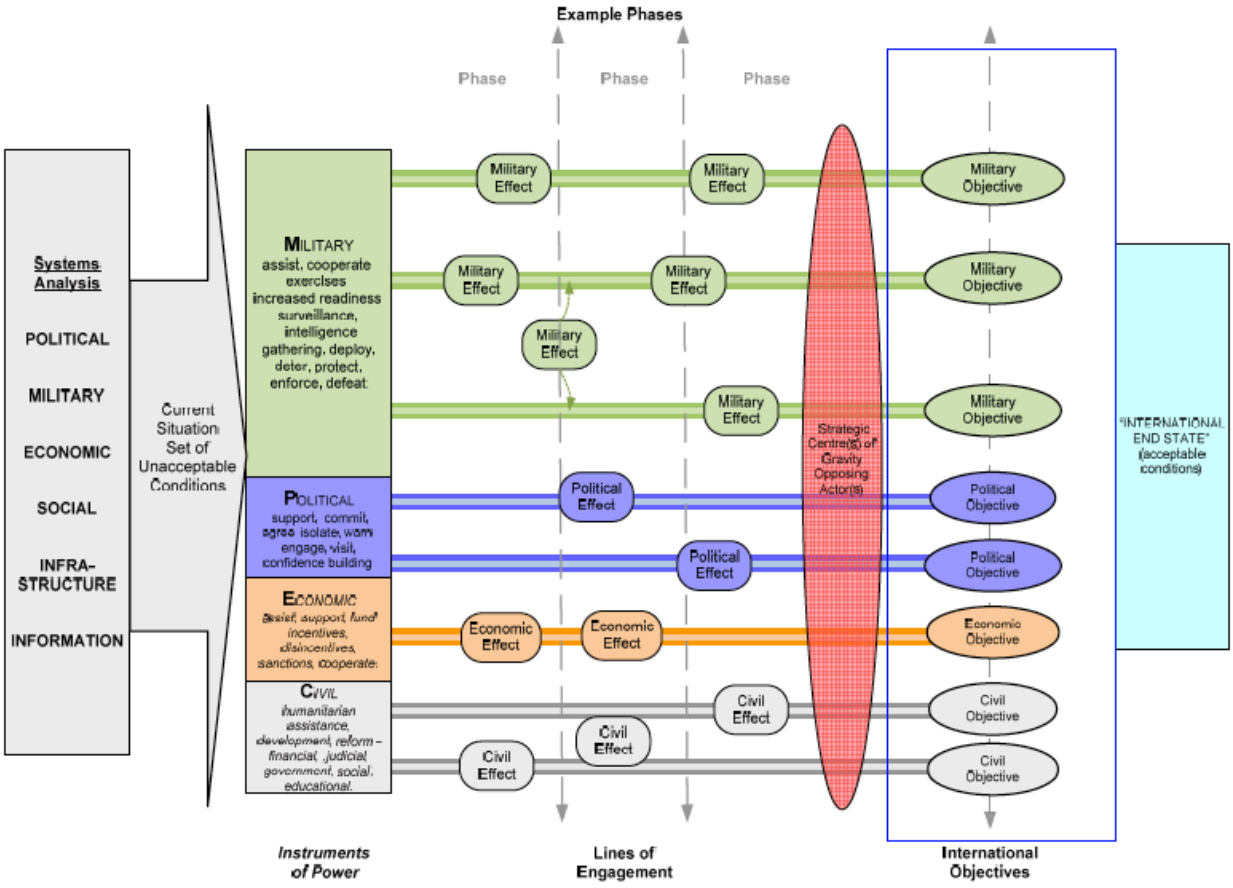


*Fig. 6: COPD Planning model.*

This figure illustrates a way of military thinking: there are separate instruments of power that can implement activities parallel to each other and lead to specific objectives that are part of a larger international end state. Military effects take place at set times and are planned in such a way that they ideally target the strategic centre(s) of gravity; the element of power that is to be targeted in an opponent and protected in a friend. The successful targeting of the strategic centre then leads to a military objective. A more detailed scheme gives an overview of such an operational design:

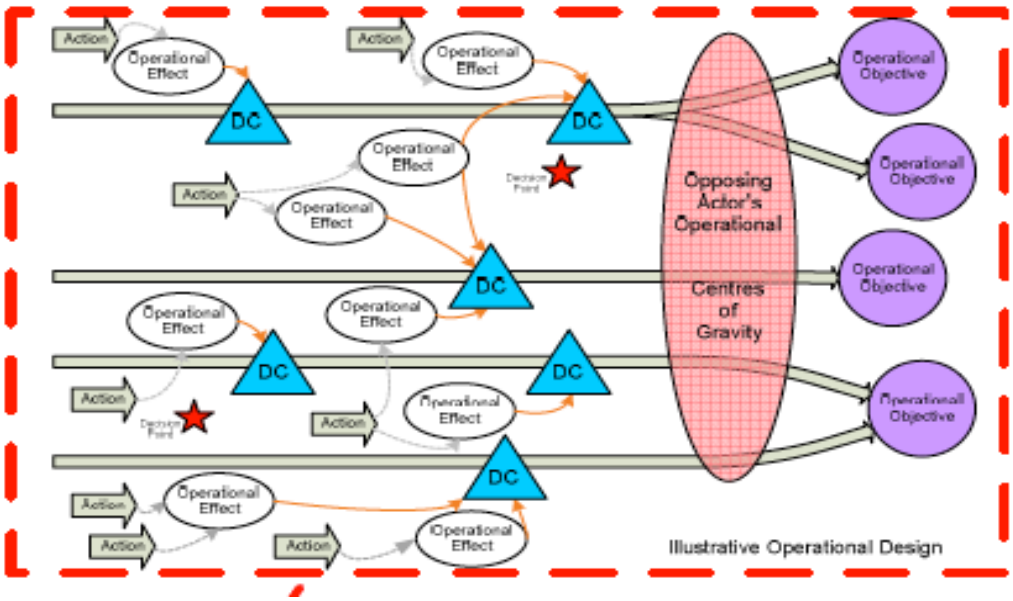


*Fig. 7: Detailed COPD Planning Model.*

The triangles with 'DC' stand for 'decisive condition' meaning that the operational design within the military domain is condition and effect based. As the scheme shows, military actions lead to operational effects that lead to decisive conditions. These designs illustrate the argument that the officers at the MOD think in processes and steps, or building blocks as it were that lead to end states that were established at the beginning of the operation. Arguably, this serves the incredibly complex military apparatus but at the same time it also hampers flexible cooperation with other actors that might not understand this way of thinking. This has been proved in practice. During the process of writing the 'Guidelines on the Comprehensive Approach' for example, a factual and partially ideal process was formulated in which the roles of the different ministries are described. This model is abstracted from the NATO Crisis Response Planning (shown on the following page) and consists of six phases. (1) Indications and Warnings of Potential/Actual Crises; (2) Assessment of the Crisis; (3) Development of Response Options; (4) Planning; (5) Execution; (6) Transition. The model has a military appearance, and indeed it is. This model has been translated by the MOD in cooperation with the MFA (shown on the following page). Again it consists out of six phases: (1) Orientation; (2) Analysis and appreciation; (3) Integrated action options; (4) Planning and preparation; (5) Execution; (6)

Evaluation. This is an example of discourse, but also of the comprehensive approach *par excellence.* It is discourse, because it visualises a way of thinking that influences the language and the other way around. 'Assessment' or 'Analysis' brings along a different connotation, just like 'Response Options' and 'Action options'; words that were heavily debated in the process of writing the 'Guidelines on the Comprehensive Approach. It is also a positive result of the comprehensive approach: 'we' at the MOD translate a way of thinking comprised in a scheme for 'them' at the MFA. This is further elaborated on in the next paragraph.

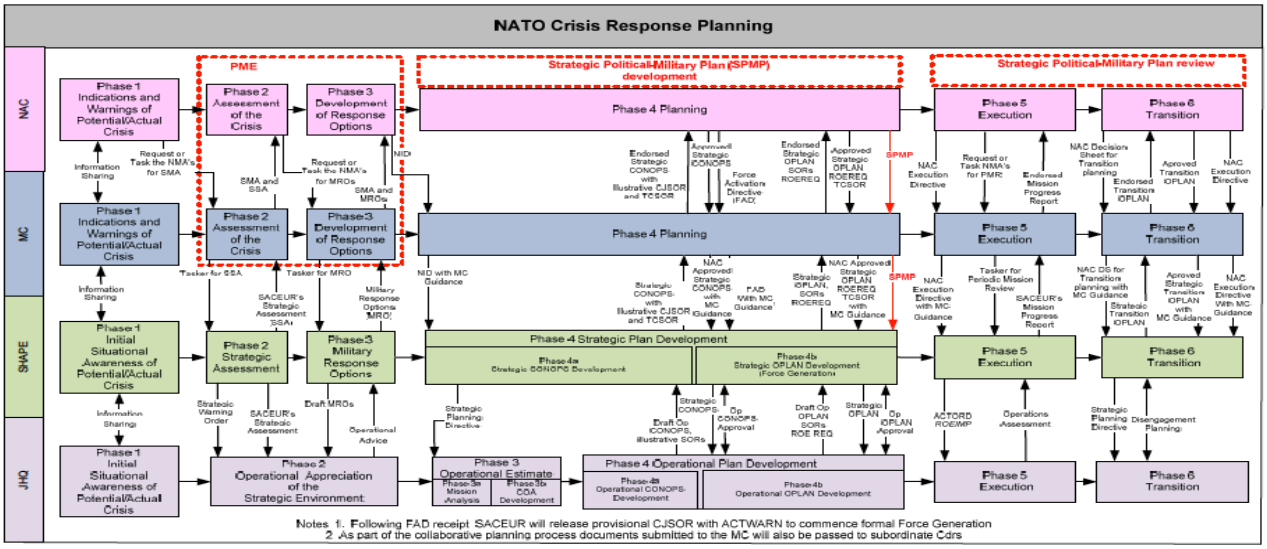


*Fig. 8: NATO Crisis Response Planning.*


*Fig. 9: 'Guidelines on the Comprehensive Approach' planning.*

### *3.2.2 Them, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

During my time at the MOD, I experienced friendly and successful cooperation between the MOD and the MFA. That is not to say however, that their discourses differ and that this sometimes hampers mutual understanding. Just like the interviewees at both the MOD and the MFA limited the task of the MOD to 'defeating the enemy'; many other simplifications about both ministries came to the fore. For example, the traditional end goal of the MOD is perceived in terms of defeating the enemy with the use of force and preferably, the armed forces shape the situation in such a way that they can leave and other actors can step in. As one interviewee put it: "*kick some ass and get out again";* an adage that was largely agreed upon by the MFA. Whereas 'use of violence' and 'short term' are predicates that belong to the MOD, 'humanitarian' 'diplomatic' and 'long term' belong to the MFA. Moral and rational arguments underlie these (self-)ascribed identities.

The rational argument that is presented largely relies on a cost-benefit concern. The military apparatus is expensive and requires full commitment. Military operations are not 'low-key', they cannot be decided upon quickly and the efforts are usually embedded in an international operation. This not only requires resources but also public and political support that is not mobilised easily for operations that do not (seem) to directly protect or support Dutch interests. The military, a colonel reasoned, needs to design its operations in such a way that they are quick, effective and limit a certain threat. For all other activities in a fragile state or conflict area the military is too expensive in terms of resources and moral support. Diplomatic and humanitarian efforts on the other hand, are less radical and can be conducted on a low-key level.

While the ministries agree on the rational arguments with regard to the measures in fragile and conflict states, they differ on the moral arguments. The MFA does not need to explain the morality of their diplomatic and humanitarian efforts, or so it seems. While 'A world to gain: A new agenda for aid, trade and investment' (2013) remarks that the Netherlands must shift from aid to investments and that public support for humanitarian aid decreases, it is still

perceived as the right thing to do. At the MFA interviewees stated that they were there to *help* the people, to *assist* them to build a secure future. The MOD on the other hand needs to counter the violent stereotype it suffers from. Interviewees explained they always need to compensate for their uniform and weapon in friendly situations. One lieutenant colonel always elaborates on the details of his personal life prior to a presentation or meeting with civilians as he feels the need to put them at ease. In military missions, all interviewees experienced hesitance of civilian personnel and the local population to interact with the military. The military has weapons and it is their purpose to use violence, goes the discourse. The discourse of the written documents targets this oversimplification by emphasising that:

> "(…) The mental component plays an important role in this regard, especially because it demands cultural awareness, empathy, an open mind and also proper initiative, creativity (…) and the attitude to be careful with the use of force" (Dutch Defence Doctrine 2013: 75).

Also, at the MFA colleagues in uniform were approached more formal than when they wore their civilian outfit. Because of these observations I understood their urge to show that "they are human too" for the bigger public.

There is no doubt about the fact that the military is the power instrument of the state and that deterrence is one of their seven strategic functions. That is not to say that there is a current trend of rapprochement of the military towards civilians in, for example, the form of strengthened civil military relations. However, the discourse on positive civil military relations is not yet fully acknowledged in practice and this possibly hampers cooperation between the departments.

### *3.2.2 Storylines, discourse coalition and discourse structuration*

The previous paragraphs of this chapter analysed - a part of - Dutch foreign security policy. The integrated approach and conflict prevention were highlighted and the predicates and subject positioning with regard to the MOD were briefly discussed. This was done to describe the context in which both the MOD and MFA operate and explore the reasoning of the official

discourse through an analysis of the current policy. As Doty (1993) argues, also quoted at the beginning of this chapter, studying how meanings are produced and attached to various subjects and objects create certain possibilities and preclude others (ibid.: 298). The storylines that were also mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis clearly came to the fore in this discourse analysis. The three main storylines that can be distinguished are (1) the security-development nexus; (2) fragile states; (3) interrelatedness of internal and external security. Following the constructivist school, these storylines are linked to each other and cannot be examined in isolation. The above-presented discourse analysis discusses the storylines in detail. In sum, the storyline dictates that the problems in fragile states are not one-sided but a mix of political, ethnic, socio-economic and security problems. The first three factors often cause security problems and in turn security problems can cause problems related to development, hence the adage 'no development without security and no security without development'. A related problem is that external insecurity poses a threat to our internal security because of transnational criminal networks, cyber crime and terrorism. This storyline has united the actors within the foreign security policy field in a discourse coalition.

*A discourse coalition* unites a set of actors around specific storylines. Hajer (1993) argues that discourse coalitions do not arise in a historical vacuum. They emerge in the context of historical discourses which contain knowledge of how similar phenomena were dealt with in the past (ibid.: 45). This is exemplified in the coming of age of the comprehensive approach. The discourse coalition in which all actors within the field of international peace and security take part has developed gradually. NGO's, knowledge platforms, the private sector and governments share the idea that conflicts need to be addressed in a holistic manner. Small steps have been taken, until Canada was the first to adopt the '3D' approach in its foreign security policy. Gradually the discourse coalition took shape in the Netherlands and structuration of the Dutch comprehensive approach is a fact.

To recall Hajer (ibid.: 46), *discourse structuration* occurs when a discourse starts to dominate the way a society conceptualises the world. It is clear that the security-development

nexus is a discourse that is now structured within the Dutch government given the discourse analysis presented above. The threats that are defined in the international security strategy and the solutions that are provided are all part of this greater comprehensive approach discourse. The question is, however whether this discourse has been institutionalised yet. At the time of writing this thesis, the 'Guidelines on the Comprehensive Approach' will be published. This is the first document that, as it is officially called, anchorages policy that is already common practice. This makes it the first attempt to institutionalise the comprehensive approach discourse in addition to the instruments (such as the BIV and the interdepartmental consultative body) that already exist. The MOD and MFA as key actors are however still in the process of acting in accordance with this (almost) institutionalised discourse. For example, early warning and early response mechanisms that were discussed in chapter two are not institutionalised yet. Information sharing between the MOD and MFA on a structural basis with the purpose of identifying (and possibly acting upon) potential conflicts is not yet an institutionalised practice. While a discussion on the current BIV practice will be discussed in chapter four, the remainder of this chapter gives some reflections on the above-discussed Defence identity in relation to possibilities and preclusions with regard to conflict prevention.

### *3.2.3 Conflict prevention: a common effort?*

Every interviewee that was asked about conflict prevention first commented the notion of conflict prevention itself and posed me the question: what is conflict prevention according to you? I often heard that I needed to explain what conflict prevention entails according to me as they did not know how to define it. As mentioned previously, former Minister Pronk[22] proposed to not speak of conflict prevention, but of the prevention of conflict escalation. The interviewees on the other hand proposed post-conflict activities to fall within the definition of conflict prevention. Again other interviewees refused to speak of conflict prevention in the first place as they believe they are never able to actually prevent conflicts. This confusion about the concept

[22] Interviewed in the Hague, 04-06-2014.

can be visualised by means of a figure abstracted from the Dutch Defence Doctrine. In this figure the security role of the government is divided into seven strategic functions:


*Fig. 10: The seven strategic functions of the government.*[23]

From the post-conflict normalisation phase to the pre-conflict deterrence phase there are activities that can be categorised under conflict prevention, as the policy documents do not explicitly define conflict prevention. The following activities are proposed within the different functions and are relevant to conflict prevention:

| Strategic function | Activities |
|---|---|
| **Anticipation** | Acquire and maintain a strategic intelligence position; Implement scenario analyses and future reconnoitring; Military cooperation; Maintenance of flexibility, adaptability and resilience. |
| **Prevention** | Multinational military cooperation; Security Sector Development; Support of diplomatic missions; Collective training with regional partners. |
| **Deterrence** | Erect blockades; Requite and prevent attacks. |
| **Normalisation** | Humanitarian aid; Reform; Advise and training of security officers and organisation in post-conflict countries after the stabilisation phase. |

*Fig. 11: Strategic functions of the government.*

[23] Figure 10 (Dutch Defence Doctrine 2013: 41). Clockwise this figure can be translated as: anticipation, prevention, deterrence, protection, intervention, stabilisation and normalisation.

With regard to conflict prevention the Dutch Defence Doctrine is a bit vague. It states that conflicts of interest often have a political or economic nature and that solutions should also be found in political or economic spheres. But,

> "Sometimes threat of military power is used in conflicts of interest or confrontations. This effort has a protective, preventive or deterrent character" (2013: 25).

This includes the protection of national interests, prevention of escalation through military diplomacy (showing the flag, military visits) and offering military advise, assistance and training to befriended states. Deterrence includes the deployment of offensive military capacities and the execution of military exercises near the conflict area; use of force is not the aim. So far the Dutch Defence Doctrine on conflict prevention that coincides with the explanation of the military instrument in general:

> "The military instrument distinguishes itself from other instruments of power through the threat or actual use of force. The use of credible force is central to the military instrument" (2013: 23).

The comprehensive approach is stressed with regard to the military instrument as it is stated that the military instrument alone cannot provide a durable solution to conflicts. Practical examples of cooperation however, are only mentioned in the table presented above on the strategic functions of the government. The underexposure of other capacities of the military in this official discourse coincides with the statements made during the interviews that the military is there to defeat or deter the enemy and leave again. The MOD's identity put forward in paragraph 3.2.1 is also reflected in the conflict prevention activities that the interviewees proposed.

*(1) Interviewees at the MOD*

Most interviewees at the MOD reiterated prevention activities in fragile states that are also mentioned in the Dutch Defence Doctrine. They include:

- The training of the local military in Africa;
- Executing military exercises of the Dutch military;

- The reconstruction of the infrastructure and rebuilding of public facilities such as hospitals, schools and orphanages;
- Security Sector Reform;
- Schooling the local population in technical subjects.

These ideas on the capabilities of the military in conflict prevention fit the identity of the MOD and the Dutch Defence Doctrine. They are practical, hands-on and mostly target non-civil actors in fragile states. The activities are measurable and can include clear end-states. The reconstruction of infrastructure and public facilities provide visible outcomes. SSR activities and the training of the local military is more time consuming but again they include clear procedures, tasks and desired outcomes. In addition to these obvious activities, a few interviewees included less evident activities, namely:

- Influencing the population and media through intelligence techniques;
- Deploying military officers as diplomats in negotiations with local armed forces and political actors;
- Deploying military officers as civilians.

These last two activities do not immediately belong to the identity of the MOD. The last idea, for example, was proposed hesitantly: "Do not cite me for this, this is an absolute no-go but I believe it would come in handy from time to time". Why is this an absolute no-go? Taking into account paragraph 3.2.1, 3.2.2 and the policy documents coming from the MOD, 'pride' and 'determination' are predicates that belong to the armed forces. To deploy a military officer as a civilian so that specific (military or technical) know-how is transmitted *without* the image or assumptions that come with the military contradicts this pride and determination. Although officers can deliver an important contribution to activities deployed by diplomats and humanitarian workers, this is hindered because of the uniform. The interviewee recognised the prejudices and stereotypes that come along with a military uniform and thought of a way to overcome this problem. The opposite reasoning goes for the 'military officer as diplomat'. The Dutch Defence Doctrine hints at military political activities by for example the showing of the

flag. The interviewee reasoned that, when military uniforms provide an obstacle to prevention activities, they also provide possibilities. During political negotiations, officers in uniform can have a deterrent effect or bring a sense of urgency. Also, in negotiations where the local military is involved, Dutch officers in uniform are possibly better able to level with like-minded local officers. While these 'out-of-the box' views provide food for thought, others critically reflected on these ideas. While the perception of *others* on the military might impede prevention activities, the *self-ascribed* identity of the military also impedes prevention activities. As one officer noted: "We did not join the military to *talk*, we enjoy *action* and *thrill*." Thus, next to obvious preventive activities that suit the MOD well because of the structured and decisive nature, new activities provide barriers because of the military's ascribed and self-ascribed identity.

*(2) Interviewees at the MFA*

Prevention activities that can be deployed by the MOD according to the MFA include:

- Security Sector Reform;
- Training of the local military;
- Monitoring and observation.

The interviewees at the MFA mentioned traditional military activities that target the local military. They stated that the military brings along certain presuppositions that may hamper the work of diplomats and humanitarian workers and they should therefore stick to military activities. The interviewees did however all mention that the task of the intelligence service should become more important. They can provide useful and additional information to the information that is gathered by the embassies. In the Hague, these information sources should be coordinated and information needs to be shared on a regular basis. Thus, with regard to conflict prevention activities the MOD and MFA share a discourse on most parts. The military can provide a useful contribution with regard to intelligence, SSR and reconstruction activities.

Considering the sharing of information improvement is needed, but further activities in the field need to be implemented by the MFA and NGO's.

With regard to the comprehensive approach and conflict prevention, three sub-conclusions can be made based on the interviews and the discourse analysis.

First, the discourse on the comprehensive approach is quite clear on what this entails. The comprehensive approach means at least that the departments draw care for matching their activities, whether this means to 'deconflict' their separate activities or true cooperation (Guidelines on the Comprehensive Approach 2014). With regard to conflict prevention, this means that early warning is at the least a starting point. Early warning means that departments do not need to integrate their activities, but share information. This ameliorates further cooperation in later stage, because sharing information means that the actors come together regularly, are able to share visions and hence share a discourse.

Second, with regard to this discourse, it can be concluded that although the discourse is now structured in official documents as well as in the interviews, it has not been institutionalised yet. 'Stove-piped' thinking was in every interview mentioned as something that needs to be prevented and *is* prevented by the comprehensive approach, but the preventive activities that were mentioned show otherwise. While the comprehensive approach could encourage a new, innovative discourse it appears that the departments remain compartmentalised in their thinking.

Third, the interviewees are all willing to cooperate with other departments and discourse institutionalisation does not happen over night. This will be explored further in chapter four, on the BIV.

## 4. Practices: The International Security Budget

In the conclusion of chapter three it is stated that discourse institutionalisation does not happen over night. The comprehensive approach has been welcomed as "an idea whose time has come" but it requires time for a discourse to become a natural way of thinking and speaking. In addition, discourses always come along with practices that suit the dominant discourse. The international security budget (BIV) is such an activity. The budget has been welcomed in July 2013 and is supposed to serve as an instrument of the comprehensive approach. The question is whether the BIV really is a result of the comprehensive approach discourse and in turn also complements and strengthens the comprehensive approach discourse. This chapter will first introduce the BIV fund. Then, the official discourse on the BIV is compared with the interviews. Here recurrent topics in the official discourse and the interviews are identified, compared and analysed. The chapter ends with a conclusion.

### 4.1 What is BIV?

The BIV is a fund that has been put in place to prevent and reduce conflict situations. The BIV was introduced in July 2013, when a letter was sent to the Chamber to inform them on the BIV. The budget has been installed to further develop het comprehensive approach, but has also been explained as a budget cut. It contains 250 million euros and is available for the MOD, MFA, FT&DC department and MS&J. The FT&DC department is responsible for the justification of the allocation and also accountable for the evaluation of the programmes and activities funded by BIV. Programmes and activities that are eligible for funding are discussed in an interdepartmental task group. One financial, one policy and one activity advisor represent each ministry in this interdepartmental task group. The Steering Group for Missions and Operations (SMO) functions as an interdepartmental advisory body in the decision-making process. The SMO will meet three times a year to discuss the main allocation of the BIV.

Following this brief overview of what the BIV is, this will now be explored in-depth using the same discourse analysis techniques that were used in chapter 3. The official BIV documents

will be compared with the interviews on six recurrent themes. This will help to understand the regularity in the particular ideas, concepts and categories *in which terms* BIV, conflict prevention and the comprehensive approach in general are discussed. In addition, it identifies the practices in which this discourse gets reproduced (Hajer in: Howarth & Torfing 2003: 300).

Accordingly, the BIV in general, the BIV and its activities, the BIV in relation to the comprehensive approach, the cooperation between the different departments and the future of the BIV will be discussed.

### *4.1.1 The BIV in general*

In the BIV letter to the Chamber the budget is explained as an important contribution to the 3D approach in international crisis management and peace operations. The budget covers the expenses made with regard to international security. It builds upon experiences and lessons learned from missions in Afghanistan, South Sudan and Burundi in which development, security and diplomacy go hand in hand. The table below shows the predicates related to the BIV, and its subject positioning:

- BIV exemplifies the importance of the 3D approach;
- BIV needs to be relevant to development and should contribute to solving the problems in a country or region;
- The strategic interests of the Netherlands will be taken into account when dividing the fund;
- The different interests and perspectives of the involved actors will be taken into account when they are financed by BIV;
- The importance of peace and crisis management operations is emphasized through the introduction of the budget;
- The operational 3D concept is strengthened through BIV.

This concise list of predicates brings two kinds of subject positioning to the fore that are also present in Dutch foreign security policy in general. First, the BIV is put forward as an important institutionalised mechanism of the 3D approach. It is through BIV that the Netherlands emphasises the importance of the 3D approach (that, according to the interviewees should be

called comprehensive approach) and because of BIV, the Netherlands believes it is capable of becoming a leading country within the UN, NATO and EU on the 3D matter (BIV letter to Chamber 2013: 2). Hence, the BIV is important for the position of the Netherlands in multilateral organisations. Second, although the BIV is presented as important to the Dutch position in the world, it leaves room for interpretation. ODA as well as non-ODA activities can be funded from the BIV, activities range from R2P to the deployment of enablers such as transport helicopters and the security of embassies. Also, it should be relevant to development and take into account the strategic interests of the Netherlands. This brings about a comfortable position for the involved ministries when viewing it from a discursive perspective. The budget is important for the Netherlands with regard to its international position but at the same time the budget is framed in such a way that the departments can continue with their existing activities.

Whereas the BIV letter to the Chamber relies on the discourse of the comprehensive approach and moral arguments to introduce the budget, the interviewees only partially agree. Next to this idealistic discourse, they attach more rational predicates to the BIV:

- BIV will improve the coherence of the different activities of the ministries;
- BIV is an instrument of the comprehensive approach;
- Every ministry defines BIV differently;
- BIV is nothing but a budget;
- BIV is a concealed a budget cut;
- BIV is not flexible;

When responding to the question "what is BIV according to you?" interviewees answered that BIV is an instrument that develops the comprehensive approach. Because of the common budget the ministries have to work together and this enhances the comprehensive approach. Later on in the interview, these statements were nuanced. It was stated that BIV is a budget cut, that it is a sensitive topic and that heated debates have dominated interdepartmental meetings on the matter. "The file gives me a headache", one interviewee noted. Interestingly enough, in almost all cases, statements that the topic is sensitive were again nuanced at the end of the interview: "I know that there are debates about the use of BIV. But I do not agree with the debates, I believe

that it provides us with a great change and I only see a positive future ahead". This relates to what Hajer (2005) notes on the assumption of mutual understanding. Different political actors can, through storylines and discourse coalitions, communicate with each other in a coherent manner. However, the assumption that these different actors mutually understand each other when they speak about the same storyline within one discourse coalition is false. Although interviewees re-uttered the official discourse at the beginning of the interviews, they later on made assumptions on what the *other* ministry would think of the budget. For example, a selection of interviewees at the MFA stated that the BIV is especially hard to deal with for the MOD, as they believe the MOD sees it as a concealed budget cut. The MOD on the other hand stated that the budget must be especially difficult for the MFA, as *they* are in the end responsible and need to demonstrate that the required 'development relevance' has been met. At the same time the interviewees also made assumptions about their own department. Multiple times it was stated that *most colleagues* see the BIV as a budget cut that obstructs their current activities with regard to international peace and security, but they *personally* do not see it that way.

In sum, the comparison between the official discourse and the interviews reveals that in first instance the policymakers repeat what is stated in the official discourse. This would mean that the assumption of mutual understanding is correct. However, only when the interviewees develop their ideas later on in the interview, it shows that both at an inter- and intradepartmental level assumptions are made about what the other thinks of the BIV. Following discourse theory that discourses get reproduced in practices (ibid.: 2005), it is plausible to assume that cooperation is negatively affected because of this false idea of mutual understanding.

### *4.1.2 BIV and its activities*

According to the BIV letter to the Chamber (2013) the activities that will be financed by BIV include amongst others:

- Activities related to the four categories of responsibility to protect (R2P): genocide prevention, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing;

- Monitoring of peace agreements, education and training, (SSR), border control, protection of goods flows, rule of law and capacity building;
- Activities that support peace operation in fragile states, for example transport aircrafts or security for diplomats and embassies in areas where needed.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, the activities need to be relevant to development, can be ODA and non-ODA and take into account the Dutch strategic interests. Also, relief aid will not be funded by the BIV nor will the BIV contribute to the maintenance of the armed forces.

Because of the broad range of activities that can fall under the BIV, the interviewees expressed all kinds of possible ideas. The interviewees that work in the Hague stated that the activities that the Netherlands undertake in Burundi are a perfect example of future BIV activities. In addition, two other frequently mentioned activities include conflict prevention and the development of early warning systems in fragile states. Although the interviewees stated that the BIV facilitates the development of new, comprehensive activities, they have not yet discussed possibilities in detail, nor have they carried out such comprehensive activities. The failure to discuss or carry out comprehensive activities is justified along three *storylines*. First, all interviews state that the BIV needs time. "2014 is a transition year" and this statement excuses the rather slow coming of age. Second, it is unclear what the 'development relevance' requirement precisely entails. The MFA refers to the storyline of the 'security-development nexus' and states that it is an improvement that development relevance is required. This will, according to the interviewees at the MFA, force policymakers to reflect upon the long-term effects of their activities and programmes. It will tackle the root causes and thereby contribute to *sustainable* solutions in fragile states and conflict-ridden regions and countries. Moreover, they state that this might be problematic for the MOD as the nature of their activities is short-term. The interviewees at the MOD find this a vague requirement and believe that it is more difficult for their activities to demonstrate that they are relevant to development than the activities of the MFA, that are in the eyes of the MOD most of the time directly believed to be relevant to development. Hence, the development of the BIV is according to the interviews thus

also hampered because they do not agree on what development relevance is. This leads to the third storyline, namely that the terms of reference are unclear and vague both for both ministries. For example, the interviewees are critical of the budget reserved for, for example, transport helicopters and the security for embassies. How is this relevant to development? They wonder. Also, it is explicitly stated that the personnel of the MOD cannot be paid by the BIV fund while according to interviewees at the MOD personnel from the FT&DC department in, for example Burundi, can be paid by BIV. This is perceived as unfair and reinforces the MOD in their opinion that the BIV is a concealed budget cut for the MOD.

From this account the idea emerges that although the storylines the interviewees at the different ministries speak of are the same, they nonetheless talk in different terms.

### *4.1.3 BIV and the comprehensive approach*

According to the BIV letter to the Chamber, the BIV stresses the importance of the 3D approach. Political and military aspects will be looked at, in which the starting point is that the activities that are undertaken are relevant to development. *How* exactly the BIV will contribute to the 3D approach, is explained later in the letter (2013: 3):

- *Where possible*, context analyses will be part of the preparation and decision-making with regard to the use of the BIV fund;
- Activities, are, *where possible,* part of long-term strategies. In addition, rapidity and flexibility are essential;
- ODA and non-ODA activities are part of the BIV fund;
- Decision-making is prepared and carried out at an interdepartmental level.

From a discursive point of view, the first two operational aspects mentioned leave room for interpretation while the last two aspects are clear financial and organisational implications. The last two operational aspects also have a clear link to the comprehensive approach that is described in the ISS and Guidelines on the Comprehensive Approach. These documents argue for coherence in the activities carried out. When decision-making is carried out at an

interdepartmental level, all actors are involved. In the interviews this is also a positive aspect that is stressed. All interviewees perceive the interdepartmental task group as an improvement in comparison to previous procedures. In the meetings that I was able to attend, I found that these were not about the decision-making per se. Instead, the meetings facilitated the exchange of the norms and rules of the respective ministries. The meetings were primarily about getting to know each other and understanding each other's discourse. This was observable at the surface as the participants involved literally questioned each other's distinctive speech: "What do military officers mean when they say…" or: "What are the procedures at the MFA with regard to…". With regard to the actual decision making the most recent development, on June 27 2014, is that the letter on the actual spending of the BIV has been postponed until September. Considering the 'flexible and rapid, long-term' activities, an interviewee noted that the proposals for activities are based on the current activities and is nothing more than guesswork.

In sum, on the basis of this research it can be concluded that the BIV letter shows many similarities with the grand Dutch foreign policy discourse. A degree of coherence between the activities of the ministries is preached in addition to flexible and rapid means and activities. This is however advised in an unconstrained manner that is reflected in the actual practices of the BIV task group involved. While the interdepartmental meetings have led to an (infrequent) exchange of norms and rules, the clause "where possible" seems to exempt the BIV group –for now- to design comprehensive activities.

#### *4.1.4 The future of BIV*

The BIV letter states that the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) will investigate the fund in 2016. Until then, the BIV will be reported on once a year in addition to the yearly estimates of incomes and expenditures. Except for this factual future of the BIV, the letter is lacking a significant strategic vision for the future:

> "With BIV the Netherlands aims to expand the Dutch position on the international stage" and: "With BIV the Netherlands aims to address a variety of activities, ranging from the four categories

> of R2P to the monitoring of peace accords, education and training, SSR, border control, protection of good flows, rule of law and capacity building but also enablers such as transport helicopters and the security of embassies" (BIV letter to the Chamber 2013: 2).

The interviewees at the MOD criticise the BIV fund for this and state that partially because of this lack of strategic vision on comprehensive activities, the main (hidden) task of every ministry is to hold on to their part of the budget. Interestingly enough, the interviewees do believe that the BIV can especially contribute to the development of conflict prevention. "Conflict prevention should become the main activity within the BIV fund" two interviewees argued. Referring to the premises of constructivism that structures determine action and action determines structures, the BIV can prove as an important catalyst for change. This institutionalised practice can force policymakers to think differently about their way of working. This is already proven by the interviewees at the MOD that now initiate a fundamental change by starting to think about prevention instead of intervention. Hence, while the discourse on BIV is unconvincing and lacks a clear strategic vision, the institutionalisation in material terms is likely to bring about a change in the norms and values of the actors involved.

## 5. Conclusion

This thesis has sought to describe the Dutch foreign policy discourse in relation to the comprehensive approach and conflict prevention. In addition, it has described a modest part of the identity of the MOD in relation to the MFA through a discourse analysis of the Dutch Defence Doctrine, interviews and observations of the daily routine. The relevance of this research can be found in the method. The method and the findings of this research rely on a constructivist theoretical framework that emphasises the norms, values and ideas that constitute policy. Investigating norms, values and ideas through a discursive lens is a complex and infinite exercise as language consists of signifiers that refer to other signifiers (Doty 1993: 302). Together, they construct various truths about social phenomena. This shows us not to take policy documents for granted, but study the underlying assumptions and its effect on policy. The first research question of this thesis that attempts to answer the question *how* the comprehensive approach is made possible within the context of the MOD. This study has exposed the Dutch foreign security policy and in addition it has attempted to study the multiplicity of actors within their different cultures and perceptions (Frerks 2007: 47). The first question is answered alongside three concepts of Hajer's theory (1993) discussed in the first chapter of this thesis.

First, three *storylines* help to construct the MOD's policy on the comprehensive approach in general and conflict prevention in specific.. To recall, storylines are condensed statements summarising complex narratives, used by people as short hand in discussions (Hajer in: Howarth & Torfing 2003: 302). The main storylines abstracted from the ISS and the Dutch Defence Doctrine are: (1) the analysis of threats as presented in the ISS (2013); (2) the security-development nexus; and (3) the moral and rational identity of the Netherlands in general and the MOD in specific. **The threats that are identified** in the ISS build upon the idea that the threats the Netherlands has to counter are diffused and can come from everywhere. Whereas the past is portrayed as comprehensible, the present and future are badly organised. Different kinds of threats are attributed to different groups of countries. One of the main threats relevant

to this research result from 'fragile states', a metaphor for countries in which the state is unable or unwilling to provide for its citizens. Fragile states are communicated as a tremendously urgent problem that needs to be addressed before the Netherlands experiences serious consequences. This is related to the second storyline, **the 'security-development nexus'.** This is used as short hand in every policy document that has been studied and explains both the problem and the solution. A lack of development and security cause fragile states and the enhancement of both development and security are the solution to fragile states. This storyline also gets shape through the third storyline, **the moral and rational identity** of the Netherlands in general and the MOD in specific. The Netherlands is presented as a bearer of the international legal order, freedom, responsibility for global governance and democratic values. This makes the Netherlands, and the MOD as an instrument of the government both capable and responsible to ameliorate the situation in fragile states. The MOD is presented as an effective means that can help to achieve this goal.

Second, these three storylines help to create *discourse coalitions* that propose solutions to these problems. Discourse coalitions revolve around the practices that conform to storylines and two of these practices are the development of the **comprehensive approach and conflict prevention strategies.** The MFA and the MOD as the main actors in Dutch foreign security policy, form a coalition on the idea that they should cooperate on a structural basis, based on the storylines presented above. Conflict prevention is presented as a moral, strategic and rational activity to employ. Moral, because "to prevent is better than to cure" (ISS 2013: 13) and it helps the promotion of the rule of law and human rights. It is also strategic, because it tackles the root causes of possible threats to the Netherlands such as organised crime and terrorism. Lastly, it is presented as a logical, rational option because prevention is assumed to be cheaper than intervention.

Third, while there exist identifiable discourse coalitions between the MFA, MOD and (to a lesser extent) the MS&J, *discourse institutionalisation* is lacking. While the BIV *is* an institutionalised aspect of the comprehensive approach, it does not lead to an

institutionalisation of the discourse coalitions. This research has illustrated that the discourse of the MFA and MOD differ to such an extent that institutionalisation is hampered. The MOD's way of thinking is structured and organised and relates to the operational processes described by the NATO. In general, the MFA has no knowledge of these operational processes and discards MOD's references made to these processes as "too much military language". In chapter three it was argued that, although *integration* is –explicitly- not an aim of the comprehensive approach, coherence between activities of the MOD and MFA could also be hampered because of these different discourses. This leads to the second research question of this thesis: *what can the contribution of the MOD be with regard to conflict prevention within the BIV?*

As argued above, the BIV is an institutionalised aspect of the discourse coalition that exist between the MFA, MOD and MS&J on the comprehensive approach. Referring to Wendt, the BIV, as a material component that underlies the constant process of interaction has initiated three sorts of changes within the MOD. These changes make conflict prevention possible within the comprehensive context. In the first place, the BIV has facilitated the *exchange of meanings*. Because of the BIV interviewees noted that they were forced to plan meetings with each other. Although at the beginning these meetings were difficult and both parties were unhappy with the course of action, the current interpersonal relationships are good. As noted in chapter three, the meetings provide the MOD and the MFA with a chance to explain their activities and way of working. In the second place, this brings about an exchange of *norms and principles*. The MFA transmits the knowledge it has on the civilian side of conflict, especially in conflict prevention situations, to the MOD. The MOD can use this information to gradually adapt their identity, made up of norms and principles, to an identity that better suits conflict prevention activities if necessary. Third, the BIV shows the *capacity for change* of the MOD. The actors that are actively engaged in the process of enhancing the comprehensive approach are, directly or indirectly, transforming the structures bit-by-bit. An example of this is for example the process of writing the 'Guidelines on the Comprehensive Approach'. Change is initiated by formally documenting new procedures in policy, but also informally through the change of norms and principles and

exchange of meanings described above. To contribute to this change, the next chapter suggests concrete activities for the MOD taking into account the identity of the MOD and academic literature on conflict prevention.

## 6. Suggestions for the development of conflict prevention activities

The academic discourse that was presented in chapter two on conflict prevention coincides with the findings of this research as presented in chapter three. In chapter two, three main debates within in the academic discourse were identified: (1) the scope of conflict prevention; (2) the early warning/early response gap; and (3) the political (un)willingness.

With regard to the first debate, it became clear that the interviewed policymakers do not have a clear idea of what conflict prevention actually is. Precisely because of the broad scope of prevention, policymakers find it difficult to think of concrete preventive activities. In most cases, the interviewees referred to *post-conflict* programmes and missions as 'possible preventive activities'. The mentioning of *post-conflict* programmes and missions as good examples of conflict prevention, such as Burundi, seemed to me as an empty sleeve. The interviewees mentioned Burundi as a conflict prevention activity only after a long pause of thinking and the interviewees at a more tactical level, that have actually worked in Burundi were very critical on Burundi as a showcase for conflict prevention. Still, the confusion about the concept is fully comprehensible. In the Dutch Defence Doctrine it is stated that:

> "Conflicts of interest often have a political or economic nature and the solutions should also be found in political or economic spheres. Sometimes threat of military power is used in conflicts of interest or confrontations. This effort has a protective, preventive or deterrent character" (2013: 25).

These fall within four of the seven strategic functions of the government: 'anticipation, prevention, deterrence and normalisation'. This illustrates the broad scope of possible preventive activities and it logically follows that the MOD is unsure about what conflict prevention precisely *should* entail when four of the seven strategic functions can be called 'prevention'. In addition, Aggestam (2010) differentiates 'structural' from 'operational' prevention. 'Operational' prevention would fit the identity of the MOD, as elaborated on in chapter three. Operational prevention is based on short-term strategies and aims to control and remove imminent causes to violent escalation between parties (ibid.: 13). Pronk's statement that

we should speak of the 'prevention of conflict escalation' instead of 'conflict prevention' would fit operational prevention well. However, in the ISS (2013) it is stated that the instruments of power at the disposal of the Dutch government should engage in more long-term strategies where possible. While the interviewees at the MFA argue that the task of the MOD in conflict prevention should be limited to operational prevention so that they will focus on structural prevention, the interviewees at the MOD also see concrete possibilities for the armed forces to engage in structural prevention. This would fit the aim of the Dutch foreign security policy but requires an adaptation of the core activities of the MOD. Concrete suggestions made by interviewees at the MOD are listed below.

Second, it is argued that the early warning/early response gap currently deserves the most attention in light of the publication of the 'Guidelines on the Comprehensive Approach'. The problem, according to the Carnegie Commission (1997) is *not* that there is enough early warning. Early warning analyses are widespread, contrary to the conventional wisdom that there is not enough early warning. One interviewee at the MFA also pointed out that: "we have enough information sources to *know* where conflicts are about to break out". However, structural interdepartmental consultations are lacking. These are necessary to discuss possible response options in the earliest possible stage, before, to quote an interviewee "the papers are writing about a possible conflict". The combined amount of information of the MIVD, AIVD and embassies should be able to respond as quickly as possible and if we follow the reasoning of the ISS, the quicker the cheaper.

Third, the early warning/early response gap relates to the question of political willingness. BIV, or the comprehensive approach in general needs according to some interviewees literally "nice pictures". That is to say the involved ministries need to visualise their cooperation and if this is not possible, there is less incentive to undertake action. Conflict prevention is an activity that is difficult to capture on camera. It is impossible for the ministries to show to the Chamber and the public in general that they have prevented a possible conflict because of combined military/political/economic efforts. Especially the deployment of the

military brings along heavy political debates and this decision-making process is time-consuming. As the nature of conflict prevention activities should be quick and preferably 'invisible' this is almost impossible. Related to this political debate on military deployment is also (1) a question on state sovereignty and (2) a question on the safety of the armed forces. The safety of the armed forces partially relies on a so-called Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). Countries that do not have a SOFA with the Netherlands are in general more fragile and would therefore be more eligible for conflict prevention. On the other hand, the MOD and the Dutch government are hesitant of deploying troops to these countries as this heightens the vulnerability of the Dutch troops. In sum, it can be concluded that the academic debate coincides with the Dutch policy debate on conflict prevention as all of these issues were raised during the interviews. The following suggestions combine the ideas of the interviewees with academic suggestions in the field of prevention.

- To start off, as early warning of instability and conflicts is one of the six phases suggested in the 'Guidelines on the Comprehensive Approach', **monthly meetings** between the MOD and the MFA are recommended. It is up to the reader whether my optimism with regard to this recommendation is excused. It is clear that **information sharing** is a sensitive topic for both the MOD and the MFA but this is necessary if conflict prevention is to be regarded as a serious policy focus.
- **The training and education** of local armed forces needs to be continued. The visibility in fragile countries serves three goals. It deters potential rebel groups, it enhances the capacities of the local armed forces and serves the trainings goals of the Dutch armed forces. Lund (2009) argues that a soft stalemate is necessary once initial violence breaks out to show the parties that they do not gain anything with violence. Building on this assumption, it is assumed in this thesis that also *before* initial violence breaks out the Dutch armed forces can show that the parties do not gain anything with violence.
- With regard to the **training and education**, it is also recommended that takes place **in cooperation with the MFA at a structural level.** In the interviews it was pointed out

that while embassies know that the MOD is deploying activities in cooperation with the local armed forces, the embassies do not engage in these activities. Structural cooperation in the field will increase mutual understanding and better the effectiveness of the operation. This is because, for example, embassies can monitor the local armed forces once the training and education programme of the military has ended. The **transition phase** will therefore be more flexible and hence more effective.

- Also, when **cooperation between the MOD and the MFA** in taking place on a structural level, the MFA can also involve the MOD in less traditional tasks such as negotiation. The **military officer as diplomat** can be a very concrete result of the comprehensive approach. It enhances the mutual understanding and credibility of negotiations if a Dutch officer can negotiate in the discourse of a local officer. A civilian diplomat brings along different (and probably less) credible connotations to the table than a respected officer in uniform.
- Whereas the military uniform brings along a necessary authority, it can also work against the armed forces in fragile pre-conflict situation. Sometimes deterrence is not the best option and instead **military officers can be employed as civilians.** They have knowledge at their disposal about a variety of issues that civilian personnel are less knowledgeable about. Employing military officers as civilians in pre-conflict situations means that the necessary knowledge or skills can be transmitted, without a deterrent effect. Also, officers deployed as civilians will more easily be accepted in local civilian communities than military officers.
- With regard to **structural conflict prevention** the military should engage more in **civil-military relations.** The MOD should not only engage in conflict prevention by training the local military but also become more visible under civilians to gather information and build rapport.
- Inclusion of a **local perspective** is also facilitated if the MOD cooperates on a structural basis with **regional organisations such as the AU and ECOWAS.** Nor the ISS, nor the

'Guidelines on the Comprehensive Approach' consider this a serious option and instead focus on the EU and NATO as our key allies. While this is comprehensible from a strategic perspective, involvement of regional organisations is indispensible when undertaking delicate operations such as conflict prevention.

- In addition to the inclusion of regional organisations, **CSO's** can also play an important role to fill the early warning/early response gap. As one of the aims for the future is to adopt a whole-of-government perspective where the private sector and CSO's are included as well. The MOD should invest in the establishment with CSO's. **Strategic communication** provides an area in which the MOD and the CSO's can cooperate.
- In addition to strategic communication, the **intelligence service of the MOD** can also engage in conflict prevention by, for example, influencing the media or key leaders in an effort to diminish tensions.
- Develop the capacities of the MOD by investing in training possibilities for example at the International Institute for Humanitarian Law (IIHL).
- To incorporate **gender** picture, the MOD should invest an increased visibility of **female officers** that provide as an example for the local community.
- On a more abstract level, **discourse coalitions** play a key part in the bringing about of a change in the norms and perceptions. The comprehensive approach is such an example of a discourse coalition. However, the MOD and MFA should be wary not remain in a discursive space but also follow up with **practices.** The 'Guidelines on the Comprehensive Approach' needs to prove what it promises. During the six months of my internship, I have observed very frequent, flexible and pleasant meetings between the MOD and MFA. However, since the finishing of the document, policymakers are tempted to view and argue from their point of view (and their point of view only) again. Fruitful cooperation is possible and this needs to be continued.

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