



Universiteit Utrecht

# Mass Murder in Perspective

*A Comparison of Influences on the Dutch Policy during the Genocides in Cambodia and Bosnia*



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Date: 06-08-2017

Words: 16,773

MA International Relations in Historical Perspective

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# Abstract

Genocide is the most barbaric crime a government can carry out on its own people. Throughout the years, many examples of these crimes have occurred, resulting in many different responses from the international community. This thesis aims to outline the influences on the policy of the Dutch government during the genocide in Cambodia and compares this with the policy during the genocide in Srebrenica (Bosnia), which is already much investigated. During the genocide in Cambodia the Dutch government remained silent and followed the path of other (bigger) countries and of the international community. On the other hand, during the genocide in Bosnia, the Netherlands took the lead in intervening, and tried to move other countries to follow its example, even though this was overly ambitious for such a small country. The central question of this thesis therefore is: *What were the different influences affecting the policy of the Dutch government during the Cambodian and Bosnian genocide?* In order to answer this question, both cases are answered by four sub-questions. Firstly, what was the influence of the historical context of both cases on the policy of the Dutch government. Secondly, what was the influence of the nature of the acts of genocide on the policy of the Dutch government? Thirdly, what was the influence of the information level on the policy of the Dutch government? And finally, what was the role of the international community and how did this affect the policy of the Dutch government? The research for this thesis was carried out in the archive of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The findings were compared to the research on the case of Srebrenica by the Dutch Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies. To answer these four sub-questions, the situation in Cambodia was discussed, followed by the case of Bosnia and a comparison of both cases. Finally, in the conclusion of the thesis the difference in policy has been explained. The research shows that the historical context of the genocide, information level of the government and the role of the international community are important factors for influencing the policy of the Dutch government during the Cambodian and Bosnian genocide. The nature of the genocide was no significant factor in influencing the Dutch policy.

# List of Abbreviations

ABiH:	Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnian Muslim Army)
ARP:	Dutch Anti-Revolutionary Party
AOD/BA:	Bureau of Special Issues of the Department of Investigations and Documentation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (Bureau Bijzondere aangelegenheden van de Afdeling Onderzoek en Documentatie)
BBC:	British Broadcasting Corporation
CDA:	Dutch Christian Democratic Appeal Party
CPK:	Communist Party of Kampuchea
D66:	Dutch Democrats 66 Party
DCBC:	The Defence Crisis Management Centre
DK:	Democratic Kampuchea
DOA/ZA:	Administration Asia and Oceania Bureau South Asia of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Directie Azië en Oceanië bureau Zuid-Azië van het Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken)
EC:	European Community
GRUNK:	The Royal Government of the National Union of Kampuchea
HDZ:	Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnian Croats Party)
ICRC:	International Red Cross
JNA:	The Yugoslav People's Army
KL crisis staff:	Crisis Staff of the Royal Netherlands Army
KPNLF:	Khmers People National Liberation Front
KVP:	Dutch Catholic People's Party
MID:	Military Intelligence Service of the Netherlands
NATO:	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIOD:	Dutch Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies
OP:	Observation Post
PPR:	Dutch Political Party of Radicals
PVDA:	Dutch Labour Party
SALT I :	First Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SDA:	Party of Democratic Action (Bosnian Muslim Party)
SDS:	Serb Democratic Party (Bosnian Serb Party)
UN:	United Nations
UNHCR:	UN Refugee Agency

UNPROFOR: United Nations Protection Force  
UNTAC: United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia  
VRS: Army of Republika Srpska (Bosnian Serb Army)  
VVD: Dutch People's Party for Freedom and Democracy  
WW II: Second World War

# 1. Introduction

'Later I was furious as I watched Pol Pot achieve what had seemed impossible: winning the support of most of the United States and Europe against Vietnam. His government remained at the United Nations as the representative of Cambodia and for nearly 12 years the United States government refused to acknowledge that his regime had committed genocide.'<sup>1</sup>

Elizabeth Becker wrote this as one of the few western people ever to meet Pol Pot. She interviewed him on 22 December 1978, but instead of answering questions, he gave a two-hour long speech. 'There was no interrupting. There were no questions about the condition of the Cambodian people, about the executions and killing fields. Pol Pot's vision had no room for anything but enemies and justification of his behaviour.'<sup>2</sup> Keeping this in mind, this reflects that even Pol Pot himself remained silent about the real situation in Cambodia. Obviously, he had no interest in the transparency and public scrutiny of this. However, genocide like this seems impossible to hide completely from the rest of the world. Nevertheless, he could still execute his authority in the United Nations (UN) for a long time, even after his extreme cruelties were revealed.

When I was visiting the notorious Killing Fields of Choeung Ek and the Tuol Sleng prison in Cambodia in 2014, I could not believe what happened only 40 years ago. These Killing Fields refer to a number of execution places where more than a million people were executed and buried. Tuol Sleng was a former high school, turned into a prison in 1975. According to Ben Kiernan 'all but seven of the twenty thousand Tuol Sleng prisoners' were executed in the prison.'<sup>3</sup> What I saw made me realise that I did not know much about the history of the genocide in Cambodia. How could such a cruel regime rule the country for more than 5 years? How was it possible that no country intervened, nor the United Nations? All of these thoughts led to the central question of this thesis: what was the policy of the Dutch government on the situation in Cambodia? Was it informed on a possible act of genocide in Cambodia?

These questions made me realise Cambodia was not the only country where such terrible things happened. Just twenty years later, the Srebrenica Massacre happened in the former Yugoslavian country of Bosnia. When the Safe Area Srebrenica came in Bosnian-Serb hands, the ethnic cleansing of the Safe Area began. 8000 Muslim men were executed and the women and children were forced to leave the Safe Area. In contrast to the genocide in Cambodia, this genocide

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<sup>1</sup> E. Becker, 'Pol Pot Remembered', [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from\\_our\\_own\\_correspondent/81048.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/81048.stm), accessed on 18 January 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>3</sup> B. Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia Under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79*. Yale: University Press 2014, p. 464.

happened in close presence of the United Nations Dutchbat soldiers in Srebrenica. What was their involvement in the genocide? This thesis examines Dutch policy during both massacres. Was the Dutch government aware of the situation in both countries, and what could it have done to prevent it from further escalating? And more important, what were the reasons for not intervening in such a situation?

The policy of the Dutch government in the war in Bosnia differed completely from the policy of the Dutch government during the acts of genocide by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. While the Dutch government acted proactively in Bosnia and wanted to act as a catalyst for other countries to intervene, the policy during the genocide in Cambodia was the opposite of proactive. The central question of this thesis therefore is: what were the different influences affecting the policy of the Dutch government during the Cambodian and Bosnian genocide? In order to answer this question, both cases will be compared by answering four sub-questions. Firstly, what was the influence of the historical context of both cases on the policy of the Dutch government? Secondly, what was the influence of the nature of the acts of genocide on the policy of the Dutch government? Thirdly, what was the influence of the information level on the policy of the Dutch government? And finally, what was the role of the international community on the policy of the Dutch government? Each question will be answered by discussing the situation in Cambodia, followed by the situation in Bosnia and a comparison of both cases. In the conclusion of this thesis the difference in influences on the policy will be explained.

These aspects have been chosen because in my opinion they had a significant impact on Dutch policy during the genocides. Other aspects could have been the historical relation between the country and the Netherlands or the specific relation of the Netherlands to the victims, but these have not been taken into account in this thesis. This research focuses on the historical context, the nature of the genocide, the information level and the international community. Despite only the cases discussed in this thesis, these features could also have a great impact on other cases of genocide.

The genocide of Srebrenica happened within a couple of days in July 1995, but was preceded by the Bosnian war from 1992 onward. The Bosnian case is much more investigated and researched than the case of Cambodia, despite that this genocide happened 20 years after the Cambodian genocide. Already during the war, the situation was discussed many times in the Dutch House of Representatives and by the ministers in the involved departments. On the other hand, during the four years when the Cambodian genocide took place, the situation was discussed only a couple of times in the Dutch House of Representatives. This thesis tries to fill the void of information on the Cambodian genocide and the role the Dutch government played and thus makes a comparison between the Cambodian and the Bosnian genocide possible.

For the case of Cambodia, the main sources of information were documents from the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These included communication of the Dutch Foreign Office with the Embassy of the Netherlands in Thailand, Malaysia and China, countries close to Cambodia. The Dutch had no ambassador in Cambodia during the time of the genocide, so information was mainly received from the ambassadors of these countries. Nevertheless, some of the requested files from the archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were not available for inspection and could not be consulted. This concerned the dossiers of diplomatic relations of Cambodia with the Netherlands, UN Security Council and NATO. The dossier about the internal political relations and political parties was not available to consult. The documents were not open for public and had to be screened by a special lawyer, who refused the inspection of several files. The proceedings of the sessions of the House of Representatives were also used. These mainly cover questions about the situation in Cambodia. These proceedings are used to expose the discussion about the human rights violations in Cambodia in the Dutch House of Representatives. To complete the information on the genocide in Cambodia, articles and books related to Dutch foreign policy and the history of Cambodia have been used.

Furthermore, news articles on Cambodia were examined to research the information level regarding the situation in Cambodia. For these news articles, newspapers on the website of Delpher were used, such as *Het Vrije Volk*, *De Waarheid*, *De Telegraaf* and *Nederlands Dagblad*. The search terms 'Rode Khmer', 'Cambodja' 'Phnom Penh' and 'Pol Pot' were used to find reliable information about the Khmer Rouge in Dutch newspapers and to investigate the information level on the genocide in Cambodia. Between 01-01-1975 and 01-02-1979, the search term 'Rode Khmer' delivered 557 articles, 'Cambodja' 2386 articles and 'Phnom Penh' 853 articles. These three search terms show the same development, starting with many articles in 1975. The years that followed show an extreme decline in the number of articles. In 1978 and the first two months of 1979, the number of articles increased. This has to do with the Vietnamese invasion in Cambodia already starting at the end of 1978. Using 'Pol Pot' as a search term between 01-01-1975 and 01-02-1979 delivered 288 articles, showing a different curve. In 1975, when little was known about the leader of the country, no articles were written including his name. In 1976 this number was 2, in 1977 24 and in 1978 this increased to 54, and in the first two months of 1979 already 154.

The main source used for the case of Srebrenica is the report of the Dutch Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (NIOD): *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied, reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area*, which was the guideline for the part on the Bosnian genocide. The recently published updated document from NIOD was also used: *De val van Srebrenica, luchtsteun en voorkennis in nieuw perspectief*. Apart from these documents, also other academic articles and books related to the subject were consulted.



The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the Dutch policy on genocides, and deliver a significant contribution to the less researched Dutch policy on the genocide in Cambodia. During my studies, I have learned about wars and peacekeeping operations in the course 'military violence'. We even discussed the Dutch participation in the UN mission in Bosnia. Also in the course 'Wereldsysteem en Statenstelsel', we discussed the international community, violations of human rights, and their responsibility to protect. However, I never learned about the role and actions of the Dutch government in times of genocide.

## 2. Historical Context

In this chapter the historical contexts in which both genocides took place, are compared. At first the history prior to the genocide of Cambodia is described. After this the history of Yugoslavia, and in particular of Bosnia, will be outlined. Finally, the most important issues from both historical overviews are identified by answering the question: what was the influence of the historical context on the policy of the Dutch government during both genocides?

### Historical Overview Cambodia

From the year 802 the Khmer people ruled over a large part of the current mainland of Southeast Asia. The Khmer Empire, with the capital city Angkor, was the predecessor state of current Cambodia. After the fall of Angkor in 1431, the country was ruled as a vassal state by its neighbours. The French occupied Cambodia in 1863 and reclaimed the original territory from the neighbouring states.

During the Second World War the Japanese troops deposed French rule and occupied Cambodia.<sup>4</sup> In 1945, after the Japanese were defeated, the French troops moved back to Cambodia. They now experienced a different country, marked by nationalist movements and a strong communist force.<sup>5</sup> However, this reoccupation by French forces encouraged King Norodom Sihanouk to proclaim independence, which he did in 1954. A year later, Norodom Sihanouk abdicated to participate in politics and his father, Norodom Suramarit, became the new King of Cambodia. Sihanouk started a political organisation called Sangkum, leading it to victory in the elections of the same year. After winning the elections, Sihanouk became the Prime Minister of Cambodia.<sup>6</sup> In 1960 his father, King Norodom Suramarit, died and Sihanouk changed the constitution to fulfil the position of Head of State. He ruled the country with a one-party policy and shut down all dissenting voices from other political parties.<sup>7</sup>

### **Ideas and Structure of the Early Khmer Rouge**

Saloth Sar (later known as Pol Pot and leader of the Khmer Rouge) was born on 19 May 1928, the youngest of seven children. His parents were wealthy, they owned 7 acres of garden land, 22 acres to plant rice and 14 acres for herding buffalo, producing more than enough food to feed the whole

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<sup>4</sup> E. D. Weitz, *A century of genocide, utopias of race and nation*, Princeton: University Press 2003, p. 145.

<sup>5</sup> Idem. p. 146.

<sup>6</sup> J. J. Corfield, *Khmers stand up! A history of the Cambodian government 1970-1975*, Clayton: Aristoc Press 1994, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Idem, pp. 29-30.

family. Pol Pot went to a catholic primary school and often visited his sister who was a concubine of King Monivong in the Royal Palace.<sup>8</sup> In 1948, at the age of 20, Pol Pot received a scholarship to study radio electricity in Paris. Many of the future Khmer Rouge's key figures like Ieng Sary and Khieu Samphan also went to study in France during the same period and became close friends of Pol Pot and joined the French Communist Party together.<sup>9</sup>

Upon their return to Cambodia this group of young and radical communists called themselves The Khmer Rouge. In the 1960's, the group took over the Vietnamese Workers' Party of Kampuchea which, until then, was an orthodox party leading the fight against French colonial domination. In 1966, the party changed its name to the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK).<sup>10</sup> The ruling body of the party was known as the Party Centre (or Angkar) but, apart from a handful of people, nobody at that time knew who was involved in the Angkar. Figure 1 shows the structure of the CPK.

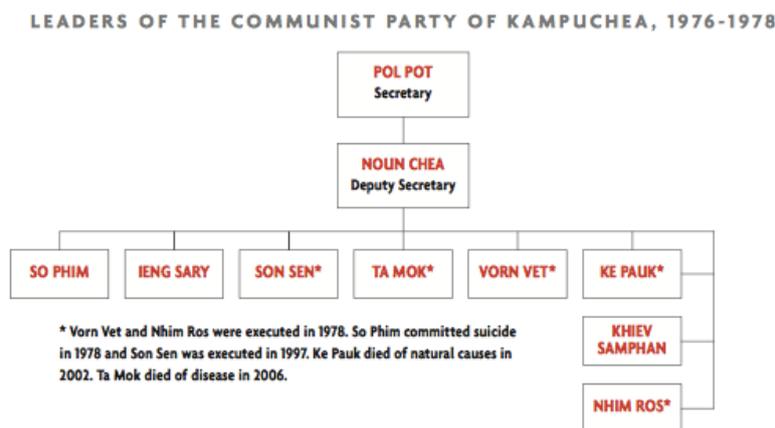


Figure 1.<sup>11</sup>

### Lon Nol Regime

After a vote in the National Assembly on 18 March 1970, King Sihanouk was overthrown as Head of State and replaced by General Lon Nol, former Premier and Minister of Defence. In October 1970, the monarchy was abolished and the Khmer Republic was officially proclaimed.<sup>12</sup> After the coup

<sup>8</sup> B. Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime*, pp. 9-11.

<sup>9</sup> Idem, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> B. Kiernan, *Genocide and Democracy in Cambodia, The Khmer Rouge, the United Nations and the International Community*, New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies 1993, p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> Documentation Center of Cambodia (DCCAM), 'A history of Democratic Kampuchea', Phnom Penh: 2007, [http://www.d.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/DK\\_Book/DK\\_History--EN.pdf](http://www.d.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/DK_Book/DK_History--EN.pdf), accessed on 02 May 2017, pp. 18-19.

<sup>12</sup> B. Kiernan, 'De genocide in Cambodja 1975-1979', in: M. Van Haperen e.a. eds., *De Holocaust en andere genociden*, p.77.

Sihanouk formed an alliance with the Khmer Rouge, who used the former Kings' popularity against the American-supported Lon Nol.<sup>13</sup> This coalition was called: The Royal Government of the National Union of Kampuchea (GRUNK) and formed a government in exile from Beijing.

During the time of the Lon Nol regime in Cambodia, the United States supported South-Vietnamese forces in the war in Vietnam. On the other hand, Russia supported the North Vietnamese communist forces. This conflict crossed the Cambodian border in 1973 when the United States dropped half a million tons of bombs on Cambodian soil aimed at the Ho Chi Minh Trail.<sup>14</sup> This trail ran through Cambodia and Laos and was used by communist guerrilla fighters to get from North Vietnam to South Vietnam. Approximately 300,000 Cambodian people did not survive these bombings, lots of infrastructure was demolished by the bombings, and approximately 75% of draft animals were killed. After several years of failed harvests, rice prices rose incredibly from 8 riels per kilogram in 1970, to 340 riels in 1975.<sup>15</sup> These poor conditions and an anti-American stance resulted in a growing number of supporters for the Khmer Rouge.<sup>16</sup> When the United States withdrew from Vietnam in 1973, Lon Nol lost his biggest ally in his fight against communism in Cambodia. At the same time, the Khmer Rouge formed an alliance (GRUNK) with the overthrown Prince Sihanouk. Altogether these events resulted in a large number of followers and a successful coup was undertaken by the Khmer Rouge in 1975.

### **Khmer Rouge Coup**

On 17 April 1975, the Khmer Rouge founded Democratic Kampuchea (DK) with Khieu Samphan as Head of the state, Nuon Chea as President of the People's Representative Assembly and Pol Pot as Prime Minister (see figure 2). When the Khmer Rouge captured the capital city of Phnom Penh, it was supported by 85% of the population.<sup>17</sup> This situation definitely did not have the features of a possible genocide like the one the Netherlands experienced during the holocaust in WW II.

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<sup>13</sup> K. G. Frieson, 'Revolution and Rural Response in Cambodia: 1970-1975', in: B. Kiernan, *Genocide and Democracy in Cambodia, The Khmer Rouge, the United Nations and the International Community*, New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies 1993, pp. 33-34.

<sup>14</sup> B. Kiernan, *Genocide and Democracy in Cambodia*, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> J. F. Metzl, *Western Responses to Human Rights Abuses in Cambodia, 1975-80*, London: Macmillan Press 1996, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> J. Voorhoeve, *Veilige Gebieden, Falen en slagen bij het beschermen van burgers in oorlogstijd*, Amsterdam, Atlas: 2015, pp. 281-282.

<sup>17</sup> Idem, p. 282.

STRUCTURE OF THE STATE OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA

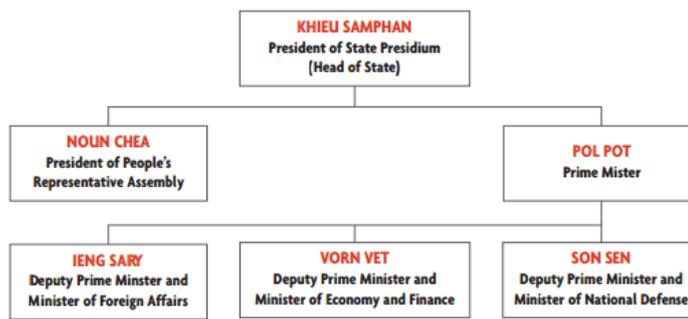


Figure 2.<sup>18</sup>

After taking over the capital city, the Khmer Rouge immediately began with its leap forward to create a new, egalitarian, prosperous and self-sufficient Khmer society based on four developments: ‘the destruction of the pre-existing class-riven society; the collectivisation of all aspects of life; immense acts of will, especially in relation to labour; and the refashioning of individuals, ethnic and religious minorities into communist Khmers.’<sup>19</sup> Already, a couple of days after the occupation of Phnom Penh, the two million inhabitants of the capital city were forced to leave to the countryside and work on the fields to create a classless society. The Khmer Rouge came up with different excuses for the evacuation. For example, it said America was going to bomb Phnom Penh. It told the people it was not necessary to lock their homes because they could return in two or three days.<sup>20</sup> Approximately already 20,000 people died on the way to the countryside.

This mass deportation to the countryside was a strange beginning of the new regime. However, it was not until January 1976 when the Bureau of Special Issues from the Research and Documentation department of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a memorandum about, among other things, this important development.<sup>21</sup> The document confirmed that, after taking over the power, people who lived in cities were forced on a large scale to move to the countryside, but gave no explanation for this.<sup>22</sup> During the General Assembly of the UN in 1976, the Cambodian minister of Foreign Affairs, Ieng Sary, explained that his government enacted this measure because otherwise there would have been an immense food shortage. To give the harvest a boost, all labour force was needed in the countryside. Sary also claimed that people could return to the city if they

<sup>18</sup> DCCAM, ‘A history of Democratic Kampuchea’, Phnom Penh: 2007, [http://www.d.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/DK\\_Book/DK\\_History--EN.pdf](http://www.d.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/DK_Book/DK_History--EN.pdf), accessed on 02 May 2017, p. 22.

<sup>19</sup> E. D. Weitz, *A century of genocide, utopias of race and nation*, p. 150.

<sup>20</sup> DCCAM, ‘A history of Democratic Kampuchea’, [http://www.d.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/DK\\_Book/DK\\_History--EN.pdf](http://www.d.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/DK_Book/DK_History--EN.pdf) accessed on 2 May 2017, p. 16.

<sup>21</sup> Archive code 9, 911.0, part 0, inventory no. 10552, Memorandum from AOD/BA to: DOA/ZA, 29 January 1976 no. 16/76, cambodja ref. Dzz.memo 166/75.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem.

wished.<sup>23</sup> This explanation seemed plausible for the Dutch government, and caused no suspicion of a possible genocide and therefore it remained inactive in its policy.

### **Historical Overview Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Srebrenica**

The Kingdom of Yugoslavia was created after the First World War in 1918, and remained intact until WW II broke out in 1939. This Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later named Kingdom of Yugoslavia) consisted of the current countries Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia and the biggest parts of modern-day Slovenia and Croatia.<sup>24</sup> Belgrade, which was the capital of Serbia, also became the capital of Yugoslavia. In a political context, Yugoslavia mainly revolved around Serbia as well. For example, the majority of the army and civil servants were Serb.<sup>25</sup>

During WW II, Yugoslavia was occupied by the Germans, Italians and Hungarians. Apart from fighting against their common oppressor, the different ethnicities were fighting each other as well. It was a multi-sided war between Yugoslav communist Partisans, the Croatian fascist Ustaše, and the Serbian royalist Chetniks. More people died during these ethnic in-fights than from the violence of their oppressors. The communist partisan troops won the civil war and their leader, Josip Tito Broz (better known as Tito), restored the Yugoslav unitary state by using violence.<sup>26</sup>

Tito's solution for solving the multi-ethnic problem was equal treatment for all different nations. To avoid Serbia becoming dominant over the others, Tito founded a communist republic consisting of 6 sub-republics: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia, and two autonomous regions Kosovo and Vojvodina.<sup>27</sup> Tito remained the president until his death in 1980. After the loss of this great leader, nationalism re-emerged in Yugoslavia.<sup>28</sup>

In Serbia, this led to the rise of politician Slobodan Milosevic, who wanted to become the new leader of a united Yugoslavia. However, the leaders of the other republics were not amused by Milosevic's idea of Yugoslavia as a 'greater Serbia'. In December 1987 Milosevic was elected President of the Communistic League of Serbia. He demanded full control of Serbia over the autonomous regions of Kosovo and Vojvodina, but his cause of a Greater-Serbia led to distrust by

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<sup>23</sup> R. Canninga, 'Donkere schaduwen verlicht II', <http://www.geschiedenis.nl/nieuws/artikel/243/donkere-schaduwen-verlicht-ii>, accessed on 18 May 2017.; Archive code 9, 911.0, part 0, inventory no. 10552, Memorandum van AOD/BA aan: DOA/ZA, 29 January 1976, cambodja reference no. Dzz.memo 166/75.

<sup>24</sup> Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (NIOD), *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied, Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area*, Amsterdam: Boom 2002, p. 45.

<sup>25</sup> Idem, p. 50.

<sup>26</sup> A. ten Cate, *Sterven voor Bosnië? Een historische analyse van het interventiedebat in Nederland 1992-1995*, Amsterdam: Boom 2007, p. 35.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>28</sup> NIOD, *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied*, pp. 88-91.

both Slovenia and Croatia. This resulted in the Communist Parties of both Slovenia and Croatia leaving the Communist League of Yugoslavia at the beginning of 1990.<sup>29</sup>

In April 1990, elections were held in Slovenia and Croatia. In Slovenia, a coalition of opposition parties won. All these parties had one particular thing in common: they wanted independency from the Yugoslav Republic. Only two months later, the country declared its sovereignty within the federation.<sup>30</sup> In Croatia similar things happened. Ultra-nationalist Franjo Tudjman won the elections and promised Croatian independence from Yugoslavia. In the meantime, the Serb minority in Croatia also declared its independence and proclaimed the Serb Autonomous Province of Krajina.<sup>31</sup> On 25 June 1991, both Slovenia and Croatia declared independence, resulting in the definite end of a united Yugoslavia.<sup>32</sup>

After the declaration of independence of Slovenia, the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA), consisting mostly of Serbian civil servants, fought a 10-day war in June 1991 against the Slovenians. The JNA was formally a Yugoslav army, but became increasingly a national Serbian army. According to Milosevic, the war in Slovenia was not worth the fighting, and he expected that the real battle would take place in Croatia. To avoid this war in Croatia, Milosevic and Tudjman had already agreed, in March 1991, on a deal to divide Bosnia between both countries.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, the deal never went through and war in Croatia could not be avoided. On 18 November 1991, the Serbs took over the city of Vukovar in Croatia after months of fighting. A group of wounded was deported by buses to be executed. More than 2600 Croats did not survive the war.<sup>34</sup> These events were serious but during the Yugoslavian wars this was the usual way and it did not give the impression that a possible genocide would occur in the following years.

A couple of months later, on 2 January 1992 a ceasefire was reached in the Serbian areas of Croatia. Both countries had their own interest in a ceasefire at this moment of the war.<sup>35</sup> Milosevic already occupied a quarter of Croatia and wanted to focus on Bosnia. Croatia, on the other hand, could use the time to modernise its military forces and prepare for the next battle.<sup>36</sup>

### **Bosnia Enters the War**

From all the Yugoslav sub-republics, Bosnia was the most ethnically diverse country. The three biggest ethnicities were Serbs, Croats and Muslims. Muslims formed 44% of the population.

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<sup>29</sup> NIOD, *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied*, pp. 112-119.

<sup>30</sup> R. Craig Nation, *War in the Balkans*, p. 97.

<sup>31</sup> *Idem* pp. 97-98.

<sup>32</sup> NIOD, *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied*, p. 144.

<sup>33</sup> *Idem*, pp. 191-192 & 393.

<sup>34</sup> *Idem*, p. 258.

<sup>35</sup> *Idem*, pp. 390-391.

<sup>36</sup> *Idem*, pp. 392-394.

However, Bosnian Muslims feared the nationalist cause of Croatia and Serbia because the Bosnian Serbs (31%) were loyal to Milosevic, and the Bosnian Croats (17%) to Tudjman. The Muslims feared these nationalistic feelings would eventually lead to uprisings and war in the country. They feared a division of the country and possibly oppression by the Bosnian-Serbs.<sup>37</sup>

The *Stranka Demokratske Akcije* (SDA), a Bosnian Muslim party, was founded on 26 May 1990. Chairman Alija Izetbegovic wanted Bosnia to remain a multi-ethnic country. In response to this, in July 1990 the Bosnian Serbs also founded their *Srpska Demokratska Stranka* (SDS) with Radovan Karadzic as leader of the party. The Bosnian Croats followed by founding their *Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica Bosnia* (HDZ Bosnia).<sup>38</sup> This Croatian party soon split between the 'moderates' and the 'radicals'. The moderates were led by Stjepan Kljuic, and the radicals were led by Mate Boban.

The Muslim leader Izetbegovic was elected president of Bosnia, and he hoped that the Muslims and Croats would fight together against the Serbs. However, at this time, Tudjman and Milosevic still had plans to divide Bosnia between Croatia and Serbia. In the autumn of 1991, the Bosnian Serbs claimed ground in eastern Bosnia, including the town of Srebrenica. They wanted all of their territories to be completely connected with Serbia. The problem was that these areas in eastern Bosnia were dominated by the Bosnian Muslims. In these eastern areas, the Muslim population started battle groups led by Naser Oric in order to defend their villages. They started a counteroffensive against the Serbian claimed territories and recaptured several areas. These recaptured areas became Muslim enclaves within Serbian territory.<sup>39</sup>

In the beginning of 1992 a referendum was held on the independence of Bosnia from Yugoslavia. The Bosnian Serbs boycotted the referendum, but the Muslim and Croat communities voted almost unanimously in favour of independence. President Izetbegovic declared independence on 3 March 1992 and founded an official Bosnian government army: *Armija Bosne I Hercegovina* (ABiH).<sup>40</sup>

As a counter-reaction to the independence of Bosnia, the Bosnian Serbs declared the Serb areas as their own *Republika Srpska* with Karadzic as president. The Croats followed this example and on 18 November 1991 declared their own *Hrvatska Republika Herceg-Bosna* with Mostar as capital. Milosevic did not want the JNA to be seen as the aggressor and withdrew his troops from Bosnia, although an army of (Bosnian) Serbs remained, *Vosjka Republika Sprska* (VRS), with Ratko Mladic as Commander-in-chief.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> R. Craig Nation, *War in the Balkans*, p. 149.

<sup>38</sup> NIOD, *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied*, pp. 421-433.

<sup>39</sup> Idem, pp. 909-916.

<sup>40</sup> Idem, p. 519.

<sup>41</sup> Idem, pp. 543-549.



The Bosnian Serbs organised a campaign of ethnic cleansing in their areas. This did not necessarily mean killing people of other ethnicities, but they systematically expelled all non-Serbs from the conquered areas, or bullied them until they left voluntarily. Another tactic was to draft Muslims for the JNA. When they refused, they lost their rights to housing and had to leave. However, in some cases it did mean people being sporadically killed or locked down in camps.<sup>42</sup>

In the summer of 1992 two third of Bosnia was 'cleansed'. Only parts of western and central Bosnia were still in hands of the Croats or Muslims, and several Muslim enclaves in east Bosnia were surrounded by Serb territory.<sup>43</sup> The return of camps on European soil also influenced the Dutch government. In 1992, Prime Minister Lubbers said that the Bosnian capital reminded him of Amsterdam during the Dutch Famine in the winter of 1944-1945. This provides an example of Dutch empathy with the people in Bosnia and explained their eagerness to intervene.<sup>44</sup> The Netherlands especially had a strong urge to 'do something' during the war. The Dutch motto was 'doing something is better than doing nothing'.<sup>45</sup>

In July 1992, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) wrote a report about several camps. The frustration from their side was clearly visible: 'our inability to do anything other than write reports and stand by'.<sup>46</sup> The international community thus was passive in its condemnation of these camps, until American journalist, Roy Gutman, wrote repeatedly about detention camps in Bosnia. In August 1992 these articles led to deep concern within the Security Council of the UN. However, when Western journalists were invited by Karadzic to visit several camps, they found no evidence of the camps being concentration camps and the importance of this issue in the international community vanished.<sup>47</sup> Between July and December 1992, the International Red Cross (ICRC) visited 10,800 prisoners in 16 camps. These prisoners were gradually released and, on 1 October, the ICRC signed an agreement with the Bosnian-Serbian authorities to release the remaining 7000 prisoners from 11 camps.<sup>48</sup>

Even though it was not complete genocide, these events already had features of detention camps. When the ICRC signed the agreement, these practices faded into the background. According to the ICRC, in the beginning of 1993, all but 2700 prisoners interned were released from the camps. These events were clearly forms of ethnic cleansing. Ethnic cleansing is the forced removal of ethnic groups from a specific area. The difference between genocide and ethnic cleansing thus lies in

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<sup>42</sup> A. ten Cate, *Sterven voor Bosnië?*, pp. 51-52.; NIOD, *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied*, pp. 538-540.

<sup>43</sup> A. ten Cate, *Sterven voor Bosnië?*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>44</sup> NIOD, *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied*, p. 726.

<sup>45</sup> *Idem*, p. 682.

<sup>46</sup> *Idem*, p. 618.

<sup>47</sup> *Idem*, pp. 634-640.

<sup>48</sup> *Idem*, p. 647.

genocide being a mass murder of specific ethnic groups and ethnic cleansing only being the removal of ethnic groups.<sup>49</sup>

### **Comparison**

The historical situations prior to the two acts of genocide were completely different from each other and led to different policies of the Dutch government. The history of Cambodia was characterised by a long French and Japanese colonization. The Dutch government saw this new Cambodian ruler only as an improvement in the country and did not expect him to carry out an act of genocide. Pol Pot's coup was not preceded by a long war, as was the case in Bosnia, and most Cambodians were happy to welcome the new regime. Therefore the strange policies of emptying the cities in Cambodia did not lead to suspicion in the Dutch government. The genocide in Cambodia was more an internal practice without another country interfering in its own territory. This explains the passive attitude and lack of action during the genocide in Cambodia. In Bosnia on the other hand, a neighbouring country occupied its territory and committed an act of genocide on its people. This situation was more similar to the history of the Netherlands during WW II and was thus the main reason for an active policy of interfering and trying to prevent a genocide in Bosnia.

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<sup>49</sup> B. Liebermann, 'Ethnic Cleansing' versus Genocide? In: D. Bloxman & A. D. Moses, *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide*, Oxford: University Press 2010, pp. 42.

### 3. Nature of the Genocide

In this chapter the different structures of both genocides are compared. At first the history of genocide is described, what is understood as an act of genocide and as violation of human rights? Hereafter, the Cambodian and Srebrenica genocide will be described. Finally, the influence of these different acts of genocide on the Dutch policy will be discussed.

#### Historical Overview Human Rights and Genocide

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Hugo de Groot took the first steps to form an international law, based on natural law, in his work *De iure belli ac pacis*. This idea of Natural Law was further developed by philosopher John Locke and many others. Locke's work was based on the idea of being human involves certain inherent universal rights. Based on his ideas, the first Bill of Rights was created in 1776 in Virginia, which later became part of the American Constitution in 1791.<sup>50</sup> Four years after, on 31 January 1795, the Declaration of Rights of Man and of Citizens was signed in the Netherlands. Directly translated from the French declaration of 1789, the fundamental rights of equality, freedom and security were herein outlined.<sup>51</sup> Because of the constitutional reform in 1848, the Netherlands became a constitutional democracy and included a list of fundamental rights listed in its new constitution.<sup>52</sup>

In the 20th century, human rights became a matter of importance in the world. The first period of the century was characterised by the two World Wars. After WW II, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948 by the United Nations.<sup>53</sup> This was in reaction to the cruelties of the German Nazis during the WW II.<sup>54</sup> Raphael Lemkin invented the term 'genocide' in his work *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, published in 1948.<sup>55</sup> The term gave a name to, what Winston Churchill called: 'the crime without a name'. Lemkin used the ancient Greek word for race or tribe: *geno* and combined it with the Latin word for killing: *cide*.<sup>56</sup> Within two years, the word genocide was used in an official United Nations General Assembly resolution, and in the following years the term became commonly known and was used in more UN documents. In the Convention on the

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<sup>50</sup> P.R. Baehr, *Mensenrechten*, Meppel: Boom 1989, p. 13.

<sup>51</sup> M. Kuitenbrouwer, 'Nederland en de mensenrechten 1795-1995' in: M. Kuitenbrouwer & M. Leenders eds., *Geschiedenis van de Menschenrechten: bouwstenen voor een interdisciplinaire benadering*, Hilversum: Verloren 2000, pp. 155-157.

<sup>52</sup> *Idem*, p. 167.

<sup>53</sup> A. P. van Goudoever, 'The problem of International Protection of Human Rights since 1945: from International Legal Declarations to Commitment in Global Politics', in A. Fleury, C. Fink & L. Jilek eds., *Les Droits De L'Homme En Europe Depuis 1945/Human Rights in Europe since 1945*, Bern: Peter Lang 2003, p. 13.

<sup>54</sup> P.R. Baehr, *Mensenrechten*, p. 13.

<sup>55</sup> E. D. Weitz, *A century of genocide, utopias of race and nation*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>56</sup> W. A. Schabas, *Genocide in International Law, The Crimes of Crimes*, Cambridge: University Press 2000, p. 14.

Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted in 1948 by the UN, an extensive definition of the word genocide was given:

'Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.'<sup>57</sup>

The members of the United Nations who signed the document pledged to never allow such horrible crimes to happen again.

### **Cambodia**

After emptying the cities, the Khmer Rouge came up with a hastily made four-year plan covering 1977-1980. Most important in this plan was the collectivisation of all private property. The Khmer Rouge wanted to turn the country into a complete economic and political independent country, isolated from the rest of the world. To achieve this, national defence was also a high priority. Another goal was an immense harvest of three tons of rice per hectare.<sup>58</sup> This, however, was an impossible goal for the already war-torn country. All people in Cambodia, even children and the elderly, were forced to work on the fields, cultivate the land, plant and harvest rice, dig canals and reservoirs, build dikes, and carry out many more agricultural and infrastructural tasks. This work had to be done for 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, without proper resting and food. Everyone was considered equal and received only one tin of rice per person every two days. Only a small group of a few thousand people, who were trusted by the party, were sent to work in one of the few factories still running.<sup>59</sup> Basically, the whole country was turned into a big labour camp. The conditions were so poor that many people died from starvation and were bodily or mentally harmed under these circumstances. Nevertheless, this applied to all Cambodians, and not only to a specific national, ethnical, racial or religious group.

The thousands of soldiers who served under the Lon Nol regime were seen by the new regime as enemies and were immediately killed. According to the Khmer Rouge only the pure, non-intellectual and property-less people could rule Cambodia and the people of the old system were

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<sup>57</sup> UN, Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 09 December 1948.

<sup>58</sup> DCCAM, 'A history of Democratic Kampuchea', Phnom Penh: 2007, [http://www.d.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/DK\\_Book/DK\\_History--EN.pdf](http://www.d.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/DK_Book/DK_History--EN.pdf), accessed on 02 May 2017, p. 26.

<sup>59</sup> Idem, accessed on 02 May 2017 pp. 30 & 47.

considered 'not pure enough'.<sup>60</sup> Not only supporters of the old regime became victims, but also the educated intellectuals were 'not pure enough'. Wearing glasses, speaking foreign languages or being educated as a skilled worker were reasons to get randomly arrested or executed. But again, no specific national, ethnical, racial or religious group was specifically attacked. Public schools, mosques, churches, universities and government buildings were shut down and transformed into prisons, re-education camps and grain warehouses.<sup>61</sup>

As time went by, the Khmer Rouge focused more on specific groups and, for example, tried to eradicate the completely Buddhist religion. According to a document of the CPK from 1975: 90-95% of the monks had already disappeared, and monasteries were mostly abandoned. The political, economic and cultural foundation had to be completely eradicated.<sup>62</sup> Thus, the Buddhist religion had completely disappeared within a year. According to the Genocide Convention, this destruction of a religious group is definitely an act of genocide and should have been punished.

The fate of the Vietnamese minority was no better (see figure 3.) According to research after 1979, not one Vietnamese inhabitant was found who had survived the Khmer Rouge regime. Eyewitnesses from other ethnic groups saw a campaign of systematic racial eradication.<sup>63</sup> In 1977 and 1978 several extensive purges occurred. When Vietnamese troops invaded the eastern part of Cambodia, and withdrew after several months, the Khmer Rouge accused a lot of people of cooperating with the Vietnamese invaders. Many people were arrested or executed on the spot.<sup>64</sup>

A year later, the same area was again a battle scene. In this year several units of the East Zone rebelled against the government. Following this incident, the Khmer Rouge declared the entire region to have 'Khmer bodies but Vietnamese heads' and treated the people as traitors.<sup>65</sup> Troops from the Southwest Zone were sent to fight the rebellion. 100,000 people who were evacuated to Phnom Penh died along the road or were executed. Another several thousand people fled across the borders to Vietnam.<sup>66</sup> During the evacuation of the eastern zone, the Khmer Rouge handed out blue scarves to the people who were obliged to wear them. The blue scarf became an expression of people who were going to be executed. So, this scarf can be compared with the yellow star the Jews

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<sup>60</sup> J. Voorhoeve, *Veilige Gebieden*, pp. 282-283.

<sup>61</sup> Idem, p. 283.

<sup>62</sup> C. Boua, 'genocide of a Religious Group: Pol Pot and Cambodia's Buddhist Monks', in P.T. Bushnell e.a. eds., *State-Organized Terror: The Case of Violent Internal Repression*, Boulder: 1991, p. 235.

<sup>63</sup> B. Kiernan, 'De genocide in Cambodja 1975-1979', in: M. Van Haperen e.a. eds., *De Holocaust en andere genociden*, Amsterdam: University Press 2012, pp. 80-81.

<sup>64</sup> DCCAM, 'A history of Democratic Kampuchea', [http://www.d.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/DK\\_Book/DK\\_History--EN.pdf](http://www.d.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/DK_Book/DK_History--EN.pdf), accessed on 10-05-2017, pp. 38-39.

<sup>65</sup> G. H. Stanton, 'Blue scarves and yellow stars, Classification and Symbolization in the Cambodian genocide', <http://www.genocidewatch.org/images/AboutGen89BlueScarvesandYellowStars.pdf>, accessed on 30 May 2017.

<sup>66</sup> DCCAM, 'A history of Democratic Kampuchea', Phnom Penh: 2007, [http://www.d.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/DK\\_Book/DK\\_History--EN.pdf](http://www.d.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/DK_Book/DK_History--EN.pdf), accessed on 10 May 2017, p. 39.

had to wear in WW II, as a sign of their ethnicity. The blue scarf was also proof that mass murder was intended and ordered by the leaders of the Khmer Rouge.<sup>67</sup> In the International Genocide Convention, it is a requirement that the genocide is intended by leaders.

From the 425,000 Chinese, only 200,000 survived, less than 50 percent of the original population. Not only were the killings part of the action against this minority, but the Chinese language was prohibited as well. The Chinese community was no longer allowed to distinguish themselves in a culturally distinct way, and the people who still distinguish themselves were executed.<sup>68</sup> The same happened to other ethnic minorities as is listed below in figure 3.

Figure 3: Estimated number of deaths under the Khmer Rouge divided by social group (1975-1979).<sup>69</sup>

Social group	Population 1975	Deaths	%
<u>'New people'</u>			
Khmers city	2,000,000	500,000	25
Khmers countryside	600,000	150,000	25
Chinese (city)	430,000	215,000	50
Vietnamese (city)	10,000	10,000	100
Lao (countryside)	10,000	4,000	40
Total new people	3,050,000	879,000	29
<u>'Old people'</u>			
Khmers countryside	4,500,000	675,000	15
Khmers Krom	5,000	2,000	40
Cham (countryside)	250,000	90,000	36
Vietnamese (countryside)	10,000	10,000	100
Thai (countryside)	20,000	8,000	40
Minorities highland	60,000	9,000	15
Total old people	4,840,000	792,000	16
Total Cambodia	7,890,000	1,671,000	21

<sup>67</sup> G. H. Stanton, 'The Cambodian Genocide and International Law', in: B. Kiernan ed., *Genocide and Democracy in Cambodia*, Yale: University Law School 1993, pp. 141-142.

<sup>68</sup> B. Kiernan, 'De genocide in Cambodja 1975-1979', in: M. Van Haperen e.a. eds., *De Holocaust en andere genociden*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>69</sup> Table translated from: B. Kiernan, 'De genocide in Cambodja 1975-1979', in: M. van Haperen e.a. eds., *De Holocaust en andere genociden*, p. 84.

## **Bosnia and Srebrenica**

After the VRS took over Srebrenica, a lot of Muslims wanted to leave the enclave. These refugees could be divided into two groups: men who wanted to leave the enclave by foot, and women, the elderly and children who gathered at the compound of Dutchbat in Potocari. The first group consisted of 10,000 to 15,000 men heading to Tuzla. For the VRS, this group was a complete surprise. They thought this group would go to Potocari as well, and the VRS had to come up with a new plan. They decided to catch the group at the road from Bratunac to Konjević Polje in the villages of Kamenica, Sandići and Lolići. This road had to be crossed by the refugees to reach Tuzla.<sup>70</sup> The VRS fired from the surrounding mountains on the group. One third of the convoy successfully crossed the road, although many were wounded. When the VRS started to fire anti-aircraft artillery, a lot of Muslims surrendered and were captured by the VRS. Their valuables were taken and, every now and then, a random Muslim was executed. The captured Muslims were taken to either Bratunac or Kravica.<sup>71</sup> These executions of Muslim men had features of the destruction of the Muslim minority of Srebrenica.

The other group of refugees made their way to the UN compound in Potocari. Battalion Commander Karremans and his deputy, Robert Franken, decided to let the refugees enter the compound to create a mini Safe Area. However, this made the compound overcrowded, when more and more refugees entered. The humanitarian situation in the compound was poor and there was a shortage of food, medicine and fuel. When Karremans was invited by the VRS, he clarified his wish for evacuation of the enclave to Mladic. Mladic made a list of conditions on how this evacuation would happen: firstly the VRS would provide vehicles, with his soldiers escorting them, but Dutchbat had to provide fuel. Secondly, Mladic wanted all men of fighting age to be screened on war crimes. Thirdly, he wanted a list of all names.<sup>72</sup> Nobody questioned the separation of men and women because during the war in Yugoslavia these were common procedures. Men of fighting age were taken to smaller busses and Dutchbat was told they would be further screened on war crimes in Bratunac. At that time, however, it was not clear that these men would be executed by the Bosnian-Serbs.

The Dutch government was divided on the solution for the departure of Dutchbat from the compound in Potocari. Minister of Defence Voorhoeve's priority was the safe departure of Dutchbat from Srebrenica, but Minister of Foreign Affairs, Van Mierlo, wanted Dutchbat to take their weapons with them, otherwise the VRS would take them. It was up to Rupert Smith in Sarajevo, to decide on this requirement. Smith was under the impression, like Van Mierlo, that leaving the materials was

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<sup>70</sup> NIOD, *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied*, pp. 2486-2493.

<sup>71</sup> Idem, pp. 2494-2500.

<sup>72</sup> Idem, pp. 2633-2641.

unmanageable, fearing that the Bosnian Serbs would use them.<sup>73</sup> The refugees in the compound were a different problem. While Voorhoeve said Dutchbat could only leave the compound when the refugees could go with them. Van Mierlo, on the other hand, prioritised the evacuation of the Dutch soldiers.<sup>74</sup> In the end, the refugees were left in Serbian hands and the genocide happened on the men who were taken for screening on war crimes.

In the years that followed, evidence made it clear that a genocide had taken place during these days in Bosnia. From the 7500 dead or missing persons, 6000 were executed and 1500 died on their way to Tuzla.<sup>75</sup> However, no mass graves were ever found in Potocari and the surrounding areas, but it is clear that between 100 and 400 men were killed there.<sup>76</sup>

### **Comparison**

Cambodia, as a non-member of the UN in 1948, signed and accessed the convention on 14 October 1950, and became a member of the UN in 1955.<sup>77</sup> When Bosnia Hercegovina became independent in 1992, the ratification by Yugoslavia of 19 August 1950 was automatically extended. Both countries had ratified the convention, before the genocide took place in their country.

The impact of the genocide in Cambodia was, compared to the 8000 Muslims in Bosnia, extremely big. Between 20 and 25 percent of the whole country died. However, most of these victims were not killed because of their national, ethnical, racial or religious group. These victims were only a fraction of the total numbers, but were still extremely high. A high number of victims, does not necessarily always signify an act of genocide. Joris Voorhoeve called the massacre in Cambodia a *politicide*. With this definition he only focused on the mass murder of political groups and thus left out the genocide part.<sup>78</sup> Other scholars refer to what happened in Cambodia as an auto genocide: 1. 'The self-destruction of the entire human race (rare)' and 2. 'The mass killing by a government or regime of a section of its own people',<sup>79</sup>

It could therefore be expected that the scope of the genocide would play an important part in the intervention and policy of the Dutch government, but this is not the case. Also the duration of the genocide has clearly no influence on the policy of the Dutch government. The difference between the couple of days in July in which the genocide of Srebrenica took place and the four years

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<sup>73</sup> NIOD, *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied*, pp. 2442-2443.

<sup>74</sup> Idem, pp. 2445-2448.

<sup>75</sup> Idem, p. 2534.

<sup>76</sup> Idem, p. 2668.

<sup>77</sup> No. 1021 of the General Assembly, United Nations Treaty Series, 12 January 1951, p. 278.

<sup>78</sup> J. Voorhoeve, *veilige gebieden*, pp. 281-284.

<sup>79</sup> Oxford dictionary definition of auto genocide.



of the Khmer Rouge regime should imply an easier intervention in Cambodia, which was not the case.

The fact however that the genocide in Srebrenica was more clearly an act of genocide, could explain the more active policy of the Dutch government. The confusion about whether or not it was a genocide, a politicide or an autogenocide in Cambodia could have influenced the passive Dutch policy in that case, when the convention was only aimed at a genocide.

## 4. Information Level and Government

In order to explain the difference in policy during both genocides, it is important to outline the level of information the Dutch government received during the time of the genocide. At first a historical overview of the Dutch foreign policy is given to have a clearer view of the development of Dutch foreign policy and the two cabinets that ruled during the Cambodian genocide. After that, the information level and the government during the genocide in Cambodia are described. After this the information level of the Dutch government during the genocide of Srebrenica is discussed. Finally, both genocides will be compared to answer the question on the influence of the information level on the Dutch policy during both genocides.

### Historical Overview Dutch Foreign Policy

The Dutch foreign affairs policy was, until 1940, mainly neutral. During World War I, the government did not participate and remained neutral. The Netherlands followed this path until their neutrality was violated in 1940 by the German Nazis who occupied the country. Political scientists and historians mostly agree that the first half of the 70s was important for the development of human rights in Dutch foreign affairs policy.<sup>80</sup> According to Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, during the 1960s and 1970s there was also an increase in developmental aid being given by the Netherlands.

Three developments paved the way for a modern human rights policy during this period. Firstly, the period from the late 1960s until the end of 1970s marked a time of détente between East and West in international relations. The two main powers of the Cold War, United States and Russia, were engaged in two big conferences about controlling the issue of an arms race. The first Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I) took place between 1969 and 1972, and the second round took place between 1972 and 1979. In 1975 the Helsinki Accord was signed to improve relations between the western capitalist states and the communist states.<sup>81</sup> In this relaxed atmosphere of international relations there was room for subjects other than eastern aggression. Secondly, the international interest (mostly in the Scandinavian countries) in the protection of human rights increased, making it easier to cooperate and take effective measures on this subject.<sup>82</sup> Thirdly, the Netherlands had closed the chapter of decolonisation by assigning New Guinea to Indonesia. From this moment, the Netherlands could be critical of other countries, because they could not be judged on this anymore.

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<sup>80</sup> R. Canninga, 'Donkere schaduwen verlicht', <http://www.geschiedenis.nl/nieuws/artikel/244/donkere-schaduwen-verlicht>, accessed on 11 May 2017.

<sup>81</sup> D. Hellema, *Nederland en de jaren zeventig*, Amsterdam: Boom 2012, pp. 119-123.

<sup>82</sup> R. Canninga, 'Donkere schaduwen verlicht', <http://www.geschiedenis.nl/nieuws/artikel/244/donkere-schaduwen-verlicht>, accessed on 11 May 2017.

Additionally, a lot of money destined for New Guinea was made available for developmental aid instead.<sup>83</sup>

The period of the 1970s in western Europe is often called a period of stagnation, slump, and renewed conservatism because of economic downturn after the oil crisis of 1973-1974. Not only the Netherlands, during the 1970s, went through a period of the left-wing political parties. For example, in Germany, this period was called by historian Gerd Koenen: 'das rote Jahrzehnt', or by historian Bernd Faulenbach: 'sozialdemokratisches Jahrzehnt'.<sup>84</sup>

### **Cabinet-Den Uyl (1973 – 1977)**

During the time of the genocide in Cambodia, two different cabinets in the Netherlands ruled the country. The first was Cabinet-Den Uyl in 1973. After being in opposition for years, the Social-Democratic *Partij van de Arbeid* (PvdA, Dutch Labour Party) was elected by a landslide. The party formed, together with D66, PPR, KVP and ARP, a new left-wing cabinet led by Joop den Uyl. According to Duco Hellema, this new cabinet was the most left-wing in the history of Dutch politics.<sup>85</sup> However, the two conservative parties (KVP and ARP) wanted to participate in government to counterbalance the influence of the progressives within the government.<sup>86</sup> It was the first time the left parties held the majority of ministerial posts.

The main goal of foreign policy was to propose initiatives in the UN, and make the organisation more effective in keeping peace within the world. According to Labour Party member and minister of Foreign Affairs, Max van der Stoep, human rights were a key element in his foreign affairs policy between 1973 and 1977. To achieve this ambitious goal, the percentage of the Gross National Product for developmental aid had to be raised by 1.5 percent.<sup>87</sup> A factor which made a progressive foreign policy difficult were the relatively bad economic circumstances of the early 1970s. The economic recession after the oil crisis of 1973-1974, and soaring energy prices, caused a period of economic insecurity. The focus of the government was rather to solve these domestic problems before looking at international problems. Another factor which made a progressive policy difficult was that the Christian parties, KVP and ARP, together with some right-wing parties, maintained the majority in the House of Representatives. Although they were part of the cabinet, in

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<sup>83</sup> R. Canninga, 'Donkere schaduwen verlicht', <http://www.geschiedenis.nl/nieuws/artikel/244/donkere-schaduwen-verlicht>, accessed on 11 May 2017.

<sup>84</sup> D. Hellema, *Nederland en de jaren zeventig*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>85</sup> D. Hellema, *Nederland in de wereld, de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland*, Houten: Spectrum 2014 (5th edition), p. 262.

<sup>86</sup> P. Bootsma & W. Breedveld, *de verbeelding aan de macht, het kabinet-Den Uyl 1973-1977*, Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers 1999, pp. 35-36.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibidem*.

several matters, they agreed more with the right-wing approach.<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, human rights was still a prominent issue for the first left-wing cabinet.<sup>89</sup>

Despite the idealistic prime minister, two other important ministers of the cabinet were considered temperate within their party: minister of Defence Henk Vredeling, and minister of Foreign Affairs, Max van der Stoel, both members of the Dutch Labour Party. They were key figures in the field of foreign policy on human rights.<sup>90</sup> Van der Stoel was a proponent of close American-European cooperation, especially in terms of NATO. This did not match with the ideas of some of his radical left-wing colleagues. He often disagreed with his idealistic Labour colleague, and Minister of Development Cooperation, Jan Pronk, whose main goal was to defend humanitarian principles in the world.<sup>91</sup>

Regarding the development of the Third world, the cabinet wanted a profound policy change. In this field the social-democratic policy was most visible. Minister Pronk wanted to focus on Third world countries that maintained an active social policy to improve the social conditions for the poorest.<sup>92</sup> The Netherlands supported a fund of the UNHCR. In May 1975 the Netherlands donated 500,000 guilders for assistance to Cambodia, which was outlined in the government budget of 1975-1976.<sup>93</sup> Also in the years 1972-1975, Cambodia received 38,000 guilders in total. The intended 500,000 guilders was a huge increase in the amount available for Development Cooperation in Cambodia.<sup>94</sup> Nonetheless, on 23 May 1975, van der Stoel received an answer from the UNHCR that there was currently no assistance program in Cambodia. A possibility was transferring the money to another assistance program, for example it could be donated for assistance to Cambodian refugees in foreign countries.<sup>95</sup> In February 1976 the new purpose was still not decided. According to UNHCR, an assistance program in Cambodia was not likely in the short term. The UNHCR preferred spending the money on their Indochina program for Laos and both parts of Vietnam. Their second option was

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<sup>88</sup> R. Canninga, 'Donkere schaduwen verlicht', <http://www.geschiedenis.nl/nieuws/artikel/244/donkere-schaduwen-verlicht>, accessed on 23 May 2017.

<sup>89</sup> P. Bootsma & W. Breedveld, *de verbeelding aan de macht*, p. 47.

<sup>90</sup> R. Canninga, 'Donkere schaduwen verlicht', <http://www.geschiedenis.nl/nieuws/artikel/244/donkere-schaduwen-verlicht>, accessed on 16 May 2017.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>92</sup> D. Hellema, *Nederland in de wereld*, pp. 289-291.

<sup>93</sup> Archive code 9, 997.4, part 2, inventory no. 21189, code message from Minister of Foreign Affairs to PR of the UN in Geneva, 21 May 1975, reference no. 7128.

<sup>94</sup> Kamerstuk 13600 chapter V sub no. 29, session 1975-1976, p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> Archive code 9, 997.4, part 2, inventory no. 21189, code message from PR in Geneva to Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Development Cooperation, 23 May 1975, reference no. 9882.

the Thailand program of assistance to Cambodian refugees. Both minister Pronk and minister van der Stoel preferred the latter.<sup>96</sup>

The government did not complete its full term. The result of the elections provided two possible cabinets: the combination of PvdA and CDA (and D66), but also the combination of CDA and VVD (*Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* conservative-liberal). After a long formation, in December 1977, the CDA and VVD decided to form the new cabinet.<sup>97</sup>

### **Cabinet-Van Agt (1977 – 1981)**

This centre-right cabinet, consisting of CDA and VVD, differed completely from the previous progressive cabinet. The ministerial post of Development Cooperation was taken over by Jan de Koning (CDA). He was a pragmatic politician and did not have the same idealistic attitude as his predecessor Pronk (PvdA).<sup>98</sup> Defence minister Vredeling was succeeded by Roelof Kruisinga. Van der Stoel's successor as minister of Foreign Affairs was the liberal Chris van der Klaauw, after two other candidates refused the job offer. Van der Klaauw was a diplomat who had a difficult time in politics. In general, it could be said that Van der Klaauw made a hesitating appearance in the parliament, but despite strong opposition, he usually received enough support for his policies.<sup>99</sup>

This cabinet commenced in a time when, in international politics, the *détente* came to an end, and the Cold War resumed. This also had an impact on Dutch foreign policy, which was characterised by its pro-American attitude. The first issue in foreign policy happened directly after the start of the cabinet. The cabinet took an ambivalent position towards the introduction of the neutron bomb to NATO, in order to enlarge their nuclear power.<sup>100</sup> On this issue, the minister of Defence, Kruisinga, and minister of Foreign Affairs Van der Klaauw were diametrically opposed. Kruisinga did not want to take any responsibility for the introduction of nuclear weaponry, but Van der Klaauw on the other hand, had less difficulty with it. Again friction between the minister of Foreign Affairs and the minister of Defence is visible.

Regarding Development Cooperation in 1977, an amount of 50,000 guilders was reserved for sheltering refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia in Thailand. In November 1979, the UNHCR initiated a special mission led by Zia Rizvi for Cambodian refugees in Thailand. In a telex message to the

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<sup>96</sup> Archive code 9, 997.4, part 2, inventory no. 21189, code message from Minister of Development Cooperation to PR of the UN in Geneva, 17 February 1976, reference no. 2054 & code message from Minister of Foreign Affairs to PR of the UN Geneva, 17 March 1976, reference no. 5061.

<sup>97</sup> P. Bootsma & W. Breedveld, *de verbeelding aan de macht*, pp. 268-270.

<sup>98</sup> P. Malcontent, 'Nederland en de mensenrechten in de Derde Wereld', in: M. Kuitenbrouwer & M. Leenders, eds., *Geschiedenis van de mensenrechten: bouwstenen voor een interdisciplinaire benadering*, Hilversum: Verloren 1996, p. 283.

<sup>99</sup> R. Canninga, 'Donkere schaduwen verlicht', <http://www.geschiedenis.nl/nieuws/artikel/244/donkere-schaduwen-verlicht>, accessed on 23 May 2017.

<sup>100</sup> D. Hellema, *Nederland in de Wereld*, pp. 292-294.

Permanent Representative in New York, minister De Koning donated an amount of 2.5 million guilders for this UNHCR program.<sup>101</sup>

Van der Klaauw had the reputation of not being the most pronounced minister of Foreign Affairs, although his biggest achievement in human rights policy was, together with De Koning, the Human Rights Bill of 1979.<sup>102</sup> Van der Klaauw's predecessor, Van der Stoel had already put on paper several principles on human rights part of the government's foreign policy, but it was Van der Klaauw who elaborated on these principles. The most important part of the document was the belief that human rights should be a central component in foreign politics.<sup>103</sup> This document remains an important feature in Dutch foreign policy until today.

### **Information Level Cambodia**

During the years when the pro-American General Lon Nol was in power (1970-1975), the Netherlands did not have an ambassador in Cambodia. The information the Dutch government received came from an informant in Phnom Penh and from the Dutch Ambassador in Malaysia, G.J. de Graag. However, when the Khmer Rouge took over the country, the informant was forced to leave and the information flow from Cambodia stopped. Combined with being completely isolated from other countries, it was very difficult for Dutch foreign ministers, Max van der Stoel and Chris van der Klaauw, to receive reliable information about the situation in Cambodia during the genocide.<sup>104</sup>

The Dutch government received its information mostly through the UN, and later through the Dutch Embassies in the region: China, Thailand and Malaysia. Besides these official sources, the members of the Dutch House of Representatives probably read articles in newspapers and magazines. These papers received their information mainly from international press agencies. These papers also published stories from refugees, but, according to the government, these could not be seen as reliable sources.<sup>105</sup>

Figure 4 shows the result (557 articles) of the search term *Rode Khmer* (Khmer Rouge in Dutch) in different Dutch newspapers between 01 January 1975 and 02 February 1979. Remarkable is the relatively low number of articles between 1976 and 1979. This shows that during that time the information flow was relatively closed on the Khmer Rouge. This is also valid for other search terms

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<sup>101</sup> Archive code 9, 997.4 part 8, inventory no. 21195, Telex message no. 662657 from Minister of Development Cooperation to NY Permanent Representative, 04 November 1979.

<sup>102</sup> 'De rechten van de mens in het buitenlands beleid', proceedings House of Representatives, 1978-1979, 15571, no. 1-2. In: P. Malcontent, *Op kruistocht in de Derde Wereld*, Hilversum: verloren 1998, p.63

<sup>103</sup> P. Malcontent, *Op kruistocht in de Derde Wereld*, Hilversum: verloren 1998, pp.63-64.

<sup>104</sup> R. Canninga, 'Donkere schaduwen verlicht II', <http://www.geschiedenis.nl/nieuws/artikel/243/donkere-schaduwen-verlicht-ii>, accessed on 18 May 2017.

<sup>105</sup> Archive code 9, 911.0, part 0, inventory no. 10552, 'General reports and data', memorandum from AOD/BA to DOA/ZA, 18 March 1977, general report of important developments.

like: *Cambodja* (Cambodia) and Phnom Penh. These search terms had 2,386 (*Cambodja*) and 852 (Phnom Penh) hits (see figures 5 to 7). The more general search term *Cambodja* also received the most hits, but could also involve articles not focused on the specific subject necessary for this research. The search term 'Pol Pot' obviously shows a different curve (234 hits). This was mainly because the name of Pol Pot remained secret for a long time.

The low number of articles in the Dutch newspapers between the years that the Khmer Rouge was in power, corresponds with the low information level of the government, as will be seen in the next paragraph.

*Search results 'Rode Khmer' in Dutch newspapers between 01-01-1975 and 01-02-1979.*

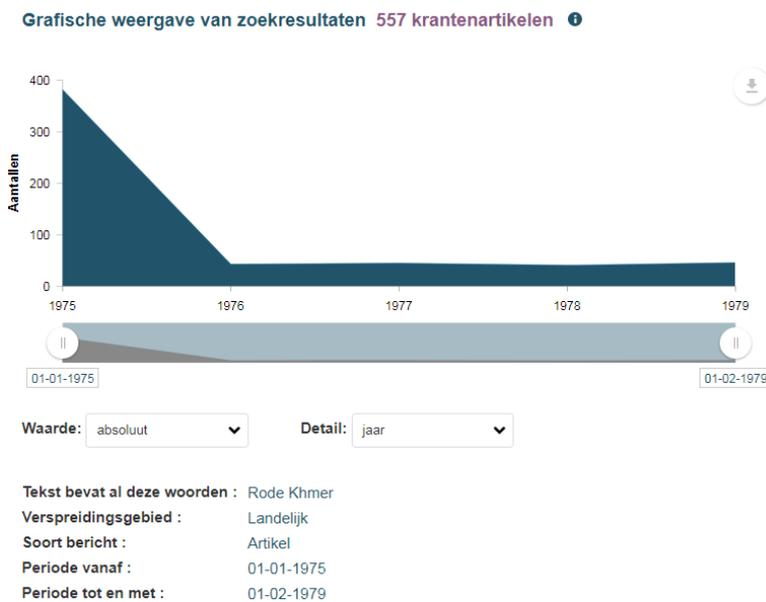


Figure 4.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Delpher, website with digitalized Dutch newspapers, search term Rode Khmer, accessed on 26 June 2017.

Search results 'Cambodja' in Dutch newspapers between 01-01-1975 and 01-02-1979.

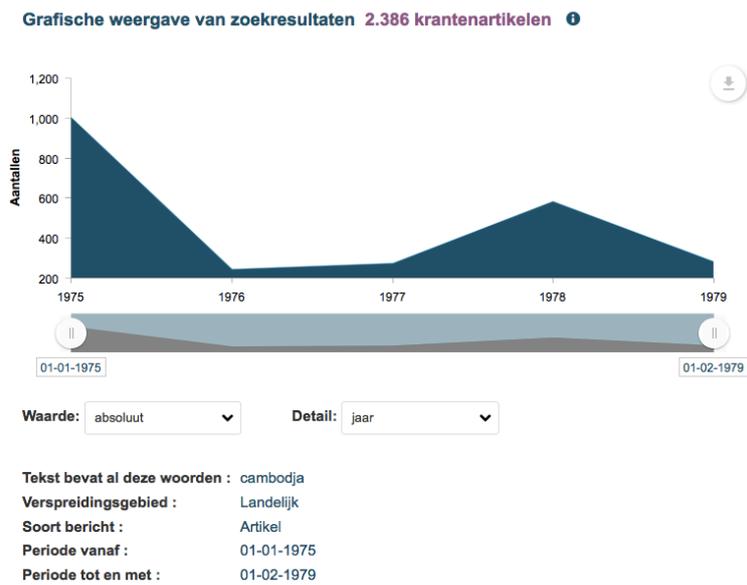


Figure 5.<sup>107</sup>

Search results 'Phnom Penh' in Dutch newspapers between 01-01-1975 and 01-02-1979.

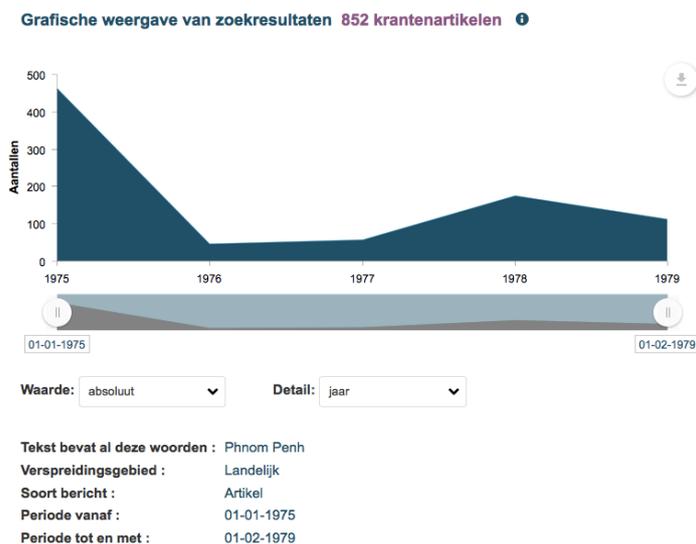


Figure 6.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Delpher, website with digitalized Dutch newspapers, search term Cambodja, accessed on 20 July 2017.

<sup>108</sup> Delpher, website with digitalized Dutch newspapers, search term Phnom Penh, accessed on 20 July 2017.



## Search results 'Pol Pot' in Dutch newspapers between 01-01-1975 and 01-02-1979

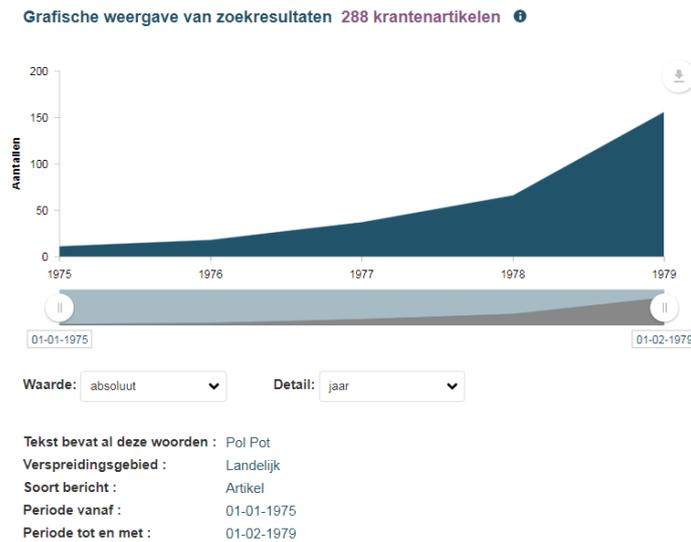


Figure 7.<sup>109</sup>

### **Cambodia in the Government**

On 5 March 1975, even before the Khmer Rouge took power, PSP-member Fred van der Spek forwarded a motion in the Dutch House of Representatives to recognise the Royal Government of the National Union of Kampuchea (GRUNK, coalition between Sihanouk and the Khmer Rouge). This motion (13 100 chapter V no. 21) was rejected by the majority, although several left parties like PSP, PPR and CPN had supported it.<sup>110</sup> On 15 April 1975 minister van der Stoel said that when an effective regime in Phnom Penh was formed, he would try to establish diplomatic relations with the new government.

The first time a question was asked in the House of Representatives about the situation in Cambodia was on 15 July 1975. Cees Berkhouwer from the liberal party asked the government 'to solve the mystery around the possible genocide from the Khmer Rouge, judge this genocide and try to stop it through the competent authorities like the UN'.<sup>111</sup> Because the cabinet began its summer recess, the answer did not come from Van der Stoel, but from his deputy Harry van Doorn who was actually the minister of Culture, Recreation and Social work. His answer was that the messages regarding the situation in Cambodia were alarming, but that they could not be verified, because Cambodia had no contact with the outside world. If the suspicions were proven to be true, the

<sup>109</sup> Delpher, website with digitalized Dutch newspapers, search term Pol Pot, accessed on 20 July 2017.

<sup>110</sup> House of Representatives, 60th session, 5 March 1975.

<sup>111</sup> House of Representatives session 1974-1975, Question no. 1600, 15 July 1975, Cees Berkhouwer p. 1235.

government would take action and investigate which procedures were necessary to inform the UN.<sup>112</sup>

Finally, at the beginning of April 1976, after several months of trying to make contact, minister Van der Stoel received an English communiqué, forwarded by the Dutch Embassy in Beijing, from the Ministry of Information and Propaganda of DK. It concerned an announcement of the first anniversary of the revolution on 15, 16 and 17 April.<sup>113</sup> Although this was the first time the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs received information from the government of DK itself, it was no diplomatic relationship between the two countries.

At the end of April 1976, another communiqué was sent to The Hague about the first plenary meeting of the representatives of DK. Several constitutional decisions were outlined in this document. The elections of 20 March 1976 had been fair, and every year a plenary meeting would be organised. Khieu Sampan would be the head of state, and there would be a permanent, executive government of 15 ministers, with Pol Pot as the prime minister. Ex-King Sihanouk's request of retirement had been accepted.<sup>114</sup> However, both communiqués were documents with one-sided information. This reflects the situation given in the introduction of this thesis according to the BBC journalist Elizabeth Becker. Her interview with Pol Pot was also a one-sided sharing of information, just like the early communication between the Netherlands and DK.

On 6 October 1976 CHU-member Roelof Kruisinga asked a second question about Cambodia. He had read an article in the magazine of the evangelical foundation 'Kruistochten' (later renamed 'Open Doors') of July 1976 about the persecution of Christians by the Khmer Rouge. He asked the minister what his ideas were on pressuring the regime to stop liquidating and persecuting people because of their religion.<sup>115</sup> This time the answer came from minister Van der Stoel. He said that he had also read the article, but again, that Cambodia was still completely isolated from the world. This made it very difficult to verify the stories about the cruelties of the Khmer Rouge regime. He repeated the fact that the Netherlands still were not able to establish diplomatic relations with Cambodia, so the minister could not approach the authorities of Cambodia.<sup>116</sup>

In the yearbook of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 1975-1976, it was written that information was scarce and often contradictory. The alarming messages about an extermination of the supporters of the old regime were therefore difficult to verify. Cambodia's foreign policy was characterised by almost complete isolationism. Only with China existed a more diplomatic and formal

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<sup>112</sup> House of Representatives session 1974-1975, Question no. 1600, 15 July 1975, Cees Berkhouwer p. 1235.

<sup>113</sup> R. Canninga, 'Donkere schaduwen verlicht II', <http://www.geschiedenis.nl/nieuws/artikel/243/donkere-schaduwen-verlicht-ii>, accessed on 18 May 2017.

<sup>114</sup> Idem, accessed on 19 May 2017.

<sup>115</sup> House of Representatives session 1976-1977, Question no. 118, Roelof Kruisinga, 6 October 1976, p. 229.

<sup>116</sup> Ibidem.

relation.<sup>117</sup> In this yearbook the relations between the Netherlands and Cambodia were not yet mentioned.

The answer from DK on Van der Stoel's request to establish diplomatic relations came in November 1976, sixteen months later. In this letter, the minister of Foreign Affairs Ieng Sary said DK was ready to establish diplomatic relations.<sup>118</sup>

On 4 February 1977, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DK sent an aide-memoire with a request to circulate it amongst all Permanent Missions accredited to the UN. The Netherlands received an English translation of the original French text.<sup>119</sup> The first issue in the document were the foreign relations of the newly established country: 'DK is imbued with goodwill and with the firm resolve to maintain close relations with all countries which have common frontiers, and with all countries of the world on a strict basis of mutual respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.'<sup>120</sup> As an example of the country's will to maintain good relations with its neighbours, the visit of the foreign minister and the deputy prime minister of Cambodia, Ieng Sary, to Thailand was outlined. The text also included a warning to other countries:

'DK [...] does not interfere in the internal affairs of any country or commit aggression against any country. But DK does not permit any country to violate its sovereignty and its territorial integrity or to interfere in its internal affairs. [...] and is determined at all costs to defend its sovereignty and its territorial integrity within its existing boundaries.'<sup>121</sup>

Related to this aide-memoire on 10 May 1977 a memorandum from DOA/ZA<sup>122</sup> was written to the Chief of DOA. The memorandum focused on the formal visit of Ieng Sary to Malaysia and Singapore in March 1977. During the visit, Sary clarified that DK did not want to be seen as part of the Indochinese Communist bloc, but wanted to reduce Cambodia's isolated position by improving relations with countries like Malaysia and Singapore.<sup>123</sup> Ieng Sary said 'independent politics does not mean living in isolation from international cooperation and refusing all foreign aid'.<sup>124</sup> It is

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<sup>117</sup> Yearbook of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1975-176, pp. 142-143.

<sup>118</sup> R. Canninga, 'Donkere schaduwen verlicht II', <http://www.geschiedenis.nl/nieuws/artikel/243/donkere-schaduwen-verlicht-ii>, accessed on 19 May 2017.

<sup>119</sup> Archive code 9, 912.2, part 2, inventory no. 12919, Cambodja/Buitenlandse politiek, Aide-mémoire, 4 February 1977, reference: PO 240.

<sup>120</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>121</sup> Archive code 9, 912.2, part 2, inventory no. 12919, Cambodja/Buitenlandse politiek, Aide-mémoire, 4 February 1977, reference: PO 240.

<sup>122</sup> DOA/ZA Administration Asia and Oceania Bureau South Asia of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Directie Azië en Oceanië bureau Zuid-Azië van het Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken)

<sup>123</sup> Archive code 9, 912.2, part 2, inventory no. 12919, Memorandum, 10 May 1977 No. 68/77 from DOA/ZA to Chief DOA, Cambodia and Southeast Asia.

<sup>124</sup> Ibidem.

remarkable that Cambodia in this period wanted to establish relations. The Khmer Rouge did not want any interference by foreign countries within their own territory, but, as the rice harvest was not as high as expected and famine prevailed in the country, Cambodia was in desperate need of foreign aid. Establishing relations could provide the money to save the people of Cambodia.

In the general report of 1977 of AOD/BA<sup>125</sup> to DOA/ZA, the developments on the situation in Cambodia were outlined. This report was the first to denounce the possibility of victims, whereas, in the previous year, the report only exposed the enormous migration flow from the cities to the countryside. According to the report of 1977, there was an unknown, but most likely high number of victims. Possible causes were the forced and rushed departure from Phnom Penh, problems with food supply, and the radical renewal policy of the Khmer Rouge.<sup>126</sup> Although these reasons were outlined, it was stated that they were based on stories from refugees and could therefore not be taken as necessarily representative. So far, however, the document also stated that no other messages had come out showing a more positive image.<sup>127</sup> This report also outlined the remarkable fact that, under the new constitution of DK, a definition of fundamental rights was missing.<sup>128</sup> Finally, the establishment of diplomatic relations, effective from 3 January 1977, was mentioned, but also that, until then, no exchange of ambassadors had occurred and DK had not responded to the proposal to accredit the Dutch ambassador of Thailand for the job.<sup>129</sup>

The inability to form 'effective diplomatic relations', was raised in the year report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A question was asked in the House of Representatives of 16 January 1978: 'How are the relations with Cambodia and have we exchanged ambassadors yet?' The answer that followed was that the Cambodian government had not yet responded to the Dutch proposal to accredit the ambassador of Thailand for Cambodia. Therefore, diplomatic relations with Cambodia were less than effective.<sup>130</sup>

At the beginning of February 1978, the Dutch ambassador in Beijing received an invitation from the Cambodian government to visit Cambodia. Minister of Foreign Affairs Van der Klaauw answered that the ambassador could accept the invitation, on the one condition that he would not be the only western ambassador attending.<sup>131</sup> According to Van der Klaauw, this was an opportunity

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<sup>125</sup> AOD/BA, Bureau of Special Issues of the department of Investigations and Documentation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (Bureau Bijzondere aangelegenheden van de Afdeling Onderzoek en Documentatie)

<sup>126</sup> Archive code 9, 911.0, part 0, inventory no. 10552, memorandum from AOD/BA to DOA/ZA, 18 March 1977, general report of important developments.

<sup>127</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>128</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>129</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>130</sup> House of Representatives, session 1977-1978, 14 800 chapter V, no. 21, p. 16.

<sup>131</sup> Archive code 9, 912.2, part 2, inventory no. 12919, Code message from Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Beijing Ambassador, 1 February 1978, reference no. 1422.

to enter a dialogue regarding the policies of the Cambodian government on human rights. Until that day, the Khmer Rouge had evaded every dialogue regarding human rights. The Dutch ambassador in Beijing emphasised in his letter that he explicitly wanted the Cambodian government to know that accepting the invitation did not mean choosing sides in any conflict or an approval of their policies.<sup>132</sup> Nevertheless, shortly after this contact, the Cambodian government withdrew the invitation and the visit never took place.<sup>133</sup>

The Netherlands was not the only country that recognised the regime of the Khmer Rouge and tried to establish diplomatic relations. In 1978, the Dutch Embassy in Beijing sent an overview of the relations of Cambodia with other European countries. France and (western-) Germany did not recognise the regime. Belgium, Denmark, Italy and Great-Britain had on the other hand individually recognised the Government of Cambodia. Belgium had sent an agreement for their ambassador in Beijing, but just like the Netherlands, never received an answer.<sup>134</sup> The UK and Denmark both received a positive reaction on their agreement, although both countries were not planning to do anything with it. Italy was still busy trying to find a suitable location for an embassy.<sup>135</sup> In summary, the countries of the European Community did not have a common stance regarding the recognition of the government in Cambodia and were divided about recognising the regime.

The 1977-1978 yearbook of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs identified that forced agricultural labour, food shortage, and wide-spread disease were rampant in Cambodia, and that these together had resulted in a large number of victims. According to messages from victims, purification of the Cambodian people had been ongoing for the last couple of years.<sup>136</sup>

After the Vietnamese invasion at the beginning of 1979, Van der Klaauw said in a statement about the developments in Cambodia:

'The regime in Cambodia violated the human rights in a terrible way and was a disapproved regime. But I'm convinced that an intervention from outside could not have been the solution. [...] The Netherlands approved the resolution in the UN Security Council which condemned the aggression, independency and integrity of a state, and called upon withdrawal of all foreign forces from Cambodia. Nevertheless, because of a veto of the Soviet-Union, this resolution was never approved. It would be a lack of insight/understanding if the western European countries did not strive after dialogue and cooperation. [...] This in general, is important for the safety and security in the world.'<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Archive code 9, 912.2, part 2, inventory no. 12919, Code message from Dutch Ambassador in Beijing to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 3 February 1978, reference no. 3016.

<sup>133</sup> House of Representatives, 26th session, 23 February 1978, p. 1121.

<sup>134</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>135</sup> Archive code 9, 912.2, part 2, inventory no. 12919, Message from Royal Netherlands Embassy Beijing, 24 August 1977, no. 2662/369.

<sup>136</sup> Yearbook of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1977-1978, p. 141.

<sup>137</sup> House of Representatives, 47th session 8 February 1979, p. 3218.

From this statement, it can be concluded that by then, Van der Klaauw knew about the severe abuses under the regime of the Khmer Rouge. Nevertheless, the focus here was again on condemning the intervention of Vietnam, and not on the cruelties of the old regime.

On 16 July 1979, the Deputy Head of DOA received a memorandum from DOA/ZA about the invasion by Vietnam. According to DOA/ZA, a return of the regime of Pol Pot was not an option, but a recognition of the regime of Heng Samrin could seem like an approval of the Vietnamese invasion, and was neither an option. As a solution, he proposed the idea of a neutral red-coloured government, because Vietnam would not allow an anti-communistic or anti-Vietnamese government.<sup>138</sup> It would not take much effort to find a qualified head of state, and he suggested Sihanouk. However, it would be extremely difficult to find Cambodians qualified in politics and to rule the country, because during the regime of the Khmer Rouge, the people were systematically murdered.<sup>139</sup> This document was the first time the actions of the Khmer Rouge were referred to as 'systematic murders', but this was after the Khmer Rouge had been dismissed by the Vietnamese.

In conclusion, it can be said that during the first two years of the Pol Pot's regime, the government of DK established no relations with the Dutch government. Having so little information about the situation in DK made it for the Dutch government extremely difficult to know about the real situation in Cambodia. A possible genocide was questioned in the Dutch House of Representatives, but the cabinet had no further information because of the isolated position in relation to foreign countries. After two years of isolation, only having contact with China, the government of DK slowly started opening up, especially to neighbouring and non-communistic countries like Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. However, communication with the Dutch government was negligible. According to the Dutch government, without establishing diplomatic relations, it was impossible to discuss the humanitarian situation with the Khmer Rouge regime. Even after the Vietnamese invasion, it was difficult to establish relations with Cambodia. Dutch policy implied that a return to the old regime was unacceptable, but the new Vietnamese regime was certainly no improvement.

### **Information Level and the Dutch Government in Bosnia and Srebrenica**

At first the Dutch government was not interested in being involved in the war in Croatia. However, when the conflict shifted to Bosnia, and became a war between different ethnicities, it hit a nerve. Despite the Dutch initiatives for active involvement in the conflict, NATO hesitated to intervene. The

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<sup>138</sup> Archive code 9, 912.2, inventory no. 12919, Memorandum DOA/ZA to deputy DOA, 16 July 1979, no. 136/79.

<sup>139</sup> Ibidem.

reason why NATO hesitated, was because it was the first time an intervention had been suggested which went beyond the territory of its member states. Because of this lack of action, the Dutch minister of Foreign Affairs, Hans van den Broek, said that if countries wanted to intervene, they could better do it without NATO, because it took ages for them to decide.<sup>140</sup> In the second half of 1991, the Dutch presidency of the Council of the EC started and Van Den Broek wanted the EC to play a role in the conflict. This was difficult because the EC was strongly divided on the subject, and the task of the presidency was to keep member states together.

In June 1993 Under-Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan, organised a meeting to gauge if countries were prepared to provide military support for the Safe Areas. The Dutch permanent representative to the UN, Nicolaas Biegman, initiated the process of the Netherlands offering a logistics unit for the Safe Areas, hoping this example would be followed by other countries by sending troops.<sup>141</sup> At the same time minister Pieter Kooijmans offered an Airmobile Brigade for the implementation of a peace settlement. However, it soon became clear that a logistic unit would be impossible. According to Kooijmans, the Airmobile Brigade could also be used for the purpose of the Safe Areas.<sup>142</sup>

On 31 August 1993, minister of Defence Ter Beek wrote a concept letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to send it on to Boutros-Ghali. In the letter Ter Beek withdrew the logistic unit and offered the Airmobile Brigade instead. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the other hand, was surprised that the brigade was not offered for the purpose of the Safe Areas.<sup>143</sup> This shows the friction between the two ministries and their different conceptions. Having more parties like the UN and NATO involved in the actual mission, even more miscommunication and difference of opinions could be expected.

When UN-Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali formally accepted the offer of the Airmobile Battalion for the Safe Areas, minister Kooijmans spoke out his preference for stationing the force in Central Bosnia. However, Force Commander Jean Cot in Zagreb had already divided the troops in Bosnia, and so the Dutch would go to the eastern enclaves of Srebrenica and Zepa.<sup>144</sup>

This shows that, because of the lack of information, the Dutch government promised things it could not carry out. The policy of being proactive and acting as a catalyst, actually provided the opposite result. Instead of other countries following their example, the Dutch government was stuck with an impossible task.

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<sup>140</sup> A. ten Cate, *Sterven voor Bosnië?*, p. 91.

<sup>141</sup> NIOD, *Srebrenica: Reconstruction, background, consequences and analyses of the fall of a 'safe' Area*, pp. 778-783.

<sup>142</sup> House of Representatives, 1992-1993, Proceedings, p. 6041 in: NIOD, *Srebrenica: Reconstruction, background, consequences and analyses of the fall of a 'safe' Area*, p. 785.

<sup>143</sup> NIOD, *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied*, pp. 995-1006.

<sup>144</sup> *Idem*, p. 1071.

## Dutchbat in Srebrenica

Three consecutive battalions of the Airmobile Brigade stayed in Srebrenica: Dutchbat I from March 1994 until July 1994, Dutchbat II from July 1994 until January 1995 and finally, Dutchbat III from January 1995 until July 1995. While Dutchbat was formally under the command of the UN, the Dutch Government was still concerned with its Dutch soldiers, and felt a certain kind of responsibility. The operational authority was transferred to the UN, but the supreme command stayed within the national authorities.<sup>145</sup> One problem was that there were two points of contact in The Hague: the crisis staff of the Royal Netherlands Army (KL Crisis Staff) and the Defence Crisis Management Centre (DCBC). Normally, the KL Crisis Staff controlled the forces in Bosnia but, because of political pressure, the DCBC was interfering too. Both agencies were obliged to exchange information, but this rarely happened and caused a lack of information.<sup>146</sup>

The commander of the first Airmobile Brigade, Lieutenant Colonel Chris Vermeulen, realised that there were no guidelines for the Safe Area at the Bosnia Herzegovina Command of the UN.<sup>147</sup> Basically, Dutchbat had to establish what to do in Srebrenica itself. According to Vermeulen, Dutchbat had to man the observation posts (OP's) in Zepa and Srebrenica, and secure the local headquarters of Dutchbat, called compounds. The main tasks here were patrolling and reporting incidents like shootings to the Opsroom.<sup>148</sup> They had to control the weapon collection points and Dutchbat had to patrol the line of control. The Dutch assumed they would be stationed in both Zepa and Srebrenica, but in March 1994 the Bosnia Herzegovina Command decided to let the Ukrainians stay in Zepa and that Dutchbat would replace the Canadians in Srebrenica.<sup>149</sup>

The Canadians had been stationed in Srebrenica since April 1993, when the demilitarisation agreement was signed. The Dutch government never asked the Canadians for any information about the current situation in Srebrenica. Meanwhile, the Military Intelligence Service of the Netherlands (MID) made no effort to set up a risk analysis on the situation in Srebrenica.<sup>150</sup> The UN had no intelligence institution of its own because collecting information about its own members was not in line with the level of transparency the organisation wanted to pursue. Altogether, Dutch troops had to rely on their own intelligence forces. But the MID still thought the UN was responsible for the protection of the deployed forces. This showed further friction between the international organisations and the countries whose forces were deployed in Bosnia. Often NATO and the UN had already decided without consulting or informing the Dutch government.

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<sup>145</sup> NIOD, *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied*, p. 1175.

<sup>146</sup> *Idem*, pp.2275-2282.

<sup>147</sup> *Idem*, p. 1321.

<sup>148</sup> *Idem*, p. 1334 & pp. 1407-1414.

<sup>149</sup> *Idem*, p. 1350.

<sup>150</sup> *Idem*, p. 1119.



At the end of 1994 a new ceasefire was signed and, in most parts of Bosnia, the parties abided by this, but in January 1995 fighting resumed between the VRS (Bosnian Serbs) and ABiH (Bosnian Muslims). Later that month the ABiH wanted their weapons from the Weapon Collection Points, but the Battalion Commander Thom Karremans refused this in relation to the signed agreement. As a result, Commander of the ABiH, Oric, enlarged the area prohibited for Dutchbat. Karremans saw this as a violation of Freedom of Movement and wanted to force his way through the area. This ended in the hostage taking of 99 Dutchbatters by the ABiH.<sup>151</sup> This came as a complete surprise for Dutchbat. Dutchbat was supposed to be neutral, but often took the side of the Bosnian Muslims. After taking Dutch soldiers hostage diplomatic relations deteriorated. Tensions between all of the parties remained and in the daily reports to the Sector North East, the situation was often referred to as 'calm but tense' with hundreds of shots being fired daily.

In the beginning of 1995, a lot of people asked questions about the continuation of the Safe Areas in Eastern Bosnia. Force Commander of United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Zagreb, Bernard Janvier, considered withdrawal from the Eastern enclaves to be the most effective solution. Nevertheless, the Under Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan, wanted to continue the old way, but with more power. The Dutch government agreed with Annan, having little appetite for withdrawal. The minister of Foreign Affairs, Hans van Mierlo, wanted a more effective performance, but nobody knew how this could be achieved concretely.<sup>152</sup> In contrast to Janvier and the UN in New York, Bosnia Herzegovina Commander General Rupert Smith in Sarajevo wanted, like Van Mierlo, to adopt a hard line against the Serbs.

From the beginning of April 1995 onwards, the situation in the Safe Areas declined. Nobody was allowed to enter or to leave Srebrenica anymore. On 28 May, the VRS attacked the British in Safe Area Gorazde. In reaction to these events, on the night of 28-29 May, Chief of Staff Brigadier General Cees Nicolai gave instruction for withdrawal from the two most vulnerable Observation Posts (OP-A and OP-C) in Srebrenica. Karremans, on the contrary, did not feel the urge to leave the posts and compromised with Nicolai to stay at the OPs, on the condition that Dutchbat should be able to evacuate the OPs within an hour, in case of an emergency.<sup>153</sup>

On 3 June 1995, the VRS attacked OP-E and Dutchbat, as agreed, left the OP. The Bosnian Muslims were not happy with this and demanded Dutchbat to take the OP back with force. In the following days, the ABiH made failed attempts to recapture the OP without help from Dutchbat.<sup>154</sup> The situation further remained calm but tense, until the VRS decided to attack the enclave on 6 July.

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<sup>151</sup> NIOD, *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied*, pp. 1433-1434.

<sup>152</sup> *Idem*, pp. 1754-1761.

<sup>153</sup> *Idem*, pp. 1989-1992.

<sup>154</sup> *Idem*, pp. 2005-2013.

The last situation report of 5 July still reported: 'The situation is calm and stable. We expect no major changes for the next 24 hours'.<sup>155</sup> However, on 9 July VRS General Zdravko Tolimir ordered the take over of the whole enclave, which happened in the next few days until 11 July.

On 10 July Minister Voorhoeve agreed with bombings, despite the Dutch hostages. The VRS threatened to kill the Dutch hostages if air power continued. The VRS held the soldiers hostage after they conquered the OPs. When the same question was asked again on 11 July, the government was under the impression that it was no longer useful to unnecessarily endanger the hostages, because the enclave had fallen. Irrespective of whoever made the decision to stop the use of air power, in Bosnia, Karremans and Dutchbat soldiers were still under the assumption that air strikes would take place in the early morning of July 11th. However, soon they would realise that this plan had already been rejected by higher authorities.<sup>156</sup>

On 11 July Minister President Wim Kok and Minister of Foreign Affairs Van Mierlo arrived in the DCBC for crisis talks. Minister President Kok had difficulty with choosing between 'doing something or doing nothing'.<sup>157</sup> Finally, the ministers decided in this situation that the Close Air Support had to be shut down immediately. Minister of Defence Voorhoeve called Akashi saying Close Air Support was no longer relevant. Akashi debated with Janvier and told Voorhoeve that Janvier did not completely agree with it, but that he would do what was possible. However, at that moment, Janvier had already agreed to call off the Close Air Support.<sup>158</sup> The call Voorhoeve made came in favour of Akashi. Shortly after July 11th, Akashi said he was the one who decided to stop the Close Air Support, but in later statements he changed his story and said he did it after Voorhoeve called him.<sup>159</sup>

The situation drastically changed in these days of July 1995. When Srebrenica had fallen, nothing was visible anymore from the once so proactive Dutch policy. Instead, they wanted to leave the country as soon as possible.

## **Comparison**

The information level of the Dutch government was an important factor in the Dutch policy. The information on the situation in Cambodia was scarce, and difficult to verify, due to the isolated position of the country in relation to foreign countries. This information gap resulted in a passive policy, with no action taken to prevent or stop the genocide. The government was relatively reserved towards the situation in Cambodia and saw it as an internal problem. The government was on the

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<sup>155</sup> NIOD, *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied*, p. 2075.

<sup>156</sup> Idem, p. 2160 & pp. 2288-2290.

<sup>157</sup> P. Bootsma, *Srebrenica, het officiële NIOD-rapport samengevat*, Amsterdam: Boom 2002, p. 277.

<sup>158</sup> Idem, pp. 277-278.

<sup>159</sup> Idem, p. 279.

other hand eager to start an intervention in Bosnia and was at the vanguard of intervention. It hoped that this active policy would encourage other countries to intervene too. However, the information level caused problems during this intervention too. While there were other parties involved (like the NATO and UN), a clear and direct communication between the UNPROFOR mission and the Dutch government was difficult. The UN was responsible for the operational authority of UNPROFOR and therefore made most decisions in consultation with the NATO.

In the case of Cambodia, there was no role for the Ministry of Defence, since an intervention was not even considered. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs played a modest role in the situation in Cambodia. They tried to establish diplomatic relations which, according to them, were necessary for denouncing the humanitarian situation in Cambodia. In the humanitarian mission in Bosnia the Ministry of Defence played on the other hand an important role. It had to cooperate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which often disagreed in situations and had different interests.

In conclusion it can be said that the information level of the government played a more significant part in influencing the Dutch policy during the genocide in Cambodia, than it did during the genocide in Bosnia. Lack of information was one of the reasons for not intervening in Cambodia, and in Bosnia the intervention was precisely the cause for an information gap.

## 5. Role of the International Community

In times of genocide, the international community has several possibilities to intervene and stop the genocide from happening. In this chapter, role of the international community is described. At first, the Cambodian and Srebrenica genocide will be described. And finally, the influence of these different acts of genocide on the Dutch policy will be discussed.

The difficulty with intervening in an act of genocide lies in the contradiction of genocide with other important human rights. To intervene in an internal matter of a country, one must infringe a country's sovereignty. Sovereignty is the power of a country to control its own government.<sup>160</sup> It is based on the effective authority inside the own territory.<sup>161</sup> The meaning of sovereignty is explained in the report of the International Commission on Intervention and Sovereignty of December 2001:

'For many states and peoples, it is [...] a recognition of their equal worth and dignity, a protection of their unique identities and their national freedom, and an affirmation of their right to shape and determine their own destiny.'<sup>162</sup>

These concepts of sovereignty and intervening to protect the values of human rights in other countries are therefore always conflicting with each other.

The United Nations organization itself has two options to violate the principle of sovereignty in a legal way. The first option to intervene in a country's sovereignty lies in Chapter 7 of the UN Charter: 'action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression'. Nevertheless, the use of this exception has happened only in some extraordinary cases. The UN considers sovereignty in general as one of the most important values, and sees violating this as the last option.<sup>163</sup> The second option is the Genocide convention from 1948, as discussed before.<sup>164</sup> In order to punish a requirement is that genocide always has to be intentional. Despite the duty to punish the violating state, the convention does not refer to a specific institution to supervise these duties.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Definition from the Cambridge dictionary, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sovereignty>, accessed on 11 May 2017.

<sup>161</sup> D.Hellema & H. Reiding *Humanitaire interventie en soevereiniteit, De geschiedenis van een tegenstelling*, Amsterdam: Boom 2004, p. 12.

<sup>162</sup> ICISS, *The Responsibility to Protect. Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty*, Ottawa: December 2001, p. 16.

<sup>163</sup> F. Baudet, 'Soevereiniteit en humanitaire interventie. Theorie en praktijk in de Koude Oorlog', in D. Hellema & H. Reiding, *Humanitaire interventie en soevereiniteit*, pp. 105-106.

<sup>164</sup> UN, Article 1 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 09 December 1948.

<sup>165</sup> M. Mennecke, 'Genocide en het internationaal recht', in: B. Boender & W. ten Have eds., *De Holocaust en andere genociden, een inleiding*, Amsterdam: NIOD/Amsterdam University Press 2012, pp. 148-149 & p. 160.

Another option is a unilateral military intervention by a single state. Some consider this form of humanitarian intervention illegal, because there is no control by an international body and it infringes on the prohibition of the use of violence in international relations.<sup>166</sup> Nevertheless, according to the treaty, countries have the duty to intervene upon suspicion of genocide.

### **International Interference in Cambodia**

During the first three years of the genocide in Cambodia, the UN did not intervene in the matter. Most members saw it as a domestic problem in which they were not interested. Another dominant factor was the war in Vietnam. This war had just ended in a failure for western countries, and especially for the United States, which was afraid an intervention in Cambodia would result in the same situation as in Vietnam.<sup>167</sup> An active intervention in Cambodia by the UN would possibly also have been vetoed by China. China and North Korea were the only two countries that had some kind of diplomatic relation with the Khmer Rouge regime. Because China was also a permanent member of the Security Council, its permission was also necessary for an intervention.

Only after the intervention of Vietnam in 1979, did the UN interfere in the conflict. Right after Phnom Penh was taken over, an emergency meeting of the Security Council of the UN was convened. Nevertheless, the UN kept recognising the Khmer Rouge as the legal representative of Cambodia until 1990, and not the newly-installed Vietnamese government.<sup>168</sup> This was the result of a remarkable cooperation between United States and China. Both countries had lobbied to sentence the Vietnamese intervention, because it was a violation of international law. The coalition government in exile, Khmers People National Liberation Front (KPNLF), consisted of Red Khmer but also supporters of King Sihanouk, who represented the seat of Cambodia in the UN.<sup>169</sup>

In 1979, the international community was divided on this Vietnamese intervention. On January 11th, Prince Sihanouk spoke on behalf of Pol Pot's government at the Security Council. He condemned the Vietnamese invasion and accused Vietnam of conducting a 'Hitler-like Blitzkrieg'.<sup>170</sup> China supported the position of Prince Sihanouk and refused to recognise the new regime. China submitted a resolution to the Security Council in which was stated that it wanted all foreign forces to leave Cambodia, not recognise the new regime and stop all international aid to Vietnam.<sup>171</sup> The

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<sup>166</sup> D. Hellema & Hilde Reiding, *Humanitaire interventie en soevereiniteit.*, p. 8.

<sup>167</sup> Joris Voorhoeve, *veilige gebieden*, p. 284-285.

<sup>168</sup> B. Kiernan, 'de genocide in Cambodja', in: M. Van Haperen e.a. eds., *De Holocaust en andere genociden* p. 86.

<sup>169</sup> Robbie Canninga, *Donkere schaduwen verlicht*, accessed on 18 May 2017.

<sup>170</sup> 'Sowjet-veto Cambodja?' *Het Vrije Volk*, volume 34, no. 9679, 12 January 1979, p. 1.

<sup>171</sup> Idem.

Soviet Union on the other hand, recognised the Vietnamese regime and stimulated pro-Russian countries to follow their example, such as Ethiopia and Afghanistan.<sup>172</sup>

In April 1979, the spokesman of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the Netherlands did not recognise the new Vietnamese regime in Cambodia. According to the Ministry, the regime of Heng Samrin did not meet the criteria to exercise effective authority over the majority of the territory.<sup>173</sup>

On 20 September 1979, an advisory commission from non-aligned countries of the UN voted with six-against-three to recognise the Pol Pot regime as the legitimate representation of Cambodia in the UN.<sup>174</sup> Two days later, this issue went to the General Assembly of the UN. 71 countries voted in favour of Pol Pot, 35 in favour of Heng Samrin, and 34 countries abstained from voting. The nine EC countries originally agreed to follow the example of the advisory commission of non-aligned countries and give Cambodia an empty seat. However, six countries still voted in favour of Pol Pot and France, Ireland and the Netherlands abstained from voting.<sup>175</sup>

In November 1979, a request of the seven neutral members of the UN General Assembly for a resolution on a ceasefire in Cambodia and withdrawal of all foreign forces from Cambodian soil was initiated.<sup>176</sup> The Soviet Union vetoed the resolution at the Security Council, and the resolution therefore was not adopted. This meant that the Security Council could not intervene in the country, but that the General Assembly requested in another resolution that foreign forces would withdraw.<sup>177</sup>

On 16 October 1991, the UN finally agreed in Resolution 717 to start a mission in Cambodia. The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) mission started on 15 March 1992 and was a peacekeeping operation to restore peace and civil government after a period of domination and civil war.<sup>178</sup> It is not a coincidence that the UN started to interfere in this period in Cambodia. The war between North and South Vietnam had ended, as had the Cold War, so it was possible for the Security Council of the UN to get the support of all five permanent members, and the mission not being vetoed.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> 'Pro-Russische landen erkennen Cambodjaans regime: China hekelt Hanoi', *Nederlands Dagblad: gereformeerd gezinsblad*, volume 35, no. 8007, 12 January 1979, p. 3.

<sup>173</sup> 'Nieuwe bewind in Cambodja niet erkend', *De Telegraaf*, volume 86, no. 28409, 18 April 1979, p. 3.; 'Nederland erkent nieuw bewind in Cambodja niet', *Nederlands Dagblad: gereformeerd gezinsblad*, volume 35, no. 8088, 18 April 1979, p. 1.

<sup>174</sup> 'Overwinning China in VN op Moskou', *NRC Handelsblad*, volume 9, no. 309, 20 September 1979, p. 10.

<sup>175</sup> 'Ruzie in VN vergroot hongerramp in Cambodja', *Het vrije volk*, volume 34, no. 888, 24 September 1979, p. 7.

<sup>176</sup> General Assembly Resolution UN, A/RES/34/22, 14 November 1979.

<sup>177</sup> Joris Voorhoeve, *veilige gebieden*, p. 285-287.

<sup>178</sup> *Idem*, p. 287.

<sup>179</sup> *Idem*, p. 288.

In general during the genocide, the policy of the international community was passive. No intervention was initiated and they condemned the Vietnamese intervention which stopped the genocide. The international community also defended the coalition regime of the Khmer Rouge and Prince Sihanouk taking the legal seat in the UN. Twenty years after the genocide happened, the consequences of the genocide were still visible. At that time the international community organised a peacekeeping operation to restore peace and civil government in the country.

### **International Interference in Bosnia and Srebrenica**

The international community was from the beginning involved in the war in Yugoslavia. During the wars in Slovenia the European Community tried to solve the conflict in a diplomatic way, by sending a troika to talk with the leaders of the countries.<sup>180</sup> During the war in Croatia, the UN became involved.

The UN-negotiator, Cyrus Vance, initiated a ceasefire, which was accepted by both countries. Croatia needed a breathing space to modernise its military forces, and Serbia wanted to shift the focus to Bosnia.<sup>181</sup> Part of the ceasefire was the stationing of an UN-force consisting of 14,000 men at the frontline. This was the so-called UNPROFOR.<sup>182</sup>

The conflict in Bosnia was a completely different issue. A war seemed unavoidable but the UN still sought a diplomatic solution to avoid intervention with military force. The UN suggested dividing Bosnia into three ethnic cantons. The leaders of the ethnic parties: Alija Izetbegovic (SDA Muslim Bosnians), Radovan Karadzic (SDS Serbian Bosnians) and Mate Boban (HDZ, Croatian Bosnians) agreed on this solution. However, the United States feared this would become a *carte blanche* for the Croatians and Serbians to purify their parts of Bosnia. The American ambassador in Belgrade, Warren Zimmerman, persuaded the Muslim leader Izetbegovic to reject the proposed division of Bosnia.<sup>183</sup>

### **UNPROFOR**

Since military intervention was no option, humanitarian intervention was created in the form of the UNPROFOR, led by the Canadian general Lewis Mackenzie. The mission was established during the war in Croatia to ensure demilitarisation of several areas. The mandate was enlarged when the war extended to Bosnia to 'ensure the security and functioning of the airport at Sarajevo, and the

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<sup>180</sup> NIOD, *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied*, pp. 195-207.

<sup>181</sup> *Idem*, pp. 392-394.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>183</sup> A. ten Cate, *Sterven voor Bosnië?*, pp. 69-70.

delivery of humanitarian assistance to that city and its environs.<sup>184</sup> In September 1992 the mandate was further enlarged:

[...] to enable it to support efforts by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to deliver humanitarian relief throughout Bosnia, and to protect convoys of released civilian detainees if the International Committee of the Red Cross requested so. Also, monitoring of the no-fly zone, banning all military flights and securing the five safe areas, created by the UN.<sup>185</sup>

In order to do so, UNPROFOR was authorised to use force in self-defence, in retaliation to attacks against Safe Areas, and to coordinate with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on the use of air power in support of its activities.<sup>186</sup> In resolutions 824<sup>187</sup> and 836<sup>188</sup> of the United Nations Security Council, UN troops were assigned to scare off attacks on the safe areas of Srebrenica, Sarajevo, Bihac, Tuzla, Zepa and Gorazde, including the use of air power.<sup>189</sup>

The Netherlands wanted this mission to succeed and offered their Airmobile Brigade for the function of protecting the Safe Areas, hoping other countries would follow their example by sending troops too, and enlarge the capacity of the mission. However, this was a miscalculation and therefore they were confronted with an impossible task.

The problem in Bosnia could not be solved in the diplomatic way, so the UN started a humanitarian mission. The international community was closely involved, because of the humanitarian mission. Nevertheless, the proactive policy of the Dutch government could not inspire other countries to follow its example.

## **Comparison**

During the genocide in Cambodia, the international community respected the internal sovereignty of the country and did not intervene in what they thought to be a domestic problem. The international community was passive and therefore the Netherlands followed their example. With an intervention, they needed the approval from the UN security councils, which seemed an impossible task since at least two of the five permanent members (China and US) were strongly against an intervention. During the genocide in Bosnia, the international community had the approval of the Bosnian government to intervene, which made an intervention easier and more realistic than an intervention

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<sup>184</sup> Security Council resolution, S/RES/761, 29-06-1992, accessed on 04-11-2016.

<sup>185</sup> Security Council resolutions, S/RES/779, 06-10-1992 & S/RES/781, 09-10-1992, accessed on 04 November 2016.

<sup>186</sup> UNPROFOR profile, [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unprof\\_p.htm](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unprof_p.htm), accessed on 4 November 2016.

<sup>187</sup> Security Council resolution, S/RES/824, 06-05-1993, accessed on 04-11-2016

<sup>188</sup> Security Council resolution, S/RES/836, 04-06-1993, accessed on 04-11-2016

<sup>189</sup> A. ten Cate, *Sterven voor Bosnië?* pp. 73-74.



in Cambodia. In Bosnia, the Dutch government also mainly followed the policy of the international organisations. With its active policy, however, it tried to influence the policy of other foreign countries to follow their example. Despite these efforts, this did not work out as planned.

## 6. Conclusion

This research aimed to outline influences on the Dutch policy during the genocide in Cambodia, compared to the, already much investigated, research on the policy during the genocide in Srebrenica.

Neither the Cambodian nor the Srebrenica acts of genocide were prevented by the international community, as was seen in the previous chapters. However, the humanitarian mission in Bosnia was already an intervention by the international community to prevent the war from escalating. Several events in 1992, before the Dutch were militarily involved, were forms of ethnic cleansing. However, this cannot be seen as genocide just yet. During the genocide in Cambodia, no counter measures were taken to stop the regime from carrying it out.

During the war in Bosnia, the Dutch could have been an effective force to prevent the war from further escalating, because they were directly involved in a humanitarian intervention. The overall policy from the Dutch government during the war in Bosnia was at first proactive. The urge to do something in the war was strong in the Netherlands. This was mainly because of memories of WW II. At the end of the war, when the Serbians had taken over Srebrenica, the focus shifted from mediating the conflict and protecting innocent civilians in the war, to making sure Dutchbat got away safely.

An important difference was the historical context of both genocides. The Dutch were oppressed by the German Nazis during WW II and genocide was committed on a major scale against the Jews. This situation was clearly more similar to the war in Bosnia than to the genocide of the Cambodian Khmer Rouge. This feeling of empathy with the Muslims in Bosnia influenced the proactive policy and eagerness to solve the problem. Cambodia was not oppressed by a foreign country, but the leader of this country, having many followers, ordered the acts of genocide himself. This was different from the situation in the Netherlands during WW II and was therefore a reason why the policy during the genocide in Cambodia was not as proactive as the policy during the genocide in Srebrenica.

The Cambodian genocide took place 20 years earlier than the genocide in Srebrenica, and, during that time, human rights were less developed in foreign policy. However, the Genocide Convention already existed, and was signed by the Netherlands making it mandatory to intervene in an act of genocide. Instead of intervening in Cambodia, the policy of the Dutch government was mainly to try to establish diplomatic relations with Cambodia. This was not an easy task, because of Cambodia's isolated position in international politics at that time. Even when the country said it was

ready for foreign relations, no effective relations in the form of ambassadors were established. Despite the lack of information from the Cambodian government itself, refugees had crossed the borders of neighbouring countries and had told their stories. The Dutch government knew about these stories, but could not verify them and use it as a reliable source. When the Dutch ambassador in Beijing received an invitation to visit Cambodia in the beginning of 1978, the government saw this as an opportunity to address the subject of human rights violations. The invitation, however, was shortly after withdrawn and in less than a year the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia.

The Dutch government used this lack of information, together with the unverified stories from the refugees, as an excuse to remain silent and not intervene in the situation in Cambodia. The Dutch attempted to establish diplomatic ties with the regime in Cambodia, but did not pursue this over the course of the next 16 months. The Dutch policy was too passive and mainly followed the path of the UN and US, which judged the situation as an internal Cambodian matter.

The information level was also an issue during the war in Bosnia and the genocide in Srebrenica. A lot of parties were involved in the humanitarian mission, making the policy of the Dutch government difficult. Decisions were taken without them because operational authority was transferred to the UN. When it was decided to deploy Dutchbat to Srebrenica, no information or intelligence about the place was received either. This lack of information about the whole situation resulted in the failure of protecting the local people and preventing the genocide.

The scope and nature of the genocide were also expected to be important factors. However, this research shows different results. Whereas the policy during the relatively small genocide on 8000 Muslim men in Srebrenica was proactive, the policy during the genocide in Cambodia, where approximately 1.7 million people died, was passive and no steps were taken to stop this genocide from being further committed by the regime of Pol Pot.

With this passive policy in Cambodia, and an active policy in Bosnia, the Netherlands clearly followed the path of the international community. Especially after the failure of the Vietnam war, the US was afraid an intervention in Cambodia would result in another failure. The international community also labeled the situation in Cambodia an internal conflict in which the international community had no interest. On the other hand, during the war in Bosnia, the Netherlands took the lead in spearheading an intervention, hoping other countries would follow its example. This did not work out well and the Netherlands was left with an impossible task.

The difference between these two forms of policy during an act of genocide could be explained by the different historical context, different information levels, and the different stance of the international community. The Netherlands followed other countries in its passive attitude during the genocide in Cambodia, but the difference in these factors during the war in Bosnia made a proactive policy possible.

In conclusion it can be said that mainly the historical context, information level and the international community were important factors which influenced the policy of the Dutch government during these genocides. The nature of the genocide had in these two cases no significant influence. However, the difficulty of defining the genocide in Cambodia, since also political enemies became victims, could have influenced the policy of the Dutch government.

This thesis tried to fill the gap in information on Dutch policy during the genocide in Cambodia. Other genocides are already investigated more often, but the case of Cambodia was not. For further research on this subject, it would be interesting to compare these cases with other genocides to examine whether a general explanation is possible. It would also be interesting to compare similar policies, for example the case of Cambodia to another case in which the policy was passive as well. Also it would be interesting to compare this research with future research on the same subject, when the documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be opened for public insight.

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