

# Coalition Politics & Peaceful Foreign Policy

A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE DUTCH  
DECISION-MAKING PROCESS WITH REGARD TO THE  
GULF CRISIS (1990-1991)

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## Abstract

On 2 August 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait. Four days later the Iraqi government announced that Kuwait had been annexed as the nineteenth province of Iraq. These actions precipitated an international crisis that culminated in a war led by the United States against Iraq in January and February 1991.

Why would states wage war against each other? And why wouldn't they? This study is an attempt to fill an important gap in two distinct yet closely related theories: the democratic peace theory and coalition cabinet theories. On the general level, the study examines the influence of coalition party ideas on foreign policy. By looking at the Dutch decision-making process with regard to the Gulf crisis (1990-1991) this research will give interesting insights on how ideas shape foreign policy. Moreover, this research contains new information about the debates and the decision-making process with regard to the Gulf crisis in the Netherlands. It will be argued that ideas of parties in coalition governments play an important role in shaping peaceful foreign policy.



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*'The world is facing a heavily armed tyrant who is determined to become leader of the Arab world. The decision on whether to take military actions is tough. Nonetheless, this could be first time in world history that a process of conflict management and conflict resolution has gone through the medium of the United Nations and the United Nations Security Council'.<sup>1</sup>*

*Minister van den Broek, January 1991.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Nationaal Archief*, The Hague, 2.02.05.02, Minutes of the Cabinet, Council of Ministers and Royal Councils 1991, catalog number 6333, Minutes of the meeting held on 15 and 16 January in The Hague, 6.





## Introduction

On August 2, 1990, the armed forces of Iraq invaded Kuwait. Six days later, the Iraqi government announced that Kuwait had been annexed as the nineteenth province of Iraq. These actions precipitated an international crisis that culminated in a war led by the United States against Iraq in January and February 1991.<sup>2</sup> The Gulf crisis occurred in the midst of a radical change in the balance of power that shaped the world after 1945.<sup>3</sup> The crisis took place after the end of the Cold War and the global strategic threat was removed.<sup>4</sup> It was the first major conflict of the post-Cold War era. More importantly, it was also the first time since World War II that the US and Russia cooperated in a major effort to repel aggression.<sup>5</sup>

The major problem posed by the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait was not one of ends. The invasion was seen by the international community as an unambiguous violation of the fundamentals of international law governing the behaviour of states. The Iraqi invasion provoked almost unanimous world condemnation, through the medium of the UN.<sup>6</sup> Few states disputed the need for Iraq to withdraw. Even Iraq's friends did not attempt to make a case for Kuwait's annexation. The problem was one of means. What measures were necessary and appropriate in order to force Iraq out of Kuwait – economic sanctions, diplomatic deals or military force?<sup>7</sup> In the period from August until January it had become clear that military confrontation with Iraq could not be ruled out by the international community as a means to force the country out of Kuwait.<sup>8</sup>

The international coalition against Iraq consisted of 30 countries, including the Netherlands. The Dutch government considered participation necessary, because Dutch people in Iraq were taken hostage. Moreover, the Netherlands was bound to resolutions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which meant that the government had to respond to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the following UNSC resolutions.<sup>9</sup> However, within the

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<sup>2</sup> William L. Cleveland & Martin Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: 2013), 445.

<sup>3</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman & Abraham R. Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern War. Volume IV: The Gulf War* (Boulder: 1996), 33.

<sup>4</sup> Louise Fawcett, *International Relations of the Middle East* (Oxford: 2005), 277.

<sup>5</sup> Cordesman & Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern War*, 33.

<sup>6</sup> Musallam Ali Musallam, *The Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait. Saddam Hussein, His State and International Power Politics* (London: 1996), 101.

<sup>7</sup> Lawrence Freedman, *The Gulf Conflict 1990-1991. Diplomacy and War in the New World Order* (Princeton: 1993), xxxi.

<sup>8</sup> U. Rosenthal & J. De Vries, *Nederland en de Golfocrisis. Politiek, Media, Terreur* (Arnhem: 1993), 10

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*.

Dutch government there no immediate consensus was reached on the question how the Netherlands should contribute in this American-led war against Iraq.

### Historiographical Debate

Why do states use military violence against one another? And why don't they? Scholars still debate why states wage war against one another. A theory that contributes to this debate is the democratic peace theory. According to Immanuel Kant's perpetual peace theory -which can be seen as the basis for the democratic peace theory- it is highly unlikely that democracies will go to war with each other.<sup>10</sup> Democratic peace is the proposition that democratic countries are more peaceful in their foreign relations. It would also mean that non-democratic regimes are more warlike. Kant's basic argument is that in a republican regime -which is characterised by a constitutional, representative government and separation of powers- the citizens rule and 'those who would have to decide to undergo all the deprivations of war will very much hesitate to start such an evil game'.<sup>11</sup> Decision makers in non-democratic states are more likely to engage in war, even 'for the most trivial reasons' because they do not themselves directly suffer its human consequences. Moreover, these leaders are not constrained by a system of checks and balances or electoral accountability.<sup>12</sup> Thus, based on this idea democracies will not wage war against each other. However, the possibility exists that democracies will engage into war with other -non-democratic- countries.<sup>13</sup> Kant's thesis on democratic peace is not unknown within the study of international relations and in international politics. Several politicians have referred to the existing peace between democratic countries in their speeches in order to justify military interventions and to spread democracy. For example, in one of his speeches Bill Clinton stated that: 'Democracies don't attack each other, ultimately the best strategy to insure our security and to build a durable peace is to support the advance of democracy elsewhere'.<sup>14</sup>

When referring to theories of democratic peace it has become customary to distinguish between dyadic and monadic variants. On the one hand there is the dyadic perspective on the democratic peace theory. The dyadic approach investigates pairs of states, so-called dyads,

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<sup>10</sup> Anna Geis, Lothar Brock & Harald Muller, 'From Democratic Peace to Democratic War', *Peace Review*, 19 (2007): 2, 159.

<sup>11</sup> Patrick A. Mello, 'Democratic Peace Theory', in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of War: Social Science Perspectives*, ed. Paul I. Joseph (Thousand Oaks: 2017), 472.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>13</sup> Idem, 473.

<sup>14</sup> The Washington Post, '1994 State of the Union Address' (version 25 January 1994), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/states/docs/sou94.htm>, retrieved on 14 April 2017.

based on the theoretical premise that democracies rarely if ever engage in war against each other. Democratic dyads are thus expected to be less warlike than pairs of non-democracies or mixed dyads. On the other hand, the monadic perspective proposes that democracies are generally less war prone than other regime types.<sup>15</sup> According to the monadic argument democracies are more pacific in their action towards all other states.<sup>16</sup>

International relations scholars who argue that there is a connection between democracy and conflict related behavior have yet to reach consensus on the nature of the relationship. According to the dyadic approach of the democratic peace theory democracies will not wage war against each other. The empirical literature on the democratic peace provides strong support for the proposition that democracies are pacific in their relations with one another.<sup>17</sup> However, there has been ongoing debate among scholars about the correctness of the monadic variant of the democratic peace theory. The empirical findings on the relations between regime type and conflict involvement are mixed. Several authors have argued that the overall rate of war involvement does not differ substantially between democracies and non-democracies.<sup>18</sup> The lack of a general relative pacifism of democracies has been established in numerous empirical studies. According to the research of Zeev Moaz and Nasrin Abdolali it can be concluded that democracies are generally not less dispute prone than other regime types.<sup>19</sup> According to Moaz & Abdolali regime type is not a significant factor in analyses of the causes and consequences of international conflict.<sup>20</sup> William Dixon also argues in his article that democratic states engage in wars and violent conflict as often as other types of states.<sup>21</sup>

On the contrary, others scholars have argued that regime type can be a critical factor in explaining conflict proclivity. Arguments for why democratic dyads are relatively more pacific than non-democracies claim that institutional arrangements restrict leaders' ability to initiate conflict. This is due to the democratic leaders' accountability to legislatures, parties

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<sup>15</sup> Mello, 'Democratic Peace Theory', 472.

<sup>16</sup> David L. Rousseau, Christopher Gelpi, Dan Reiter & Paul K. Huth, 'Assessing the Dyadic Nature of the Democratic Peace, 1918-1988', *The American Political Science Review*, 90 (September 1996): 3, 514.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>18</sup> Mello, 'Democratic Peace Theory', 476.

<sup>19</sup> Zeev Moaz & Nasrin Abdolali, 'Regime Types and International Conflict', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 33 (March 1989): 1, 31.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>21</sup> William J. Dixon, 'Democracy and the Peaceful Settlement of International Conflict', *The American Political Science Review*, 88 (March 1994): 1, 29.

and public constraints.<sup>22</sup> The empirical research of Rousseau et al. has demonstrated that democracies are less likely than non-democracies to initiate crises against states. Moreover, their study supported the claim that democracies are less likely to escalate conflict to war in general. According to David Lake democratic states tend to be more constrained by their societies. Lake concludes that regime type does matter in international politics. Furthermore, the author argues that democratic states are relatively more pacifistic than non-democratic states.<sup>23</sup> Kenneth Benoit has also argued in his empirical study that regime type does explain variation in international conflict.<sup>24</sup> Jack Levy agrees with the views of Rousseau et al., Lake and Benoit, nonetheless he states that if it were true that liberal democratic regimes are less inclined to initiate foreign wars, it would not automatically follow that they are less likely to become involved in international wars.<sup>25</sup>

Great advances have been made in our understanding of the effects of democracy and international forces on conflict behaviour. However, a point of critique comes from Miriam Fendius Elman. According to Elman ‘both monadic and dyadic democratic peace claims have largely neglected to differentiate between different kinds of democratic subtypes’. Elman states that that democratic countries with a coalition government are likely to be far more constrained than governments controlled by a single party with regard to the decision-making process.<sup>26</sup> Juliet Kaarbo shares Elman’s view and states that in parliamentary democracies, the authority to make foreign policy and to respond to international developments lies within the cabinet. Coalitions arise in parliamentary democracies in which the electoral rules, based on principles of proportional representation, and the political landscape create a fragmented legislature. When no single party controls a majority of parliamentary seats, the largest party (typically) must forge a coalition with one or more smaller parties.<sup>27</sup> The coalition partners share the cabinet; dividing up the ministries and the responsibility for making decisions for the country. In multiparty cabinets, the parties are independent political actors – competitors with one another in the electoral process – and frequently disagree on their country’s proper response to international situations. According to Lanny W. Martin and Georg Vanberg;

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<sup>22</sup> Michael J. Ireland & Scott Sigmund Gartner, ‘Time to Fight: Government Type and Conflict Initiation in Parliamentary Systems’, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 45 (October 2001): 5, 550.

<sup>23</sup> David A. Lake, ‘Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War’, *The American Political Science Review*, 86 (March 1992): 1, 32.

<sup>24</sup> Kenneth Benoit, ‘Democracies Really Are More Pacific (In General): Reexamining Regime-type and War Involvement’, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 40 (December 1996): 4, 654.

<sup>25</sup> Jack S. Levy, ‘Domestic Politics and War’, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18 (1988): 4, 660.

<sup>26</sup> Miriam Fendius Elman, ‘Unpacking Democracy: Presidentialism, parliamentarism and theories of democratic peace’, *Security Studies*, 9 (2000): 4, 93.

<sup>27</sup> Juliet Kaarbo, *Coalition Politics and Cabinet Decisionmaking: A Comparative Analysis of Foreign Policy* (Ann Arbor: 2012), 4

‘Parties that participate in a coalition are engaged in a ‘mixed motive’ game. On the one hand they have reason to cooperate with their partners to pursue successful common policies. On the other hand, each party faces strong incentives to move policy in ways that appeal to party members and to the constituencies on which the party relies for support... In short, the policy and position-taking incentives of coalition parties continually put them in competition with one another’.<sup>28</sup>

Coalition cabinets make many important decisions in international politics. Nonetheless, the parties in the cabinet often disagree on the best course of action for their country. How – and if – these disagreements are resolved can have significant consequences for these countries, their foreign relations and the international community.<sup>29</sup>

There are two prevailing images of the type of foreign policy that coalition cabinets are expected to follow. The dominant view is that coalition cabinets should be particularly peaceful in their foreign policies, since the presence of multiple parties and more vigilant legislatures constrains leaders from taking aggressive militant actions. It would therefore also mean that democratic states with a coalition government are more peaceful than democratic governments controlled by a single party.<sup>30</sup> Other scholars, however, propose that coalition cabinets may be more aggressive in order to compensate for domestic political weakness and uncertainty. A diffusion of responsibility in coalition cabinets may also lead them into conflict, as it is difficult for the public to hold any single party accountable.<sup>31</sup>

### Research question

In order to explain why states engage in conflict with other states, the democratic peace theory can give us interesting insights. Nonetheless, the theoretical debate has shown that the democratic peace theory is flawed. Foreign policy-making in democracies is often compared with that of more autocratic political systems, in which public participation has not been allowed to shape national interests or policy formation. Yet, how coalition politics affect foreign policy is an important question that remains unresolved in the field of international relations and in the study of foreign policy. This research will therefore fill in the gap of the

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<sup>28</sup> Lanny W. Martin & Georg Vanberg, ‘Coalition Policymaking and Legislative Review’, *American Political Science Review*, 99 (2005): 94.

<sup>29</sup> Kaarbo, *Coalition Politics and Cabinet Decisionmaking*, 5.

<sup>30</sup> Idem, 8-9.

<sup>31</sup> Idem, 9.

democratic peace theory by looking deeper into the question in *until what extent coalition politics contribute to peaceful foreign policy*.

I do not argue that other factors- such as economic interdependence, culture, history and public opinion are not important in explaining foreign policies of countries. However, by looking at the debates in the cabinet on foreign policy issues we can understand how these factors are understood, evaluated and will be acted upon (or not) by coalition parties.

## Demarcation

The central question, in how far coalition politics contribute to peaceful foreign policy, is a broad question. In order to understand whether a coalition government is less war prone due to the governmental structure, this research will focus on the Dutch decision-making process with regard to the Gulf War of 1990-1991. First of all, it is interesting to look at the decision-making process in the Netherlands. The Netherlands is a democratic country and has a tradition of coalition politics. It can therefore be argued that Dutch politics is a politics of accommodation. The term accommodation is here used in the sense of settlement of divisive issues and conflicts where only a minimal consensus consists. Pragmatic solutions are forged for all problems, even those with clear religious-ideological overtones on which the opposing parties may appear irreconcilable, and which therefore may seem insoluble and likely to split the country apart. A key element of this conception is the lack of a comprehensive political consensus, but not the complete absence of consensus.<sup>32</sup>

Secondly, by looking specifically at the Gulf crisis and the Dutch decision-making it can become clearer how a coalition government operates during an international crisis. During the Gulf crisis the Dutch cabinet consisted of two parties: the *Christen Democraten Appèl* (CDA - Christian Democrats) and the *Partij van de Arbeid* (PvdA - Social Democrats). The Netherlands participated in the international coalition against Iraq. From August 1990 until January 1991 the developments with regard to the Gulf crisis were discussed almost weekly in the *Ministerraad*. The *Ministerraad* consists of all the ministers of the cabinet and discusses national and international issues and developments that are relevant for the Netherlands.<sup>33</sup> It is interesting to look at the debates in the *Ministerraad* during the Gulfcrisis, since no immediate consensus was reached on how the Netherlands should contribute to this

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<sup>32</sup> Arend Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation. Pluaralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (Berkley: 1968), 103.

<sup>33</sup> Parlement & Politiek, 'Ministerraad', <https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrogv8/ministerraad>, accessed on March 12, 2017.

American-led war against Iraq among the two coalition parties.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, looking at minutes of the meetings of the *Ministerraad* from August 1990-January 1991 will give us more insight in the considerations the Dutch cabinet made during this international crisis and what the influence of the participating parties in the coalition was on the eventual foreign policy outcome.

The choice of looking at the Dutch debates in the *Ministerraad* with regard to the Gulf crisis may seem limited. However, by doing so it will be possible to give a comprehensive analysis of the opinions that the ministers of the different parties had during the meetings. Moreover, it will be possible to analyse how these different opinions eventually influenced the policy outcome.

## Method

In order to understand the influence of the Dutch coalition politics on peaceful foreign policy, this research will be using minutes of the meetings of the *Ministerraad* from August 1990 to January 1991. The meetings during these six months extensive. Therefore, this research will focus on the peace and security issues that were discussed in the meeting. These debates include for a great part the Dutch participation in the international coalition against Iraq. The debates on peace and security started in the *Ministerraad* after the Iraqi invasion on August 2 and ended when Iraq surrendered. By looking at the minutes of the meeting it will become clear what individual considerations the ministers of the CDA and PvdA parties made during the debates. Moreover, it will be possible to see what the overall stance was of the parties on the Dutch contribution to the coalition.

## Relevance

As the historiographical debate has demonstrated it can be stated that the democratic peace theory is limited. This research will fill in the gap between coalition parties' theory and the democratic peace theory, by linking them together. Coalition cabinets occur with great frequency in Western Europe. More than 60 percent of post- World War II Western European governments have been multiparty coalitions; in some states such as the Netherlands, Germany and Italy, cabinets nearly always contain more than one party.<sup>35</sup> This research can therefore give interesting insights on the influence of coalition politics on foreign policy in the

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<sup>34</sup> Rosenthal & de Vries, *Nederland en de Golfoorlog*, 29-30.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*.

Netherlands. Also, it can be seen as starting point for further research on democratic peace theory and coalition cabinet politics in other Western European countries. Furthermore, the documents that have been used for this research were released by the National Archive in January 2017. Therefore, new insights can be obtained on the Dutch contribution to the Gulf War and on the motives of the PvdA and CDA for supporting or not supporting military actions in Iraq.

## Research outline

In order to understand the influence coalition party policies on the decision-making process in the *Ministerraad* with regard to the contribution of the Netherlands in the international coalition against Iraq in 1990-1991, this essay will be divided into four chapters. The first chapter will give an introduction in the tradition of Dutch foreign politics. Furthermore, it will look deeper into the ruling coalition government in the Netherlands of 1989-1993 and their ideas about foreign policy. What were their individual stances on foreign policy with regard to peace and security? And in how far were these stances in line with the traditional views on Dutch foreign policy?

The second chapter will focus on the first two months of the Gulf crisis. In August and September 1990 the international community was seeking for an appropriate response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The UNSC passed several resolutions in the first months that called for economic sanctions against Iraq. On top of that the United States was eager to seek allies for an international coalition against Iraq and possible military support. Next to an overview of the international developments within the two first months of the crisis, this chapter will look deeper into the debates in the *Ministerraad*. How did the ministers in the cabinet think that the Netherlands should respond to these international developments? What are the differences among the ministers of the different parties? And in how far can these differences be explained by looking at the stance on foreign policies of these parties?

In the third chapter the period from October-December 1990 will be analysed. From October onwards the Gulfcrisis started to escalate. The United States enlarged their military presence in the region. Moreover, in November the UNSC adopted a resolution that stated that 'all means necessary' were allowed to be used if Iraq did not withdraw from Kuwait before 15 January. The third chapter will follow the same structure as the second chapter. International developments with regard to the Gulfcrisis will be discussed, followed by a comprehensive analysis of the meetings in the *Ministerraad* in this period. How did they think



the Netherlands should act with regard to the Gulfcrisis in this period? And what role did ideas on foreign policy of their party influence this?

The fourth chapter will be centred around the last phase of the Gulfcrisis. After the Iraqi government refused to withdraw from the Kuwait on 15 January 1991, the international coalition led by the United States subjected Iraq to the most intensive air bombardment in military history. A month later the coalition launched also a ground attack. Chapter 4 will also have the same structure as the second and third. The chapter will focus on international developments and will look at the debates in the *Ministerraad* and the stances of the different parties on the matter.



## Chapter 1: Ideas on Peace and Security in the Netherlands (1945-1989)

As a result of the unfortunate government of the CDA and the VVD (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie; People's Party of Freedom and Democracy) new elections were to be held in the Netherlands in 1989. The former government had not been able to overcome their different stances and therefore called for early elections. The outcome of the elections was that the CDA once again had become the biggest party. Yet, the Christian Democrats did not gain enough seats to win a majority in the parliament. Consequently, the CDA had to choose with which other parties they wanted to negotiate in order to form a new government.<sup>36</sup> Negotiations between the CDA and PvdA started soon after the outcome of the elections. After nineteen days of negotiations between the two parties, the government agreement was established and positions were assigned to the ministers.<sup>37</sup> PvdA politicians Pronk and A.L. ter Beek became Minister of Development Cooperation and Minister of Defence respectively. The CDA delivered the Minister of Foreign Affairs; Minister van den Broek.<sup>38</sup> The appointment of Minister van den Broek was not surprising. He had been Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1982 onwards, and this would become his third term.<sup>39</sup> According to Duco Hellema the reappointment of van den Broek as the Minister of Foreign Affairs illustrated the continuity of the Dutch foreign policy in the first years since the end of the Cold War.<sup>40</sup>

In order to understand the tradition of Dutch foreign politics, this chapter will give a brief overview on the history of Dutch foreign politics. What was the Dutch foreign policy during the Cold War period? More importantly, this chapter will look deeper into the stances on peace and security of the CDA and PvdA in this period. The opinions of the two coalition parties on foreign policy are useful, since it is highly likely that their ideas influenced the way the parties thought on how the Netherlands should respond to the Gulf crisis in 1990. So, what were the stances of the Christian Democrats and Social democrats on foreign policy? And what were the similarities and differences between the two parties?

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<sup>36</sup> Anne Bos, 'Werkende weg' van centrumrechts naar centrumlinks. De formatie van het kabinet Lubbers III (1989)', in *Kabinetsformaties 1977-2012*, ed. Carla van Baalen & Alexander van Kessel, *Kabinetsformaties 1977-2012* (Amsterdam: 2016), 195.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>38</sup> \*\*In Appendix I a list can be found of the assigned ministers from August 1990 – January 1991 in the Netherlands.

<sup>39</sup> Duco Hellema, *Nederland in de Wereld. De Buitenlandse Politiek van Nederland* (Houten: 2014), 351.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem.

## 1.1. Thoughts on international security in Dutch foreign politics (1945-1989)

During the 1950s and 1960s the Netherlands had a reputation of being a loyal ally of the US and being pro-NATO when it came down to international security. In this period leading figures in Dutch politics expressed their willingness to let the US be the main country responsible for safeguarding the security of Western Europe. Furthermore, the Netherlands made relatively big financial contributions to NATO compared to other Western European countries in this period.<sup>41</sup> NATO and having the US as an important ally became the two most important cornerstones of the Dutch security policy.<sup>42</sup> According to A. van Staden the reason that the Netherlands was loyal to the US in this period was because the Dutch ought the Soviet Union as a serious threat. The Netherlands were convinced that Western European countries could not defend themselves against any possible Soviet aggression. For that reason, the American military protection was needed on the continent.<sup>43</sup> Another reason why the Netherlands was so in favour of the US was moral in nature. The Netherlands were grateful for the American contribution during the Second World War that eventually led to the defeat of Nazi-Germany and the liberation of Holland. Furthermore, the US had provided the help that was necessary for the economic recovery of Western Europe in the years after WWII.<sup>44</sup> In the 50s and 60s the Dutch government spend a remarkably high amount of money on defence, was outspokenly anti-Communist, had confidence in the American nuclear program and had an aversion towards European security arrangements. It can therefore be concluded that in the 50s and 60s the Netherlands was orientated to the Atlantic.<sup>45</sup>

Nonetheless, in the 1970s the image of the Netherlands being a loyal ally of the US started to shift. On the one hand the pro-American policy of the Netherlands with regard to several international conflicts started to receive criticism.<sup>46</sup> The attitude of the United States during the Vietnam War proved to be an important factor for the deteriorating relations between the US and Netherlands. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs Norbert Schmelzer and Max van der Stoep renounced themselves more and more from the American actions in Indo-China in the 70s.<sup>47</sup> Also the relations with NATO started to deteriorate in this period. The

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<sup>41</sup> A. van Staden, 'De rol van Nederland in het Atlantisch Bondgenootschap. Wat veranderde en wat uiteindelijk bleef', in *De kracht van Nederland*, ed. N.C.F. van Sas (Haarlem: 1991), 219.

<sup>42</sup> Frank Zuïdam, *Tussen Wens en Werkelijkheid. Het debat over vrede en veiligheid binnen de PvdA in de periode 1958-1977* (Amsterdam: 2001), 3.

<sup>43</sup> Van Staden, 'De rol van Nederland in het Atlantisch Bondgenootschap', 219.

<sup>44</sup> Idem, 220.

<sup>45</sup> Zuïdam, *Tussen Wens en Werkelijkheid*, 3.

<sup>46</sup> Hellema, *Nederland in de Wereld*, 252.

<sup>47</sup> Idem, 220.

Dutch population did not think it was fair that the Netherlands was financially contributing more to NATO than other members. So, they wanted to reduce the Dutch contribution to the alliance.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the Dutch population and government became more and more worried about the nuclear arms race and the strong emphasis on weapons of mass destruction in NATO-strategies.<sup>49</sup> The US on the other hand blamed the Netherlands of being hostile towards the West, since the Dutch government provided development aid to Cuba.<sup>50</sup> It can be stated that the relationship between the Netherlands and the US had become tense.

## 1.2. The CDA on Peace and Security

The Christian Democrats party had only been established in October 1980. The party was a fusion of three other parties: The Anti-Revolutionaire Partij (Anti-Revolutionary Party), the Christenlijke-Historische Unie (The Christian Historical Union) and the Katholieke Volkspartij (Catholic People's Party).<sup>51</sup> Although the party existed not that long before the outbreak of the Gulf crisis, by looking at stances on foreign policy by the KVP party some insights can be obtained. From 1956-1971 Joseph Luns of the KVP was Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. According to Hellema, Minister Luns had become the symbol the 'Dutch Atlanticism' in the sixties.<sup>52</sup> During this period the American-Dutch relations started to flourish. The Atlantic unity was seen as more important than European integration by the Minister.<sup>53</sup> The Netherlands had become Atlantic orientated and saw the US as an important ally in order to repel the communist threat from the East. Also during the sixties, when other parties criticised the American actions in Indo-China the KVP remained pro-American.<sup>54</sup> The Minister refused to deliver critique on the American actions in the country. Moreover, the Netherlands became the first country to deliver a financial contribution to the American economic aid program in South-Vietnam. When the Dutch parliament adopted a motion in 1967 that stated that Luns had to request the US to stop the bombardments in North Vietnam and proceed to negotiations with the North-Vietnamese government, the Minister refused. For the next years the government remained to support the American military actions in South East Asia. In 1970 the Netherlands was the only NATO country that was outspokenly in

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<sup>48</sup> Idem, 252.

<sup>49</sup> Idem, 221.

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>51</sup> Parlement & Politiek, 'CDA',

[https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrouwxm/christen\\_democratisch\\_appel\\_cda](https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrouwxm/christen_democratisch_appel_cda), retrieved on 13 mei 2017.

<sup>52</sup> Hellema, *Nederland in de Wereld*, 217.

<sup>53</sup> Idem, 218.

<sup>54</sup> Idem, 249.

favour of the decision of President Nixon to send American troops Cambodia to enlarge the American presence in the region.<sup>55</sup>

### 1.3. The PvdA on Peace and Security

In the 50s and 60s the PvdA stances on peace and security were in line with the general views on Dutch foreign politics in this period. The leaders of the party did not express any critique the American foreign politics and were highly in favour of the Dutch participation in NATO.<sup>56</sup> However, within the next fifteen years the view of the PvdA on these stances shifted radically. The beginning of the 70s marked the beginning of a shift in the PvdA party when it came down to foreign and defence politics. Perspectives that for a long time represented the the party's views on foreign policy were rejected in a short amount of time. According to Frank Zuijdam the radical shift in these perspectives on security was due to a combination of international and intraparty developments. An important factor that contributed to the change of action was the rise of the New Left in the party. The New Left was a movement within the PvdA that existed of mostly youngsters. The New Left believed that the PvdA had taken a conservative path in recent years. The PvdA had become too conservative and therefore the movement wanted to break away from this course. The PvdA had to become more progressive in their opinion. Other developments that influenced the shift in policy were the disagreement with the American actions in Vietnam, resistance towards NATO and the debate in the Netherlands about the possible recognition of the DDR, on which the PvdA was in favour. The combination of these for factors eventually led to a change in the way the PvdA perceived peace and security. During the party congress of 1975 some leaders of the PvdA stated that the Netherlands had to leave NATO. The Dutch cooperation in the alliance, one of the most important pillars in the Dutch security and peace policy in the period after the Cold War, should come to an end according to the Social Democrats. Members of the party began to profile themselves as 'the real left' and 'idealistic'. In the 80s the PvdA security policies could be defined as relatively reluctant towards the American foreign policies, critical towards NATO and pacifistic, because the party protested against the sending of two Dutch ships to the Street of Hormuz during the first Gulf-War in 1988.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Idem, 253.

<sup>56</sup> Frank Zuijdam, *Tussen Wens en Werkelijkheid*, 1.

<sup>57</sup> Rosenthal & de Vries, *Nederland en de Golfcrisis*, 30.

## Chapter 2: Hope for a peaceful solution (August-September 1990)

*'It is extremely important that the international community strives to find a political solution'.<sup>58</sup>*

*Minister Ritzen, August 1990*

Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990. The Iraqi invasion led to a condemnation of the international community. A crisis involving the whole world is inevitably complex in its ramifications. However, if international law and norms of behaviour are to mean anything, then aggression must be opposed. In the first two months of the Gulf crisis the Netherlands tried to find an appropriate response to the Iraqi aggression. The ministers in the *Ministerraad* discussed their opinions and tried to figure out a course of action. This chapter will focus on the first two months of the Gulf crisis. How did the coalition parties think of the Gulf Crisis? More importantly, how did they think the Netherlands should respond?

### 2.1. August 1990

The United States took a leading role in seeking an international cooperation in order to end the Gulf crisis. Not long after Iraq seized Kuwait, President Bush spoke of this challenge as both a test and an opportunity. If the international community could only act now with resolution, then the best hopes for the post-cold war era might be realised:

*'What is at stake is more than one small country: it is a big idea: a new world order- where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause, to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind: peace, security, freedom and the rule of law.'<sup>59</sup>*

The international response to the annexation of Kuwait was substantial. The UNSC met on 2 August, the same day as the Iraqi invasion had taken place. The Council discussed how the international community had to respond to the Iraqi aggression. The US took a leading role in the matter and had already prepared a resolution.<sup>60</sup> As a result of the meeting, the UNSC

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<sup>58</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, Minutes of the Cabinet, Council of Ministers and Royal Councils 1990, catalog number 5822, Minutes of the meeting held on 13 August in The Hague, 6.

<sup>59</sup> The American Presidency Project, 'Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union' (version 1991), <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=19253>, retrieved on 7 May 2017.

<sup>60</sup> Freedman & Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict 1990-1991*, 73.

adopted resolution 660. The resolution determined that an Iraqi violation had indeed occurred, and called for Iraq's 'immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait'. The resolution invoked Articles 39 and 40 of Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which grants the Council sweeping powers to prevent 'acts of aggression' including economic sanctions or actions 'by air, sea or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security'.<sup>61</sup>

Iraq failed to comply to resolution 660 within the next few days. The international community responded quickly. On August 6 the Security Council imposed economic sanctions by passing resolution 661.<sup>62</sup> Such sanctions included a ban on all imports and exports to Iraq, the protection of Kuwaiti assets and an immediate halt to any international funding of Iraqi government projects.<sup>63</sup>

In the Middle East Saudi Arabia and the other Arab oil monarchies were afraid that Iraq would target them next and that their army was not strong enough to stop an attack.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, President Bush interpreted the seizure of Kuwait and the potential threat to Saudi Arabia as a direct threat to US strategic interests.<sup>65</sup> The government of Saudi Arabia therefore soon agreed to allow United States forces into their territory for protection and for future military operations against Iraq.<sup>66</sup> On 8 August President Bush spoke on national television: 'We seek the immediate, unconditional and complete withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait'.<sup>67</sup> Bush emphasised that the legitimate government of Kuwait must be restored. He stressed the commitment to the security of the Gulf and that: 'The mission of our troops is wholly defensive. Hopefully they will not be needed long. They will not initiate hostilities, but they will defend themselves, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and other friends in the Persian Gulf'.<sup>68</sup> Operation Desert Shield was set in motion and the US started to station troops in Saudi Arabia.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait in August, the Dutch parliament had summer recess, which meant that most of the ministers were on holiday. So, in the first days of the crisis no immediate response came from the Dutch government.<sup>69</sup> The first time the ministers came

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<sup>61</sup> United Nations, 'Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice (version 1945), <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/ctc/uncharter.pdf>, retrieved on 17 May 2017.

<sup>62</sup> Freedman & Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict 1990-1991*, 73.

<sup>63</sup> *Idem*, 102.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>65</sup> Cordesman & Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern War*, 53.

<sup>66</sup> Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 448.

<sup>67</sup> Freedman & Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict 1990-1991*, 93.

<sup>68</sup> Freedman & Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict 1990-1991*, 93.

<sup>69</sup> Rosenthal & de Vries, *Nederland en de Golfocrisis*, 37.



together and discussed the situation in the Gulf was eleven days after the Iraqi invasion, on August 13. By that time, the United States and Saudi Arabia had requested the Netherlands to participate in an international coalition against Iraq.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, the two countries requested the Netherlands to provide military support.<sup>71</sup> Before the ministers came together, the CDA party had already discussed that they were in favour of this request. However, the party was also worried about the response of the PvdA. In the past the PvdA had resisted the American request for the placement of cross rockets in the Netherlands.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, as the previous chapter has shown the PvdA had always been critical towards the United States and NATO. It was therefore likely that the party would reject such request.

During the meeting of the *Ministerraad* on 13 august 1990, the ministers discussed what action the Netherlands should take with regard to the situation in the Gulf. It was the first time the Ministers expressed their opinion on the matter in the *Ministerraad*. A couple of days before the meeting took place, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence had already discussed that the Netherlands could contribute to the international coalition by sending two frigates.

In the beginning of the meeting Prime Minister Lubbers stated that ‘there is no disagreement among the ministers about the necessity of the Netherlands to contribute to the international coalition’. The important question was rather how the Netherlands should contribute to the international coalition. During the meeting the ministers discussed which country or region should take the lead in the coalition against Iraq, how the Netherlands should interpret the sanctions of the UNSC and what the commands of the two frigates that the Netherlands would be.<sup>73</sup> The opinions of the ministers were divided on these questions.

The sentiment among the PvdA-ministers’ during the meeting was that the Arab countries should take the lead in an international coalition in order to bring stability to the region. Party members were in favour of a regional approach, rather than an American-led coalition. The Arab diplomacy had become active at the highest levels in the first days of the crisis, in order to search for an Arab solution that would get the Iraqi army out of Kuwait.<sup>74</sup> According to PvdA-Minister Ritzen the Arab countries had to play a leading role in order to achieve a

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<sup>70</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, Minutes of the Cabinet, Council of Ministers and Royal Councils 1990, catalog number 5827, Minutes of the meeting held on 13 August in The Hague, 2.

<sup>71</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>72</sup> Rosenthal & de Vries, *Nederland en de Golfcrisis*, 30.

<sup>73</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, Minutes of the Cabinet, Council of Ministers and Royal Councils 1990, catalog number 5822, Minutes of the meeting held on 13 August in The Hague, 2.

<sup>74</sup> Ghazi A. Alogsaibi, *The Gulf Crisis. An Attempt to Understand* (London: 1993), 29.

peaceful solution.<sup>75</sup> Also PvdA-Minister d'Ancona stated that she was in favour of an 'Arab solution' to the crisis. Yet, the view of an Arab-led initiative was not shared by the CDA-ministers'. CDA-Minister van den Broek argued that the opinions of the Arab countries were divided on the possible condemnation of the Iraqi invasion and therefore an Arab-led coalition would not be possible. CDA-Minister Braks also stated that the solidarity of Arab countries was hard to estimate.<sup>76</sup> The CDA ministers were therefore more in favour an international coalition. The PvdA eventually agreed on this view, however PvdA-Minister Alders was disturbed about the idea that the international coalition would highly likely become an American-led coalition. Although President Bush had stated that the troops he had sent to Saudi-Arabia were defensive in nature, Minister Alders stated that the U.S. had not been clear about the American intentions of sending troops to the Gulf.<sup>77</sup> He argued that it was difficult to decide to what extent the American troops had a 'defensive nature'.<sup>78</sup> The *Ministerraad* eventually agreed that efforts should be made to act on a global scale against Iraq; an Arabic led coalition was not possible and an American led coalition was less favourable. Consequently, the ministers agreed that the coalition should not only merely exist of Western countries, but should represent and contain the international community. The discussion during the meeting showed that the PvdA party was reluctant towards the United States and thought their intentions were unclear. At the same time the CDA party leaned more towards the American approach, which was in line with their Atlanticist tradition.

Another point of discussion was the question on how the Netherlands should interpret the recently adopted UNSC resolution 660. Both parties agreed that the economic sanctions should have a 'far-reaching interpretation', and no exceptions should be made.<sup>79</sup> However, Minister Pronk (PvdA) had a different stance towards the interpretation than the other ministers of his party. The minister stated that 'a possible military operation by the international community could make a political solution to the crisis possible'.<sup>80</sup> He therefore questioned whether the Netherlands should make troops available in case the Secretary-General of the UN would request this.<sup>81</sup> Pronk's stance on the matter is surprising, since pacifism has been proven an important pillar of foreign policy of the PvdA party since the

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<sup>75</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, Minutes of the Cabinet, Council of Ministers and Royal Councils 1990, catalog number 5822, Minutes of the meeting held on 13 August in The Hague, 6.

<sup>76</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>77</sup> Idem, 7

<sup>78</sup> Idem, 7

<sup>79</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>80</sup> Idem, 3.

<sup>81</sup> Ibidem.

70s. Pronk's different stance on the matter could therefore suggest that the PvdA party was divided on the matter.

On the question what the command of the frigates would be, the Ministers quickly came to a decision. According to Minister ter Beek (PvdA) the frigates could contribute to the boycott. Because there was no reason to suspect that the situation in the Gulf was going to escalate, the frigates had a defensive task; patrol and explore.<sup>82</sup> The PvdA ministers and the CDA ministers were content with the decision. The PvdA was in favour of the defensive task, and the CDA was glad the Netherlands was contributing to the international coalition against Iraq.

In August 1990 the situation in the Gulf was discussed three times in total in the *Ministerraad*: on 13, 16 and 23 August. In the last two meetings the ministers agreed on the view that it was important to have a UNSC-mandate in case military action would be necessary. It can be concluded from the meetings in August that the opinions of the ministers of the coalition parties were divided on the approach on how to move Iraq out of Kuwait. The ministers agreed that Iraq should withdraw, however which country should take the lead and how the Netherlands should respond to the crisis remained a point of discussion. It is remarkable that PvdA-Minister Pronk stated that he saw a military operation as a way to find a political solution to the crisis, since this is not in line with the pacific tradition of the PvdA on security politics. The different perspective of Minister Pronk therefore suggests that the party was divided in the first days after the Iraqi invasion. In later chapters we will see that Minister Pronk eventually comes back from this statement. None of the coalition parties was willing to get involved in a possible war and therefore the ministers soon agreed on the defensive task of the frigates the Netherlands was going to send.

## 2.2. September 1990

In September 1990 the Security Council met up several times to discuss the options of imposing heavier sanctions on Iraq. Iraq was going to withdraw from Kuwait anytime soon. Consequently, on 13 September the UNSC adopts resolution 666 in a 13-2 vote. The resolution imposed strict controls over humanitarian food aid to Iraq and Kuwait. The UN and other international agencies would be charged with determining the food necessities in Iraq and assessing the distribution process. Furthermore, on 25 September the UNSC voted in

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<sup>82</sup> Ibidem.

favour of resolution 670. Resolution 670 increased the sanctions against Iraq to include all sources of transport and even aircrafts.<sup>83</sup>

Before the start of the Western European Union meeting (WEU) of 18 September the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence discussed that the Netherlands could contribute to the imposed air-embargo by providing an F16 squadron. However, the ministers had not discussed the decision with the *Ministerraad* yet. For that reason, the matter became an important topic during the meeting of 21 September. In the *Ministerraad* ministers of the PvdA expressed their concern with the provision of an F16 squadron. The PvdA-ministers stressed the importance of finding a political solution to the crisis. Furthermore, PvdA-Minister Pronk stated that the party was worried about the American attitude towards the crisis. They thought the US might take unilateral action, without consulting the international community and start a military confrontation in the Gulf.<sup>84</sup> In case this would happen Pronk was especially worried that if the Netherlands was going to provide an F16 squadron, the Netherlands would automatically become involved in the conflict.<sup>85</sup> Several ministers of the PvdA shared this view, and therefore suggested that it was rather preferable to maximise the economic boycott instead of providing an F16 squadron. In the end the Netherlands offered Turkey the stationing of a F16-squadron, however the request got rejected by the Turkish government.<sup>86</sup>

Although the PvdA party was worried about a unilateral attack of the US and the consequences of rise of the Dutch military presence in the region, ministers of the CDA did not share this view. Prime Minister Lubbers stated that he thought that the ‘attitude of the United States is not a concern for us’.<sup>87</sup> Lubbers acknowledged that the US were playing a leading role in the efforts against Iraq, however there were no indications that the US were going to invade Iraq unilateral according. Rather than worrying about the US Lubbers urged that the Netherlands should focus on putting pressure on Iraq via the UN.<sup>88</sup> Also CDA-Minister van den Broek shared this view. According to him ‘a solution for the Gulf crisis should be found in the implementations of the UN resolutions’.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Cordesman & Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern War*, 51.

<sup>84</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, Minutes of the Cabinet, Council of Ministers and Royal Councils 1990, catalog number 5823, Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September in The Hague, 6.

<sup>85</sup> *Idem*, 7.

<sup>86</sup> Rosenthal & de Vries, *Nederland en de Golfcrisis*, 194.

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

<sup>88</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>89</sup> *Idem*, 9.

The minutes of the meetings of September demonstrated the different stances of the CDA and PvdA on the question whether to provide a F16 squadron. It can be stated that the PvdA-ministers were not in favour of sending a F16 squadron to Turkey. Also, the PvdA-ministers were concerned about the American hostile attitude towards Iraq. The CDA-ministers did not share this view and thought it was very unlikely that the US were going to intervene without consulting the international community first.

### 2.3. Conclusion

The first two months of the crisis were taken up with reacting to the shock of the seizure of Kuwait, moving forces to the Gulf, organising the sanctions and orchestrating diplomatic activities through the UN. In August and September, the UNSC took every measure short of war to force Iraq to leave Kuwait. Besides resolutions 660 and 661, the Council adopted a series of resolutions that declared Iraq's annexation null and void (August 9), called on Iraq to free the foreign hostages it had taken (August 18), established an international naval blockade (August 25) and halted air cargo shipments (September 25).<sup>90</sup>

In the first two months after the Iraqi invasion the ministers of the coalition parties in the Netherlands were seeking to find an appropriate response. The meetings of August showed that there was some sort of agreement in the *Ministerraad*. Both parties thought political and diplomatic efforts should be made in order to find a peaceful solution to the crisis. On the other hand, the meetings also demonstrated the differences between the two parties. The meetings of September showed the pro-American attitude of the CDA. The CDA was not concerned that the US might become military involved and was therefore in favour of the American attitude. The PvdA however, marked this American behaviour as hostile. In the end consensus was reached. The Netherlands was going to send two frigates with a defensive task to contribute to the international coalition.

The eventual policy outcome showed that the ideas of the coalition parties influenced the decision on peaceful foreign politics. The CDA on the one hand wanted to be a loyal ally to the US and wanted to contribute to the international coalition. The PvdA on the other hand did not want to become military involved. Therefore, by sending two defensive ships, the policy of the Netherlands was relatively peaceful and consensus could be reached among the parties.

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<sup>90</sup> Cordesman & Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern War*, 61.



## Chapter 3: Rising tensions - diplomacy versus war? (October-December 1990)

*'President Saddam Hussain has six weeks to withdraw from Kuwait and release the hostages. The possibilities of finding a peaceful solution after the deadline of 15 January will become extremely limited.'*<sup>91</sup>

*Minister van den Broek, Nov. 1990*

Once Iraq had been isolated, economically and politically, thoughts began to turn to the next possible stage: war. It had become clear that economic sanctions and diplomatic fury might not be able to reverse the Iraqi invasion.<sup>92</sup> On October 9 President Bush aired his doubts publicly: 'Sanctions will take time to have their full intended effect. We shall continue to review all options with our allies, but let it be clear, we will not let this aggression stand. Iraq will not be permitted to annex Kuwait. And that is not a threat, it is not a boast, it is just the way it is going to be'.<sup>93</sup> It was evident that President Bush was becoming impatient and increasingly pessimistic with regard to the effectiveness of the imposed sanctions.

Since Iraq did not seem to respond to the sanctions that were imposed by the international community, the ministers in the *Ministerraad* now had to evaluate other options in order to force Iraq out of Kuwait. The debate concentrated on the question to what extent the Netherlands was going to contribute military supplies to the coalition. What did the different parties think was an appropriate contribution? And how did their ideas influence the eventual policy outcome?

### 3.1. October - November 1990

In October Thomas Pickering, representative of the US to the UN, asked the Deputies Committee to start to draw up the outlines of a UN resolution with regard to the use of force in the conflict.<sup>94</sup> By October 1990 over 200,000 US troops were stationed in Saudi Arabia. The American objectives of Operation Desert Shield had been achieved: the coalition forces stationed in Saudi Arabia were more than sufficient to protect the kingdom from invasion. Yet, because of the indifferent attitude of Iraq, the United States was now anxious to show

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<sup>91</sup> Idem, 26.

<sup>92</sup> Musallam, *The Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait*, 102.

<sup>93</sup> Freedman & Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict 1990-1991*, 204.

<sup>94</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, Minutes of the Cabinet, Council of Ministers and Royal Councils 1990, catalog number 5825, Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November in The Hague, 28.

that it was not alone in being prepared to take drastic measures in opposing aggression.<sup>95</sup> In the beginning of November President Bush Sr. ordered US forces in Arabia to be doubled to 400,000 troops and announced the need for the Coalition to develop an offensive military operation.<sup>96</sup> Operation Desert Shield was about to become Operation Desert Storm.

The international developments with regard to the Gulf crisis were followed closely by the *Ministerraad*. Because of the rising American military presence in the region and President Bush's pressure to look into the option of using force to push Iraq out of Kuwait, CDA-Minister van den Broek believed that the US wanted to pass a resolution in the UNSC as soon as possible on this matter.<sup>97</sup> Van den Broek expected that the PvdA-Ministers might not be in favour of a resolution that approved the use of violence in the conflict. Therefore, he stated during the *Ministerraad* meeting of 23 November that the adoption of such resolution did not automatically mean that military action will become imminent. The resolution would just serve the purpose of warning Iraq.<sup>98</sup>

Six days later the UNSC indeed adopted resolution 678. At the request of the US the UNSC passed the resolution which authorised the use of force to end the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.<sup>99</sup> The resolution authorised the 'use of all necessary means' to enforce Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait after 15 January.<sup>100</sup> Because of the resolution the US and other allies were now allowed to militarily intervene in the Gulf after 15 January, without consulting other parties.<sup>101</sup> CDA-Minister van den Broek informed the cabinet about the adoption of resolution 678 during the meeting of 30 November. The minister stated that he interpreted resolution 678 as 'the last attempt to find a peaceful solution to the crisis'.<sup>102</sup> According to Minister van den Broek the diplomatic initiatives that had been taken already and the economic boycott implemented by the international community did not achieve its goal.<sup>103</sup> The adoption of resolution 678 caused concern in the *Ministerraad*, especially among the PvdA-ministers. As a response PvdA-Minister Kok asked the *Ministerraad* what their

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<sup>95</sup> James DeFronzo, *The Iraq War. Origins and Consequences* (Boulder: 2010), 104.

<sup>96</sup> Musallam, *The Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait*, 102.

<sup>97</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, Minutes of the Cabinet, Council of Ministers and Royal Councils 1990, catalog number 5825, Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November in The Hague, 14.

<sup>98</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, Minutes of the Cabinet, Council of Ministers and Royal Councils 1990, catalog number 5825, Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November in The Hague, 14.

<sup>99</sup> Musallam, *The Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait*, 102.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>102</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, Minutes of the Cabinet, Council of Ministers and Royal Councils 1990, catalog number 5825, Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November in The Hague, 28.

<sup>103</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, Minutes of the Cabinet, Council of Ministers and Royal Councils 1990, catalog number 5825, Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November in The Hague, 28.



thoughts were on possible initiatives that would prevent the use of force and a military confrontation.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, PvdA-Minister Kok found it problematic that resolution 678 gave the US the possibility to intervene without consulting the international community.<sup>105</sup> Also PvdA-Minister Pronk expressed his concern about the ultimatum in the resolution. According to Pronk a military intervention is not beneficial for anyone and now the US had obtained the freedom to take all the necessary steps.<sup>106</sup> Also Prime Minister Lubbers was concerned about the consequences of resolution 678. Nonetheless, the Minister stated that the Netherlands should try everything it could to find a peaceful solution to the conflict.<sup>107</sup>

About six weeks later, the US Congress passed a bill which gave President Bush the authority to engage in war.<sup>108</sup> With resolution 678 in place and a green light for President Bush to engage in a military confrontation in Iraq, war became virtually inevitable. It can be concluded from the meetings of the *Ministerraad* in November that the adoption of resolution 678 led to concern in the council. Both coalition parties were worried about the possibility of the US taking unilateral military action in the Gulf. As a result, the ministers stressed the importance of the idea that the Netherlands should try to focus on finding a peaceful solution to the crisis.

### 3.2. December 1990

In the beginning of December, the Dutch parliament voted on the motion whether to station Dutch ground troops in the Gulf. War seemed to be coming closer and closer. Because the VVD, CDA and D66 (Democrats '66) voted in favour of the motion, a majority of the parliament was achieved.<sup>109</sup> However, the PvdA had voted against the motion. The differences between the two coalition parties on the matter soon became clear in the following meeting of the *Ministerraad*. On 21 December CDA-Minister van den Broek stated that since the deadline of 15 January was approaching and because a clear majority in the parliament wanted to station ground troops in the Gulf, the next step for the Netherlands would be to take action as soon as possible.<sup>110</sup> According to the Minister of Foreign Affairs 'the Netherlands now had the task to make a substantial contribution to the international coalition against Iraq'.

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<sup>104</sup> Idem, 26.

<sup>105</sup> Idem, 32.

<sup>106</sup> Idem, 31.

<sup>107</sup> Idem, 33

<sup>108</sup> Musallam, *The Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait*, 102.

<sup>109</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, Minutes of the Cabinet, Council of Ministers and Royal Councils 1990, catalog number 5826, Minutes of the meeting held on 21 December in The Hague, 12.

<sup>110</sup> Idem, 13.

<sup>111</sup> The main topic of discussion during the meeting of the *Ministerraad* became whether a peaceful solution would become less or more likely when the international community, including the Netherlands, raised their military presence in the region. <sup>112</sup> Not surprisingly, the PvdA-Ministers once again did not agree with the CDA-ministers. PvdA-Minister Pronk believed that by sending ground troops or any other form military supplies to the Gulf the Netherlands would send the message to the international community that it did not believe in a peaceful solution anymore. <sup>113</sup> PvdA-Minister Kok agreed with Minister Pronk. Kok argued that military build-up meant that the Netherlands was mentally preparing for war. <sup>114</sup> PvdA-Minister Ritzen also reacted hesitant towards the proposal to expand the Dutch presence in the Gulf: ‘By sending troops or a squadron F16s to the Gulf the Netherlands will be committed to participate in a war’, he stated. <sup>115</sup> The PvdA-Ministers did not see any advantage of sending troops to the Gulf and thought it would limit the chance of finding a peaceful solution to the crisis.

On the contrary, the CDA-Ministers argued that sending ground troops would show the international community that the US were not alone in the matter. <sup>116</sup> For example, CDA-Minister Maij believed that by sending ground troops to the Gulf the Netherlands would demonstrate its solidarity with the United States. <sup>117</sup> Moreover, CDA-Minister van den Broek argued that all diplomatic and political efforts have been made to force Iraq out of Kuwait: ‘A peaceful solution cannot be found’. <sup>118</sup> Moreover, the Minister argued, there is a majority in the Dutch parliament that wants to increase the military presence in the region: ‘we cannot simply deny that majority’. <sup>119</sup> As a result of the debate during the meeting Prime Minister Lubbers suggested that he, Minister Kok, Minister van den Broek and Minister ter Beek would discuss the possible further steps on 28 December. The findings of the meeting between the four ministers would be discussed during an extra meeting of the *Ministerraad*.<sup>120</sup> However, the Netherlands would have to decide soon, since the deadline of 15 January was soon around the corner.

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<sup>111</sup> Idem, 13.

<sup>112</sup> Idem, 19.

<sup>113</sup> Idem, 17.

<sup>114</sup> Idem, 21.

<sup>115</sup> Idem, 16.

<sup>116</sup> Idem, 17.

<sup>117</sup> Idem, 18.

<sup>118</sup> Idem, 19.

<sup>119</sup> Idem, 22.

<sup>120</sup> Idem, 22.

The meeting of 21 December showed that the *Ministerraad* was divided on the matter whether to station ground troops in the Gulf. The PvdA had voted against the motion in the parliament. Moreover, during the meeting the ministers stated that they believed that the stationing of ground troops would eventually lead to the Dutch participation in war, something they wanted to prevent. The CDA-ministers however thought that the stationing of ground troops would show the Dutch support for the US. In the end the Netherlands did not send ground troops, instead a month later it would send a medical team to the region.

### 3.3. Conclusions

From October to December the situation in the Gulf started to escalate. The US were building up their army in the region. With the adaptation of resolution 678 by the UNSC in November war seemed to become inevitable. The adoption of resolution 678 also led to concern in *Ministerraad*. Both coalition parties were worried about the possibility of the US taking unilateral military action in the Gulf. As a result, the ministers stressed the importance of the idea that the Netherlands should try to focus on finding a peaceful solution to the crisis. Furthermore, the meeting of 21 December showed that the *Ministerraad* was divided on the matter whether to station ground troops in the Gulf. The PvdA had voted against the motion in the parliament and did not want to become involved in a war. The CDA-ministers however wanted to remain loyal to the US.

Based on the minutes of the meetings in the *Ministerraad* it can be concluded that the eventual policy outcome was peaceful. Eventually, no Dutch troops were stationed in the region due to the pacific attitude of the PvdA. Moreover, this chapter demonstrated that the stances of the political parties on the matter were in line with their general stances on foreign security policy. The CDA wanted that the Netherlands remained a loyal ally of the US. The PvdA hold on to their pacific stance. The combination of these two different perspectives eventually led to a more peaceful foreign policy with regard to the situation in the Gulf; no troops were send to the region.



## Chapter 4: War by appointment (January & February 1991)

*'There is no doubt. A military intervention will take place if Iraq does not withdraw within the next nine hours'.<sup>121</sup>*

*Prime Minister Lubbers, 15 Jan 1991.*

The deadline of 15 January came closer and closer as the international community tried to find a peaceful solution to the crisis. Within the *Ministerraad* the ministers discussed what the best course of action was now war seemed to be inevitable. What did the two political parties think that needed to be done in order to find a peaceful solution in the last days before the deadline? And what was the Netherlands going to do if America would start a military intervention?

### 4.1. January 1991

The general picture from the smaller European countries in the last months before January 15 was that public opinion supported the coalition campaign, but preferred to remain outside the actual fighting.<sup>122</sup> Two other European countries were prepared to commit forces; the Netherlands and Italy. The Netherlands put its warships in the area under American control. According to Freedman and Karsh the Dutch commitment demonstrated the Dutch were strongly supportive: 'The once formidable Dutch peace movement barely protested'.<sup>123</sup> However, when we have a look at the discussion in the *Ministerraad* in January, it becomes clear that the authors are wrong on the assumption that the Netherlands was strongly supportive of the military confrontation. Minutes of the meetings in January show that the ministers in the government not easily came to decision to participate in the military action. In the days before and during the start of the military intervention in the Gulf the *Ministerraad* discussed what the Netherlands were ought to do. On 7&8 January the *Ministerraad* came together after the Christmas holidays. During the meeting it became clear that the US had requested the Netherlands to station two patriot air defence rockets in Turkey.<sup>124</sup> CDA-

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<sup>121</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, Minutes of the Cabinet, Council of Ministers and Royal Councils 1991, catalog number 6333, Minutes of the meeting held on 15 and 16 January in The Hague, 14.

<sup>122</sup> Freedman & Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict 1990-1991*, 356.

<sup>123</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>124</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, Minutes of the Cabinet, Council of Ministers and Royal Councils 1991, catalog number 6330, Minutes of the meeting held on 7 and 8 January in The Hague, 3.

minister van den Broek was willing to accept the request, stating that the only possibility that was left in order to force Iraq out of Kuwait was ‘a firm, hard and unanimous stand’.<sup>125</sup> The international community and the Netherlands had no other choice according to the minister.<sup>126</sup> Since the military confrontation was inevitable ‘the Netherlands should to decide as soon as possible whether they were willing to accept the consequences’, according to the Minister.<sup>127</sup> Van den Broek expected resistance from the PvdA party, since the PvdA had been reserved towards giving military support throughout the crisis.<sup>128</sup> Since the deadline of 15 January was next week and Iraq did not give the impression it was going to withdraw, there was no time left to explore other non-violent options. The Netherlands now had to decide what the Dutch contribution in the war was going to entail.<sup>129</sup> Although Minister van den Broek argued that there was no time for exploring non-violent options, PvdA-Minister Pronk still thought that it should also be discussed how a military confrontation could be avoided.<sup>130</sup> Also PvdA-Minister Hirsch Ballin agreed with the view of Minister Pronk. Moreover, he was worried that the US did not want to make any concessions anymore.<sup>131</sup>

The deadline stated in resolution 668 of January 15, passed without an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. As a result, the air war against Iraq began on January 16. The international coalition against Iraq had had nearly six months to prepare for war.<sup>132</sup> By mid-January the coalition had received contributions of various kinds from 50 countries. It included military forces from 38 countries and troops from 31 countries. According to the US estimates, the Coalition had in total of 540,000 troops in theatre, 1,736 combat aircraft from 12 Coalition countries, plus 60 B-5s waiting outside the theatre. Naval forces included six carrier battle groups, two battleships, several submarines with cruise missiles and an amphibious force with 17,000 US Marines.<sup>133</sup> For six weeks the coalition forces subjected Iraq to the most intensive air bombardment in military history. The coalition attacked Iraqi air force bases, command centres, military industrial facilities, power stations and oil refineries. Iraq’s communication systems were disrupted and production of electricity dropped by about 75 percent.<sup>134</sup> Iraq was virtually defenceless against the bombing.

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<sup>125</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>126</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>127</sup> Idem, 24.

<sup>128</sup> Idem, 24.

<sup>129</sup> Idem, 24.

<sup>130</sup> Idem, 8.

<sup>131</sup> Idem, 18.

<sup>132</sup> Cordesman & Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern War*, 91.

<sup>133</sup> Idem, 93.

<sup>134</sup> DeFronzo, *The Iraq War*, 105.

On 15 January, the day of the deadline, the *Ministerraad* met up to discuss the situation in the Gulf. In the WEU meeting that took place a few days ago, Belgium, Spain and Portugal had stated that they were not willing to contribute to the international coalition. PvdA-Minister Kok said during the *Ministerraad* meeting that the ‘position of these three countries towards the international coalition could affect the PvdA’s position towards the Dutch military presence in the region’.<sup>135</sup> Ministers of the PvdA party were not amused that a peaceful solution was not found. Minister Kok stated that he ‘could not stand the idea that a peaceful solution was not working out now the deadline had almost passed’.<sup>136</sup> CDA-minister van den Broek asked the PvdA ministers what other possible solution there was then a military action.<sup>137</sup> As a response, PvdA-Ministers Alders and Pronk stated that the Netherlands should remain to contribute to all the necessary political and diplomatic efforts in order to prevent a military confrontation.<sup>138</sup>

It can be concluded from the meetings in January that the *Ministerraad* had a hard time deciding what the contribution of the Netherlands to the international coalition should be. On the one hand the council saw the need of supporting the international coalition, on the other hand it was tough to decide what the contribution should entail. Although CDA and PvdA could not agree on the Dutch contribution in the Gulf, eventually a consensus was reached: The Netherlands was going to send a medical team to the region that consisted of 31 soldiers.

#### 4.2. February 1991

Although the Netherlands did not contribute ground troops to the international coalition, once the war had begun the Netherlands provided patriot rockets to Turkey and Israel. When the American air bombardments on Iraq commenced, Iraq responded by launching Scud-rockets on Israel. In order to repel the rockets, Israel requested the international coalition to provide help. Minister van den Broek stated on 8 February that the Netherlands had been requested to provide patriot units to Israel. Within the *Ministerraad* no opposition came to the request, since Israel was under attack. Since there was no opposition to the request, the Netherlands announced that day that it would Station 8 patriot units in Israel.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Idem, 5.

<sup>136</sup> Idem, 6.

<sup>137</sup> Idem, 9.

<sup>138</sup> Idem, 13.

<sup>139</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.02.05.02, Minutes of the Cabinet, Council of Ministers and Royal Councils 1991, catalog number 6333, Minutes of the meeting held on 8 & 9 February in The Hague, 2.

### 4.3. Conclusions

This chapter was focussed on the last two months of the Gulf crisis. The deadline of 15 January was approaching and the international community still tried to However, Iraq did not give in. Once the deadline had passed the US started bomb Iraq. On 22 January the Dutch government decided to send a medical team to Saudi-Arabia. The decision to send a medical team came one week after the deadline of 15 January and 6 days after the start of the American air bombardments on Iraq. So, it took the ministers 14 days to come to this decision. The slow decision-making in the last crucial days before 15 January demonstrates that it is difficult for coalition parties in a cabinet to reach consensus on whether to get involved in a conflict. Moreover, the outcome the debates and the eventual decision to send a medical team to the Gulf showed that coalition politics could lead to more peaceful foreign policy. The PvdA-ministers were hesitant and wanted to prevent military actions. However, CDA ministers stated that there was no other way out anymore. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the history of pacifism of the PvdA also played a role in their attitude towards military intervention. It can therefore be concluded that it is not only coalition politics that leads to more peaceful foreign policy. It can be argued that it the combination of the influence of ideas on peace and security of the parties and the coalition politics that leaf to the relatively peaceful foreign policy of the Netherlands.



## Chapter 5: Conclusions

This research commenced with two simple questions: Why do states wage war against one another? And why don't they? The answer to these questions is rather complicated. According to the democratic peace theory democratic countries are less likely to wage war against one another. Although scholars seem to agree on this idea, the democratic peace theory remains flawed. Foreign policy-making in democracies has often been compared with that of more autocratic political systems. Yet, no distinction has been made between democratic subtypes. How coalition politics affect foreign policy is an important question that remains unresolved in the field of international relations and in the study of foreign policy.

So, in how far do coalition politics contribute to peaceful foreign policy? In order to answer this question this research has focussed on the Dutch decision-making process with regard to the Gulf crisis of 1990-1991 and analysed minutes of the meetings in the *Ministerraad* in this period.

In the first chapter of this research I argued that the CDA and PvdA had two different opinions on peace and security policies in 1989. Since the 1970s the PvdA had become more pacifist in their foreign politics and rejected military interventions. Furthermore, it had criticised the American actions in Vietnam and became reserved towards NATO. Although the CDA was received critique because they supported the American actions in Vietnam, the party wanted the Netherlands to remain a loyal ally to the country.

During the first two months of the Iraqi invasion the ministers were seeking for a appropriate response to the invasion. Both parties thought political and diplomatic efforts should be made to force Iraq out of Kuwait. However, there were differences between the two parties; the PvdA thought the US was acting hostile, whereas the CDA thought the perception of the PvdA was nonsense. This example showed the pro-American attitude of CDA ministers and the reserved position of the PvdA towards the US. Moreover, the parties did not agree on the question how the Netherlands was going to contribute to the international coalition. The CDA wanted to show their loyalty to the US, whereas the PvdA was not in favour of any contribution at all. The parties agreed on the sending of two frigates with a defensive task. The eventual policy outcome of the first two months showed that the ideas on foreign policy of the coalition shaped the eventual decision-making. It can be argued that by sending two frigates, the outcome of the negotiations between the two parties had proven to relatively peaceful: the two ships had a defensive task.

From October to December 1990 the situation in the Gulf escalated. With the adaptation of resolution 678 by the UNSC war seemed inevitable. In December the *Ministerraad* was heavily divided on the question whether to station Dutch ground troops in the Gulf. The PvdA had voted against the motion in this parliament. The party simply did not want to become involved in a war. The CDA-ministers however wanted to remain loyal to the US. In the end no ground troops were sent to Iraq, because the ministers could not agree on this matter. The decision of not sending troops to the region can be seen as a peaceful turn in Dutch foreign politics with regard to the Gulf. Although the CDA party wanted to send troops, the structure of a coalition cabinet made it impossible.

In the last months for the outbreak of the crisis the international community made efforts to find a peaceful solution. This chapter was focussed on the last two months of the Gulf crisis. The deadline of 15 January was approaching and the international community still tried to find a peaceful solution. However, Iraq did not give in. Once the deadline had passed the US started bomb Iraq. On 22 January the Dutch government decided to send a medical team to Saudi-Arabia. It took the ministers 14 days to come to this decision. The slow decision-making in the last crucial days before 15 January demonstrate that it is difficult for coalition parties in a cabinet to reach consensus on to what extent the country is going to be involved in a conflict. The contribution of sending a medical team, and later the provision of defensive rockets to Israel, meant that the *Ministerraad* still leaned towards more peaceful policy decisions.

All in all, it can be concluded that the Dutch cabinet had disagreements about the Dutch contribution to the international coalition in Iraq. By discussing their different opinions, the ministers tried to convince each other to take certain actions with regard to the situation in the Gulf. Most of the times consensus was reached. By analysing the policy outcomes of the debates in the *Ministerraad* it can be stated that coalition politics can lead to relatively more peaceful foreign politics. I do not argue that other factors- such as economic interdependence, culture, history and public opinion are not important in explaining peaceful foreign policies of countries. Yet, in the end the Netherlands did not send ground troops to the Gulf, no offensive tasks were given to the frigates, and a medical team was sent due to the constraints of the coalition cabinet.

Moreover, this research has demonstrated how general ideas of the CDA and PvdA on peace and security have shaped the policy outcome. The way the two parties thought on foreign politics clearly influenced their opinions on how the Netherlands should respond to developments with regard to the Gulf crisis. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the ideas of

the PvdA on foreign politics have played an important role in shaping the relatively peaceful policy outcomes. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is not necessarily the coalition structure of the government that influences the peaceful policy outcomes, but rather the ideas of parties within a coalition cabinet that shape the possibility of a peaceful policy outcome. The idea that it is not necessarily the coalition cabinet that shapes relatively peaceful foreign policy is an interesting finding. The historiographical debate has given examples of arguments why coalition government politics could be more peaceful than single-party government politics. For example, the presence of multiple parties and more vigilant legislatures constrains leaders from taking aggressive militant actions. However, this research has demonstrated that this is only true when a coalition contains one (or more) parties with relatively pacifistic ideas on peace and security policy. Ideas of parties within coalition cabinets on foreign policy therefore have a big influence on the shaping of a relatively peaceful foreign policy outcome. Furthermore, the findings of this research could also implicate that a single-party government is not necessarily more peaceful than a coalition-party government. It rather depends on the ideas of this single-party on foreign policy whether their policies are more peaceful.

In the Netherlands general elections were held 2,5 months ago. The coalition cabinet has not been formed yet and the parties are divided on multiple issues which makes forming a coalition extremely difficult. If a majority coalition government will be formed still remains uncertain. However, with the findings of this research it would be interesting to see how the ideas of the future coalition parties eventually will influence policy outcomes and to what extent the Dutch foreign policy will be peaceful in the next coming years.



## Appendix I: Ministers in the Netherlands (August 1990-January 1991)

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Political Party</b>
Prime Minister, General Affairs	Ruud Lubbers	CDA
Deputy Prime Minister, Finance	Wim Kok	PvdA
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Hans van den Broek	CDA
Minister of Justice and Kingdom Relations	Ernst Hirsch Ballin	PvdA
Minister of Interior Affairs	Ien Dales	PvdA
Minister of Education and Sciences	Jo Ritzen	PvdA
Minister of Defence	Relus ter Beek	PvdA
Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment	Hans Alders	PvdA
Minister of Transport and Water	Hanja Maij-Weggen	CDA
Minister of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fishery (CDA)	Gerrit Braks Bert de Vries	CDA
Minister of Economic Affairs	Koos Andriessen	CDA
Minister of Social Affairs and Work opportunity	Bert de Vries	CDA
Minister of Welfare, Health and Culture	Hedy d'Ancona	PvdA
Minister of Development Cooperation	Jan Pronk	PvdA



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