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From Enthusiastic Moluccan Youngsters to Ruthless Terrorists

An analysis of the development of the
Dutch security culture regarding Moluccan
terrorism between 1970 and 1978

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Preface

This thesis is called: *'From enthusiastic Moluccan youngsters to ruthless terrorists: An analysis of the development of the Dutch security culture regarding Moluccan terrorism between 1970 and 1978.'* I have written this thesis as part of my Master's degree in International Relations in Historical Perspective at Utrecht University. From February to June 2022, I have read hundreds of pages of literature and government documents to gain a better understanding of the development of the Dutch security culture regarding Moluccan terrorism. The result of that labour can be read in this thesis.

Although I have done literature research before, the scale of this research was new to me. Even though it was sometimes tiring or frustrating to read for days and put little on paper, I am ultimately satisfied with the result. I have learned to read, process and write down large pieces of text in a coherent and concise manner. By writing this thesis, I have been able to improve my research skills and learn more about my own thinking processes.

First of all, I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Beatrice de Graaf, my supervisor during the writing process, for giving me feedback, asking me the right questions, and helping me with the thinking and writing process in general. It was very instructive to have an expert like you as my guide. I would also like to thank Laure Dijkstra for providing interim feedback and helping me with the thinking process. Finally, I would also like to thank the teachers of the programme in general for providing the right knowledge and tools to bring this thesis to a successful conclusion.

I hope you enjoy reading it.

Thijs van der Stigchel

Schoonhoven, June 15th 2022

Abstract

This research focuses on the concept of security culture. This means that the threat perception, interest assessment and measures taken by the Dutch government with regard to Moluccan terrorism are analysed on the basis of their discourse between 1970 and 1978. This study shows that there were fundamental changes in this security culture between 1970 and 1978. It developed from a non-existent security culture in 1970 to a culture in 1978 in which Moluccan terrorism was seen as a real threat to national security and the legal order, although not yet to the level that far-reaching powers for the Dutch Intelligence Service or new legislation were considered necessary. The discourse had developed from one in which the perpetrators were called enthusiastic Moluccan youngsters in 1970 to one in which they were called ruthless terrorists in 1978. Whereas no counterterrorist measures had been taken in 1970, special military units and protocols had been set up in 1978. This development, particularly between 1970 and 1976 but also between 1976 and 1978, took place under the influence of international terrorism. It was not until the train hijacking at De Punt in 1977 that the Moluccan actions were seen in a pattern of terroristic violence and put in the framework of international terrorism. Only then the government seemed to take the threat of Moluccan terrorism seriously to the extent that serious attempts were actually being made to prevent future Moluccan terrorism. Nevertheless, the government remained cautious in its measures. Under no circumstances was the Netherlands to become a police state in which fundamental democratic values were affected.

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Introduction

'The spreading growth of this terror in society makes measures necessary. Now I would like to mention a number of measures and ask questions, and I would like to hear some responses to them from the government.'¹

This was said by Dutch parliamentarian and later Minister of Defence Roelof Kruisinga in response to terrorist² actions by Moluccan youths in 1975, in which a total of four people were killed. Three people were killed during a train hijacking near Wijster, and one died during the simultaneous occupation of the Indonesian consulate in Amsterdam. Kruisinga, member of parliament on behalf of the Christian Historical Union (CHU), made these statements regarding these terrorist attacks and demanded the government to act, because the Moluccan actions in 1975 were not stand alone events. In the seventies, the Netherlands encountered its first terrorist attacks since World War II, thereby tuning into a dark trend that kept sway in other western countries as well. In this period, in the Netherlands, young Moluccans caused six hostage situations, varying from the hostage-taking of an Indonesian ambassador to the hostage-taking of school children.

During the Dutch colonisation of Indonesia, thousands of local islanders had joined the Dutch Colonial Army (KNIL), especially from the island of Ambon, which is part of the Moluccas. The Moluccas were one of the few places with a large group of Christians in Indonesia. Both their large presence in the KNIL and their religion made them seen as loyal to the Netherlands and therefore they were hated by Indonesian nationalists.³ When, in 1949, the Netherlands was forced to recognise the independence of Indonesia after a four-year long war of independence, a problem arose. The Moluccans did not want to join the new Indonesian state and proclaimed their own republic (Republik Maluku Selatan [RMS]).⁴

As part of the independence negotiations, it was determined that Indonesian KNIL soldiers could either join the Indonesian army or be demobilised. The Moluccan soldiers who had served in the KNIL thus found themselves in a difficult situation. They either had to join their former enemy and fight against their own people, or they had to be demobilised. Indonesia, however, did not allow this demobilisation to take place on Ambon, since they would then probably join the 'rebels'.⁵ The only solution the Dutch government saw was to bring the Moluccan ex-soldiers to the Netherlands, demobilise them there and give them temporary accommodation. As a result, a total of about 13,000 Moluccans came to the Netherlands in 1951.⁶

These Moluccans were unemployed and poorly educated and they held the Dutch government responsible for their situation. They felt abandoned and felt that the Dutch government had not done enough to support the goals of the Moluccans, despite decades of loyal service. Since the Moluccans would only stay in the Netherlands temporarily, no attempts at integration were made.⁷ The situation in Indonesia did not improve, however, and the Moluccans therefore continued to live in their own remote enclaves within the Netherlands, especially near small villages. The accumulated frustrations

¹ Roelof Kruisinga in HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, p. 2812.

² The use of the term terrorism can be epistemologically problematic. Further on, it will be explained why and when the term terrorism will be used in certain situations.

³ Martijn Rasser. 2005. The Dutch response to Moluccan terrorism, 1970–1978. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 28(6), 482.

⁴ Hans van Amersfoort. 2004. The waxing and waning of a diaspora: Moluccans in the Netherlands, 1950–2002. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 30(1), 153-155.

⁵ Van Amersfoort, 2004, 153-156.

⁶ Siem Eikelenboom. 2007. *Niet bang om te sterven: dertig jaar terrorisme in Nederland*. Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam Uitgevers, p. 112.

⁷ Van Amersfoort, 2004, 154-157.

erupted among the second generation of Moluccans, who grew up in a 'foreign' country, in poor camps and regularly faced discrimination. In the seventies, therefore, they started committing violent, terrorist actions, in order to get more attention for their ideal and to create a dialogue between the Dutch government, the Moluccans and Indonesia.⁸

Terrorism has been a concept thoroughly researched in recent literature, but remains difficult to define.⁹ According to Weinberg, Pedahzur & Hirsch-Hoefler, terrorism is an 'essentially contested concept', which means that it is internally complex and its agreed and contested rules of application are open.¹⁰ The main problem with defining terrorism is that it has so many different aspects inherent in its meaning, such as the spread of fear, the use of violence and the political objective, that definitions either become very long, making it too specified resulting in nothing entirely fitting within this definition, or very short, making it a hollow and vague concept. Besides, what is and what is not considered terrorism is also highly dependent on what the authorities portray as terrorism, since it has become a politicized concept. As, in this research, governmental documents will be analysed, the definition as stated by the Dutch Intelligence Agency (AIVD) will be used.

'Terrorism is the ideologically motivated (preparation for) committing of violence aimed at human life or causing socially disruptive damage, with the aim to instil serious fear in (a part of) the population, to bring about social change and/or to influence political decision-making.'¹¹

The choice has thus been made to use a contemporary definition of terrorism in a historical thesis. This was mainly done because of workability, as in the seventies no definitions of terrorism had been adopted within the Dutch government. In order to be able to analyse how and to what extent the term terrorism is used, a contemporary definition offers a solution. In this thesis actions will therefore also be described as terrorist if they fall within this contemporary definition.

The emergence of terrorism in the Netherlands in the 1970s brought new challenges to light for the Dutch government, but also had an impact on the Dutch society. It raises questions about to what extent and why the Dutch government did or did not take counterterrorist measures, and what the role of the Dutch people was in relation to these measures. This can be analysed on the basis of the concept of 'security culture'. This relatively new concept is defined by Beatrice de Graaf as '1) an open, and contested, process of threat identification and interest-assessment, including the drawing of lines between friends and foes, insiders and outsiders; 2) enabled by institutional structures and agents involved in these processes of threat assessment and neutralisation; 3) resulting in practices and action repertoires that are introduced and implemented to defend the allegedly endangered interests.'¹²

With this research, I intend to use the case of Moluccan terrorism as a tool of analysis for the evolution of the Dutch security culture regarding terrorism. This brings us to the following research question:

How and why did the Dutch security culture regarding Moluccan terrorism evolve during 1970-1978?

In accordance with De Graaf's definition of security culture¹³, this includes analysing (1) to what extent and why Moluccan terrorism was perceived as a threat by mainly the Dutch government and the Dutch

⁸ Rasser, 2005, 481-492.

⁹ Leonard Weinberg, Ami Pedahzur & Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler. 2004. The challenges of conceptualizing terrorism. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 16(4), 777-794.

¹⁰ Weinberg, Pedahzur & Hirsch-Hoefler, 2004, 778.

¹¹ Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst [AIVD]. Date unknown. *Terrorisme*.

¹² Beatrice de Graaf. 2021. Terrorism in the Netherlands: A History (p. 333-334), in: English, Richard. (Ed.). 2021. *The Cambridge History of Terrorism*. Cambridge University Press.

¹³ De Graaf, 2021, p. 333-334.

public and (2) what measures were taken and why these measures were taken regarding this perceived threat. This will be analysed by using three subsidiary questions, which will be answered for the four most far-reaching Moluccan terrorist actions.¹⁴ By doing this, an evolution of the Dutch security culture can be observed. These three subsidiary questions are:

- What were the response of and measures taken by the Dutch government to Moluccan terrorist actions?
- What were the self-proclaimed reasons of the Dutch government for their (lack of) actions taken against a terrorist threat?
- What was the response of the Dutch public to the Moluccan terrorist actions and how was this connected to the government's policy?

One of the articles that comes closest to this research is a chapter by Beatrice de Graaf in *The Cambridge History of Terrorism*.¹⁵ In her chapter, she describes the evolution of the Dutch security culture regarding terrorism from the French Revolution onwards, which thus includes a paragraph on Moluccan terrorism in the 1970's. She observes that initially, terrorism was not high on the agenda of the Dutch government; the first Moluccan terrorist action in 1970 did not trigger any major reaction. However, the hostage situation during the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972 did.¹⁶ In 1973, the first national counterterrorist policy was formulated. However, the changes made were mainly organisational and did not entail any new laws, as the Dutch government wanted to protect the liberal, open society. Moreover, they did not frame the Moluccan actions as 'terrorist'. This also leads to De Graaf's main conclusions: Moluccan actions were not linked to the threat of global terrorism, and the fear of a police state and the loss of privacy prevailed over the fear of terrorism.¹⁷ This research aims to use De Graaf's paragraph as a basis, but look into more detail as to why certain terrorist actions were or were not perceived as a threat and how this evolved over time. Moreover, this research aims to add the dimension of the interplay between the Dutch public and the Dutch government.

In another article by De Graaf, together with Froukje Demant, the Dutch counterterrorism policy and how this deradicalized the Moluccan population is analysed.¹⁸ In this article, it is stated that there was no image of a homogenous Moluccan terrorist threat; the actions were seen as incidents. Therefore, there was no widespread fear amongst the Dutch population. In another book, De Graaf describes how counterterrorism is a way of communication where images of the enemy are constructed and cultural norms and values are reproduced.¹⁹ Acts of securitization by the government can reinforce or increase the level of terroristic violence.²⁰ The success of their acts of securitization are dependent on the prevalent security culture regarding terrorism²¹, which in turn can be influenced by the government itself, but also by the media. This is a clear representation of the interplay between the government and the public regarding the creation or changing of a security culture.

¹⁴ The occupation of the Indonesian Ambassadorial Residence in 1970, the trainjacking near Wijster and occupation of the Indonesian Consulate-General in 1975, the trainjacking near De Punt and hostage-taking at Bovensmilde School in 1977 and the occupation of the provincial government office in Assen in 1978.

¹⁵ De Graaf, 2021.

¹⁶ Rather surprising, as even though it could be argued that due to the situation taking place in another country it could be perceived as less threatening than the threat of Moluccan terrorism.

¹⁷ De Graaf, 2021, 345-355.

¹⁸ Froukje Demant, & Beatrice de Graaf. 2010. How to counter radical narratives: Dutch deradicalization policy in the case of Moluccan and Islamic radicals. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 33(5), 408-428.

¹⁹ Beatrice de Graaf. 2010. *Theater van angst. De strijd tegen terrorisme in Nederland, Duitsland, Italië en Amerika*. Amsterdam: Boom Publishers, p. 25.

²⁰ Beatrice de Graaf, & Bob de Graaff. 2010. Bringing politics back in: the introduction of the 'performative power' of counterterrorism. *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 3(2), 261-275.

²¹ Christopher Daase. 2015. On paradox and pathologies: A cultural approach to security. *Transformations of Security Studies*, 86-87.

Many other authors have written about the Moluccan terrorist actions, but they focused on either the governmental measures taken or the perception of the Dutch public, without using the concept of security culture²². Eikelenboom,²³ Klerks²⁴ & Janse²⁵ provide an overview of Dutch counterterrorist measures of the period between 1970 and 1978, including the creation of counterterrorist policies and counterterrorist organisations. Van Amersfoort²⁶ focuses more on the perception of and reaction to the Moluccan terrorist actions by the Dutch public and the government, including the relation between the Moluccans and the Dutch as ethnic groups. He also explains the mild reaction of the government as a result of the fear of an increase in ethnic violence between the Dutch and the Moluccans. Rasser provides an overview of causes of Moluccan violence and analyses the four main terrorist actions and the Dutch government's response to them, touching upon the 'Dutch approach' as a country-specific counterterrorist policy as well.²⁷ Lastly, Schmid, de Graaf, Bovenkerk, Bovenkerk-Teerink & Brunt [Schmid et al.] discuss the media's response and the public opinion regarding the Moluccan terrorist attack, and the relatively high level of sympathy for the Moluccan cause amongst the Dutch.²⁸ In this research, insights gained from these articles and books will be integrated and used to answer the main and subsidiary questions.

These articles and books will provide a solid foundation for this research. Mainly De Graaf's chapter will serve as a basis for this research, as it is most closely related to the topic and it deals with the notion and the evolution of security culture. Therefore, this research aims to add to the current literature by using the concept of security culture in analysing the reaction to and threat perception of the Moluccan terrorist attacks. The unique angle of this research is that it seeks a deeper understanding of the evolution of the Dutch security culture, not only describing how the security culture evolved, but also why.

In 2021, following a case brought by Moluccans against the Dutch government, the Dutch court ruled that the Dutch government was not guilty of using excessive force and therefore did not have to pay compensation to the families of the deceased. They found that the Dutch government had killed hostages during the ending of the train hijacking near De Punt in 1977 by the unlawful excessive use of force. This court case shows that the period of Moluccan terrorism and the Moluccan issue are still very much alive in Dutch society, and specifically in the Moluccan community.²⁹ This research can contribute to the creation of more insight into the actions of the government, which can add to the current social discussion regarding the guilt of the government for the death of the hijackers.

The concept of security culture is central in this research. This concept is twofold; the first part deals with what is and is not generally considered a threat. The second part is more focused on the measures taken against the perceived threat and the general view on how this threat should be handled. This is what makes security culture unique; it combines both institutions and individuals in its establishment

²² Martijn Rasser. 2005. The Dutch response to Moluccan terrorism, 1970–1978. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 28(6), 481-492. Hans van Amersfoort, 2004, 151-174. Siem Eikelenboom. 2007. Ronald Janse. 2005. Fighting terrorism in the Netherlands; a historical perspective. *Utrecht L. Rev.*, 1, 55-68. Peter Klerks. 1989. *Terreurbestrijding in Nederland, 1970-1988*. Amsterdam: Ravijn. Alex Peter Schmid, Janny de Graaf, Frank Bovenkerk, Wiesje Bovenkerk-Teerink & Lodewijk Brunt. 1982. *Zuidmoluks terrorisme, de media en de publieke opinie*. Intermediair Bibliotheek. Joseph Soeters. 2020. Odysseus Prevails over Achilles: A Warrior Model Suited to Post-9/11 Conflicts. In *How 9/11 changed our ways of war*, 89-115. Stanford University Press.

²³ Eikelenboom, 2007.

²⁴ Klerks, 1989.

²⁵ Janse, 2005.

²⁶ Van Amersfoort, 2004.

²⁷ Rasser, 2005.

²⁸ Schmid et al., 1982.

²⁹ RTL Nieuws. 2021. *Einde aan jarenlange zaak treinkaping De Punt: "De kwestie leeft nog steeds"*.

of a security culture, within a specific context, within a given time. It is a tool to historicize and contextualize such contested concepts as terrorism and security, and is therefore very helpful in this research design. However, this is also what makes it more difficult to assess what is and what is not part of a security culture, as it requires some sort of overall picture of a combination of what both the public and government perceive as a threat and requires some sort of homogeneity within this group of individuals and institutions. A security culture can therefore best be analysed through the language of both the government and the Dutch public. By looking at recurring discursive practices within these written statements on the Moluccan terrorist actions, and by looking at the measures taken against this threat, the evolvement of the Dutch security culture can be analysed. The use of this concept will provide us with a comprehensive, relatively new lens which captures not only acts of securitization by the government, but also the threat perception of the government and the public.

As analysing a security culture thus requires discourse, this research will use primary sources in combination with secondary sources. Answering the first two subsidiary questions requires the discourse of the Dutch government between 1970 and 1978. The primary sources that will be used will mainly consist of statements, policy proposals, ministers' declarations and reports of sittings of the House of Representatives and government. The most relevant sources are the ones known in Dutch as the *Handelingen van de Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal*, which consists of verbatim transcripts of the debates in the Dutch Lower House. These sources should provide an answer to what the Dutch government perceives as a threat, and why they do or do not perceive something as a threat. These sources have been digitized and can thus be found online. In combination with these reports, secondary sources, such as the ones from Eikelenboom³⁰, Klerks³¹ & Janse³² who provide an overview of the direct counterterrorist measures taken by the Dutch government, will be used.

In order to answer the third subsidiary question, the main sources that will be used will be secondary sources, as it is the intention of this research to focus mainly on the response of the Dutch government, which is easier and less time-consuming to assess than the public perception. The article by Van Amersfoort³³ and the book by Schmid et al.³⁴ from just after the events in the 1970s, can be used to assess the general reaction of the Dutch public. However, in order to find recurring discursive practices, these sources do not suffice. Therefore, newspapers from during and shortly after these terrorist actions will be used to further determine whether the Moluccan terrorist acts were perceived as a major threat by the Dutch public.³⁵ These newspapers have also been digitized and can be found in the Delpher Archive.

Analysing recurring discursive practices can be divided into three parts.³⁶ One part entails examining recurring discursive practices with regard to threat perception. This means answering questions such as: How are the Moluccan actions described? To what extent and why is it described as terrorism? To what extent are the Moluccans as a group seen as a threat? In what context are the Moluccan actions placed? By answering these questions within different documents or between different speakers, the general threat perception can be determined.

In the second part, recurring discursive practices regarding the importance attributed to Moluccan actions by the Dutch government and public with regard to what is seen as the object being threatened

³⁰ Eikelenboom, 2007.

³¹ Klerks, 1989.

³² Janse, 2005.

³³ Van Amersfoort, 2004.

³⁴ Schmid et al., 1982.

³⁵ Since many of these terrorist actions had a relatively long time span, we will mainly look at available articles from during and the ten days after the terrorist actions.

³⁶ In accordance with the definition in De Graaf, 2021, p. 333-334.

should be examined. This means answering questions such as: What importance is attributed to countering or preventing Moluccan actions? What motivation is given for attributing a certain importance to the Moluccan actions? To what extent are the Moluccan actions placed in a broader context of larger social problems? These questions are also related to the third part: the translation of these interests and threat perceptions into practices. When analysing the primary sources, questions such as: What measures are proposed and actually taken to prevent future Moluccan actions? To what extent are these measures placed in a broader context of global terrorism? What motivations are given for the proposed measures? By answering these questions and combining the three parts, a clear picture can be painted of the prevailing security culture within the Netherlands regarding terrorism.

Chapter 1 – 1970 – Occupation of the Indonesian Ambassadorial Residence

Introduction

The sixties were a turbulent period in the Netherlands. After the reconstruction after World War II, the sixties saw a trend of social change. Factions of the Dutch youth, mainly students, began to resist authority and the capitalist and segregated society of previous generations.³⁷ This manifested itself in many demonstrations, for example against the Vietnam War. These young people started to organise themselves, which resulted in more diversification in national and local politics. Their demonstrations caused unrest within Dutch society and increased polarisation.³⁸

This also led to new, often progressive parties, such as D66, winning many seats in the 1967 elections. Traditionally large parties, such as the Catholic KVP and the Dutch Labour Party (PVDa), lost a considerable number of seats.³⁹ Nevertheless, these parties still managed to win the elections, and Piet de Jong of the KVP became the prime minister of a centre-right coalition with the VVD, CHU and ARP. Despite the unstable situation in Dutch society, the coalition was quite stable and they governed without major problems.

These changes in Dutch society also affected the Moluccan community.⁴⁰ Gradually, the Dutch people, who largely supported the Moluccans in the early fifties, had lost sight of the Moluccan ideal. The Dutch government had realised that the Moluccans probably could not return to their own country, and tried to bring about some form of integration by building residential areas.⁴¹ However, the Moluccans were still largely sitting at home, unemployed, and unrest was growing. The lack of political success led some Moluccans to turn away from Moluccan president in exile Johan Manusama, who mainly sought diplomatic solutions, and to join former general Isaac Tamaëla. Tamaëla advocated action, which found a great deal of resonance among the frustrated Moluccans, especially among the Moluccan youth, who were inspired by the resistance of the Dutch youth. In 1970, a group of Moluccan youth decided to stop venting their frustrations on each other and to aim for Dutch and Indonesian targets instead.

On Monday, August 31, 1970, 33 Moluccan youths forced their way into the residence of the Indonesian ambassador to the Netherlands in Wassenaar, a suburb of The Hague, the political centre of the Netherlands.⁴² The immediate cause was the state visit of Indonesian president Suharto to the Netherlands.⁴³ The Moluccans were angry; Suharto had been involved in the execution of their president Chris Soumokil in 1966, but was nevertheless welcome in the Netherlands, whose government had – they felt – promised to help the Moluccans in their quest for their own state.

The start of the occupation of the residence of the Indonesian ambassador went wrong immediately. Head agent Hans Moolenaar, who was guarding the house at the time, was shot and died. In addition, the Indonesian ambassador managed to escape because the Moluccans did not recognise him.⁴⁴ They took thirty people hostage and announced their main demands: Suharto must enter into talks with the president of the Moluccans, Johan Manusama, and the Dutch government must force Suharto to do

³⁷ Ellemers, Joop. 1979. Nederland in de jaren zestig en zeventig. *Sociologische gids*, 26(6), 431-439.

³⁸ Ellemers, 1979, 431,439.

³⁹ Ellemers, 1979, 433.

⁴⁰ Van Amersfoort, 2004, 159-162.

⁴¹ Idem.

⁴² Eikelenboom, 2007, p. 110.

⁴³ Klerks, 1989, p. 29.

⁴⁴ Eikelenboom, 2007, p. 110-114.

so.⁴⁵ The Dutch government did not agree to the demand, and called on Johan Manusama and Reverend Samuel Metiary, a central figure in the Moluccan community, to mediate, while the military police surrounded the house.⁴⁶ Twelve hours later, the Moluccan youths laid down their weapons with the promise that talks would take place between the Dutch government and the Moluccans. Although their demand was not met, they claimed to have achieved their goal: creating attention and dialogue for the Moluccan cause.

In this chapter, this – what we now call – terrorist action will be analysed using the three subsidiary questions described in the introduction. This makes it possible to identify the prevalent security culture regarding Moluccan terrorism, which is the main aim of this chapter. First, the measures taken will be discussed. After that, the motivation for these measures and the reaction of the Dutch people will be analysed, from which a conclusion will be drawn.

Counterterrorist measures directly after the incident

The way the hostage situation was handled by the Dutch authorities clearly showed how inexperienced they were in the field of terrorism, and specifically on the issue of hostage taking. This is not surprising, since terrorism was a relatively new concept, especially in the Netherlands. Violence by the Dutch youth in the sixties was always dealt with at the local level. There was no legislation regarding the preparation of or engagement in politically violent activism because it was all relatively new and there simply had not been any reason for creating such legislation yet. This meant that, at the time of the hostage-taking, there was no official protocol or script, so Prime Minister Piet de Jong and Foreign Minister Joseph Luns (both members of the Catholic Party KVP), who had taken charge of the situation, had to improvise.⁴⁷ As there was no specific protocol for such situations and the Dutch authorities were inexperienced with hostage situations, there were insufficient means of communication and inadequate security measures.⁴⁸ Besides, because of the lack of legislation, it was unclear whether the use of force by the police was permitted, causing confusion and a lack of organisation. According to Klerks, the inexperience of the Moluccan youths was the main reason why the Dutch authorities were able to prevent further casualties.⁴⁹

Since the authorities had been able to prevent any more casualties from happening, the way the crisis situation was handled was deemed successful.⁵⁰ Since terrorism was not a known concept, and the handling of the situation was thus seen as sufficient, the measures taken after 'Wassenaar' were rather limited in comparison to later similar situations. However, some measures were taken. For example, during Suharto's state visit, all Moluccans were barred from The Hague, which was seen as discriminatory by many Moluccans. On October 15th 1970, almost two months after the hostage-taking in Wassenaar, the Moluccan residential camp IJsseloord was invaded by some 1,000 heavily armed soldiers and policemen, supported by tanks and helicopters.⁵¹ The aim was to arrest accomplices and search the camp for weapons. In order to gain more insight into Moluccan crime, the 'South Moluccans Information Centre' was also set up on December 2nd 1970. The aim of this information centre was to collect data on Moluccan criminal activities and Moluccan youth.⁵²

⁴⁵ HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4356.

⁴⁶ Eikelenboom, 2007, p. 115.

⁴⁷ Klerks, 1989, p. 29-31.

⁴⁸ Eikelenboom, 2007, p. 115-116.

⁴⁹ Klerks, 1989, p. 30.

⁵⁰ HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4364.

⁵¹ Rasser, 2005, p. 484. Klerks, 1989, p. 43-45.

⁵² Eikelenboom, 2007, p. 118.

These were the only measures taken. The perpetrators received only mild prison sentences, varying between a few months and three years.⁵³ These low sentences were partly due to the lack of legislation on hostage-taking situations with a political purpose. The Dutch government, however, focused on combating socio-economic problems among Moluccan youth, such as high unemployment, drug use, low education levels and poor integration into Dutch society.⁵⁴ The ideal of the Moluccans, their own state, was not considered feasible. The Dutch intelligence service (Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst [BVD]) did start focusing more on the Moluccan community, but was dependent on intelligence from local police forces and there was no clear structure with regard to the gathering of this intelligence.

Threat perception and interest assessment after 'Wassenaar' in 1970

This raises the question of why the Dutch government did not see it as a necessity to create legislation regarding politically motivated violence or mark the Moluccans as a potentially dangerous group. There is, however, no unequivocal answer to this. It is therefore important to analyse what the authorities see as the cause of the incident. From the parliamentary documents, three clear causes emerge.

The first and most prominent cause is the failing policy of the Dutch government since the independence of Indonesia and the repatriation of the Moluccan population.⁵⁵ Although not a single parliamentarian approved of the actions of the Moluccan youth, almost all of them stated that the Dutch government was also partly to blame.⁵⁶ By putting the Moluccans in camps and making false promises regarding the independence of the Moluccan state, the Netherlands had manoeuvred the Moluccans into an untenable position. Parliamentarian Piet Jongeling (GPV) says the following about this in a statement that exemplifies the prevailing sentiment in the House of Representatives:

'I am not condoning anything, to either side. The South Moluccans have acted in a way that cannot be defended. [...] The Dutch Government has acted wrongly for 20 years; [...] I would like it if rapprochement were possible. But this is not possible at a time when injustice is piled up sky-high.'⁵⁷

The second cause that emerges from the debate is the Dutch government's lack of anticipation of Suharto's visit and its consequent failure to secure the residence of the Indonesian ambassador. According to the opposition, the unrest caused by Suharto's visit was predictable, and the posting of only one policeman at the ambassador's residence was insufficient.⁵⁸ Within the Lower House, this is also placed in the context of increasing violence towards the police. The Dutch government is said to have supported its own police too little in the years before, causing staff shortages and 'moral undermining'.⁵⁹

⁵³ Van Amersfoort, 2004, p. 163.

⁵⁴ Eikelenboom, 2007, p. 118.

⁵⁵ HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4355-4376.

⁵⁶ For example Mr. Jongeling, Mr. Van Mierlo, Mr. Den Uyl & Mr. Goedhart in HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4355-4376.

⁵⁷ Mr Jongeling, in HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4364.

⁵⁸ For example Mr. Wiebenga, Mr. Den Uyl & Mr. Biesheuvel ask questions about whether the level of security was enough, in HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4355-4376.

⁵⁹ For example Mr. Goedhart: 'The police, already in great difficulty because they are understaffed almost everywhere, is threatened to be morally undermined', in HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4362. Also, Hubert Kronenburg: 'Tragic as yesterday's events are, they may have two good consequences. The first is that the issue of the South Moluccans is given the attention it deserves, at least in relative terms, as it has lived in our country for 20 years. The second is that the government will finally and possibly definitively reflect on its attitude to maintaining authority.' In HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4369.

The third cause, which is linked to the second, is the increasing illegal possession of weapons. The Ministers are asked many questions about how the young Moluccans got hold of so many weapons, and how it is possible that the BVD knew nothing about this.⁶⁰ One of the few direct measures that were taken, the invasion of camp IJsseloord, was explained as action against illegal possession of weapons among the Moluccans.⁶¹ The Moluccans had so many weapons because they had their own security forces and many former soldiers had taken their service weapons with them to the Netherlands. Since 1936, it was forbidden in the Netherlands to set up own units to maintain order and peace, but the Moluccans were exempt from certain laws because they were only meant to stay in the Netherlands temporarily and did not have Dutch citizenship. Because they lived in such isolation, they often had their own rules and lived within their own small 'state'.

Not the possibility of new terrorist attacks by 'young, enthusiastic Moluccans' – because that is how they were described⁶² – was the basis for the raid on the camp, but the possession of illegal weapons. This is illustrative of how new terrorist violence was for the Dutch government. Before this, the Dutch authorities had not encountered what we now call terrorism since the Second World War. Therefore, it was more logical for the Dutch government to put the Moluccan actions in the framework of the illegal possession of weapons and the youth violence of the sixties than to create legislation regarding politically motivated activism.

It is also striking that there was hardly any criticism in the Lower House on the actions of Prime Minister De Jong and Minister Luns. According to parliamentarians, the ministers 'acted wisely and effectively in extremely difficult and precarious circumstances'.⁶³ In hindsight, however, both ministers took many risks, and the situation was mainly saved by the inexperience of the hostage takers.⁶⁴ Perhaps the lack of criticism and the prevention of further casualties were reasons for not establishing protocols immediately after the incident.

The phenomenon of terrorism was not very well known in Europe at this time. The fact that the word terrorism is hardly used in government discourse is therefore not entirely surprising. In almost no way was the incident in Wassenaar linked to the concept of terrorism. Only one parliamentarian, Frans Goedhart, called the group of Moluccans terrorists.⁶⁵ Others stuck to 'criminals' or 'perpetrators of violence'. The hostage-taking was thus also placed in the context of increasing violence against authority.⁶⁶

Besides the inexperience of the Dutch government with the concept of terrorism, the term was also not used because the occupation in Wassenaar was seen as incidental violence. The government saw the upcoming visit of Indonesian President Suharto as an immediate cause and trigger event. Parliamentary documents show that the idea existed that, provided the socio-economic situation of the Moluccans improved, the violence would stop.⁶⁷ Although the violence was linked to the prevailing sentiment among Moluccan youth, not the entire Moluccan community was seen as a threat. This was

⁶⁰ For example Mr. Den Uyl, Mr. Goedhart & Mr. Biesheuvel ask questions about this in HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4355-4376.

⁶¹ HTK 1970-1971, November 4th 1970, p. 694-695, and HTK 1970-1971, October 15th 1970, p. 370. Also Mr. Polak in *Aanhangsel tot het Verslag van de Handelingen der Tweede Kamer*. October 7th 1970. *Vragen van de heren Boot (K.V.P.) en Van Schaik (K.V.P.) betreffende het illegale wapenbezit in Nederland*, p. 211-212.

⁶² Mr. Goedhart uses the term 'enthusiastic young Ambonese' in HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4362.

⁶³ Mr. Biesheuvel in HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4364.

⁶⁴ Klerks, 1989, p. 30.

⁶⁵ HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4362-4363.

⁶⁶ Mr. Goedhart, in HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4362: 'In recent times, countless policemen have been injured in scandalous riots. Now a young policeman, who did his duty until his last breath, has been murdered by terrorists in Wassenaar'

⁶⁷ HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4355-4376.

also due to the sympathy within the Lower House for the conflict in which the Moluccans found themselves.⁶⁸ As stated by parliamentarian Van Mierlo: 'For 20 years there has been a large group of disillusioned people in the Netherlands, some of whom dream of their own republic in the Moluccas'.⁶⁹ This sympathy was also made clear by a sentence in the court's ruling: 'There may be reason to reflect on the question whether the Dutch government, the Dutch parliament and the Dutch people's community have always been sufficiently aware of the Dutch obligations towards the people of the South Moluccas in recent years.'⁷⁰

The measures that were taken were in fact therefore aimed at preventing new Moluccan violence, since improving the socio-economic situation would reduce dissatisfaction among the Moluccans, but were not anti-terrorist. No protocols were established for future similar situations, and no anti-terrorist legislation was enacted.⁷¹ The incident in Wassenaar was seen more in the interest of the image of the Netherlands as a safe country to the international community than as a threat to the national security itself.⁷² Although some saw the Moluccan violence as a threat to public order,⁷³ it was not seen as a terrorist threat, which meant that special legislation or protocols were not deemed necessary.

Newspapers after the occupation in Wassenaar in 1970

The Moluccan action in Wassenaar not only received reactions from within Dutch politics, but also from the Dutch population, for example through newspapers. As Schmid et al. wrote in 1982: 'Publicity surrounding terrorist actions can have a catalysing effect on a society. Public opinion is polarised to such an extent that few people are capable of taking a balanced position.'⁷⁴ This polarisation was also partly visible in the Dutch newspapers after the Moluccan occupation of the residence of the Indonesian ambassador. On the one side were people who could not sympathise in any way with the Moluccans, and especially not with their methods. An example of this is someone from Leeuwarden who sent in a short opinion piece, calling the Moluccan action 'downright murder': 'If the South Moluccans want to fight for their own country they have to do that themselves, but the fact that a Dutch policeman was murdered by these people is more than scandalous.'⁷⁵ Others are mainly concerned about the damage to the image of the Netherlands.⁷⁶

⁶⁸ Mr. Van Dis in HTK 1970-1971, December 9th 1970, p. 1670-1671 and in HTK 1970-1071, October 13th 1970, p. 305. Also Mr. Franssen in HTK 1970-1971, November 4th 1970, p. 709. Also Mr. Polak calls the Moluccans a 'severely affected group' in HTK 1970-1971, November 4th 1970, p. 711. And among others Mr. Den Uyl, Mr. Van Mierlo, Mr. Biesheuvel in HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4355-4376.

⁶⁹ Mr. Van Mierlo in HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4365.

⁷⁰ Eikelenboom, 2007, p. 116-117.

⁷¹ De Graaf, 2021, 350-351.

⁷² For example Mr. Den Uyl stated that '*The brutal violence that was demonstrated yesterday, I believe, has given the image of the Netherlands as a constitutional state, which guarantees the freedom and security of its citizens and guests, a considerable blow.*' In HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4359.

⁷³ Mr. Goedhart, in HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4362, states that '*This concerns public safety, legal certainty and social order. If in the Netherlands it is possible to form armed vigilante groups without hindrance, without the government, the judiciary and the police being aware of this, then this hassle will no longer be limited to enthusiastic young Ambonese after a shorter or longer period of time, but then one must also count on the fact that others will ideas will come to arm themselves in a similar way.*'

⁷⁴ Schmid et al., 1982, p. 120.

⁷⁵ Unknown. September 1st 1970. Regelrechte moord. "*Leeuwarder courant: hoofdblad van Friesland*". Leeuwarden, p. 7.

⁷⁶ Unknown. September 1st 1970. Wassenaar (I). "*Algemeen Dagblad*". Rotterdam, p. 3.

On the other side were people who fully support the Moluccan action. These people also got enough attention in the Dutch newspapers.⁷⁷ For instance, the lawyer of the Moluccans was interviewed, who defended the actions of the Moluccan youth.⁷⁸ Also Mr. Rubys, from Leiden⁷⁹, and Mr. Polet, from Gouda⁸⁰, openly expressed their support for the Moluccans and blamed the Dutch government and its policies for the death of the police officer. Between these groups there was also a third group, which rejected the methods of the Moluccans, but sympathized with their goal and acknowledged the negative role of the Dutch government. These people argued that the Dutch government owed it to the Moluccans to put pressure on Suharto.⁸¹

What is most striking in Dutch newspapers is the lack of use of the concept of terrorism. Within two weeks of the occupation of the residence in Wassenaar, the word terrorism was mentioned in only one article. The writer stated that 'Mr Jongeling and Mr Manusama may declare a thousand times that they have warned, if they do not reject the terrorism of the Ambonese squarely and with the most decisiveness, they will never get out of trouble and will share the responsibility for further acts of terror.'⁸² Not seeing the Moluccans as a terrorist threat and the great sympathy for their cause was in line with the parliamentary documents. Although in the newspapers there were more divergent opinions in sharper terms, the consensus was that the end did not justify the means. The shooting of the policeman and the negative role of the Dutch government were both condemned. There was no fear of possible future terrorist actions, so there was also no fear of the Moluccans as a group.

Policy changes after 1972

This attitude changed in 1972, after Palestinian terrorists took Israelis hostage and killed them in a rescue operation at the Munich Olympic Games.⁸³ In the Netherlands, the *Gijzelingscircularie* (Hostage Management Circular) was drawn up, a document that indicated who had what authority and task during a hostage taking.⁸⁴ From then on, hostage-taking was no longer dealt with by the Ministry of the Interior, but by the Ministry of Justice. Stalling and negotiating was the main motto, in order to save the lives of the hostages. The use of force was to be postponed as long as possible.⁸⁵

In addition to this document, three new anti-terrorism units were created, the so-called Special Assistance Units (Bijzondere Bijstandseenheden [BBE]).⁸⁶ In addition, teams of snipers and close combat units were trained to intervene in possible hostage situations.⁸⁷ A special department within the Central Criminal Intelligence Service (Centrale Recherche Informatiedienst [CRI]) was also set up to deal with 'special cases'.⁸⁸ One of the focus groups of these 'special cases' was the Moluccans.⁸⁹ Policymakers realised that the structure of counterterrorism had to change, and attempts were made

⁷⁷ For example, family of the Moluccan occupiers express how proud they are of their family in: Kok, H. September 3rd 1970. Wij zijn trots, zeggen vrouwen, moeders en zoons van bezetters. "*Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*". Groningen, p. 17.

⁷⁸ Mingelen, Ferry. September 15th 1970. Geen Hersenschim. "*Trouw*". Meppel, p. 3.

⁷⁹ Rubys, M. September 5th 1970. Wassenaar 4. "*Algemeen Dagblad*". Rotterdam, p. 2.

⁸⁰ Polet, G. September 5th 1970. Wassenaar 3. "*Algemeen Dagblad*". Rotterdam, p. 2.

⁸¹ Unknown. September 5th 1970. Wassenaar 6. "*Algemeen Dagblad*". Rotterdam, p. 2.

⁸² Harkema. September 9th 1970. 'Ambonnezen verspelen sympathie'. "*Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*". Groningen, p. 18.

⁸³ Eikelenboom, 2007, p. 197.

⁸⁴ Klerks, 1989, p. 30-31. Eikelenboom, 2007, p. 198.

⁸⁵ Klerks, 1989, p. 30-31.

⁸⁶ De Graaf, 2021, p. 350.

⁸⁷ Eikelenboom, 2007, p. 198-208.

⁸⁸ Klerks, 1989, p. 75-78.

⁸⁹ Eikelenboom, 2007, p. 201.

to create more national coordination. In addition, behavioural scientists were recruited to assist in possible hostage situations.⁹⁰ These measures were communicated to the Dutch House of Representatives by means of the Terror Letter in 1973, in which for the first time a form of strategy with regard to the prevention of and acting during terrorist actions was drawn up.⁹¹ In this letter, Prime Minister Barend Biesheuvel stated that the fight against terrorism would not be at the expense of the open character of Dutch society. No legislative changes were made and no specific anti-terrorism legislation was drafted.⁹²

Conclusion

In short, in the security culture of around 1970, there was no place for the threat of Moluccan terrorism as a threat in its own right, with accompanying measures and practices. Police actions were carried out and an information centre was set up to gain more insight into Moluccan criminal activities, but no structural changes were made. No new legislation on politically motivated violence was introduced and no protocols or anti-terrorist units were set up. Since terrorism was not a widespread phenomenon within Europe and the Netherlands, the Moluccan action was not placed within this framework by the Dutch government either. This is shown, among other things, by the lack of use of the word terrorism in government documents and in the Dutch newspapers. Terrorism was not yet part of the discourse used within Dutch society.

Instead of being placed within the framework of terrorism, it was placed within the framework of the social problems of the Moluccan community, the associated illegal possession of weapons, and the already existing increasing violence against the police from the 1960s. The authorities also thought that the violence would be incidental, provided the social problems were addressed. These measures were therefore aimed at improving Dutch internal security, but were not specifically counter-terrorist in nature. This clearly shows that the Dutch government did not consider the Moluccan community a terrorist threat or a large-scale threat to national security. In fact, within the parliament and the Dutch newspapers, the Dutch government was also held responsible. This is exemplary for how in Dutch society the link between terrorism and the Moluccan community was hardly made.

This is also evident from the fact that it was only after the hostage situation at the Munich Olympic Games in 1972 that anti-terrorist policy was developed by means of the Terror Letter, in which structural changes were made. For the first time, terrorism was seen as a threat to the security of the Dutch state, so a security culture related to terrorism developed and terrorism became part of the discourse of Dutch society. This was still not linked to the Moluccan community on a large scale, however, although there was probably no reason to do so, based on the fact that no other actions had been committed by Moluccan youths.

⁹⁰ Eikelenboom, 2007, p. 194-204.

⁹¹ De Graaf, 2021, p. 350-351.

⁹² Idem.

Chapter 2 – 1975 – Train jacking near Wijster and occupation of the Indonesian Consulate-General

Introduction

In the period between 1971 and 1975, economic growth in the Netherlands stagnated and the political landscape was also less stable than before.⁹³ At the elections in 1971, mainly progressive and leftist parties, such as the PVDA and D66, won. The confessional parties lost seats, but did join the government consisting of the CHU, KVP, ARP, VVD and the new party DS'70. Barend Biesheuvel became Prime Minister on behalf of the KVP. However, disagreements over economic policy led to the fall of this government within a year. In the 1972 elections, the PVDA again became the largest party and Joop den Uyl became the Prime Minister of the progressive coalition between the PVDA, KVP, ARP, PPR (Political Party Radicals) and D66.⁹⁴

In the same period, Europe was increasingly confronted with terrorism.⁹⁵ This terrorism coincided with David Rapoport's third wave of terrorism, which he calls 'New Left' terrorism.⁹⁶ Groups such as the Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF) in Germany, but also the Red Youth in the Netherlands, became increasingly active and carried out attacks to counter capitalism and fascism. In addition, the Palestinians were also active in Europe. In addition to the drastic hostage-taking during the 1972 Olympic Games, they also carried out a hostage-taking action in a prison in Scheveningen in 1974. This meant that for the first time the Special Assistance Units (BBE), set up after the Terror Letter in 1973, had to intervene, which they did successfully and without casualties.⁹⁷

There was also unrest within the Moluccan community. Their situation had hardly changed since 1970 and frustrations had risen further, especially among the youth, whose groups were becoming increasingly radicalised.⁹⁸ They were particularly inspired by Marxist independence fighters like Che Guevara and the Black Panthers Party.⁹⁹ In 1974, reports of torture and human rights abuses by Indonesians in the Moluccas surfaced.¹⁰⁰ This caused more anger among the young Moluccans. At the beginning of 1975 there was an attempt to take Queen Juliana hostage, but this failed because the plan was discovered prematurely. Those who tried to carry out the plan received prison sentences ranging from a few months to five years.¹⁰¹ According to the Moluccan community, they were sentenced unjustly, as they had not done anything yet. What caused even more anger within the Moluccan community was the independence of Suriname in November 1975. In her speech, Queen Juliana talked about the right to self-determination but did not mention the Moluccas once. At the 25th anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of the South Moluccas, Harry van Doorn, the Minister of Social Work and Minorities, called the existence of the Republic an illusion.¹⁰² All these accumulated frustrations manifested themselves in December 1975.

⁹³ Ellemers, 1979, 439-441.

⁹⁴ Thurlings, Jan. 1979. De Ontzuiling in Nederland, in het bijzonder van het Nederlands katholicisme. *Sociologische Gids*, 26(6), 470-473.

⁹⁵ Eikelenboom, 2007, 141-194.

⁹⁶ Rasler, Karen, & Thompson, William R. 2009. Looking for waves of terrorism. *Terrorism and political violence*, 21(1), 30-32.

⁹⁷ Klerks, 1989, 33-34.

⁹⁸ Van Amersfoort, 2004, 163-164.

⁹⁹ Idem. Also Eikelenboom, 2007, 119.

¹⁰⁰ Schmid et al., 1982, 40.

¹⁰¹ Eikelenboom, 2007, 119-124.

¹⁰² Eikelenboom, 2007, 124-125.

On 2 December 1975, seven South Moluccan youths hijacked the train between Groningen and Zwolle in the middle of a meadow near Wijster, taking twenty-three people hostage.¹⁰³ They demanded that the Dutch government raise the Moluccan issue with the United Nations and that talks be organised between representatives of the Moluccan Republic and Indonesia, with the Netherlands and the UN also taking part in the talks.¹⁰⁴ In addition, there was to be a plane ready and waiting at Schiphol Airport, where hostages were to be exchanged for Moluccan prisoners, after which they were to be given free passage and flown to an unknown place.¹⁰⁵

Not much later, the Cabinet in The Hague was informed. Since protocols had been in place since 1973, there was less improvisation this time. The Minister of Justice, Dries van Agt, was made responsible in accordance with the 'Gijzelingscirculaire' drawn up in 1973. A crisis centre was set up in The Hague and a command centre in Beilen, near the site of the train hijacking.¹⁰⁶ In addition, behavioural scientists and the special combat units (BBE), who surrounded the train, were called in. The authorities stuck to the agreed strategy of delay, even when there were fatalities among the hostages.¹⁰⁷

On December 4th 1975, two days after the start of the train hijacking, another group of Moluccan youths decided to occupy the Indonesian consulate in Amsterdam in support of the train hijackers.¹⁰⁸ This also resulted in one death when an employee jumped out of the window in panic and later died of his injuries. They took thirty-six people hostage and made the same demands as the train hijackers. A new crisis centre was set up in Amsterdam, with psychiatrist Dick Mulder playing an important role in the negotiations.¹⁰⁹ Minister of Justice Dries van Agt, Prime Minister Joop den Uyl and National Terrorism Officer Rolph Gonsalves were also closely involved in both situations.¹¹⁰

The authorities continued to use delaying tactics and on December 14th the Moluccans on the train decided to surrender after the authorities had promised a meeting between the Moluccans and the Dutch government.¹¹¹ No further demands were met. Some hijackers also stated that they surrendered for fear of reprisals from Indonesia on their families in the Moluccas.¹¹² The hostage-taking in the Indonesian consulate continued for five more days, but was also ended without further casualties.

In this chapter, the train hijacking near Wijster and the occupation of the Indonesia consulate in Amsterdam will be analysed using the three subsidiary questions mentioned in the introduction. This way, the security culture regarding Moluccan terrorism during and after the terrorist action can be assessed, which is the main goal of this chapter. The same structure as in the first chapter will be used.

¹⁰³ Klerks, 1989, 34-36.

¹⁰⁴ Schmid et al., 1982, 42-43.

¹⁰⁵ Idem.

¹⁰⁶ Klerks, 1989, 34-36.

¹⁰⁷ Klerks, 1989, 34-36.

¹⁰⁸ Schmid et al., 1982, 42-43.

¹⁰⁹ Klerks, 1989, 34-36.

¹¹⁰ Eikelenboom, 2007, 126-127.

¹¹¹ Eikelenboom, 2007, 125-129.

¹¹² Schmid et al., 1982, 46.

Counterterrorist measures after the Moluccan actions in 1975

Despite the growing unrest in the months before, the Dutch authorities were taken completely by surprise by the Moluccan train hijacking and did not decide to increase security at other relevant buildings during the hijacking.¹¹³ A state of heightened vigilance was not declared either.¹¹⁴ The Dutch Intelligence Agency (BVD) had not been able to prevent the actions from happening, despite ongoing unrest among the Moluccan community.¹¹⁵ Although the BVD's shortcoming was acknowledged, no extra measures were taken with regard to the BVD. According to Rasser, the government fell short in the first hours of the train hijacking; the start-up was very slow, which probably resulted in extra casualties.¹¹⁶ This was underemphasised in the subsequent evaluation of the operation. More attention was paid to the high costs and the long duration of the crisis situation and how this could be improved for a possible next time.¹¹⁷

Within the BVD and the national counterterrorism assistance team (LBT), however, there was a greater emphasis on Moluccan terrorism than before, as before that there had also been a major focus on extreme left-wing and Palestinian terrorism.¹¹⁸ Within certain police forces in large cities, special 'Moluccan contingents' were set up. These forces received twenty extra men, specifically meant for the management of the Moluccan problem.¹¹⁹ The perpetrators of the actions received prison sentences varying from seven years (occupiers of the consulate in Amsterdam) to fourteen years (train hijackers).¹²⁰ Public prosecutor Jan Jacobus Abspoel argued in his statement that he felt he could not properly qualify the acts committed, because there was no specific legislation for politically motivated violence. He therefore argued for an amendment to the Criminal Code.¹²¹ However, his appeal did not meet with a response, because, according to Janse, the authorities were satisfied with the final sentences and were afraid that such laws might have unpleasant consequences for radical politicians, since at that time there was no official definition of terrorism or politically motivated violence either.¹²²

The promised talks between Moluccan representatives and the Dutch government did take place. It was agreed that two committees would be set up. Firstly, the *Inspraakorgaan Welzijn Molukkers* (Participation Body for the Welfare of Moluccans) was established, which had to ensure better living conditions and serve as a contact body between the Moluccan community and the government.¹²³ Secondly, what became known as the Committee Köbben-Mantouw was established, named after the two chairmen representing both parties.¹²⁴ This committee was given the task of promoting coherence between the Moluccan ideal and the rule of law. In concrete terms this meant mediating between the Dutch government and the Moluccan community, investigating the feasibility of the Moluccan ideal and investigating the possible negligence of the Dutch government in supporting the Moluccan community in their pursuit of an own state.¹²⁵

¹¹³ Rasser, 2005, 485-486.

¹¹⁴ Klerks, 1989, 35. Also De Graaf, 2021, 351.

¹¹⁵ De Graaf, 2021, 351.

¹¹⁶ Rasser, 2005, 485-486.

¹¹⁷ Idem.

¹¹⁸ Eikelenboom, 2007, 129-132.

¹¹⁹ Klerks, 1989, 36.

¹²⁰ Janse, 2005, 61-62.

¹²¹ Janse, 2005, 64.

¹²² Idem.

¹²³ Eikelenboom, 2007, 129.

¹²⁴ Eikelenboom, 2007, 130. Also Janse, 2005, 63. Named after anthropologist André Köbben, who took part on behalf of the Dutch government, and Louis Christiaan Mantouw, confidant of Johan Manusama, who took part on behalf of the Moluccan community.

¹²⁵ Janse, 2005, 63.

According to Eikelenboom, both commissions were steps in the right direction for the Moluccan community, but according to the young Moluccans the attitude of the Dutch government towards the Moluccan community had not changed fundamentally.¹²⁶ This was confirmed by the eviction of a Moluccan residential camp in Vaassen on October 14th 1976. As in the case of the residential camp IJsseloord, an enormous police force was deployed, this time of about 500 men, including tanks and machine guns.¹²⁷ This caused a new rift in the already bad relationship between the Moluccan community and the Dutch government. In addition to this eviction, the Moluccan community was forbidden to show any military or paramilitary presence through their own security forces. These forces were allowed to continue to exist, but their military competences were restricted.¹²⁸

Threat perception and interest assessment after the Moluccan actions in 1975

The first aspect that immediately stands out when analysing the parliamentary documents is the changed discourse in comparison to the occupation of the Indonesian ambassador's residence in 1970. Almost every parliamentarian called the action an act of terror and called the perpetrators terrorists, whereas in 1970 only a few people used this terminology.¹²⁹ In comparison, in the parliamentary discussion of the Moluccan actions in Wassenaar, the word 'terrorist' was only used twice. In the parliamentary discussion of the Moluccan actions in 1975 the word was used 79 times. This clearly shows that in the five years between 'Wassenaar' and the train hijacking at Wijster, the government developed a different discourse regarding violent actions with a political motive. In 1975, terrorism was no longer a new phenomenon and the government had already drawn up policy to prevent it. Other terrorist actions had brought the concept to life and created an image of what terrorism entailed. The fact that terrorism was also increasingly seen as a global phenomenon is evident from the quote by Roelof Kruisinga (CHU): 'Terror like today in our country is a global phenomenon. It is, I think, also an offshoot of the increased aggression and violence.'¹³⁰

After the Moluccan actions in 1975, however, a discussion started in the Dutch Lower House about the definition of terrorism.¹³¹ This is interesting, because it indicates that, even though anti-terrorist policy was drawn up, the Dutch government did not use a generally accepted definition of terrorism. In the discussion it becomes clear, among other things, how complicated defining terrorism is.¹³²

The BVD was also criticised in the Lower House, since many parties thought it was strange that despite the growing unrest and the long period of preparation for the train hijacking, no information had reached the BVD.¹³³ Member of Parliament Theo van Schaik (KVP), among others, called this strange and asked questions.¹³⁴ In its answer to these and other questions, however, the government brushed

¹²⁶Eikelenboom, 2007, 131.

¹²⁷Klerks, 1989, 45.

¹²⁸Kamerstuk Verslag. January 17th 1976. *Verslag van de bespreking gehouden op zaterdag 17 januari 1976 tussen een delegatie uit het kabinet met de heer Ir. Manusama en een vijftal andere vertegenwoordigers van de in Nederland woonachtige Zuidmolukkers*, 8.

¹²⁹HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, 2807-2862. Kamerstuk Verslag. January 15th 1976. *Gebeurtenissen rond de treinkaping te Beilen en de overval op het Indonesisch consulaat-generaal te Amsterdam*, 1-38.

¹³⁰Roelof Kruisinga (CHU) in HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, 2811.

¹³¹HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, 2853-2855.

¹³²Member of parliament Willem Drees Jr. (DS'70) states the following in HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, 2853, when referring to the definition used in the official police bulletin: "Behaviour in which the perpetrator expects to cause harm to others and with which he hopes to achieve his own ends". Mr President! It covers certain election propaganda, but it also covers purse snatching, burglary and so on. Any form of crime is covered, including, for example, tax fraud.'

¹³³For example Mr van Schaik (KVP) and Mr Abma (SGP) in HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, 2807-2862.

¹³⁴HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, 2809.

the criticism aside.¹³⁵ According to them the intelligence services were not to blame because the terrorist action had been prepared in a small circle among people who did not have high functions within the Moluccan community.¹³⁶ In addition, according to Minister of Justice Dries van Agt (KVP), it was also like looking for a needle in a haystack.¹³⁷ Even more striking was the government's reaction to the question whether the BVD should be given more powers, in order to prevent future terrorist actions. The following was written about this:

'This would require giving the police and the intelligence and security services powers that are incompatible with the foundations of our legal system.'¹³⁸

In short, the government stated that it did not want to infringe on the freedoms of the population in order to prevent terrorist attacks, for that would go against the democratic and free values of Dutch society. Member of parliament Bas de Gaay Fortman (PPR) agreed with this and drew the comparison with a dictatorship.¹³⁹ Other politicians, however, were critical of these statements and argued that there is a large grey area between an open democracy and a police state.¹⁴⁰ Despite these comments, the government stuck to its point of view not to give the BVD extra powers. This is in accordance with what Beatrice de Graaf writes in her chapter about terrorism in the Netherlands: there was more fear of state terrorism than of terrorism by for instance the Moluccans.¹⁴¹

Another big difference in the discourse of the government between 1970 and 1975 is that in 1975, hardly any co-responsibility for the terrorist attack was placed on the Dutch government. In 1970 the Moluccan occupation of the residence of the Indonesian ambassador was seen as a sort of logical consequence of the Dutch policy towards the Moluccan community. In the parliamentary documents concerning the train hijacking and the occupation of the Indonesian consulate, however, there is much less criticism of this policy and less sympathy for the goal of the Moluccans. Hette Abma (SGP) is one of the few who criticised the actions of the Dutch government. He called the words of the Minister of Social Work and Minorities Henry van Doorn to call the goal of the Moluccans unrealistic and unthinkable provocative.¹⁴² But Abma did not go so far as to call the Dutch government co-responsible, which did happen in 1970. This reflects well the changed attitude of parliament towards terrorism, as it is quite a bold statement to call a government complicit in terrorism.

In order to prevent further terrorist acts, there was still a strong focus on reducing the illegal possession of weapons. As parliamentarian Theo van Schaik (KVP) put it: 'No hijacking and no hostage-taking or terrorist action is possible unless the perpetrators have weapons.'¹⁴³ The government therefore stated that it would develop measures to combat this illegal possession of weapons, by cooperating with West Germany and Belgium.¹⁴⁴ So again, as with 'Wassenaar' in 1970, the Moluccan actions are placed within the framework of the illegal possession of weapons. Again, the illegal possession of weapons was indicated as the main reason for the major police intervention during the

¹³⁵ Kamerstuk Verslag Mondeling Overleg. February 9th 1976. *Gebeurtenissen rond de treinkaping te Beilen en de overval op het Indonesische consulaat-generaal te Amsterdam (2 december -19 december 1975)*, 2.

¹³⁶ Idem.

¹³⁷ Minister of Justice Dries van Agt (KVP) in HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, 2841.

¹³⁸ Kamerstuk Verslag. January 15th 1976. *Gebeurtenissen rond de treinkaping te Beilen en de overval op het Indonesisch consulaat-generaal te Amsterdam*, 37.

¹³⁹ In HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, 2823, he states that 'The dictatorship itself commits terror and provokes counter-terror.'

¹⁴⁰ For example Mr Abma (SGP) states 'Between excessive tolerance and a police state, there is a very wide margin' in HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, 2814.

¹⁴¹ De Graaf, 2021, 351.

¹⁴² HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, 2814.

¹⁴³ Theo van Schaik in HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, 2810.

¹⁴⁴ Minister of Justice Dries van Agt (KVP) in HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, 2844-2845.

clearing of a Moluccan residential camp, this time in Vaassen in October 1976.¹⁴⁵ The difference with the situation in 1970, however, was that this time the actions were carried out in order to prevent future terrorism, thus also placing it within the framework of terrorism. In 1970 this was not the case, because it had not been designated as terrorism. The measure specifically aimed at the Moluccan community in order to restrict their security forces, was also instituted to combat illegal possession of weapons and was met with great approval in the Lower House.¹⁴⁶ The fact that this measure was specifically aimed at the Moluccan community shows that the government considered the possession of firearms among the Moluccans to be a threat.

The talks that took place between representatives of the Moluccan community and the Dutch government, and the committees that were set up as a result of those talks, show that the government tried new ways of tackling the Moluccan problem and improving the poor relations. In the talks, however, the Dutch government also let it be known that it was not prepared to cooperate with the political ideal of the Moluccans, but rather with the social problems.¹⁴⁷ Representative of the Moluccans Johan Manusama therefore argued that the government should also regard the Moluccan issue as a political one, and not just as a social one.¹⁴⁸ However, the government did not comply to this, as they found it difficult to justify this on the international stage.

According to the Dutch government, the prevention of future terrorism and the drafting of policy were important to safeguard the Dutch legal order and the free character of Dutch society.¹⁴⁹ The government therefore found itself in a difficult dilemma. On the one hand, the government did not want to comply with the demands of terrorists, because that would open the doors to future terrorist actions. At the same time, however, the safety of the hostages had to be pursued as far as possible. The government stated that in the future the rule of law, should it come to that, had to be put before the lives of the hostages.¹⁵⁰

The fact that anti-terrorist policies were so openly debated shows that the government took the terrorist threat much more seriously than in 1970. Abroad, but also at home, they had now seen what terrorist attacks could do to a society. The government's policy was therefore evaluated quite extensively. In general, the members of parliament were quite positive about the actions of the authorities.¹⁵¹ The main criticism came from the large number of ministers involved in the crisis situation, which brought the administration of other matters to a standstill.

¹⁴⁵ Kamerstuk Verslag Mondeling Overleg. November 9th 1976. *Verslag van een mondeling overleg over de gebeurtenissen in het Molukse woonoord Vaassen*, 1-6.

¹⁴⁶ Kamerstuk Verslag. January 17th 1976. *Verslag van de bespreking gehouden op zaterdag 17 januari 1976 tussen een delegatie uit het kabinet met de heer Ir. Manusama en een vijftal andere vertegenwoordigers van de in Nederland woonachtige Zuidmolukkers*, 8. Support from for example Theo van Schaik (KVP) and Maarten Schakel (ARP) in HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, 2808 & 2819.

¹⁴⁷ Kamerstuk Verslag. January 17th 1976. *Verslag van de bespreking gehouden op zaterdag 17 januari 1976 tussen een delegatie uit het kabinet met de heer Ir. Manusama en een vijftal andere vertegenwoordigers van de in Nederland woonachtige Zuidmolukkers*, 3-7.

¹⁴⁸ Kamerstuk Verslag. January 17th 1976. *Verslag van de bespreking gehouden op zaterdag 17 januari 1976 tussen een delegatie uit het kabinet met de heer Ir. Manusama en een vijftal andere vertegenwoordigers van de in Nederland woonachtige Zuidmolukkers*, 2-3.

¹⁴⁹ HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, 2838-2846.

¹⁵⁰ Idem.

¹⁵¹ Maarten Schakel (ARP), for example, said in HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, 2819: 'The government deserves appreciation. It was flexible but not indulgent. It was patient and careful, and it was not susceptible to the blackmailing effect of violence.'

Newspapers and public opinion during and after the Moluccan terrorist actions in 1975

The media played a crucial role during the Moluccan actions in December 1975. Because of the long duration of the action, the media took on the role of communicator between the hostage-takers and the authorities.¹⁵² More important, however, was the role they played in achieving perhaps the biggest goal of the Moluccans: publicity. The train hijacking and the occupation of the Indonesian consulate in Amsterdam were a cry for attention for their political ideal and the years of neglect of the Moluccan community by the Dutch government. This cry for attention succeeded, because all newspapers were filled with news, background articles about the Moluccans and interviews with both Moluccans and politicians, just like in 1970. This time, however, because of the duration and intensity of the actions, there was an even greater amount of publicity than in 1970.¹⁵³

In a study by the Netherlands Institute for Public Opinion and Market Research (NIPO), shortly after the train hijacking and occupation of the consulate in Amsterdam, the question was asked whether people should have sympathy for the Moluccans who took the hostages. This survey revealed a reasonably balanced picture: 41 percent of those questioned said they thought they should show understanding, 44 percent said they did not and 15 percent had no opinion.¹⁵⁴

This division is particularly interesting, as it indicates that there were different degrees of sympathy within Dutch society. This division was also reflected in letters sent to newspapers and in the letters Prime Minister Joop den Uyl and Johan Manusama received during and after the actions.¹⁵⁵ Although these letters were not representative of Dutch society, quotes from these letters will be used to illustrate a representative argument. On the one hand there were people who disapproved of the means and goals of the Moluccan terrorists.¹⁵⁶ These people often had no understanding whatsoever for the Moluccan actions. An example of this is a quote from a letter to Manusama: 'We bear no responsibility for what our ancestors did, any more than these young people can claim that their parents were brave KNIL soldiers.'¹⁵⁷ Sometimes this turned into racist or violent statements¹⁵⁸, and in practice many Moluccans were also confronted with racism.¹⁵⁹ This indicates that part of the Dutch population held the entire Moluccan community responsible for the hijackers' actions.

On the other side was a group that generally disapproved the means used by the Moluccan youth, but sympathised with the cause. An example of this is a letter sent in by one P. Koopenberg: 'As an old friend of the Ambonese cause, I hope that the Moluccans will come to an understanding. They certainly won't achieve anything this way.'¹⁶⁰ Here, too, some were more extreme than others and some pointed to the Dutch government or the Dutch people as being partly to blame.¹⁶¹

¹⁵² Schmid et al., 1982, 145.

¹⁵³ Idem.

¹⁵⁴ Schmid et al., 1982, 61.

¹⁵⁵ Schmid et al., 1982, 183.

¹⁵⁶ For example, an Anti-Terrorist Action Committee is created by civilians who are plea for more legislation and more focus on illegal arms possession, via: Unknown. December 5th 1975. Rotterdams comité Anti-terroristenwet: veel bijval ontvangen. *NRC Handelsblad*.

¹⁵⁷ Schmid et al., 1982, 156.

¹⁵⁸ Many examples in Schmid et al., 1982, 154-174. For example: 'The Ambonese have no concept of humanity at all', on p. 173.

¹⁵⁹ Schmid et al., 1982, 145.

¹⁶⁰ Koopenberg, P. December 22nd 1975. Onbegrip. *Leeuwarder courant: hoofdblad van Friesland*. Leeuwarden, p. 5.

¹⁶¹ Unknown, in Schmid et al., 1982, 167: 'As a people and successive governments, we have failed in the cause of the South Moluccans.'

What is particularly interesting, besides this division in the Dutch newspapers, is how the discourse had now fundamentally changed. Just as within the parliamentary documents, a different terminology had been developed with regard to the Moluccan actions. They were not called violent incidents anymore, but terrorist actions.¹⁶² This is also reflected in the quantitative analysis of newspaper articles in 1970-1971 and 1975-1976. In 1970 and 1971, the word terrorism was mentioned in 249 and 359 newspaper articles respectively, while in 1975 and 1976 terrorism was mentioned in 823 and 856 newspaper articles respectively.¹⁶³ This changed discourse indicates that the Moluccan actions and the Moluccan community were directly linked to the concept of terrorism. Moluccan terrorism was also placed in an international context. Background articles appeared on the causes and history of terrorism, in which the Palestinians, the Basques and the RAF were also involved.¹⁶⁴ Some even saw terrorism as the new form of warfare.¹⁶⁵ This shows that the Dutch population was very engaged with the concept of terrorism.

So in general, compared to 1970, the tone towards the Dutch government softened and the tone towards the Moluccan actions hardened. This can be explained in particular by the intensity and length of the terrorist actions, as well as the fact that it was already the second time that the Moluccans carried out such actions. The international context also seems to have played a role; because the Moluccan actions were linked to international terrorism, the actions were placed in the framework of terrorism instead of 'just' violence.

Conclusion

Before the Moluccan actions in 1975, there was already some development of a security culture with regard to terrorism. In the period between 1972 and 1975, terrorism and its consequences and prevention were increasingly discussed by the Dutch authorities. Protocols had been set up for hostage situations and special anti-terrorist units had been created. These measures, unlike those in 1970, were specifically anti-terrorist. However, this security culture developed not in response to Moluccan terrorism, but to the hostage situation in Munich in 1972. The measures were therefore not specifically aimed at the Moluccan community. The Moluccan community was only considered as a focus group by the Central Criminal Intelligence Service (CRI). Although Moluccan terrorism was thus not the cause, a security culture developed in the Netherlands from 1972 onwards, in which terrorism was increasingly considered a threat to national security. A new discourse on terrorism could develop under the influence of international terrorism. As a result, the difference in security culture between 1970 and 1975 was considerable.

From 1975, the security culture developed further due to the train hijacking near Wijster and the occupation of the Indonesian consulate in Amsterdam. The BVD started to focus more on the Moluccans as a group, which indicates that they were seen as a threat to national security more than before. There was also more attention for the social problems of the Moluccan community by means of two commissions and ways to reduce the illegal possession of weapons were looked into again. This shows that the Moluccan actions were still placed within the framework of illegal weapons possession and social problems. However, the difference is that this was now also linked to the concept of terrorism, and that tackling illegal weapons possession and the social issue were seen as anti-terrorist measures.

¹⁶² For example: Dijkers, Irene. December 11th 1975. Geplukt en Geplozen. *De Telegraaf*.

¹⁶³ A quantitative analysis has been done in the Delpher archive, using the word 'terrorism'. Numbers checked for the last time on June 8th 2022.

¹⁶⁴ Unknown. December 13th 1975. Achtergronden van het terrorisme. *Nederlands Dagblad*.

¹⁶⁵ Unknown. December 22nd 1975. Terreur. *Leeuwarder courant: hoofdblad van Friesland*.

These measures were considered necessary to protect national security and the rule of law. However, Moluccan terrorism was not yet seen as a major threat to the extent that it must be at the expense of the freedoms and open character of Dutch society. No extra powers were given to the BVD, no definition of terrorism was adopted and no extra legislation was introduced, especially because there was a fear of a police state. This indicates, therefore, that the security culture with regard to Moluccan terrorism had developed to such an extent that measures were considered necessary, but that not everything was done yet to prevent future Moluccan terrorist actions.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ This tendency was well expressed by parliamentarian de Gaay Fortman (PPR) in HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, 2823, who spoke of the 'mental arming against terror', which he says is necessary because there are limits to what an open democracy can do against terrorism.

Chapter 3 – 1977 & 1978 – Train hijacking near De Punt, hostage-taking at primary school in Bovensmilde and the occupation of the provincial government office in Assen

Introduction

On the political front, not much changed between the December 1975 and May 1977 train hijackings. The government led by Joop den Uyl remained in place until March 1977. Two months before elections were due to take place, as a result of internal disagreements about land expropriation, the government tendered its resignation but decided to continue as a caretaker government until the elections. Two days before the elections, the next train hijack took place on 23 May 1977. Nonetheless, the elections went ahead and were won by Joop den Uyl (Labour). However, the government was formed by the newly formed CDA (Christian party formed from the KVP, ARP & CHU) and the VVD and former Minister of Justice Dries van Agt became Prime Minister on behalf of the CDA.

Something that was already present in 1975, but which developed further in the years between 1975 and 1977, was international terrorism. Due to attacks by, in particular, the ideologically motivated Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF), the Italian Red Brigade and the Japanese Red Army, international terrorism became an increasingly well-known phenomenon. Separatist movements, such as the IRA and ETA, and attacks in the Third World also made terrorism a topic on the UN agenda.¹⁶⁷ The Moluccan actions in 1975, combined with growing international terrorism, thus ensured that terrorism remained an important theme in the Netherlands in the period between 1975 and 1977.

Within the Moluccan community, the discussions between the Dutch government and Moluccan representatives and the establishment of the Köbben-Mantouw Committee had not been able to reduce the prevailing frustration.¹⁶⁸ The Dutch government was only prepared to help with the social problems, not with the realisation of the Moluccan ideal.¹⁶⁹ For many Moluccans, nothing had changed compared to the situation before 1975. Their frustrations and the feeling of not being taken seriously by the Dutch government remained. This manifested itself in another train hijacking in May 1977.

On 23 May 1977, nine young Moluccans hijacked another train in the north of the Netherlands, this time near De Punt, taking 54 people hostage.¹⁷⁰ At the same time, four other Moluccans invaded a primary school in the village of Bovensmilde, taking 105 pupils and five teachers hostage. A big difference with 1975 is that this time the simultaneity of these actions was coordinated.¹⁷¹ They had sent their demands in advance to the most important Dutch news broadcasters and the Ministry of Justice: All Moluccans imprisoned for political reasons had to be released and all support for Suharto's regime by the Dutch government had to be ceased. In addition, they demanded a free exit via Schiphol, taking some hostages with them.¹⁷²

A policy centre was set up almost immediately in Assen, close to the location of the train hijacking and the school occupation. A crisis centre was also set up in The Hague, headed by Minister of Justice Van

¹⁶⁷ Blumenau, Bernhard. 2014. The other battleground of the Cold War: The UN and the struggle against international terrorism in the 1970s. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 16(1), 63-66.

¹⁶⁸ Eikelenboom, 2007, 131.

¹⁶⁹ Kamerstuk Verslag. January 17th 1976. *Verslag van de bespreking gehouden op zaterdag 17 januari 1976 tussen een delegatie uit het kabinet met de heer Ir. Manusama en een vijftal andere vertegenwoordigers van de in Nederland woonachtige Zuidmolukkers*. p. 1-10.

¹⁷⁰ Klerks, 1989, 36.

¹⁷¹ Eikelenboom, 2007, 131-132.

¹⁷² Idem.

Agt.¹⁷³ Again, there was a great deal of support from behavioural specialists. Psychiatrist Dick Mulder was in charge of negotiations at the primary school in Bovensmilde, and behavioural scientists Gert Schmidt and Henk Havinga negotiated with the Moluccans on the train.¹⁷⁴ Within the crisis team, however, there was some disagreement. Minister of Justice Van Agt was in favour of a hard, possibly violent approach and a quick end to the situation. Prime Minister Den Uyl, on the other hand, wanted to use the same tactics as in 1975 with a focus on de-escalation and delay.¹⁷⁵ After five days, all children were eventually released due to a virus infection. The teachers, however, remained hostage.

Mediators were unable to force a breakthrough in the subsequent period and an impasse was reached. After yet another disagreement within the crisis team, with Van Agt and De Gaay Fortman in favour of military intervention and Van Doorn and Van der Stoel against, Prime Minister Den Uyl finally gave the decisive vote and it was decided to intervene on June 11th, almost three weeks after the start of the actions.¹⁷⁶ In the end six hostage takers were killed and two hostages died as a result of this action.¹⁷⁷ The remaining three hijackers and the occupiers of the school received sentences between six and nine years.

On 13 March 1978, less than a year after the Moluccan actions near De Punt and Bovensmilde, three Moluccans stormed into the provincial government building in Assen and took 69 people hostage.¹⁷⁸ The Moluccans claimed to be members of a suicide commando, and afterwards they stated that their action was meant as a suicide mission.¹⁷⁹ In contrast to previous actions, these perpetrators did not seem to have ties with Moluccan organisations.¹⁸⁰ The same demands were made as in the 1977 actions, with a further demand of \$13 million in ransom. Planner Ko de Groot was executed almost immediately. Ko de Groot's execution and the hostage-takers' tough stance meant that the crisis team, this time led by Justice Minister Job de Ruiter (CDA), quickly came to the conclusion that military intervention was needed.¹⁸¹ The next day, special military units (BBE) raided the building. After a firefight, the hostage takers were overpowered. Ultimately, two hostages died and the three perpetrators received sentences of 15 years.

In this chapter, the train hijacking near De Punt and the occupation of the primary school in Bovensmilde and the provincial government building in Assen will be analysed using the three subsidiary questions mentioned in the introduction. This way, the security culture regarding Moluccan terrorism during and after the terrorist actions can be assessed, which is the main goal of this chapter. The same structure as in the first and second chapter will be used.

¹⁷³ Prime Minister Den Uyl, Minister of the Interior De Gaay Fortman, Minister of Foreign Affairs Van der Stoel and Minister of Culture, Recreation and Social Work (CRM) Van Doorn were also regularly present at this crisis centre. Klerks, 1989, 37.

¹⁷⁴ Eikelenboom, 2007, 132-133.

¹⁷⁵ Rasser, 2005, 486.

¹⁷⁶ Eikelenboom, 2007, 134.

¹⁷⁷ Klerks, 1989, 36-37.

¹⁷⁸ Rasser, 2005, 486-487.

¹⁷⁹ Eikelenboom, 2007, 138-140.

¹⁸⁰ Klerks, 1989, 39.

¹⁸¹ Eikelenboom, 2007, 138-140.

Counterterrorist measures after the Moluccan actions in 1977 and 1978

The violent end to both hostage situations was a clear break from the delaying and endless negotiating of what is sometimes called the Dutch Approach.¹⁸² Although this approach was attempted at the beginning of the Moluccan actions in 1977, it proved not to be feasible. Following the train hijacking near Wijster in 1975, the government had decided to place the rule of law above the lives of the hostages and thus not to comply with any demands.¹⁸³ The resulting impasse and the increasingly precarious situation in the train and the primary school ultimately forced the government to intervene. In 1978, military intervention was even resorted to immediately, because of the violence of the perpetrators and therefore the extreme danger for the hostages.

After the actions in 1977, searches were again conducted in Moluccan neighbourhoods, this time in Assen and Bovensmilde. The aim of the searches was again to find and confiscate illegal weapons.¹⁸⁴ Due to poor preparations and a shortage of personnel, these actions became failures. There was also a renewed focus on the role of the Moluccan security forces, whose role was supposed to have become rather limited after 1975 but had continued to exist in the same way as before.¹⁸⁵ In addition, the actions of the authorities and the role of negotiators were carefully evaluated.¹⁸⁶ This extensive evaluation indicates that the threat of hostage taking was taken increasingly seriously.

Although there was some discussion on whether or not to amend the Criminal Code, specific anti-terrorist legislation was still not drafted.¹⁸⁷ The Moluccan perpetrators therefore had to be sentenced on the basis of other breaches of the law, such as illegal possession of weapons and unlawful deprivation of liberty. However, a *Handbook on Hostage Situations* was published and put into use in 1978.¹⁸⁸ This manual was to ensure that in the future there would be a clear structure between the different levels of government involved and everyone would know what their tasks and responsibilities would be during a hostage situation. It was also decided to train police officers to be negotiators specialised in hostage situations. By 1979, six police officers had completed this training.¹⁸⁹

In 1978, the Dutch government officially stated that it would not recognise the South Moluccan republic, thus rendering an important goal of the Moluccan actions officially unachievable.¹⁹⁰ The initiatives that had been set up after 1975 to improve the socio-economic situation of the Moluccan community were intensified after the Moluccan actions in 1977. Many different actors worked together to establish an official national policy on the rights of the Moluccan community. In addition, attempts were made to better integrate the Moluccan community into Dutch society, for example through training programmes and setting up a museum about the history of the Moluccans.¹⁹¹

¹⁸² Soeters, 2020, 24-25.

¹⁸³ HTK 1975-1976, February 12th 1976, 2838-2846.

¹⁸⁴ Klerks, 1989, 45.

¹⁸⁵ Eikelenboom, 2007, 135.

¹⁸⁶ The raid on the train, for example, was filmed so that an analysis could be made afterwards and the techniques improved. Eikelenboom, 2007, 135. Also Klerks, 1989, 39-43.

¹⁸⁷ Eikelenboom, 2007, 135-136. Also Klerks' chapter 11, 185-203, shows the discussions between experts on whether specific anti-terrorist legislation was necessary.

¹⁸⁸ Rasser, 2005, 487.

¹⁸⁹ Klerks, 1989, 41.

¹⁹⁰ Rasser, 2005, 487.

¹⁹¹ Idem.

Threat perception and interest assessment after the Moluccan actions in 1977 and 1978

Parliamentarian Willem Drees Jr (DS'70) aptly opened the debate on the train hijacking near De Punt and the occupation of the school in Bovensmilde:

'Sixteen months after our debate on the train hijacking in Beilen¹⁹² and the raid on the Indonesian consulate general in Amsterdam, the House of Representatives is once again engaged in a debate on terror committed by a few Moluccan youths.'¹⁹³

This opening is apt for the trend in the House of Representatives for three reasons. Firstly, this statement clearly shows the prevailing frustration in the Lower House that less than one and a half years after the first train hijacking, something similar had happened again. This frustration manifested itself in the House of Representatives mainly through criticism of the government for its lack of decisive action in the period between 1975 and 1977. The fact that the government and the intelligence services had been unable to prevent these actions was held against them much more heavily this time than in 1975. Whereas in 1975 the government could count on support from the House of Representatives and there was understanding for the lack of intelligence, this time the House was much more critical. Henk Hoekstra (CPN - Communist Party), said the following about this: 'However, in view of these facts, the government did not take any effective action, either political or judicial.'¹⁹⁴

This also caused the discussion about whether the BVD should be given more powers or not to flare up again. Proponents of more powers, such as Henk Koning (VVD), argued that the government had presented the choice between a police state or terror too black and white. Giving more powers to the BVD would not result in the police tapping or arresting people arbitrarily, but would actually lead to a more efficient investigation.¹⁹⁵ This viewpoint was increasingly heard. Minister of Justice Van Agt, however, maintained 'that a guarantee that such acts of violence will not occur again can only be given if we indeed make a police state in optima forma'.¹⁹⁶

The policy of the Dutch government towards the Moluccan security forces was also criticised. After the train hijacking at Wijster it was decided to ban the paramilitary actions of the Moluccan security services. At the time of the Moluccan actions in 1977, however, this had not yet happened, despite several discussions with representatives of the Moluccan community. The Moluccan security forces were said to undermine the Dutch legal order, and so the fact that the Dutch government had been too slow to act had contributed to a threat to national security, according to the Lower House.¹⁹⁷ The fact that within the Lower House criticism of the inability to prevent the Moluccan actions and the call for change was greater than in 1975 shows that Moluccan terrorism was seen as a greater threat than before. More value was attached to defending the Dutch legal order, ensuring national security and thus also preventing future Moluccan actions.

Secondly, the opening sentence of Drees Jr. was apt because it reflects well the discourse in the House of Representatives towards terrorism. The words terror and terrorism had become part of the standard discourse with regard to describing the Moluccan actions. The word terror was used 61 times in the debate after the actions in 1977, the word terrorist 22 times. Compared to 1975 this large-scale use of

¹⁹² A town near Wijster.

¹⁹³ Willem Drees Jr. in HTK 1977-1978, June 23rd 1977, 174.

¹⁹⁴ Henk Hoekstra in HTK 1977-1978, June 23rd 1977, 182.

¹⁹⁵ For example Henk Koning in HTK 1977-1978, June 23rd 1977, 179. Or Wileem Drees Jr. in HTK 1977-1978, June 23rd 1977, 176.

¹⁹⁶ Minister of Justice Dries van Agt In HTK 1977-1978, June 23rd 1977, 229.

¹⁹⁷ For example Henk Molleman (PVDA) in HTK 1977-1978, June 23rd 1977, 190. Also Henk Koning in HTK 1977-1978, June 23rd 1977, 178.

these terms was not a big difference; even then these terms had become established under the influence of international terrorism. The change, however, was especially great compared to the early 1970s, when terrorism was still a new phenomenon. In 1977 there had been so many attacks in Europe that the Moluccan actions were almost automatically seen as terrorism.

Thirdly, it is interesting that Drees Jr talks about 'a few Moluccan youths'.¹⁹⁸ He did not include the entire Moluccan community in his account of the terrorist actions, but stated that it concerned a small group of radicals within a Moluccan community in which there was no place for violence or acts of terrorism. This was a point of view that was often repeated within the government and the Lower House. Minister of the Interior De Gaay Fortman (ARP) stated for example: 'In any case, it is certain that the South Moluccan community as a whole may not be regarded as a group that poses such a danger.'¹⁹⁹ The government stuck to this position as well after the occupation of the provincial government office in Assen in 1978.²⁰⁰

The fact that the Moluccan community was not held responsible for the terrorist actions was somewhat contradictory to the actions of the government. Actions such as searching Moluccan residential areas for weapons, the intention of banning the Moluccan security forces and intensifying efforts to improve the socio-economic situation of the Moluccans were in fact specifically aimed at the Moluccan community. These measures were also specifically anti-terrorist, as the main aim was to prevent Moluccan terrorism and thus protect the Dutch legal order.

As in 1970 and 1975, the illegal possession of weapons among the Moluccans was seen as an important cause of the terrorist actions. Almost all parliamentarians who took the floor said they were in favour of continuing to tackle the illegal possession of weapons.²⁰¹ The government agreed with this idea, which manifested itself, among other things, in the search of Moluccan neighbourhoods. Just like in 1975, countering terrorism and preventing future Moluccan actions were thus seen in the context of illegal possession of weapons. However, terrorism was also seen by some in a larger context of illegal arms trade and international crime.²⁰² Bram van der Lek said the following: 'In our opinion, in order to combat the illegal possession of weapons, we need to be much more at the source, at the trade in weapons and at the control of weapons production in the various countries.'²⁰³ Tackling illegal arms trade and possession was considered necessary to ensure national security. If this did not happen, the door would be open for a continuation of violence and the undermining of the Dutch security services.

A difference in the reaction of the Lower House between the period between 1970 and 1976 and the period after 1977 was that the Moluccan actions in 1977 and 1978 were no longer seen as incidental. Links were made with the Moluccan actions in 1970 and 1975, and for the first time there was talk of a pattern.²⁰⁴ As a result, the scenario of a new train hijacking or Moluccan action was considered much more realistic than before. This also made it more necessary to take measures to prevent new terrorist

¹⁹⁸ Willem Drees Jr. in HTK 1977-1978, June 23rd 1977, 174.

¹⁹⁹ Minister of the Interior Gaius De Gaay Fortman in HTK 1977-1978, June 23rd 1977, 231.

²⁰⁰ Prime Minister Dries van Agt (CDA) in HTK 1977-1978, March 14th 1978, 1646: 'We still hope and trust that, despite this new, shocking action, our compatriots will remain convinced that this was an ill-considered action by only a few, to which the entire South Moluccan population group should not be looked upon.'

²⁰¹ For example Bram van der Lek (PSP), Henk Molleman (PVDA), Bart Verbrugh (GPV) and Henk Koning (VVD) in HTK 1977-1978, June 23rd 1977, p. 163-238.

²⁰² For example Bram van der Lek (PSP) and Henk Hoekstra (CPN) in HTK 1977-1978, June 23rd 1977, p. 163-238.

²⁰³ Bram van der Lek (PSP) in HTK 1977-1978, June 23rd 1977, 207.

²⁰⁴ For example, Henk Molleman lists the different Moluccan actions in HTK 1977-1978, June 23rd 1977, 190. Also, Ria Beckers-De Bruijn stated: 'We cannot regard these hostage-takings as incidents. They form [...] a new phase in a development that the Dutch government and Dutch society have helped to bring about.' In HTK 1977-1978, June 23rd 1977, 180.

actions. Ria Beckers-De Bruijn (PSP) therefore argued 'for a less incidental approach to possible terrorist actions, for more permanent crisis management'.²⁰⁵ Within the pattern of Moluccan terrorism, the actions were also increasingly placed in an international context.²⁰⁶ The Netherlands therefore became increasingly active at the European level with regard to cooperation in the fight against terrorism.²⁰⁷ This can be seen in parliamentary questions on the drafting of a European convention to combat terrorism.²⁰⁸ Placing the Moluccan actions in the context of a greater terrorist threat therefore also shows that the Dutch government had come to regard Moluccan terrorism as a greater threat than before.

After 1978, the measures taken earlier, such as the establishment of the Committee Köbben-Mantouw and the Participation Body for the Welfare of Moluccans, got off to a better start. A report written by the Köbben-Mantouw Committee on the feasibility of the Moluccan political ideal and the political situation of the Moluccans in the Netherlands as well as on the Moluccan islands themselves, showed that the Dutch government took the political ideal more seriously than before and was more willing to enter into dialogue about it.²⁰⁹ Although the Dutch government eventually openly renounced this political ideal, more mutual understanding was created.

In addition to the political ideal, the socio-economic problems of the Moluccan community were also addressed more seriously, as these problems were also linked to the causes of Moluccan terrorism. Henk Molleman (PvdA – Labour Party), for example, stated that 'a number of concrete problems often play a role as a background to hostage-taking'.²¹⁰ He mentioned housing problems, poor education and drug problems as factors that contributed to the frustrations of the Moluccans and thus to the Moluccan terrorist actions. Therefore, in 1978, a special committee discussed the Moluccan problems in two extensive debates.²¹¹ A few months later, this was also discussed extensively in the Dutch Lower House.²¹² The aim of these debates was to find ways to better integrate the Moluccans into Dutch society and thus prevent future Moluccan terrorism. It was striking, however, that this was a goal drawn up in advance; during the debates themselves the link with terrorism was hardly made. The fact that such extensive debates were held in 1978 about the socio-economic situation of the Moluccans in the Netherlands shows that the Dutch government was more active in tackling what they saw as the main causes of Moluccan terrorism.

²⁰⁵ Ria Beckers-De Bruijn in HTK 1977-1978, June 23rd 1977, 181.

²⁰⁶ Henk Hoekstra in HTK 1977-1978, June 23rd 1977, 183: 'One should not close one's eyes to the international character of terror'.

²⁰⁷ This is also in accordance with what Beatrice de Graaf, 2020, p. 353. She stated that despite the governments' reluctance to create new legislation, it was rather active on the international stage regarding counterterrorism and European intelligence services.

²⁰⁸ For example, Kamervragen (Aanhangsel). November 21st 1977. *Aanhangsel Tweede Kamer 1977-1978 nummer 294; Vragen van het lid Berkhouwer over bestrijding van terrorisme*. p. 1-2.

²⁰⁹ Kamerstuk Brief. June 29th 1978. *De problematiek van de Molukse minderheid in Nederland; Brief van de viceminister-president Minister van Binnenlandse Zaken*, 1-21.

²¹⁰ Henk Molleman (PVDa) in HTK 1977-1978, June 23rd 1977, 193.

²¹¹ HTK 1977-1978 OCV/UCV, May 29th 1978, p. 491-543. And HTK 1977-1978 OCV/UCV, June 5th 1978, p. 567-606.

²¹² HTK 1978-1979, August 30th 1978, p. 3241-3264. And HTK 1978-1979, August 31st 1978, p. 3279-3305.

Newspapers and public opinion during and after the Moluccan actions in 1977 and 1978

As in 1970 and 1975, the Moluccan perpetrators succeeded in getting a lot of media attention for their actions, and the media played an important role in shaping the image of the actions. Not only within the government, but also in the newspapers the options regarding military intervention were weighed up and people with different opinions were given a chance to speak out. The media attention this time was perhaps even greater than in 1975. Whereas in 1975 some 800 articles had appeared containing the term 'terrorism', in 1977 and 1978 there were 1838 and 1613 articles respectively.²¹³ This shows not only that media attention was probably²¹⁴ greater, but also that the term terrorism was used more often in the discourse of the Dutch newspapers.

Just as in 1975, NIPO conducted a survey in 1977 among the Dutch population immediately after the train hijacking and the occupation of the school in Bovensmilde, with the main question being whether people should show any understanding for the Moluccans who took the hostages. The results, which can be seen in table one, show a clear decline in support for the Moluccan community, which thus indicates that the Dutch population increasingly turned away from the Moluccan cause.²¹⁵ Almost half of the Dutch population also thought that the Dutch government had done enough for the Moluccan community since the train hijacking in 1975. More than a third thought the government had done too little.²¹⁶ Support for the actions of the authorities during the hostage situations had grown, however. In 1975 only 63 per cent thought that the government had acted as well as it could, in 1977 this had grown to 90 per cent.²¹⁷ This shows that many people supported the violent termination of hostage taking.

	December 1975	June 1977
Understanding	41%	27%
No Understanding	27%	67%
No Opinion	15%	6%

Table 1: Should the Dutch people show understanding for the Moluccans who took the hostages?²¹⁸

This decline in understanding of the Moluccan actions can also be seen in the newspapers. The hostage-taking of children particularly shocked many people and many felt that it was crossing a line that had not been crossed before. Someone said that 'taking children between the ages of six and twelve hostage is inhumane.'²¹⁹ Whereas in 1975 there was still hope that the Moluccans would come to their senses, after the actions in 1977 and 1978 there was mainly anger and frustration that it had happened again. After the hostage-taking in Assen in 1978, for instance, someone said: 'For the umpteenth time Moluccans try to force the government to meet their demands by taking random people hostage. These people have learned very little in all those years that they have been here in the Netherlands.'²²⁰ The Dutch population seemed to be somewhat fed up with the years of tolerating

²¹³ A quantitative analysis has been done in the Delpher archive, using the word 'terrorism'. Numbers checked for the last time on June 8th 2022.

²¹⁴ However, there is a comment to be made here. Although it is likely that a large proportion of these articles were about Moluccan terrorism, there were also many attacks in this period in Italy, Israel, West Germany and Africa. Reports of these may have influenced these numbers.

²¹⁵ Schmid et al., 1982, 61.

²¹⁶ Schmid et al., 1982, 62.

²¹⁷ Schmid et al., 1982, 59.

²¹⁸ Schmid et al., 1982, 61.

²¹⁹ Schipper. June 1st 1977. Gijzelingen (16). *Het Vrije Volk: Democratisch-Socialistisch Dagblad*. Rotterdam, p.11.

²²⁰ J.H. March 20th 1978. Na gijzeling in Assen. *Leeuwarder Courant: Hoofdblad van Friesland*. Leeuwarden, p. 5.

the isolation and own rules of the Moluccan community.²²¹ There was further polarisation between the Dutch population and the Moluccan community, despite attempts by the government and various organisations to make it clear that these were only a few radical youths.²²² The awareness that only a few radicals were involved seemed to be greater in 1978 than in 1977, because of the extremely violent nature of the perpetrators.²²³

The negative tendency towards the Moluccan ideal was visible in the letters Johan Manusama and Prime Minister Den Uyl received after the Moluccan actions in 1977 as well.²²⁴ Relatively more people expressed negative views about the Moluccans as a community, and racist remarks were even more vehement than two years earlier. Someone wrote to Manusama: 'We will get rid of this cowardly South Moluccan vermin'.²²⁵ Racism was not limited to letters; the Moluccans also had to deal with it in practice. For instance, people were terrified to sit on the same train with young Moluccans.²²⁶

The discussion of whether or not more powers should go to the BVD was also carried on in the Dutch newspapers, as it was clear to them that the BVD with its current powers could hardly prevent terrorist attacks. An opinion poll in 1977 showed that three quarters of the people preferred security, law and order to a complete freedom.²²⁷ This discussion was also reflected in the newspapers. On one side were people who feared a police state, using the situation in West Germany as an example.²²⁸ On the other side were those who were fed up with terrorism and saw more powers as a solution. In *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, for example, someone stated that 'If the Netherlands cannot become a police state, it cannot become a state where terror and the fear of terror compete for precedence either.'²²⁹

The newspapers and opinion polls after the Moluccan actions in 1977 and 1978 show that the tone towards the Moluccan community sharpened even more compared to two years earlier. The tone towards the Dutch government, on the other hand, did not necessarily become milder, because of the criticism that it could not prevent the Moluccan actions. The clear call for a solution to the problem and the prevention of future Moluccan actions shows that Moluccan terrorism was also seen as a bigger problem and threat by the Dutch population than before, which can be explained by the rapid succession and the intensity of the Moluccan actions.

²²¹ For example: Unknown. March 13th 1978. Het is weer zover. *Leeuwarder Courant: Hoofdblad van Friesland*. Leeuwarden, p. 3. Also: Dussel, Wim. June 15th 1977. Splinter. *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*. Groningen, p. 10.

²²² Schmid et al., 1982, 61-63.

²²³ For example, in Unknown. March 14th 1978. Gruwelijk terrorisme. *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*. Groningen, p. 4. It is stated that 'If the hostage-taking in Assen has made one thing clear, it is that the distance between a relatively small group of extremely radical South Moluccan youths and the rest of the South Moluccan community in our country has increased considerably.'

²²⁴ Schmid et al., 1982, 174-184.

²²⁵ Schmid et al., 1982, 175.

²²⁶ Demant & De Graaf, 2010, 412.

²²⁷ Schmid et al., 1982, 63.

²²⁸ For example in Unknown. June 16th 1977. Elsevier. *De Volkskrant*. 's-Hertogenbosch, p. 17: 'While De Groene warns of 'German conditions', Elsevier insists on more control, more police and more military measures.'

²²⁹ Unknown. June 13th 1977. Na oorlog, de vrede. *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*. Groningen, p. 4.

Conclusion

The threat perception of the Dutch government regarding Moluccan terrorism, despite the short period of three years, did change between 1975 and 1978. Because the Moluccan actions of 1977 and 1978 were seen in a pattern of Moluccan violence, a next Moluccan terrorist action was considered a real possibility. In addition, the Moluccan actions were increasingly placed in the context of international terrorism, under the influence of attacks in West Germany, Italy and Israel. Moreover, the action at the primary school in Bovensmilde in 1977, in which more than 100 children were taken hostage, caused public opinion to turn increasingly against the Moluccan community and the Moluccan ideal. Because of these aspects, after the actions of 1977 and 1978 the threat of Moluccan terrorism was taken more seriously and seen as more real than after the actions of 1975 and especially 1970, when Moluccan violence was mainly seen as incidental and terrorism was a new phenomenon.

The discourse regarding Moluccan terrorism did not change much in the period between 1975 and 1978. The concept of terrorism had consistently been part of the discourse within the Dutch government since 1973, and it was clear to everyone that the Moluccan actions could be classified as terrorism. Just as in 1975, the preservation of the Dutch legal order was at stake and Moluccan actions had to be prevented in order to protect this legal order. There was, however, a slight change in discourse towards the Moluccan community, especially in newspapers. There was less understanding for the Moluccan actions and the actions were condemned with sharper words.

Despite the fact that Moluccan terrorism was seen as a greater threat to the Dutch legal order than before, far-reaching measures concerning the drafting of new legislation or giving the BVD more powers did not materialise. This did not happen, despite criticism in newspapers and within the Lower House, mainly due to fear of a police state, in which Dutch citizens would have to give up fundamental freedoms in exchange for more government control. On the socio-economic level, however, the Moluccan problems were taken more seriously and the Moluccan political ideal was taken more seriously by the government as well, especially in the Committee Köbben-Mantouw. More intensive efforts were made to integrate the Moluccans into Dutch society and to improve the living conditions of the Moluccan community, since socio-economic problems were seen as a partial cause for Moluccan terrorism.

In short, the Dutch security culture vis-à-vis Moluccan terrorism did develop in the period between 1975 and 1978 to the point where Moluccan terrorism was increasingly seen as a threat, but not to the level where the Moluccan threat was seen as such a big threat that the government felt compelled to introduce special legislation or give the BVD more powers. However, the threat of future Moluccan actions did lead to serious steps being taken in the socio-economic field to reduce Moluccan frustrations as much as possible and thus prevent possible future Moluccan terrorism. Ultimately, new Moluccan terrorist actions were did not happen anymore because of the combination of the violent end of the 1977 and 1978 Moluccan campaigns and the intensification of integration efforts, which shifted the focus of their struggle from the Netherlands to the Moluccan islands themselves.²³⁰

²³⁰ Demant & De Graaf, 2010, 416.

Conclusion

The first Moluccan terrorist action in Wassenaar in 1970 came as a complete surprise to the Dutch government. The Netherlands had not experienced terrorism since the Second World War. The method used by the Moluccans, taking hostages, was new to the authorities as well. Before 1970, therefore, there was no security culture regarding terrorism in general, and certainly not regarding Moluccan terrorism. The Moluccan community was seen as a group of temporary migrants with many socio-economic problems, who often lived in their own isolated neighbourhoods or camps; not as a possible threat to national security.

In the first years after the Moluccan action in Wassenaar in 1970, this hardly changed. The Moluccan action was generally not seen as terrorism within Dutch society. This can be explained by the fact that terrorism was not yet a widespread phenomenon in Europe at that time either and the concept of terrorism was therefore not part of the discourse. In addition, the Moluccan violence was seen as incidental. The possibility of repetition was not taken seriously to such an extent that far-reaching counterterrorist measures were considered necessary. The Moluccan actions were therefore mainly placed in the context of the illegal possession of weapons and the growing violence against the authorities among the younger Dutch generation. The measures that were taken were not counter-terrorist, but specifically aimed at this illegal possession of weapons and increasing violence. Within the Dutch security culture, there was no place for Moluccan terrorism as a large-scale threat to national security.

From 1972 onwards, after the Palestinian hostage-taking in Munich, the concept of terrorism became known to the Dutch government and a security culture related to terrorism developed. The Terror Letter and *Gijzelingscirculaire* were drafted, protocols were established and specific military units were set up. However, these measures were not taken in response to a Moluccan threat and were therefore not specifically aimed at Moluccan terrorism. Nonetheless, a new discourse did develop in which certain actions were placed under the concept of terrorism and terrorism became a known concept within Dutch society.

The Moluccan actions in Wijster and Amsterdam in 1975, under the influence of international terrorism, were therefore also linked to the concept of terrorism. The actions, however, were not linked to an international pattern of terrorism, resulting in the counterterrorist measures being mainly aimed at improving the socio-economic situation of the Moluccan community, such as setting up the Köbben-Mantouw Committee. Far-reaching powers for the BVD or new legislation were not put in place, according to the government to prevent Dutch society from becoming a police state. As historian Beatrice de Graaf states in her chapter on Moluccan terrorism, the fear of state terror was greater than the fear of Moluccan terrorism.²³¹

The Moluccan actions in 1977 and 1978 brought about a changing trend, with Moluccan terrorism seen as an increasing threat. This was mainly because a pattern of Moluccan violence was now discernible, making repetition a more realistic option. Public opinion had also increasingly turned against the Moluccan community, particularly as a result of the hostage-taking of children. Because Moluccan terrorism was seen as a greater threat, the will to prevent future actions was greater as well. This manifested itself particularly in the intensification of efforts to improve the socio-economic situation of the Moluccans, but there were also more serious discussions about their political ideals. However, giving more powers to the BVD or creating new legislation was not seen as a solution to preventing terrorism, still because of the fear of a police state.

²³¹ De Graaf, 2021, 345-355.

In short, the Dutch security culture regarding Moluccan terrorism developed from a non-existent security culture in 1970 to a culture in 1978 in which Moluccan terrorism was seen as a real threat to national security and the legal order, although not yet to the level that far-reaching powers for the BVD or new legislation were considered necessary. The discourse had developed from one in which the perpetrators were called enthusiastic Moluccan youths in 1970²³² to one in which they were called ruthless terrorists in 1978. Whereas no counterterrorist measures had been taken in 1970, special military units and protocols had been set up in 1978. This development, particularly between 1970 and 1976 but also between 1976 and 1978, took place under the influence of international terrorism. It was not until the train hijacking at De Punt in 1977 that the Moluccan actions were seen in a pattern of terroristic violence and put in the framework of international terrorism. Only then the government seemed to take the threat of Moluccan terrorism seriously to the extent that serious attempts were actually being made to prevent future Moluccan terrorism. Nevertheless, the government remained cautious in its measures. Under no circumstances was the Netherlands to become a police state in which fundamental democratic values were affected.

By using the concept of security culture, this study has used a new angle in analysing the period of Moluccan terrorism in the Netherlands in the 1970s. Much existing literature focuses only on public opinion or counterterrorism measures regarding the Moluccan terrorism. By using security culture, these two and other aspects have been combined, allowing for an in-depth analysis of the coherence and interplay between these different aspects and their development over the years. By analysing newspapers and the discourse of the government, a better picture emerged of the threat perception and interest assessment of the government with regard to Moluccan terrorism, and therefore of the reasons why the security culture developed the way it did. With her description of the development of the Dutch security culture vis-à-vis terrorism, Beatrice de Graaf provided a basis to which this study has created a more profound understanding.

However, some concessions were made in this study, especially for workability reasons. For instance, only digitised sources of what was said in the Lower House were used in this research. In archives, however, interesting sources can be found that report on meetings between members of the government. These sources might have been an addition to the analysis of the image the Dutch authorities had of the Moluccan community and of Moluccan terrorism. Moreover, for possible follow-up research, it would be interesting and relevant to look specifically at what the Dutch government said about Moluccan terrorism in press releases and speeches, and how it communicated its own threat perception to the Dutch people. In analysing these speech acts, De Graaf & De Graaff's concept of performative power²³³ could be used to obtain a better picture of the interaction between government policy and public opinion. As it turned out, Moluccan terrorism is still a relevant theme, and through the relatively new security culture lens, there are still plenty of questions waiting for answers.

²³² Mr. Goedhart uses the term 'enthusiastic young Ambonese' in HTK 1969-1970, September 1st 1970, p. 4362.

²³³ Beatrice de Graaf & Bob de Graaff, 2010, 261-275.

List of abbreviations

ARP: Anti-Revolutionaire Partij. Christian political party.
BBE: Bijzondere Bijstandseenheden. Special military units trained for hostage situations.
BVD: Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst. Dutch Intelligence Service.
CDA: Christen-Democratisch Appèl. Christian political party formed by the ARP, KVP and CHU.
CHU: Christelijke Historische Unie. Christian political party.
CPN: Communistische Partij van Nederland. Dutch Communist Party.
D66: Democraten '66. Progressive political party founded in 1966.
DS'70: Democratisch-Socialisten 1970. 'New Left' political party.
GPV: Gereformeerd Politiek Verbond. Christian political party.
KVP: Katholieke Volkspartij. Dutch catholic party.
LBT: Landelijk Bijstandsteam Terrorismebestrijding. National counterterrorism assistance team.
NIPO: Nederlands Instituut voor Publieke Opinie. Netherlands Institute for Public Opinion and Market Research
PPR: Politieke Partij Radikalen. Progressive political party.
PSP: Pacifistisch Socialistische Partij. Pacifist Socialist political party.
PVDA: Partij voor de Arbeid. Dutch Labour Party.
RMS: Republik Maluku Selatan. Moluccan name for their own republic.
VVD: Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie. Dutch right-wing party.

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