

# MILITAIRE SPECTATOR

## THE OMANI MODEL



- Reflexive Control
- The Big Data Paradox



# MILITAIRE SPECTATOR

## Vooruitblik

In *Militaire Spectator* 7/8-2018 verschijnt onder meer: 'Morele krachten. De interpretatie van morele vraagstukken in militaire operaties' van dr. M.C. de Graaff.

De interpretatie van morele vraagstukken die militairen ervaren tijdens militaire operaties verloopt via psychologische processen. Hoe zit het met emoties, welke rol speelt identiteit en welk effect heeft de intensiteit van de situatie op de manier van interpreteren? De auteur gaat in op drie hoofdcategorieën van dagelijkse morele uitdagingen, die elk verschillende emoties en gedrag oproepen. Van de morele identiteit blijkt het element moreel besef bij militairen het sterkst te zijn ontwikkeld, terwijl het reflecteren op het eigen gedrag en verantwoordelijkheidsgevoel aandacht behoeven. Daarnaast blijkt dat hoog-intense situaties minder zorgvuldig of moreel verantwoord worden benaderd. Meer aandacht voor dagelijkse dilemma's in voorbereiding op militaire inzet en uitzending lijkt dan ook noodzakelijk.



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Majoor drs. D. Boissevain  
D.Boissevain.01@mindef.nl

Nederlandse Defensieacademie (NLDA)

Sectie MOW  
Ledenadministratie KVVK  
Postbus 90002, 4800 PA Breda  
ledenadministratie@kvbk.nl

**REDACTIE**

luitenant-generaal b.d. ir. R.G. Tieskens  
(hoofdredacteur)  
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kolonel Marns drs. G.F. Booij EMSD  
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NIMH  
Postbus 90701  
2509 LS Den Haag  
T 070 – 316 51 20 of  
070 – 316 51 95  
E redactie.militaire.spectator@mindef.nl  
www.militairespectator.nl

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## Dierbaar

**W**ervingsadvertenties, spotjes op radio en televisie, posters op Defensielocaties, overall kom je de huidige oneliner van Defensie tegen: 'Defensie beschermt wat ons dierbaar is'. Klinkt op het eerste gezicht goed. Mooi dat er een organisatie is die beschermt wat ons dierbaar is. Maar wat is ons dan eigenlijk dierbaar?

Wie recente beleidsdocumenten zoals de *Geïntegreerde Buitenland- en Veiligheidsstrategie (GBVS)*<sup>1</sup> of de *Defensienota 2018*<sup>2</sup> erop naslaat komt niet veel verder. In de GBVS komt het begrip 'dierbaar' niet voor. Wel geeft deze notitie aan waarvoor Nederland staat in de wereld: het verdedigen van ons belang als handelsnatie bij een veilige wereld en de invloed die wij daarop willen uitoefenen. In de Defensienota treffen we de oneliner wel aan, maar dan alleen met een verwijzing naar de drie hoofdtaken van Defensie zoals die voortkomen uit de Grondwet. Ook dit helpt ons niet veel verder. Biedt de website van Defensie ons dan uitkomst? Ten dele. Het begrip krijgt hier een meer idealistische duiding: Defensie strijdt voor een wereld waarin mensen in vrijheid en veiligheid kunnen leven, aanzien onze vrijheid begint bij die van een ander.

Kortom, er is geen eenduidig beeld: gaat het bij het begrip 'dierbaar' nu om Nederlandse (handels)belangen, of om het strijden voor westerse waarden als vrijheid, of om allebei?

Als de politiek al verdeeld is over de betekenis van de term 'dierbaar', hoe zit het dan met 'de burger'? Denkt die er hetzelfde over? En wat zijn daarvan de implicaties voor Defensie? Het Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau doet eens per kwartaal verslag van zijn 'Continu onderzoek burgerperspectieven'.<sup>3</sup> Daaruit blijkt steeds dat de Nederlandse bevolking zich vooral zorgen maakt over immigratie/integratie, zorg, onderwijs en inkomensverschillen. Vrijwel niemand maakt zich druk om de positie van Nederland in de wereld of om onze vrijheden.

En hoe zit het met de Nederlandse kiezer, die via de keuze voor volksvertegenwoordigers het beleid kan beïnvloeden? In zijn recente afscheidsrede als hoogleraar empirische politicologie aan de Universiteit Leiden concludeerde Rudy Andeweg op basis van langlopend onderzoek onder kiezers en Tweede Kamerleden dat door de toegenomen globalisering een tweede ideologische dimensie is ontstaan, naast de bestaande sociaaleconomische dimensie.<sup>4</sup> Het gaat om een culturele dimensie, met de winnaars van de globalisering (die vooral kosmopolitisch zijn) aan de ene kant en de verliezers (die vooral nationalistisch zijn) aan de andere kant. Een grote groep kiezers (minimaal een derde tot maximaal twee derde) is sociaaleconomisch links en cultureel rechts. Kiezers uit deze categorie willen de verworvenheden van onze verzorgingsstaat behouden en de immigratie naar ons land beperken. Het elders brengen van vrijheid of anderszins uitdragen van westerse waarden heeft bij hen zeker geen prioriteit.

1 Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, *Wereldwijd voor een veilig Nederland. Geïntegreerde Buitenland- en Veiligheidsstrategie 2018-2022* (Den Haag, Rijksoverheid, maart 2018).

Via: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2018/03/19/notitie-geïntegreerde-buitenland--en-veiligheidsstrategie-gbvs>

2 Ministerie van Defensie, *Defensienota 2018. Investeren in onze mensen, slagkracht en zichtbaarheid* (Den Haag, maart 2018)

3 Zie: [https://www.scp.nl/publicaties/terugkerende\\_monitors\\_en\\_reeksen/continu\\_onderzoek\\_burgerperspectieven](https://www.scp.nl/publicaties/terugkerende_monitors_en_reeksen/continu_onderzoek_burgerperspectieven).

4 R.B. Andeweg, 'Kiezers, Kamerleden en "de Kloof"'. Rede ter gelegenheid van zijn afscheid als hoogleraar empirische politicologie aan de Universiteit Leiden, uitgesproken op vrijdag 18 mei 2018.

Deze conclusie sluit goed aan bij de uitkomsten van het SCP-onderzoek. Interessant is overigens dat op dit moment geen enkele politieke partij in Nederland deze combinatie van standpunten, die in theorie goed is voor minimaal vijftig zetels, aanbiedt. Lukt het een bestaande partij om deze kloof te overbruggen? Of komt er een nieuwe partij die in dit gat springt? Dat zou dan tot een behoorlijke aardverschuiving in het Nederlandse politieke landschap leiden.

Bij zoveel verdeeldheid in zowel politiek als samenleving is het geen wonder dat de rol van de krijgsmacht niet helder is en voortdurend ter discussie staat.

Diverse wetenschappers hebben recent aandacht gevraagd voor wat zij zien als een afnemend belang van waarden in de westerse samenleving. De Vlaamse politicoloog Jonathan Holslag stelt in het kader van het Belgische debat over de vervanging van de gevechtsvliegtuigen dat de belangrijkste bedreiging voor onze westerse waarden van binnenuit komt. Een combinatie van individualisme en materialisme heeft in zijn ogen geleid tot zelfgenoegzaamheid en gemakzucht van de bevolking en heeft daarmee de samenleving die door waarden wordt gedreven, verdrongen.

'Hebben' is in de plaats gekomen van 'zijn'. In zijn ogen bouw je geen sterke Defensie rond een verzwakte samenleving. Hij pleit voor het opnemen van actief burgerschap en deugd als kern van elke veiligheidsstrategie.<sup>5</sup> De recente oratie van Theo Brinkel bij zijn aantreden als bijzonder hoogleraar aan de Universiteit Leiden sluit hierbij aan. Hij pleit ervoor beleid in sterkere mate te baseren op waarden; alleen dan kunnen we in zijn ogen de morele kracht opbrengen om de lasten van onze eigen verdediging te dragen. En alleen dan kunnen we militairen op pad sturen om die waarden elders te verdedigen.<sup>6</sup>

Wat betekent het bovenstaande voor Defensie? Om met de stelling van Andeweg te beginnen: stel er komt een politieke partij die de grote groep kiezers die sociaaleconomisch links en cultureel rechts is, aan zich weet te binden. Wat

## Defensie moet de dialoog aangaan over wat haar werkelijk dierbaar is...

betekent dat dan voor het Defensiebeleid? Kijken we naar het huidige politieke landschap, dan zien we dat partijen die sociaaleconomisch links zijn, zoals de SP, of cultureel rechts, zoals de PVV, niet bepaald voorstander van een sterke Defensie zijn. Gekoppeld aan de stelling van Holslag doemt een toekomstbeeld op van een Defensie die vooral wordt ingezet om de grenzen van het Nederlandse grondgebied te bewaken, om daarmee te voorkomen dat de verworvenheden van onze moderne consumptie-maatschappij teniet worden gedaan.

Als uitvoeringsorganisatie dient Defensie simpelweg de wil van onze gekozen vertegenwoordigers uit te voeren. Staan wij als organisatie echter werkelijk achter onze eigen uitleg van het begrip 'dierbaar' (het strijden voor een wereld waarin mensen in vrijheid en veiligheid kunnen leven), dan moeten we ons hier de komende tijd sterker over uitspreken. We moeten de dialoog over de betekenis van dit begrip (welke waarden en belangen willen we beschermen?) en de consequenties daarvan (wat hebben we hiervoor over?) met zowel politiek als samenleving aangaan.

Zowel Holslag als Brinkel geven ons aanknopingspunten voor: het gaat om een sterkere positie van waarden in het beleid, het investeren in onderwijs en het stimuleren van actief burgerschap. Het kabinetsvoornemen om een maatschappelijke dienstplicht in te voeren past hier goed bij. Die kan immers actief burgerschap en gemeenschapszin stimuleren. Of zouden we zelfs na moeten denken over een herinvoering van de opkomstplicht? ■

5 J. Holslag, 'Opinie 'Ik gruw van oorlog maar gruw nog meer van de gedachte hem te verliezen'', <http://m.knack.be/nieuws/belgie/ik-gruw-van-oorlog-maar-gruw-nog-meer-van-de-gedachte-hem-te-verliezen/article-opinion-1145911.html>.

6 T. Brinkel, 'Moraliteit, beleid en weerbaarheid. Een verkenningssmissie'. Oratie ter gelegenheid van zijn benoeming tot bijzonder hoogleraar aan de Universiteit Leiden, uitgesproken op 15 januari 2018.

# The Big Data Paradox

*Juggling data flows, transparency and secrets*





**On more than one occasion the *Militaire Spectator* has paid attention to the digital domain, its characteristics and the role of the military within the digital arena. Recently, articles related to this subject have been published on military operations, defence policy, cyber issues, and big data analytics.<sup>1</sup> It is abundantly clear that the challenges and opportunities for the digital era are of great relevance and concern for the military domain. This article looks into one important aspect of this domain – big data. It will highlight the possibilities and pitfalls of this phenomenon by putting emphasis on the (neglected) paradox at the heart of big data developments. It does so from a theoretical, indeed more philosophical, point of view. Far from lessening its relevancy to military practice, it is argued that such an approach will help understand the dynamic and complex twenty-first century digital arena in which military activities play an important and constituent part.<sup>2</sup>**

Dr. A. Claver\*

**B**ig data is a captivating phenomenon in many respects. Data are to this century what oil was to the previous one: a driver of growth and change.<sup>3</sup> The interconnectedness of exponentially growing data flows entails great promises for personal, commercial, as well as governmental use. But is it clear what we mean by big data? There are many perspectives on big data imaginable and at the moment there is no single accepted definition. Big data can be looked upon from a technical, socio-technical as well as governance level, either generic or in detail, and is considered both an opportunity and a threat. Change holds promises, but is by the same token unsettling and intimidating. From one perspective the advent of big data ensures improved transparency from which society will greatly benefit. From another big data forebodes the horrifying perspective of an all-knowing and possibly authoritarian, regime.

In other words: big brother will be watching you... soon!

The attractiveness of data flows as a powerful means of security improvement based upon

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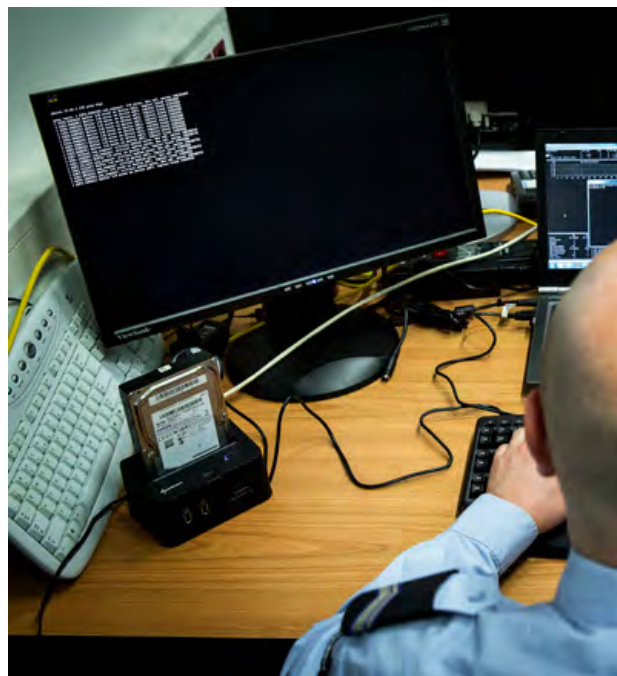
\* Alexander Claver works at the Dutch Ministry of Defence and is currently following the Executive Master Cyber Security at Leiden University. This article has been written in the personal capacity of the author.

- 1 See for example Paul A.L. Ducheine, 'Defensie in het digitale Domein', in: *Militaire Spectator* 186 (4) 2017, p. 152-168. Paul A.L. Ducheine and Kraesten Arnold, 'Besluitvorming bij cyberoperaties', in: *Militaire Spectator* 184 (2) 2015, p. 56-70. Erik S.M. Akerboom, 'Cyber security. Samenwerken voor een veilige en vitale cybersamenleving', in: *Militaire Spectator* 181 (12) 2012, p. 532-536. Allard D. Dijk, Bas Meulendijks and Frans Absil, 'Lessons Learned from NATO's Cyber Defence exercise Locked Shields 2015', in: *Militaire Spectator* 185 (2) 2016, p. 65-74 and Paul C. van Fenema et al. 'Big data analytics en Defensie. Visie en aanpak', in: *Militaire Spectator* 184 (9) 2015, p. 374-387.
- 2 In full agreement with Peer H. de Vries (Brig Gen Ret.), who argued in the *Militaire Spectator* that military practice should be considered from another, philosophical, perspective in order to broaden and deepen insights into one's actions. Peer H. de Vries, 'Filosofie voor Militairen', in: *Militaire Spectator* 184 (10) 2015, pp. 421-428.
- 3 'Fuel of the Future. Data is giving rise to a new economy', in: *The Economist*, 6 May 2017.

(automated) pattern recognition, analysis, and increased predictive value, is well recognized. This attractiveness from a security point of view has aroused suspicion regarding possible infringements on civil liberties. It is therefore closely monitored by e.g. human rights activists and privacy watchdogs. They fear that fundamental rights will be jeopardized by the increased leverage of the state in tracking its citizens for a range of purposes, e.g. maximizing tax returns, minimizing social benefit payments, countering radicalization, or punishing criminal behaviour. Notwithstanding the validity of these purposes, these advocates stress that the position of the individual versus the state has deteriorated. They plead for more and better safeguards. This includes transparency and oversight when it comes to the handling of big data flows by the state in general, and the security and intelligence community in particular.

### **Big data developments: increased transparency and secrecy**

In 2013 the authors of a short essay cautioned against what they called the utopian rhetoric of big data.<sup>4</sup> Without denying that big data holds major potential for the future they claimed that the benefits of large dataset analysis were overstated. To illustrate their point the authors discussed three, in their opinion understated, values: i.e. individual privacy, identity, and checks on power. The description of these values stressed the presence of self-contradictory traits (i.e. paradoxes) in each of the values discussed.<sup>5</sup> This matches the definition of a paradox as a



*To counter radicalism, terrorism and other threats in general, Dutch society seems to value a well-functioning intelligence and security apparatus more than before*

situation or statement that seems impossible, or is difficult, to understand because it contains opposite facts or characteristics.<sup>6</sup>

This article takes a different approach. It does not focus on aspects of dichotomy, but highlights the complementarity and/or compatibility of seemingly opposed notions. This perspective fits a different definition of a paradox: 'A statement that is seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense and yet is perhaps true.'<sup>7</sup> This is illustrated by showing that the notions of transparency and secrecy do not exclude one another but comprise two sides of the same coin.

In order to counter radicalism, terrorism and threats in general, Dutch society at present seems to value a well-functioning intelligence and security apparatus more than before. This apparatus consists of a police force and military, complemented and assisted by the proportionate activities (as circumscribed by law) of the two

4 Neil M. Richards and Jonathan H. King, 'Three Paradoxes of Big data', in: *Stanford Law Review Online* 66, 2013, pp. 41-46.

5 Richards and King, 'Three Paradoxes of Big Data'. 1) the Transparency Paradox, which concerns the collection of private information by means of big data operations that are themselves shrouded in secrecy; 2) the Identity Paradox, which emphasizes big data results operations, but ignores the fact that these techniques seek to identify, and therefore work at the expense of individual and collective identity; 3) the Power Paradox, which deals with the characterization of big data transforming society without paying attention to the accompanying power effects favouring large government and corporate entities at the expense of ordinary individuals.

6 *Cambridge Dictionary*. See: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/paradox>.

7 *Merriam Webster Dictionary*. See: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/paradox>.





PHOTO MCDIV, KUYPERS

The first section of the article briefly points out the historical roots, definition(s), and main characteristics of big data, including the important question of correlation versus causality surrounding the phenomenon. The second section deals with the Dutch debate regarding big data policy and definition. A conceptual three-layer model of cyberspace is offered to help structure the intelligence law discussion by showing that it is predominantly driven by technical issues (e.g. database design, intercept possibilities, collection, selection and search protocols). Attention is put to the fact that these issues manifest themselves on the socio-technical level (privacy and security issues). The third section addresses the paradox of transparency and secrets, linking it to the important governance level. The final section offers some concluding remarks.

### Big data; some characteristics

Dutch intelligence and security services: AIVD and MIVD.<sup>8</sup> The toolbox of these organizations naturally includes the full potential of the digital era exemplified in, for example, big data developments. Big data, however, is by definition connected to a free and transparent flow of information. This does not seem to relate well with the behaviour of intelligence and security services.

This article discusses big data developments in connection with the simultaneous need for transparency and secrecy. It will zoom in on the concept of big data whose characteristics need to be understood better. Clearer definition, sharper demarcation, and the use of conceptual modeling will help the current debate wherein the contributors tend to speak different languages. The article will also show that there is an apparent, yet not absolute incompatibility of transparency and secrecy, even though it is commonly perceived and/or framed as such in the public debate. Recognition and awareness of this big data paradox will serve current and future discussions. This is exemplified by the ongoing Dutch debate with regard to a substantial revision of the country's first intelligence law of 2002.

The first attempts to quantify the growth rate in the volume of data produced have been traced back to the 1940s when the term 'information explosion' was also introduced.<sup>9</sup> Around 1970 computers became inextricably tied to this concept when Gordon E. Moore coined his famous, and still valid, rule of thumb that overall processing power for computers will double every two years (so-called *Moore's Law*).<sup>10</sup> The first studies to estimate the amount of new information created annually worldwide appeared in 2000 and 2003. The researchers involved (including Hal Varian, now chief economist at Google) concluded that the amount of new information created annually in 1999 amounted to 1.5 billion gigabytes and had doubled to 3 billion gigabytes in 2002.<sup>11</sup>

8 AIVD and MIVD are the Dutch acronyms for the civil and military intelligence and security services. AIVD = Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst and MIVD = Militaire Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst.

9 Gil Press, 'A Very Short History of Big data', in: *Forbes*, 9 May 2013.

10 See: <http://www.moorelaw.org/>.

11 *How Much Information?*, School of Information Management and Systems, University of California (Berkeley, 2000 and 2003). See: <http://groups.ischool.berkeley.edu/archive/how-much-info/> and <http://www2.sims.berkeley.edu/research/projects/how-much-info-2003/>.

### Defining big data

There is no definition of big data agreed upon yet.<sup>12</sup> NASA scientists appear to have coined the notion first in a paper published in 1997.<sup>13</sup> However, it took the term more than a decade to become mainstream, and – ultimately – part of popular culture. The current marketing popularity of big data has little in common with the original scientific description of the information revolution, computer accomplishments, application development (commercial or otherwise), and the possible implications connected to this.<sup>14</sup> Big data today appeals above all to the possibility of entering a new world full of promises, economic opportunities, and profit.<sup>15</sup>

A number of current definitions appear to have in common the focus on the magnitude of the amount of data, measured nowadays in thousands of petabytes (1 petabyte = 1,000 terabytes = 1,000,000 gigabytes), and the

‘Big data is high-Volume, high-Velocity and/or high-Variety information assets that demand cost-effective, innovative forms of information processing that enable enhanced insight, decision making, and process automation’ – Doug Laney

associated management problems. This led industry analyst Doug Laney in 2001 to focus on Volume, Variety, and Velocity as the key data management challenges.<sup>16</sup> His well-known ‘3Vs’-definition of big data is far from outdated: ‘Big data is high-volume, high-velocity and/or high-variety information assets that demand cost-effective, innovative forms of information processing that enable enhanced insight, decision making, and process automation.’<sup>17</sup>

Other definitions tend to focus less on the massive amounts of data and more on the opportunities and challenges they offer<sup>18</sup> on the technical, socio-economic and governance level of cyberspace (see paragraph *Modelling Cyberspace* below.) These definitions point to the importance of what can actually be done with the data and why its size matters.<sup>19</sup> They emphasize the fact that cyberspace data – and the information that can be extracted from it – are giving rise to a new economy.<sup>20</sup> This so-called data economy derives its strength from self-enforcing network effects: ‘using data to attract more users, who then generate more data, which help to improve services, which attracts more users.’<sup>21</sup>

Likewise, the Dutch investigative journalist Dimitri Tokmetzis stresses that his informants are not considering data amounts as such. They refer to big data as connected developments in computer technology, consisting of ever more advanced hardware and software enabling the

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- 12 Ernst M.H. Hirsch Ballin, et al., ‘Big data in een Vrije en Veilige Samenleving’, *WRR-rapport, nr. 95* (Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2016) pp. 33-35. Also: Dimitri Tokmetzis, ‘Wat is big data?’, in: *De Correspondent*, 11 November 2013. And Gil Press, ‘12 Big data Definitions. What’s Your’s?’, in: *Forbes*, 3 September 2014.
- 13 Michael Cox and David Ellsworth, ‘Managing Big data for Scientific Visualization.’ *ACM SIGGRAPH*, 1 May 1997, 21-38.
- 14 Though anything but mainstream, the scientific tradition in this respect is not dead. See for an intriguing account of the human and technological limits of computing the mental exercise by Nick Bostrom, ‘Are You Living in a Computer Simulation’, in: *The Philosophical Quarterly* 53 (211) 2003, 243-255.
- 15 ‘Data, data everywhere. Special Report: Managing Information’, in: *The Economist*, 27 February 2010. ‘Fuel of the Future’, in: *The Economist*. ‘The world’s most valuable resource is no longer oil, but data’, in: *The Economist*, 6 May 2017.
- 16 Doug Laney, ‘3D Data Management: Controlling Data Volume, Velocity, and Variety’, Application Delivery Strategies 949 (Stamford, META Group, 2001). See: <http://blogs.gartner.com/doug-laney/files/2012/01/ad949-3D-Data-Management-Controlling-Data-Volume-Velocity-and-Variety.pdf>. In the next decade Laney continued to work on his concept and expanded it to ‘12V’s’: ‘Deja VVVu: Others Claiming Gartner’s Construct for Big data’, in: *Gartner* (January 2012) <http://blogs.gartner.com/doug-laney/deja-vvvue-others-claiming-gartners-volume-velocity-variety-construct-for-big-data/>.
- 17 See: <http://www.gartner.com/it-glossary/big-data/>.
- 18 Hirsch Ballin, et al., ‘Big data in een Vrije en Veilige Samenleving’, p. 33-35.
- 19 Viktor Mayer-Schönberger and Kenneth Cukier, *Big data. A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work, and Think* (London, John Murray Publishers, 2013). Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, *Everybody Lies: Big data, New Data, and What the Internet Can Tell Us About Who We Really Are* (New York, Harper Collins Publishers, 2017).
- 20 Marshall W. van Alstyne, Geoffrey G. Parker and Sangeet Paul Choudary, ‘Pipelines, Platforms, and the New Rules of Strategy’, in: *Harvard Business Review*, 94 (4) 2016, 54-62.
- 21 ‘Fuel of the Future’, in: *The Economist*.

collection of ever more data, and statistics, attaching meaning to dispersed data flows by relating them to each other.<sup>22</sup>

### Correlation versus causality

Attaching meaning to data by relating, or correlating, them to each other touches upon a crucial element of big data and big data usage, one that has not escaped the attention of many authors. Distinguishing between correlation and causation is immensely difficult, and often correlation is mistaken for causation. At its core, however, a correlation merely quantifies the statistical relationship between two data points. When one data point changes, the other is likely to change as well in case of a strong correlation. In case of a weak correlation this change is less likely to occur. When considering correlations attention should be paid to the fact that even strong correlations might occur because of... coincidence.<sup>23</sup>

After all, correlation does not imply causation: it only implies probability. Probabilistic outcomes should, therefore, never be taken at face value, but have to be treated as indications of possible outcomes. As a result, any analysis based on statistical probabilities will, by definition, produce both false positives (e.g. criminalizing innocent people) and false negatives (e.g. allowing security risks to go unnoticed).<sup>24</sup>

Traditionally, analysis was driven by hypotheses, which were validated by collecting and analysing data. Insights were extracted from scarce, static, and poorly relational data sets with a specific question in mind. Scientific understanding today is driven more and more by the (over) abundance of data. When mining these data the main challenge will be how to cope with the variety, messiness, and uncertainty of the generated data set, bearing in mind that much of what is collected does not have a specific question in mind, or is the (unintended) by-product of another activity.<sup>25</sup>

Here we touch upon an important distinction between current big data and the infinitely smaller data sets used before.<sup>26</sup> Contrary to established scientific practice, big data analysis

is not about validating hypotheses, but about finding interesting links and identifying patterns that might be relevant. As said, these analyses might provide unexpected correlations and insights, but run the risk of elevating correlations to causations, even though the causality of the linkages found remains uncertain.<sup>27</sup> Ultimately, big data shifts the focus of inquiry from causation to correlations. Formulating a (policy) response will thus depend more on the knowledge that something is happening rather than why it is happening.<sup>28</sup>

Some scholars view this positively<sup>29</sup> and compare the big data revolution to a classic scientific paradigm shift. According to Rob Kitchin, big data analytics enable an entirely new approach to making sense of the world. Rather than testing a theory by analysing relevant data, new data analytics seek to gain insights 'born from the data'.<sup>30</sup> Jim Gray argues that current data techniques and technologies are so different that it's worth distinguishing data-intensive science from computational science as a new, fourth paradigm for scientific exploration<sup>31</sup> (see table 1).

22 Tokmetzis, 'Wat is big data?', in: *De Correspondent*.

23 Viktor Mayer-Schönberger and Kenneth Cukier, *Big data. A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work, and Think* (London, John Murray Publishers, 2013) pp. 52-53.

24 Hirsch Ballin, et al., 'Big data in een Vrije en Veilige Samenleving', p. 38. See also: Dennis Broeders, Erik Schrijvers and Ernst Hirsch Ballin, 'Big data and Security Policies. Serving Security, Protecting Freedom', *WRR-Policy Brief no. 6* (The Hague, WRR, 2017) pp. 6-7. See: <https://english.wrr.nl/topics/big-data-privacy-and-security/documents/policy-briefs/2017/01/31/big-data-and-security-policies-serving-security-protecting-freedom>.

25 Rob Kitchin, 'Big data, New Epistemologies and Paradigm Shifts', in: *Big data & Society*, April-June 2014, p. 2. Mayer-Schönberger and Cukier, *Big data. A Revolution*, p. 70.

26 See for an interesting view on the lasting importance of small data in the era of big data developments by Rob Kitchin and Tracey P. Laurialt, 'Small Data in the era of big data', in: *GeoJournal* 80, 2015, 463-475.

27 Hirsch Ballin, et al., 'Big data in een Vrije en Veilige Samenleving', p. 38.

28 Kevjn Lim, 'Big data and Strategic Intelligence', in: *Intelligence and National Security*, 31 (4) 2016, p. 622.

29 Jonathan Shaw, 'Why Big data is a Big Deal. Information science promises to change the world', in: *Harvard Magazine* March-April 2014. See <http://harvardmagazine.com/2014/03/why-big-data-is-a-big-deal>.

30 Rob Kitchin, 'Big data, new epistemologies and paradigm shifts', in: *Big data & Society*, April-June 2014, p. 2.

31 Toney Hey, Stewart Tansley and Kristin Tolle, (2009) 'Jim Gray on eScience: A transformed scientific method', *The Fourth Paradigm: Data-Intensive Scientific Discovery* (Redmond, Microsoft Research, 2009) p. xviii-xix.



Paradigm	Form
1. Experimental science	Empirical method, describing natural phenomena
2. Theoretical science	Using models, generalizations
3. Computational science	Simulating complex phenomena
4. Data-intensive science	Data-exploration: unifying experiment, theory, and simulation

Table 1 Scientific Paradigm Shifts

Source: Compiled and adapted from Hey, Tansley and Tolle 2009; Kitchin 2014

Other scholars are less convinced. Martin Frické argues that so-called data-driven science is a chimera<sup>32</sup>. Methodologically speaking, it merely gathers more data, and does not in itself offer any explanations or theories, solve scientific problems, or aim to do anything of that nature. In his eyes, big data encourages passive data collection, and unsound statistical fiddling. Theory, experimentation, and testing remains needed as ever. The strength of big data lies, above all, in supporting this by providing access to (much) larger sample sizes, permitting

cheaper and more extensive testing of theories, and allowing the continuous assessment of theories.<sup>33</sup> Nicholas Krohley admits to a wealth of data, but speaks of a poverty of insight. According to him, the ‘fetishization of data’ has led to increasingly complex patterns of correlation accompanied by increasing failure to contextualize. He wonders whether an exceedingly complex human environment can be broken down into binary patterns and then reconstructed in a remotely meaningful way?<sup>34</sup>

Definitions and debates aside, the inevitable conclusion so far must be that the information revolution is producing a data-driven society anchored in cyberspace, which will influence people’s lives to a continuously increasing extent. For some this is a positive development heralding great promises.<sup>35</sup> Others highlight the negative aspects and warn against harmful consequences.<sup>36</sup>

### Big data, cyberspace and secrecy: the Dutch case

Digital developments have neither escaped the Netherlands nor the attention of the Dutch government. The economic and societal potential of big data (e.g. maximizing tax returns, or countering radicalization through profiling) have been realized as well as the vulnerabilities with regard to the personal sphere (e.g. issues of privacy and equal treatment). The Dutch government is actively striving to accomplish a digitalized bureaucracy in the foreseeable future. The notion ‘iGovernment’ has become an accepted label in this respect.<sup>37</sup> Other clear indications of the government’s digital awareness are its efforts at formulating big data policy, both in the private and public sector. The letter to parliament of then Secretary of Economic Affairs Henk Kamp, published in 2014, has been the point of departure with regard to the private sector.<sup>38</sup> Public sector policy regarding big data has been investigated by the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid or WRR). Being an independent advisory body the WRR

32 Wikipedia on Chimera: ‘A monstrous fire-breathing hybrid creature of Lycia (Turkey), composed of the parts of more than one animal.’  
 33 Martin Frické, ‘Big data and its epistemology’, in: *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 66 (4) 2015, pp. 651–661. Also Renato Dos Santos, ‘Big data: Philosophy, Emergence, Crowledge, and Science Education’, in: *Themes in Science & Technology Education*, 8 (2) 2015, pp. 115-127.  
 34 Nicholas Krohley, ‘The Intelligence Cycle is Broken. Here’s How to Fix it’, in: *Modern War Institute at West Point*, 24 October 2017. See: <https://mwi.usma.edu/intelligence-cycle-broken-heres-fix/>.  
 35 An outspoken positively inclined author is former Google data analyst Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, who published *Everybody Lies: Big data, New Data, and What the Internet Can Tell Us About Who We Really Are*.  
 36 A distinct negatively inclined author is mathematician and former hedge fund data scientist Cathy O’Neil, who related her experience in *Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy* (New York, Crown, 2016). Additional background information can be found in the following interview: Gerard Janssen, ‘Wiskundige Cathy O’Neil en de Weapons of Math Destruction’, in: *Vrij Nederland*, 16 November 2016. See: <https://www.vn.nl/cathy-oneil-en-weapons-math-destruction/>.  
 37 Corien Prins et al., ‘iGovernment’, in: *WRR-Report 86* (Amsterdam, WRR/Amsterdam University Press, 2011). The WRR-website provides additional information (in Dutch) on the iGovernment issue including the official government stance. See: <http://www.wrr.nl/publicaties/publicatie/article/ioverheid/>.  
 38 ‘Kamerbrief over big data en profilering in de private sector. Brief van minister Henk Kamp (EZ) aan de Tweede Kamer over big data en profilering in de private sector, in relatie tot het recht op privacy en het recht op gelijke behandeling’, 19 November 2014. See: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2014/11/19/kamerbrief-over-big-data-en-profilering-in-de-private-sector>.

was tasked to advise the government on this matter, which resulted in the publication of several reports in 2016.<sup>39</sup>

The WRR also looked into related cyber matters within the project *Freedom and security in the cyber domain*.<sup>40</sup> This resulted in a number of publications advocating the state's responsibility for the 'public core of the internet'. States need to involve themselves by making sure that the internet core – i.e. the central protocols and infrastructure considered to be public good – are safeguarded from state interference. The project emphasized the interconnectedness of technical, socio-technical and governance elements in the cyber domain and stressed that cyber policy issues are, by necessity, played out internationally and cannot be confined to the national level (for national security considerations) or left to market forces alone. The council, therefore, aimed 'to provide knowledge to assist in developing a coherent foreign policy for the cyber domain, one in which the interests of economic, physical and national security, on the one hand, and political and economic freedom, on the other, are weighed up against one another.'<sup>41</sup>

A related topic within the current Dutch public debate is the new intelligence law.<sup>42</sup> Within this debate the earlier mentioned concepts of big data, cyberspace, transparency and secrecy – and by proxy, freedom and security – are linked and hotly contested. The inability so far to find common ground owes much to the failure of clearly demarcating and/or defining the issue(s) at stake. Two examples will suffice to illustrate this.

### Defining big data in the Netherlands

The previous section on big data has clearly shown the elusiveness of the notion. Notwithstanding Doug Laney's clear and concise '3Vs'-definition of big data, no *communis opinio* on the subject exists to date. The arduous attempt of the Dutch government to clarify the issue in relation to the revision of the intelligence law merely confirms the fuzziness of the concept and the difficulty of demarcating it.

Within the *Memorie van Toelichting* (Explanatory Notes) concerning the new intelligence law big



PHOTO RIJKSOVERHEID

People are sharing more and more data in the digital domain by social media

data is described as follows: '...the phenomenon that manifests itself among others in the fact that the amount of data is growing exponentially, data collections are becoming bigger and more complex as a result of which relevant data can no longer be stored physically or logically in a location or in a system....'<sup>43</sup>

39 Hirsch Ballin, et al., 'Big data in een Vrije en Veilige Samenleving'. An English translation of the aforementioned report is: Broeders, et al., 'Big data and Security Policies'.

40 Dennis Broeders et al. 'De Publieke Kern van het Internet. Naar Buitenlands Internetbeleid', in: *WRR-rapport nr. 94* (Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2015). English translation: Dennis Broeders, 'The Public Core of the Internet. An International Agenda for Internet Governance', *WRR-Policy Brief no. 2* (The Hague, WRR, 2015). See: <https://english.wrr.nl/publications/reports/2015/10/01/the-public-core-of-the-internet>.

41 Broeders et al. 'De Publieke Kern van het Internet.'

42 See <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/dossier/34588>. See also: <https://www.internetconsultatie.nl/wiv/details>.

43 Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal 2016-2017, 'Regels met betrekking tot de inlichtingen- en veiligheidsdiensten alsmede wijziging van enkele wetten (Wet op de inlichtingen- en veiligheidsdiensten 20..)', in: *Memorie van Toelichting, Kamerstuk 34588-3*, p. 130. See: <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/kst-34588-17.html> (author's translation).

<b>Data</b>	large structured and unstructured data from different sources
<b>Analysis</b>	data-driven, automated searches for correlations, in particular with the potential for analysis of the present (real-time analysis) and the future (predictive analysis)
<b>Actionable Knowledge</b>	analysis should result in actionable knowledge, to be made applicable for decision-making at group or individual level.

Table 2 Big Data Characteristics (WRR)

Source: Hirsch Ballin et al. 2016

This wording – ‘hidden’ as a subordinate clause on page 130 – is anything but exact. It does not constitute a clear-cut definition and is contrasted on the very same page by referring to a characterization of big data in a WRR-report. The authors of this report hold that the concept of big data is ambiguous. Instead of providing a definition, they therefore chose to focus on what they consider the three main characteristics of big data: data, analysis, and actionable knowledge<sup>44</sup> (see table 2).

Big data here is not seen as a well-defined – or even a definable – concept, but as the dynamic interplay between the three displayed characteristics. According to the authors, this leaves room to discuss the use of data analysis in public policy making.<sup>45</sup> This characterization is subsequently accepted in the *Memorie van Toelichting* with the concluding remark that an interpretation of big data as provided by the WRR is in line with the assumptions of the proposed law revision.<sup>46</sup>

### Modelling cyberspace

Big data developments are inextricably connected to cyberspace. But, most people are unable to answer basic questions, such as: What is cyberspace? How is cyberspace being governed? Who are its attackers and what are their motives? How does the (underlying) technology work?, etc.<sup>47</sup> It stands to reason that without the existence of generally accepted answers, clear-cut definitions, and suitable demarcations, it becomes difficult to see eye to eye with each other when perceptions and/or interpretations differ.

A conceptualization of cyberspace is, therefore, urgently needed as will become clear from the debate in the Netherlands regarding the new (revised) intelligence law (see paragraph *Debating Secrecy* below). A promising start in this respect has been the approach of Van den Berg et al. In an award-winning paper, published in 2014, the authors suggest a conceptual model dividing cyberspace into twelve cyber subdomains, arguing that these domains need to be analyzed on three separate, but interconnected layers: a technical, socio-technical, and governance layer<sup>48</sup> (see figure 1).

From the model follows that the traditional inclination to concentrate on and investigate the technical aspects of cyberspace does not suffice. It is imperative that socio-technical and governance aspects are considered as well. Historically, the technical layer focusing on robust communication services and information security has received the most attention. However, global interconnectivity and huge numbers of applications with an easy to use human interface have given rise to a socio-technical layer. Here, people perform a vast range of cyber activities, which translates into the complex interaction of billions of people active in cyberspace with the available IT-systems – i.e. data storing and data processing systems, including to an increasing extent intelligent and autonomous decision-making systems. The governance layer consists of the large and complex number of human actors and organizations that govern both the technical and socio-technical layers.<sup>49</sup>

44 Ernst Hirsch Ballin, et al., ‘Big data in een Vrije en Veilige Samenleving’, pp. 33-35. [Author’s translation].

45 Broeders, Schrijvers and Hirsch Ballin, ‘Big data and Security Policies’, p. 6.

46 Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal 2016-2017, ‘Regels met betrekking tot de inlichtingen- en veiligheidsdiensten alsmede wijziging van enkele wetten’, in: *Memorie van Toelichting Kamerstuk 34588-3*, p. 130.

47 Jan van den Berg, et al., ‘On ( the Emergence of ) Cyber Security Science and its Challenges for Cyber Security Education’, in: *NATO STO/IST-122 and Cyber Security Academy* (Den Haag, 2014) See: <https://www.csacademy.nl/images/MP-IST-122-12-paper-published.pdf>, p. 1.

48 Van den Berg, ‘On ( the Emergence of ) Cyber Security Science and its Challenges’, p.2.

49 Ibidem.



### Debating secrecy

To a substantial degree the intelligence law debate in the Netherlands centers around the technical possibilities of large-scale automated data communication interception and the risks involved in approval of such methods. The privacy versus security argument is at play here. Adhering to its 'iGovernment' principles the Dutch government has put its intelligence law proposal up for online consultation.<sup>50</sup> According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs this resulted in 1,114 responses, evenly divided between confidential responses and responses open to public scrutiny.<sup>51</sup>

The cost incurred by companies, cooperation with foreign services, technical issues and their potential consequences were eagerly debated and subjected to criticism, next to matters of oversight (both ex-ante and ex-post).<sup>52</sup> A number of issues (in random order) received particular attention:

1. Large-scale interception of cable communication;
2. Search through large amounts of data;
3. Automated access and analysis of databases;
4. Obligating companies and organizations to decrypt communication.

Criticism on these issues boiled down to:

1. Matters of necessity, proportionality, and subsidiarity;
2. Question marks concerning privacy goals;
3. The technical impossibility of compliance.

This emphasizes the importance of a well-functioning oversight mechanism, given the fact that intelligence and security services already possess far-ranging powers by law regardless of the actual outcome of the intelligence law revision. Though governance encompasses more than oversight, the third layer within the cyber domain (see figure 1) has at long last appeared on the horizon as an integral part of an indispensable system of checks and balances.

The intelligence law debate, however, has remained focused on the technical and to a

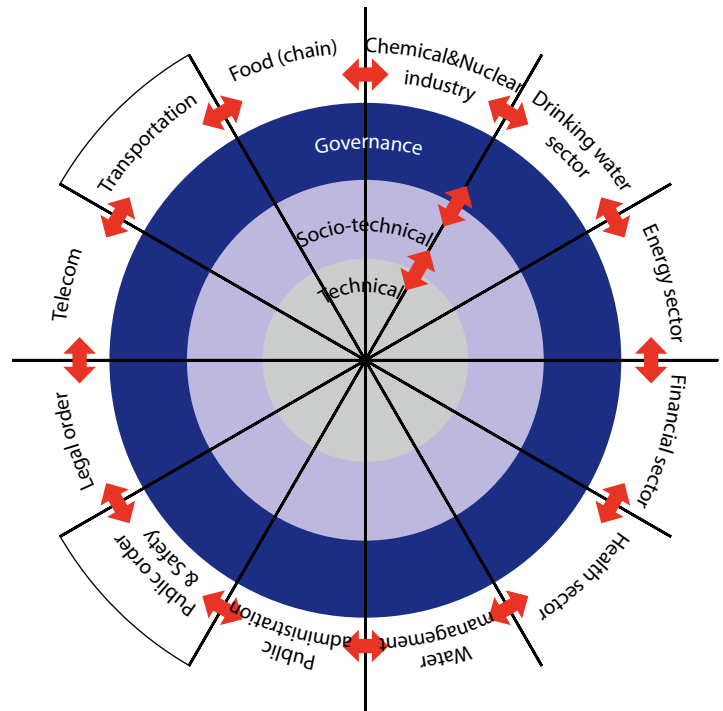


Figure 1 A Conceptualization of cyberspace in layers and (cyber) subdomains

Source: Van den Berg et al. 2014

lesser extent on socio-technical layers, as can be seen from other contributions. For understandable reasons the technically possible interception, collection and storage of huge amounts of data tickles people's imagination. Catchphrases such as 'select before you collect', 'collect before you select' and even 'select while you collect' exemplify the main road taken by most researchers.<sup>53</sup> A look at the reports of the

50 See: <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/dossier/34588> and <https://www.internetconsultatie.nl/wiv/details>.

51 Maurits Martijn, 'Wat zijn de wensen van dit kabinet voor de geheime diensten?', in: *De Correspondent*, 11 January 2016 <https://decorrespondent.nl/1632/wat-zijn-de-wensen-van-dit-kabinet-voor-de-geheime-diensten/50193792-ce33fa45>.

52 <https://www.internetconsultatie.nl/wiv/details> and Maurits Martijn, 'Vier redenen waarom de nieuwe aftapwet een slecht idee is', in: *De Correspondent*, 12 July 2017 <https://decorrespondent.nl/7054/vier-redenen-waarom-de-nieuwe-aftapwet-een-slecht-idee-is/713051614880-1a2bce5c>. NB: This article is a later version of the article mentioned in note 44 by the same author. The two interactive articles link to many important contributions concerning the intelligence law debate.

53 Bart Jacobs, 'Select before you collect', in: *Ars Aequi*, Vol. 54 (No. 12) pp. 1006-1009, 2005 and Bart Jacobs, 'Select while you collect. Over de voorgestelde interceptiebevoegdheden voor inlichtingen- en veiligheidsdiensten', in: *Nederlands Juristenblad Vol. 91* (Den Haag, 29 January 2016) p. 256-261.



PHOTO MCDON. KUYPER

The intelligence law debate in the Netherlands centers around the possibilities of large-scale automated data communication interception and the risks involved in approval of such methods

Dutch Review Committee on the Intelligence and Security Services (Commissie van Toezicht op de Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten or CTIVD) corroborates this. Twelve out of sixty-six investigative reports listed on its website deal with Signals Intelligence (SIGINT), or more precisely communication interception (tapping and/or hacking), storage and analysis.<sup>54</sup> A WRR-working paper on the use of big data by the MIVD and AIVD leads to a similar conclusion.<sup>55</sup>

### Paradoxes at play; transparency versus secrets

Is another perspective on the big data phenomenon feasible and can it be of use in, for instance, the debated Dutch intelligence law? A small strain of research has a welcome, more theoretical, bird's eye view of the problem at hand. In his inaugural lecture Dennis Broeders zooms in on the notion of secrets in today's information society and looks at the position of both individuals and the state.<sup>56</sup> He claims that the possibility of keeping individual secrets in today's society is decreasing, whilst the volume of state secrets has increased. At the same time state secrets have become more vulnerable. Broeders identifies the exponential rise and spread of new digital technologies as being at the core of this development.<sup>57</sup>

The vulnerability of state secrets has been aptly dubbed by Peter Swire the declining 'half-life' of

54 <http://www.ctivd.nl/onderzoeken>.

55 Sascha van Schendel, 'Het Gebruik van Big data door de MIVD en AIVD'. *WRR-working paper 18* (Den Haag, 2016).

56 Dennis Broeders, *Het geheim in de informatiesamenleving*, Oratie Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam, (Den Haag/Rotterdam, 2015).

57 Broeders, *Het geheim in de informatiesamenleving*, pp. 14-15.

secrets. Swire concentrates on the fact that the average time to disclosure nowadays is decreasing. At the same time the expected costs of disclosure to decision-makers become higher when secrets become known sooner, and might end up on the front-page while they are still in office. The time frame for keeping state secrets has customarily been measured in decades, as evidenced by the basic classification system of the United States that was developed during the Cold War. According to this system an executive agency must declassify its documents after twenty-five years unless an exception applies. The basic mind-set displayed in this time frame is revealing especially when secrets today often get exposed within a few years, months, or even days. The implications are multiplied owing to the continuing effects of *Moore's Law*. The continued improvement in computing power, combined with the infinitely improved possibility of dissemination through the internet, enables huge leaks at marginal costs and with relative ease,<sup>58</sup> as was the case with Assange, Snowden, the Panama or Paradise papers, or any other of a multitude of highly-publicized recent breaches and/or leaks.

So, the possibilities offered by the information revolution enable people to gather information and connect with each other at the speed of light. In its wake transparency has become the norm and is also expected from the state apparatus. However, enthused state bureaucracies are collecting more and more information on the lives of its citizens and show no inclination to keep fewer things secret. Broeders translates this development into a privacy paradox and a transparency paradox. According to him most people claim to be worried about their privacy, but in (digital) practice they behave without concern for these worries. To this must be added the acceptance, or more likely neglect, that many (commercial) databases hide themselves in and behind computer applications that make digital life so comfortable. Citizens are thus becoming ever more transparent for the state, whereas it has become more difficult to identify which government agency possesses what personal information. In other words, the state is becoming less transparent.<sup>59</sup>

'The continued improvement in computing power, combined with the infinitely improved possibility of dissemination through the internet, enables huge leaks at marginal costs and with relative ease' - Peter Swire

The right to have secrets is part of the social contract between citizens and the state. In a recent study Paul Frissen pays attention to the fact that a democratic state (democratische rechtsstaat) keeps secrets in the interest of the welfare, well-being, and (self) development of its citizens. Being of a personal nature these secrets are very much connected to privacy aspects. In addition, state secrets serve the purpose of state security, and the stability of society and the democratic legal order. Frissen emphasizes that state success in the second domain requires the acquisition of secrets. In the Netherlands these secrets are obtained with the help of special powers by ministerial approval without prior judicial review. Obviously, such state activities might seriously infringe upon people's privacy and their liberties and, therefore, require supervision and oversight. This demands the state to be strong and weak at the same time.<sup>60</sup>

58 Peter Swire, 'The declining Half-Life of Secrets. And the future of signals intelligence' in: *New America Cybersecurity Fellows Paper Series - Number 1* (July 2015).

59 Broeders, *Het geheim in de informatiesamenleving*, p. 18-19, 22-25, 29.

60 Paul Frissen, *Het geheim van de laatste staat. Kritiek van de transparantie* (Amsterdam, Uitgeverij Boom, 2016). See in particular the paragraph on paradoxes of secrets (*De paradoxen van het geheim*) in the final chapter (243-250). See also chapters 4 (137-163) and 5 (pp. 165-223) on the secrets of the state and the part played by the intelligence and security services.





PHOTO NFI/J. VISSER

Paul Frissen: 'The state needs to protect the secrets of its citizens, but to be effective it needs secrets of its own, and transparency of its citizens'

Paul Frissen maintains that the freedom of any citizen rests partly on his right to have secrets. In order to protect that right the state is obligated to prevent and counteract any attempts to undermine it. Paradoxically this requires secrecy to a certain extent. Or, in his opinion, the legitimacy of the state to perform secretive acts is also based upon people's right to have secrets. As long as the state protects this, it is entitled to have secrets of its own. In other words, to be legitimate the state needs to protect

the secrets of its citizens, but to be effective the state needs secrets of its own, and ... as much transparency of its citizens as possible.<sup>61</sup> Owing to big data flows and technology 'transparent citizens' seem within grasp. Frissen distinguishes two elements within the earlier mentioned transparency paradox. First, total transparency as the societal norm precludes the existence of secrets. However, the concept of total transparency is a treacherous misnomer, since it will ultimately rob a person of his individual freedom (e.g. to have scandalous thoughts or despicable opinions; in other words to be allowed to have secrets).<sup>62</sup> Second, it has simultaneously motivated intelligence and security services to try to use information and communication technology by indiscriminately intercepting data flows, discovering and analysing their trends in order to obtain

61 Watch the interview with Paul Frissen, broadcast by NPO 1 television on Sunday 24 January 2016. <http://www.vpro.nl/boeken/programmas/boeken/2016/24-januari.html>.

62 The disturbing consequences have been eloquently fictionalized by writers like George Orwell in *1984* (1949), or more recently, Dave Eggers in *The Circle* (2013).

# Waarborgen onderzoeksoprichtgerichte interceptie

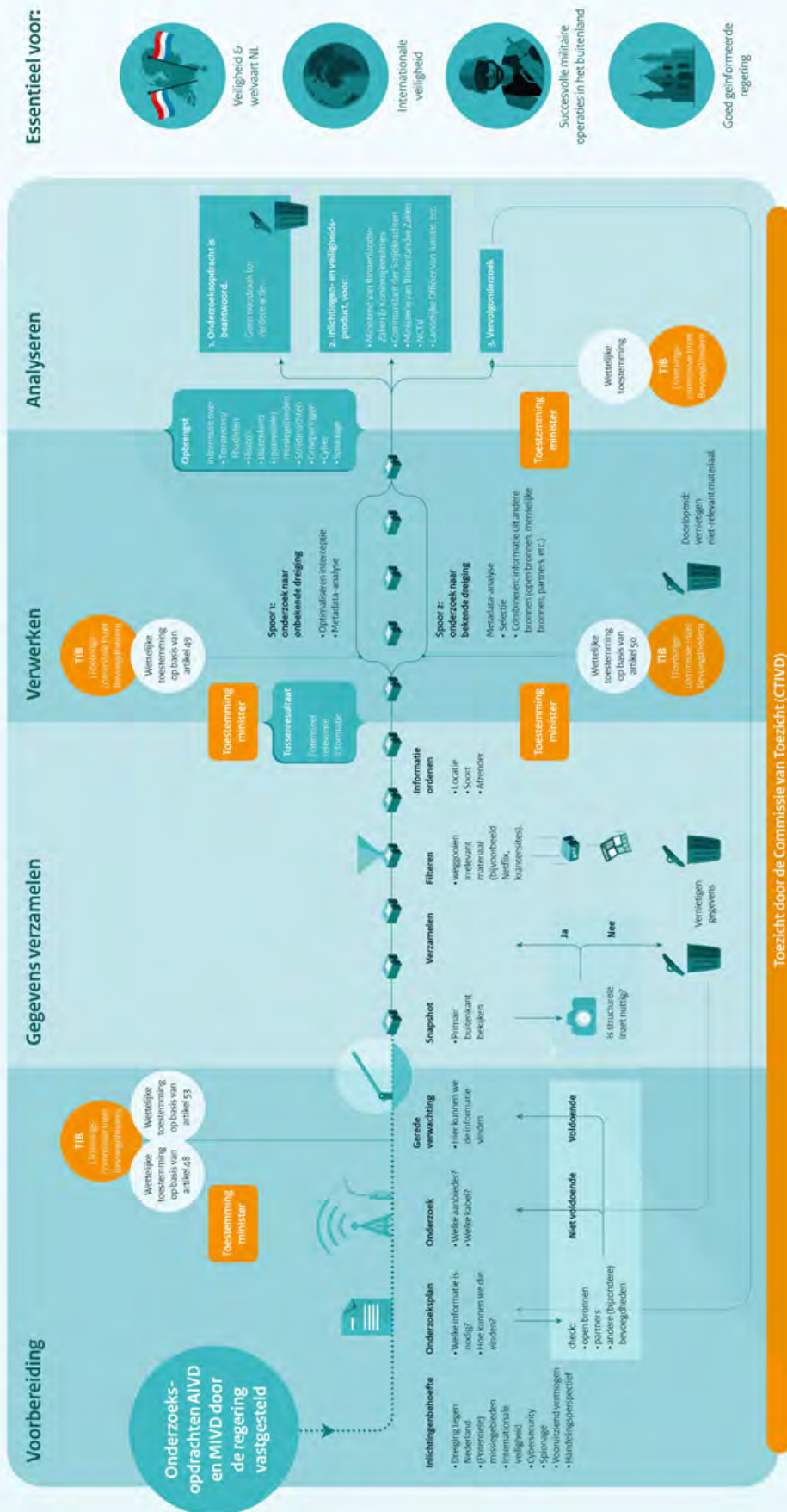


Figure 2 Intelligence law safeguards (incl. TIB and CTIVD; excl. IVD and ARK)

SOURCE: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/brochures/2016/10/28/INFOGRAPHIC-WAARBORGEN-ONDERZOEKSOprichtGERICHTE-INTERCEPTIE>

At the core of the matter there is no real dichotomy between transparency and secrets, or freedom and security. These notions constitute two sides of the same coin, and they very much depend upon each other

predictive value and actionable intelligence. This huge effort tries to protect civil society by preventing for example criminal and terrorist activities.<sup>63</sup>

#### The usefulness of paradoxes

The question remains whether recognition of the paradoxes can shed light on the complex interplay of big data flows, transparency and secrecy as indicated in the subtitle of this article. How can the described paradoxes be of assistance in this juggling act? First of all, they show that at the core of the matter there is no real

dichotomy between transparency and secrets or – indeed – freedom and security. These notions constitute two sides of the same coin, and they very much depend upon each other. Basic understanding of this fact can help bridge differences between freedom of information and security advocates. Secondly, to put this into practice requires steering away from the current inclination to zoom in on technicalities. Much more focused attention is needed on the governance level within the cyber domain. There is no paradox involved when it comes to big data flows and big data technologies on the technical level. Simply put, the data streams and the techniques to mine them exist, as well as the profits (monetary or otherwise) to reap from them. These are not imaginary. They are just there, ready to be used. The paradoxes come into play when the technical capabilities are translated into cyber activities on the socio-economic level. At this level consequences are being felt and conflicts of interest are being fought over. And third, this juggling of interests could benefit from more objective guidance offered by a robust policy and governance framework. A framework with the implicit goal of generating transparency and trust<sup>64</sup> among parties involved. In this governments have a role to play by managing parts of the data economy, such as public infrastructure, and opening up more of their own data vaults (open data).<sup>65</sup>

#### The need for a governance framework

In the Netherlands a governance framework has not matured yet. The Dutch government set a laudable step on the (international) governance track by assigning the WRR the task to research internet governance, which resulted in an elaborate advice on (inter)national governance and protection of the internet's public core.<sup>66</sup> The government response to the advice was favourable and future policy development is now eagerly awaited.<sup>67</sup>

When it comes to internal and external big data-control, commercial practice is still in its infancy. Pushed by (supra)national governments, watchdogs and consumer organizations, confidentiality and accountability issues are nowadays on the business agenda. Still, the main

63 Interview with Paul Frissen by NPO 1 television.

64 Bibi van den Berg and Esther Keymolen, 'Regulating Security on the Internet: control versus trust', in: *International Review of Law, Computers & Technology* 31:2 (2017) p. 188-205.

65 'Living with technology: The Data Republic', in: *The Economist*, 26 March 2016; 'The world's most valuable resource', *The Economist*, 6 May 2017.

66 Dennis Broeders et al. 'De Publieke Kern van het Internet'.

67 'Kabinetsreactie op AIV-advies 'Het internet, een wereldwijde vrije ruimte met begrensde staatsmacht' en WRR-advies 'De publieke kern van het internet: naar een buitenlands internetbeleid', 19 May 2016. See: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2016/05/19/kabinetsreactie-op-aiv-advies-het-internet-een-wereldwijde-vrije-ruimtemet-begrensde-staatsmacht-enwrr-advies-de-publieke-kern-van-het-internet-naar-een-buitenlands-internetbeleid>.



challenge for the coming years will be the integrity of the ever-growing amounts of data in possession of and used by companies. Recently, the accountancy profession has started to realize that auditing of databases and/or large datasets with regard to privacy violations or integrity issues are indispensable from a governance – i.e. a management – point of view, and hold great promise for the future.<sup>68</sup>

Within the security context a governance/oversight mechanism with regard to the intelligence and security services is in place, and has been strengthened in the revised intelligence law (see figure 2). The Toetsingscommissie Inzet Bevoegdheden (TIB), CTIVD (ex-post), Court of Audit (Algemene Rekenkamer or ARK) and a special parliamentary committee (Commissie voor de Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten or CIVD)<sup>69</sup> are tasked for this job. However, their findings are not legally binding, with the notable exception of the TIB from 2018 onwards.<sup>70</sup> In the end those responsible for the intelligence and security services – the Minister of Interior Affairs and/or the Minister of Defence – decide if and when what action is to be taken. The request of the CTIVD for more authoritative powers has not been honoured so far, except for CTIVD-judgement on citizens' complaints, which has become binding.<sup>71</sup> In the meantime the CTIVD is preparing itself for the future oversight challenges connected to the new intelligence law, i.e. bulk interception and big data analytics.<sup>72</sup> In a press statement of April 2017 it announced the start of project *Toezicht 3.0 (Oversight 3.0)*, which aims to investigate the possibilities of effective oversight with regard to the collection, analysis and destruction of large amounts of data.<sup>73</sup>

## Conclusion

The introduction stated that big data is connected to the free flow of information and the transparency that seems to flow from it. It was said that this does not relate well with the secretive behaviour of intelligence and security agencies. Evidently there is more to this assertion than would appear at first sight.

Transparency and secrets are inextricably linked and do meet in unexpected ways.

At the core of the debate we have found paradoxes to which little attention has been paid within the media stream of technical possibilities and, to a lesser extent, socio-technical applications of big data. Recognition of the big data paradox will serve the purpose of an integral and more balanced perspective on the counter-intuitive, but complementary, notions of transparent and secretive behaviour. If successful, all three levels of the cyber domain will be combined. Excesses on the internet required (and require) governance through regulation in order to benefit from its accomplishments. Big data requires a comparable course of action. This awareness should translate into robust oversight of secret actions and, more generally, into well-organized, state-sponsored, international governance of big data flows and technologies that are revolutionizing our everyday lives. ■

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- 68 Franka Rolvink Couzy, 'Big four duiken in big-datacontrole', in: *Financieel Dagblad*, 30 March 2017.
- 69 Constant Hijzen, 'Tot het lachen ons vergaat. Over de noodzaak van parlementaire aandacht voor inlichtingen- en veiligheidsdiensten', in: *S&D 70 Nr. 4*, July 2013.
- 70 It remains, however, to be seen how the binding mandate of the new TIB will relate to overarching(?) ministerial responsibility. See: 'Toezicht in nieuwe wet op de inlichtingendiensten goed regelen', 8 February 2017 in: *Rechtspraak.nl*. <https://www.rechtspraak.nl/Organisatie-en-contact/Organisatie/Raad-voor-de-rechtspraak/Nieuws/Paginas/Toezicht-in-nieuwe-Wet-op-de-Inlichtingen--en-veiligheidsdiensten-goed-regelen.aspx>.
- 71 'Reactie CTIVD op het concept-wetsvoorstel Wet op de inlichtingen- en veiligheidsdiensten 20XX', Consultatieversie juni 2015. See: <http://www.ctivd.nl/documenten/publicaties/2015/08/26/reactie-ctivd-conceptwetsvoorstel> and 'Bijlage I Essentiële waarborgen. Zienswijze van de CTIVD Op het wetsvoorstel Wiv 20..' November 2016. See: [https://www.ctivd.nl/binaries/ctivd/documenten/publicaties/2016/11/09/bijlage-i/Zienswijze+van+de+CTIVD\\_Bijlage+I\\_november+2016.pdf](https://www.ctivd.nl/binaries/ctivd/documenten/publicaties/2016/11/09/bijlage-i/Zienswijze+van+de+CTIVD_Bijlage+I_november+2016.pdf) and Maurits Martijn, 'De waakhond van de geheime diensten wil door kunnen bijten, maar heeft er de tanden niet voor', in: *De Correspondent*, 11 January 2016.
- 72 Hilde Bos-Ollermann, 'New surveillance legislation & intelligence oversight challenges. The Dutch experience', International Intelligence Oversight Forum, 11-12 October 2016. See: <https://www.ctivd.nl/documenten/toespraken/2016/10/11/index>.
- 73 'Start Project Toezicht 3.0', CTIVD, 25 April 2017 See: <https://www.ctivd.nl/actueel/nieuws/2017/04/25/index-2>.



# Reflexive Control

*The relevance of a 50-year-old Russian theory regarding perception control*

**During the 1980s Tom Clancy gained fame writing techno-thrillers, situated in a fictional world, using contemporary Cold War-themes. His novels, amongst others, contributed to reviving attention to the concept of *Maskirovka* (Russian military deception). Especially in *Red Storm Rising*, the concept was extensively used within a political/strategic context. More than twenty years later, *Maskirovka* and other Soviet/Russian concepts are once again relevant – as the Russian Federation is applying them in various theatres – bordering NATO territory. This article will focus on a more refined version of *Maskirovka*, called Reflexive Control Theory (RCT). The aim of this article is to provide an insight into the concept of RCT, its application in the past, present and future and how it affects NATO and the Netherlands Armed Forces.**

*Major C. Kamphuis BSc.\**

‘And the *Maskirovka*?’  
 ‘In two parts. The first is purely political, to work against the United States. The second part, immediately before the war begins, is from KGB. You know it, from KGB Group Nord. We reviewed it two years ago.’

Tom Clancy, *Red Storm Rising* (1986) p. 18

**F**irst of all, the article explores the concept of *Maskirovka* as a broader foundation for the application of Reflexive Control (RC). Secondly, the concept of RC will be discussed and put into a historical context. This will be followed by a review of recent and ongoing applications of RC in eastern Ukraine and the Crimea. The article concludes with a description of how RC could be – and is already – being applied in the Baltics, with a focus on the implications for (Dutch) NATO ‘enhanced Forward Presence’ (eFP) units operating in the Baltics.

All original literature on RCT is written in Russian, a language which the author does not master. Therefore, the literature study has been conducted using Dutch and English publications. Timothy Thomas, an American analyst at the Foreign Military Studies Office, has published



PHOTO OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF LITHUANIA, R. DACKIUS

*Lithuanian President Grybauskaitė, Prime Minister Rutte and former Commander in Chief Middendorp visit Dutch troops deployed in NATO's enhanced Forward Presence, 2017*

several extensive studies over the past decades. He based them on the original works of Vladimir Lefebvre and other Russian pioneers of RCT. Therefore, the works of Thomas have been used in this study as a replacement for the original Russian publications.

## The concept of Maskirovka explained

Maskirovka is a Russian concept predating the Soviet Union, with the first official Maskirovka school being established in 1904.<sup>1</sup> Maskirovka is a concept encompassing multiple elements, such as camouflage, concealment, deception, misinformation, imitation, secrecy, security, feints, and diversion. The noun Maskirovka used to be translated as 'to mask'. First of all, this does not cover the concept at all, and furthermore it is actually impossible to translate a noun as a verb.<sup>2</sup>

In the past, but also as we speak, this prevented actors from appreciating the full extent of the

concept and falsely mistake it for camouflage and concealment. In 2014, while writing about the conflict erupting in the Ukraine, journalist Oestron Moeler defined Maskirovka as deliberately misleading the opponent with regard to one's own intentions, causing the opponent to make wrong decisions and thereby playing into one's own hand.<sup>3</sup>

This definition of Maskirovka is astoundingly similar to modern-day definitions of RC. This is not a coincidence: the concepts of Maskirovka

\* Christian Kamphuis is a major in the Royal Netherlands Army and is currently working at the Land Training Center, part of the Education and Training Command. This article was written as a spin-off from the doctrinal bulletin on the Russian Independent Motor Rifle Brigade, which the author wrote on behalf of Commander Land Training Center.

- 1 Bouwmeester, H., 'Lo and Behold: Let the Truth Be Told—Russian Deception Warfare in the Crimea and Ukraine and the Return of 'Maskirovka' and 'Reflexive Control Theory', in: Ducheine, P., Osinga, F., *NL ARMS 201, Winning Without Killing: The Strategic and Operational Utility of Non-Kinetic Capabilities in Crises*, Den Haag: T.M.C. Asser Press (2017) 125-155.
- 2 Bouwmeester, H. (2017).
- 3 Bouwmeester, H. (2017).

and RC have a lot in common. Moreover, RC can be regarded as a refinement of Maskirovka.<sup>4</sup> Deception is a core element of both Maskirovka and RC. In order to effectively deceive an opponent, it is adamant that whatever is undertaken must appear highly plausible to the enemy, and it needs to conform to both his perspective of Russian doctrine and to his own strategic assumptions.<sup>5</sup>

## Reflexive Control

### Origins of RC

RC is a concept that was pioneered in the Soviet Union in the 1960s by Vladimir Lefebvre, a psychologist and mathematician, who is considered the founding father of this concept. RC is a special kind of influence activity, and it predates the modern concept of information warfare.

It was not until the late 1970s that this concept was formally adopted by the Soviet military, although Soviet military thinkers were already interested in the concept almost a decade before. During the time that RC was not mentioned in any Soviet military handbook. It did not officially exist and thus could not be mentioned in any military publication. Officers publishing in relevant Soviet military journals, such as *Voennaia Mysl (Military Thought)*, wrote about 'control of the enemy' to circumvent this issue.

### Definitions of RC

RC is defined by Lefebvre as 'a process by which one enemy transmits the reasons or bases for making decisions to another', or as he put it in

the title of one his books, 'a Soviet concept of influencing an adversary's decision-making process'.<sup>6</sup> Timothy Thomas defines it as 'a means of conveying to a partner or an opponent specially prepared information to incline him to voluntarily make predetermined decision desired by the initiator of the action'.<sup>7</sup>

The core concept in these definitions is that an actor provides specific and predetermined information to another actor, with the explicit goal to *control* the decisions made by the receiver. In other words, *controlling* the decision-making process leading to the receiving actor making decisions that will lead to his defeat and/or enable the desired outcome for the transmitting actor.

Keir Giles, researcher at NATO Defence College, mentioned that in Russian sources the phrase 'Reflexive Control' is no longer a current phrase. It has been partially replaced by the phrase 'Perception Management'. The latter phrase appears to have been adopted directly from western literature on Information Operations.<sup>8</sup> This notion contradicts statements made by Thomas in two different studies from 2004 and 2017. Thomas explicitly states that RC differs from any known western concept, because it is about controlling perception, and not about managing perception. Managing perception, and not controlling perception is the essence of western perception management within the context of information warfare.<sup>9</sup>

Because the Soviet/Russian concept of RC predates western thinking on information operations, it is likely that Thomas's conclusion is right. Therefore, in this article RC is considered as a different concept than perception management.

### RCT in modern day Russian doctrine

Russian commanders in warfare have to apply RC, because one of the prime goals is to interfere with the decision-making process of an enemy commander. Therefore, Russia considers RC at least as important as conventional firepower or even as a more decisive factor.<sup>10</sup> It is an essential part of the modern Russian operational art, as described in the so-called Gerasimov Doctrine.

4 Bouwmeester, H. (2017).

5 Thomas, T.L., 'Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and The Military', in: *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17 (2004) 237–256.

6 Lefebvre, V.A., op cit in: Shemayev, V.N., 'Reflexive control in socio-economic systems', in: *Information & Security. An international Journal* No. 22(2007) 28–32.

7 Thomas, T.L., 'Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and The Military', in: *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17 (2004) 237–256.

8 Giles, K., *Handbook of Russian Information Warfare*, Rome: NATO Defense College (2016) 19.

9 Thomas, T.L., *Kremlin Kontrol*, Ft Leavenworth: Foreign Military Studies Office (2017) 175–197.

10 Shemayev, V. (2007).

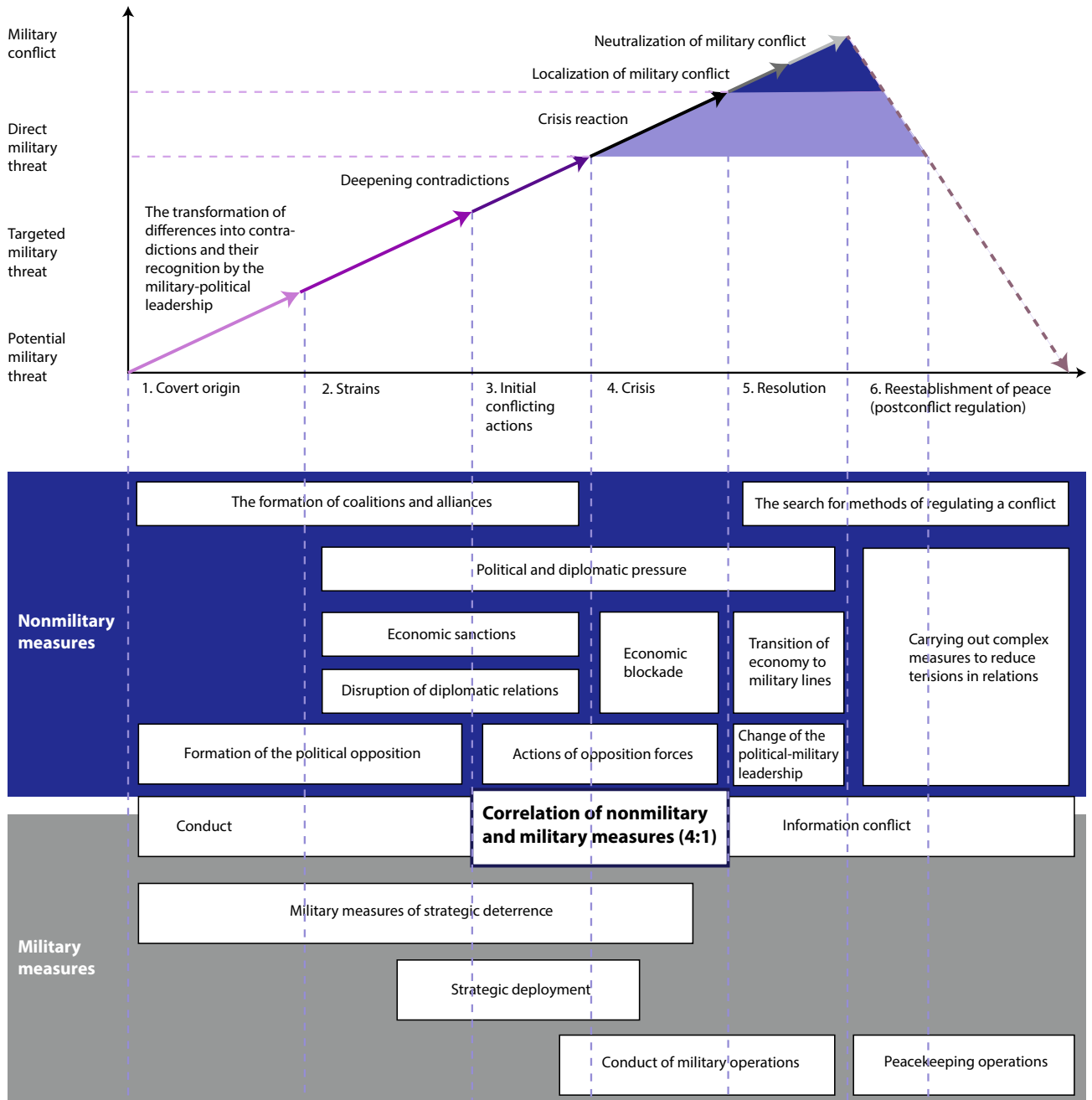


Figure 1 Graph of the Gerasimov Doctrine (Source: Charles K. Bartles, 'Getting Gerasimov Right', in: *Military Review*, January-February 2016, p. 35. Reprinted with permission)

This framework was published in February 2014 by General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation Armed Forces (RFAF).

This doctrine can be used as a planning tool for the RFAF to apply military and non-military

means to influence all actors in order to achieve its goals. The doctrine describes six distinct phases in which a conflict develops from a concealed origin up to restoration of peace.<sup>11</sup>

11 Selhorst, T., 'Russia's Preception Warfare', in: *Militaire Spectator* 185 (4) (2016) 148-164.





PHOTO U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, M. CULLEN

According to General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation Armed Forces (RFAF), RC is at least as important as conventional firepower

Gerasimov himself claimed that his doctrine is not a description of Russian doctrine at all. Instead it is a description of what the West (and especially the USA) has done in the last decades in various conflict areas, such as Iraq and Afghanistan. This claim is in fact supported by various thinkers within the western strategic community. They claim that recent Russian publications on modern warfare are merely an attempt to catch up conceptually with the reality of modern warfare, with which the West has already been grappling for almost two decades.<sup>12</sup> Taking this into account, it may well be that Gerasimov actually did describe what he

had observed in Iraq and Afghanistan, but with the purpose to adopt this within the framework of modern-day Russian military thinking.

### Hybrid Warfare

The western world, especially NATO, categorizes current Russian military activity as Hybrid Warfare. In Russian literature Hybrid Warfare is no longer a valid term. Instead, 'non-linear warfare' is used, and more recently 'New Type Warfare', to describe present-day military activity.<sup>13</sup>

This article will continue to use Hybrid Warfare, because this is in line with all relevant contemporary western publications. Frank Hoffman defined Hybrid Warfare as a fusion of war forms that blur regular and irregular warfare. Gerasimov states the following in this regard:

12 Kasapoglu, C., *Russia's renewed military thinking: non-linear warfare and reflexive control*, Rome: NATO Defence College (2015).

13 Thomas, T., The Evolving Nature of Russia's Way of War, in: *Military Review*, July-August 2017.

*'The focus of applied methods of conflict has altered in the direction of the broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other non-military measures (...) applied in coordination with the protest potential of the population. All this is supplemented by military means of concealed character, including carrying out actions of informational conflict and the actions of special operations forces.'*

According to recent NATO studies, this renewed military thinking is based upon Soviet legacy theories, such as Soviet Deep Operation Theory (DOT) and RC. In Soviet times, DOT originally focused on launching Special Forces, and specifically designed Operational Maneuver Groups, literally deep into the enemy rear. Nowadays, the physical component has been (largely) replaced by achieving effects in the enemy rear using more subtle techniques, such as RC.<sup>14</sup>

#### **Mechanisms behind the concept of RC**

The 'reflex' within RC involves the specific process of imitating the enemy's reasoning and cause him to make a decision unfavourable to himself. So, the reflex is not the reaction of the opponent an actor seeks to create, but it is the ability of an actor to imitate the opponent's thoughts or predict his behaviour. A receiver will make a decision based on the idea of the situation which he has formed.

This idea is formed by a set of concepts, knowledge, insights, ideas and experience of the receiver. This set is called the 'filter' within RC. The filter assists in separating necessary from useless information. The chief task of RC is, therefore, to find the weak link in the filter and exploit it. By exploiting this weak link an actor can create model behaviour in the system of the opponent he seeks to control.<sup>15</sup>

The aforementioned filter does not only include humans. In the modern age, automated data-processing systems composed of a significant part of decision-making processes, are part of the filter. Therefore, RC also includes digital information and is applied in the cyber domain.

Methods to achieve RC are varied and include camouflage, disinformation, encouragement, blackmail by force and compromising officials and officers. It is considered to be more of a military art than a military science.<sup>16</sup>

#### **How to apply RCT**

In order to achieve a higher degree of reflex than the opponent, it is insufficient just to understand the opponent and his filter. One must also be capable of achieving surprise and act far more differently from what the opponent expects. Surprise and unforeseen behaviour can be achieved by means of stealth, disinformation and, most important, avoidance of stereotypes.<sup>17</sup>

This appears to be paradoxical, because part of RC is to reinforce the stereotypes an opponent has of his enemy and to convince him that that enemy will do what he thinks is the most logical option for him. But, eventually all it takes is to surprise the opponent by doing something which is indeed unpredictable and defies the (reinforced) stereotypes.

It would be a grave misunderstanding to think that Russian commanders are predictable, just because the Russian army is known to operate by using sets of predetermined tactics and procedures. The broad palette of available tactics and procedures offers a commander enough options to devise operations which are intricate enough to deceive his opponent. The recent improvements in C3I within the armed forces also offer better means to orchestrate the execution of these intricate plans.<sup>18</sup>

14 Kasapoglu, C. (2015).

15 Thomas, T. (2017) 175-197.

16 Shemayev, V. (2007).

17 Thomas, T.L., 'Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and The Military', in: *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17 (2004) 243.

18 Grau, L.W., *How Russia Fights*, Ft Leavenworth, KS: Foreign Military Studies Office (2016) 50-51.

Major General (retired) Ivonov published a checklist for commanders that gives a practical insight into how Russian commanders can apply RC:

- Power pressure: using a superior force, threats of sanctions, raising the alert status of troops, combat reconnaissance, weapon tests, supporting subservice elements destabilizing the enemies rear, playing up victories and show mercy to an enemy ally that has stopped fighting.
- Measures to present false information about the situation: concealment (display weakness in a strong place), creation of mock installations, concealing true relations between units (or create mock ones), maintain secrecy about new weapons, weapons bluffing, deliberately losing critical documents (some real, some fake), subversion, leaving open a route to escape encirclement and forcing the enemy to take retaliatory actions involving expenditure of forces, assets and time.
- Influencing the enemy's decision-making algorithm: systematic conduct exercises/ demonstrations in accordance with what the enemy already perceives as being routine *modus operandi*, publishing a deliberate distorted doctrine, striking enemy C2 and key figures and transmitting false background data.
- Altering the decision-making time: unexpectedly start combat operations, transmitting information about the background of an analogous conflict to reinforce the enemy's assumptions and let him make hasty decisions that alter the mode of his operation.<sup>19</sup>

## Basic elements of RC

Colonel S.A. Komov, an influential writer about RC in the 1990s, made the following list of basic elements of RC.

- Distraction: create a real or imaginary threat to the enemy's flank or rear during the preparatory stages of combat operations, forcing him to adapt his plans.
- Overload (of information): frequently sent large amounts of conflicting information.
- Paralysis: create the perception of an unexpected threat to a vital interest or weak spot.
- Exhaustion: compel the enemy to undertake useless operations, forcing him to enter combat with reduced resources.
- Deception: force the enemy to relocate assets in reaction to an imaginary threat during the preparatory stages of combat.
- Division: convince actors to operate in opposition to coalition interests.
- Pacification: convince the enemy that pre-planned operational training is occurring rather than preparations for combat operations.
- Deterrence: create the perception of superiority.
- Provocation: force the enemy to take action advantageous to one's own side.
- Suggestion: offer information that affects the enemy legally, morally, ideologically, or in other areas.
- Pressure: offer information that discredits the enemy's commanders and/or government in the eyes of the population.<sup>20</sup>

The literature does not provide a conclusive answer, whether the elements described in the two lists above have to be addressed as a complete package or whether a commander can pick specific elements in order to be effective in achieving his goal. Many elements, however, appear to be interlinked. Some elements even appear to be the outcome of the implementation of other elements. As an example, applying overload and paralysis can contribute to achieving exhaustion, just as deception can.

19 Thomas, T.L., 'Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and The Military', in: *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17 (2004) 243-246.

20 Thomas, T.L., 'Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and The Military', in: *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17 (2004) 248-249.

It can therefore be concluded that in order to be successful, all elements have to be addressed, but to different degrees. It depends on the precise situation how important a specific element is to achieve success. Furthermore, the different elements offer a commander the option to change the focus of his operation. If a certain element is not effective (or even counter-productive) it is possible to increase the focus on another element to improve the chances of being successful eventually.

### RC in relation to the maneuverist approach

In Dutch military doctrine, fighting power is composed of a physical, mental and conceptual component. The aim of the maneuverist approach is to defeat an opponent by breaking his moral and physical cohesion, instead of destroying him step by step (attrition). The maneuverist approach emphasizes the need to understand and attack the conceptual and mental component of an opponent, besides attacking the physical component.<sup>21</sup>

While looking at the concept of RC, it can be argued that this concept is in fact a Russian incarnation of the maneuverist approach, with a great emphasis on attacking the conceptual component of an adversary. In order to be effective in applying RC one must understand the opponent, which enables one to provide him with information which not only reinforces his assumptions, but also his natural way of reasoning. This inclines him to make decisions that will contribute to his own defeat.

Combined with practical guidelines as formulated in the previous paragraph, RC offers an excellent manual to apply the maneuverist approach in a pure form: out-manuever the opponent mentally and conceptually (preferably) before or without engaging him physically. This might be a coincidence, but it is likely an indicator of the integration of (successful) western doctrine in a pre-existing Russian concept.

RC is in fact a Russian incarnation of the maneuverist approach, with a great emphasis on attacking the conceptual component of an adversary

### Past application of RC: two historical examples

In the past the Russian military and security forces actively applied the concepts of RC. The first example is from the Cold War, when the Soviet Union tried to alter the US perception of the nuclear balance. The goal was to convince the West that Soviet missile capabilities were far more formidable than they actually were. To achieve this, they, amongst others, exhibited fake ICBMs at military parades in order to create the illusion that a single missile could carry huge multiple warheads.<sup>22</sup>

At the same time Soviet authorities made sure that military attachés and known western intelligence officers would observe the parades closely. They further created a trail of collateral proof that western intelligence services would

<sup>21</sup> *Doctrine Publicaties 3.2, Landoperaties*. Amersfoort: Land Warfare Centre (2014) 81-89.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas, T.L., 'Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and The Military', in: *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17 (2004) 252-253.



discover when investigating the fake ICBMs, which would lead them even further astray.<sup>23</sup> The ultimate goal was to lead foreign scientists, who would try to copy the advanced technology, down a dead-end street. By doing so, the West would be wasting precious time, money and scientific research capacity.<sup>24</sup>

The second example occurred during the occupation of the Russian White House in October 1993 conducted by Members of

Parliament and their supporters, advocating a return to communism. On the day of a massive demonstration by supporters of the occupation, the police permitted one of its communication posts to be overrun by protesters, giving them access to secured communication channels. At the same time, the military authorities broadcasted deceptive messages, which could be received by the protesters. The messages contained a fake conversation of two high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), discussing the imminent storming of the White House. They specifically mentioned aiming for 'the Chechen'. One of the key persons orchestrating the occupation was Ruslan Khasbulatov, the Speaker of Parliament who was of Chechen ethnicity.

23 Baranov, A., 'Parade of Fakes, Moskovskii komsomolets (Moscow Komsomol), May 8, 1999, 6, as translated and entered on the FBIS webpage, May 11, 1999.

24 See <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/moscow-paraded-dummy-missiles-1185682.html>.

*'Forward to the victory of communism': during the Cold War the Soviet Union tried to mislead the West with its military parades*



Within minutes of broadcasting the fake messages, Khasbulatov and other key figures appeared on the balcony of the White House and asked the crowd of supporters outside to go to the Ostankino TV station and capture it. This public call for disobedience was exactly what the security forces had aimed for. Now they could legally act against the key figures and end the occupation.<sup>25</sup>

## Modern-day application of RC

### The Crimea

On March 18, 2014, Russia annexed Crimea catching almost everybody off guard including the Ukrainian government and security apparatus, but also many decision-makers within NATO. The Russian military disguised its actions and strongly denied involvement. The best-known example of this are the infamous ‘little green men’ who popped up everywhere.

Lacking any unit insignia or other features that could link them to Russia made it possible for the Russian government to deny the claim they were in fact Russian Special Forces.<sup>26</sup> These actions can easily be categorized as a classical example of Russian military deception, or Maskirovka, but are they also evidence of the use of the more refined concept of RC?

To answer this, the following question must be answered first: did the Russian Federation influence (use its ability to reflex and manipulate the filter of) Ukrainian and western governments with the intention to let them make the decision not to take action and thus do exactly what the Russians wanted them to do? It is argued that Russia manipulated Kiev’s and NATO’s sensory awareness of the outside world in the period leading up to the actual annexation of the Crimea.

The overall goal was not to paralyze their systems, but to alter their perception of reality by disguising the Kremlin’s real intentions (annexation of the Crimea). Kiev and NATO had to come to the conclusion that Russia would not invade the Crimea and that de-escalation was

the best option, which was exactly what the Kremlin intended.

This was achieved in various ways. First of all, Russian forces already present in Crimean naval bases were capable of seizing key points under the cover of deception. They also penetrated deeply and paralyzed a possible Ukrainian response (for example, by holding Ukrainian forces hostage within their own barracks). Russian military build-up along the eastern Ukrainian border, preceding the eventual annexation, was another factor. This did not only pin down Ukrainian units in those areas at a huge distance from the Crimea, but it also added to the confusion in Kiev and within NATO about the true scope and intentions of the Kremlin.

The massive military build-up and sub-sequential snap-exercises<sup>27</sup> did not only add to confusion, but also deterred Kiev from taking any decisive action in the Crimea.<sup>28</sup> The aforementioned combination of Russian actions leads to the conclusion that RC was indeed applied regarding the annexation of the Crimea.

The success of the Russian Crimean campaign was astounding. In a matter of three weeks, and without a shot being fired, the morale of the Ukrainian military was broken and Ukraine surrendered all of its 190 military bases in the Crimea. This was achieved by less than 10,000 Russian troops (mostly naval infantry, and some airborne and Spetsnaz battalions) making use of the BTR-80 armoured personnel carrier as their heaviest combat vehicle. The Ukrainian forces totaled 16,000 and included mechanized formations with armoured infantry fighting vehicles, self-propelled artillery and tanks.<sup>29</sup>

25 See <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-players-1993-crisis/25125000.html>.

26 The United States Army Special Operations Command, *Little Green Men*, Carolina: The United States Army Special Operations Command (2016) 21-40.

27 A snap-exercise includes units being deployed without any prior warning given, to test their operational readiness in case of emergency. Sometimes units only have to move to an assembly area, but sometimes they have to participate in exercises after arriving at the assembly area.

28 Bukkvol, T., *Russian Special Operations Forces in Donbass and Crimea*, Oslo: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (2016).





*People climb a Russian tank in Kiev during the opening of an exhibition of Russian weapons captured from pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine. Publicly the Kremlin denies any involvement in the region*

PHOTO ANP/AFP, S. SOEPINSKI

### **Eastern Ukraine**

The ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine may also serve as an example of the application of RC within the context of hybrid warfare. The massive build-up of Russian forces that started back in 2014 along the Russian-Ukrainian border is still there, disguising the sending of troops across the border or providing weapons to separatists. It also offers a disguise for Russian forces operating from Russian soil. For example the launching of Remotely Piloted Aerial Systems (RPAS), artillery strikes in the Ukraine, or Electronic Warfare units jamming frequencies

of Ukrainian units all originate from Russian soil.

Publicly the Kremlin denies any involvement in eastern Ukraine, despite mounting evidence to the contrary. The evidence includes specific versions of fighting vehicles operating in eastern Ukraine which are exclusively used by Russian forces. It also includes pictures of damaged Russian tanks, which have sustained damage that can only be inflicted in actual combat due to mines, anti-tank missiles and other tanks. These pictures have been taken on Russian territory, when the tanks were being repaired within several kilometres from the Ukrainian border.

29 Kasapoglu, C. (2015).



'Humanitarian aid from the Russian Federation': a convoy bound for the regions of Lugansk and Donetsk in Ukraine, conveying certain perceptions in Russia and abroad

PHOTO ANP/AFP, S. VENJAVSKI

## Disinformation targets public perception

There is also a large ongoing campaign using disinformation, which not only targets the population of the Ukraine and Crimea, but also the public in Russia itself. A recent publication from NATO's Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence (StratCOM CoE) reports that the deception campaign is highly successful, stating that only 6 per cent of Russians believe that the war in eastern Ukraine continues due to the interference of the Russian leadership in the conflict by supporting the Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic.<sup>30</sup>

However, what is more relevant for this article is that the disinformation also targets western and Ukrainian public perception, based on a specific strategic narrative which also has the purpose to divide the West. Russia makes use of different and sometimes conflicting economic interests of EU member states regarding Russia. It also exploits the difference in views between New Europe (Eastern Europe) and Old Europe (Western Europe).

Furthermore, Russia exploits historic paradigms, such as the Nazi occupation many countries endured during World War II. This is also the

30 Ogrisko, V., *Russian information and propaganda war: some methods and forms to counteract*, Riga: NATO Stratcom CoE (2016).



reason why there is such a strong emphasis on branding pro-Kiev movements as fascist and linking them to a 'fascist-friendly regime' in Kiev.<sup>31</sup>

The following narratives are being used to target the West, the Ukraine and Russian society:

1. Ethnic Russian minorities are suppressed in the Ukraine and in EU-countries;
2. Russia is an enemy of the West and therefore the West tries to limit Russia's global influence and power;
3. The USA and other EU-countries organized the colour revolutions in a few post-Soviet countries that were anti-Russia oriented;
4. Russia is a superpower and has to have the right to influence. The 'objective' sphere of its influence is the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS);
5. Russia is a stronghold in fighting modern fascism. Everything identified as anti-Soviet or anti-Russian should be labelled as fascism;
6. Western individualism is destructive. Collective consciousness is the traditional form of consciousness for Russians;
7. The Russian Orthodox Church is the only right religion. Morality is dying in the West. Europe becomes 'Gay-Europe', which is illustrated by the many homophobic rants in Russian media and society;<sup>32</sup>
8. The Russian World, the *Russkiy Mir*, is an alternative to 'Gay-Europe'.<sup>33</sup>

The Russian Federation has several strategic objectives including preventing further expansion to the east by both NATO and the EU, and recreating a buffer zone between the Russian heartland and NATO. Until now Russia

has succeeded in avoiding a strong and decisive action by either NATO or the Ukrainian military in eastern Ukraine and thereby contributed to the aforementioned two objectives.<sup>34</sup>

#### **Application of RC in the Baltics**

The conflict in Ukraine is taking place at the fringes of EU and NATO territory. Russia, however, is also being perceived as a threat to the NATO member states in the Baltics, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The aggressive Russian stance includes attempts to activate Russian proxies (Russian ethnic minorities), simulated attacks by SU-24 fighters in the Baltic Sea on US navy vessels, cyberattacks, and threats to use nuclear weapons. The threat is being perceived as real in these states, especially in Estonia and Lithuania.

It is interesting to notice that, although there are large Russian-speaking minorities in all three states, they do differ in nature from the Russian minority in eastern Ukraine. For example, there is hardly any desire to join the Russian motherland among the Russian-speaking minorities. In fact, many of them consider President Putin an opportunist and they prefer to stay in the Baltics and be part of the EU and NATO.

The biggest threat to the Baltics, therefore, comes from the ever-increasing numbers of Russian forces surrounding them. The threat lies not only in the numbers, but also in the quality of equipment of these units. The perceived threat already led to an Enhanced Forward Presence of NATO battlegroups.<sup>35</sup> Marcel van Herpen, director of the Cicero Foundation, says that Russian behaviour towards the Baltics fits within the framework of RC. He states that, just as is the case with the Ukraine, Russia attempts to redraw the map of Europe and reinstate a buffer zone between the 'motherland' and NATO by influencing decision-making processes in the Baltics and NATO.<sup>36</sup>

A possible scenario which Russia hopes to achieve is to make NATO members inclined to think that de-escalation is the best option, which in fact would give the Baltic States the feeling they are being abandoned and thus divide

31 Bērziņš, J., et al, *Analysis of Russia's Information Campaign against Ukraine*. Riga: NATO StratCom Centre of Excellence (2015).

32 Rutenberg, J., 'RT, Sputnik and Russia's New Theory of War', in: *New York Times Magazine*, 13 September 2017. See <https://nyti.ms/2eUldrU>.

33 Ogrisko, V. (2016).

34 Bērziņš, J., et al (2015).

35 Noll, J.E., 'De Baltische Staten, de Russische minderheid en de verdediging van de NAVO', in: *Militaire Spectator* 186 (2017) (4) 169-183.

36 See [https://www.baltictimes.com/russia\\_s\\_nuclear\\_blackmail\\_and\\_new\\_threats\\_of\\_covert\\_diplomacy](https://www.baltictimes.com/russia_s_nuclear_blackmail_and_new_threats_of_covert_diplomacy).



PHOTO: NATO

*Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov addresses international security matters during a visit to NATO's headquarters*

NATO.<sup>37</sup> It is even suggested that Russia will eventually invade the Baltics in Blitzkrieg style and, by deterring NATO, aim at slowing down a decisive response allowing Russia enough time to create an advantageous negotiating position.<sup>38</sup>

### RC and eFP

The Royal Netherlands Army also participates in NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP), within the German-led multi-national battlegroup in Lithuania. Most countries participating in the eFP battlegroups have imposed restrictions on their contingents, in some cases including the restriction to stay in barracks except during organized tours.<sup>39</sup> The measures are largely a reaction to Russian information operations, discrediting NATO presence in the Baltic region and eastern Europe at every possible opportunity.

Incidents involving NATO service members are, of course, exploited to the full extent by Russian media outlets like RT and Sputnik.<sup>40</sup> The Russian-speaking minorities in the Baltics largely depend on Russian-based news outlets and are easy targets for the Kremlin. But also, other western news outlets have a tendency to copy the Russian narrative, let alone social media where fake news narratives can go viral in an instant.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, it seems quite a sensible measure at first sight to avoid any risk of unwanted media coverage of misbehaving soldiers. A recent incident in August 2017, concerning intoxicated Dutch soldiers in Lithuania, is an example of what NATO wants to avoid.<sup>42</sup> Minimizing any risk of unwanted incidents can relatively easily be achieved by restricting freedom of movement of personnel, for instance by putting into effect a curfew, etc. However, by restricting the movement and visibility of personnel, NATO contingents are possibly more or less alienating their units from their environment.

This development, in turn, might make it easier for Russia to continue its relentless stream of negative coverage regarding NATO in the very same countries, because people have a tendency to fear or distrust anyone they do not know. Furthermore, it is a fact that several negative stories about NATO contingents in the Baltics were completely made up, and could be categorized as fake news. One recent example concerns the German battlegroup commander in Lithuania being photographed with a Russian 'spy' in the Red Square in Moscow; another the

37 Herpen, M.H. van, *Russia's nuclear threats and the security of the Baltic states* (Maastricht: Cicero Foundation, 2016).

38 See <http://www.fpri.org/2017/06/natos-baltic-defense-challenge/#.WT7tJoyh6fU>. twitter.

39 See <http://www.nationalpost.com/m/wp/news/canada/blog.html?b=news-nationalpost.com/news/canada/matthew-fisher-how-canadian-commanders-will-use-hockey-to-keep-soldiers-safe-from-russian-honey-pots>.

40 See <https://medium.com/dfrlab/russian-narratives-on-natos-deployment-616e19c3d194>.

41 See <https://jamestown.org/program/russian-fake-news-operation-seeks-generate-baltic-opposition-nato-presence>.

42 See <https://www.rtlnieuws.nl/nederland/nederlandse-militairen-weggevoerd-uit-litouwen-na-dronkenschap-en-mishandeling>.



*A resident of Valga, Estonia, watches as a British Army soldier with NATO's enhanced Forward Presence battlegroup walks by: Russia makes up negative stories about NATO contingents in the Baltics to fuel distrust*

PHOTO NATO

alleged rape of a young girl by two German servicemen.<sup>43</sup>

Restricting the freedom of movement of NATO service members does not at all prevent the Russian government from releasing false stories about misconduct. Alienating NATO contingents from their environment by imposing restrictions on freedom of movement could be exactly the outcome Russia has been aiming for all the time. So, it is possible NATO is unwillingly creating a new example of successful Russian implementation of RC against the alliance for historians to reflect upon later.

## Conclusion

The aim of this article is to provide an insight into the concept of RCT, the application of the concept in the past, present and future and how it affects NATO and the Netherlands Armed Forces. RC essentially influences an adversary's decision-making process with specifically prepared information and induce him to make decisions that are in fact predetermined by the originator of the prepared information.

Over more than a half-century the concept has been used frequently. During the Cold War it was used by the Soviet Union to influence NATO and the USA in the nuclear arms race, while in the early 90s Russia used it also to target Russian civilians and politicians to prevent a coup d'état. In the recent past RC has been used by the

<sup>43</sup> See <https://www.thelocal.de/20170217/german-army-battles-fake-news-campaign-of-rape-reports-in-lithuania>.

Russian Federation within the framework of hybrid warfare, for example in the Crimea and eastern Ukraine. There is also evidence of the use of RC in the Baltic region at this very moment.

Application of RC in the Ukraine and the Baltics likely serves a common goal: redrawing the maps of Europe and creating a more favourable situation for the Russian Federation, recreating (in some fashion) a strategic buffer between the Russian heartland and NATO. In the Baltics efforts are made to discredit NATO as an alliance and NATO troop contributions specifically as part of a bigger plan to influence decision-making within the Baltics and NATO.

## Implications for the Netherlands Armed Forces and NATO

RC, although a Russian concept, appears to be of great relevance concerning the (Dutch) doctrinal basics regarding the manoeuvrist approach. It is therefore recommended that the Dutch armed forces, in a broader framework of NATO, look into applying the mechanisms of RC itself to target the conceptual and mental component of opponents.

In order to be able to do this, the Netherlands Armed Forces first have to get a real understanding of its possible opponents and learn to let go of western paradigms (this without implying that the end justifies all means). In order to begin to understand an adversary, it is relatively easy to start reading open source publications on for example military doctrine.

A note of caution in this regard, however, was given by the Russian General A.F. Klimenko in 1997, claiming that the Russian Federation put false information into official military doctrine, with the purpose of exploiting the carefully cultivated misconceptions by applying RC at the appropriate time.

NATO has to look into ways to counter RC applied by the Russian Federation. This includes countering negative narratives from Russian media outlets

Regarding the application of RC in the Baltics, NATO has to look into ways to counter RC applied by the Russian Federation. This includes amongst others countering negative narratives from Russian media outlets by providing NATO's narrative. On the other hand, showing to the public that eFP service members who misbehave are getting punished is possibly more effective in this regard than trying to avoid any risk at an incident.

If the Netherlands and other NATO members want to avoid being deceived by the mechanics of RC, they will first have to understand themselves and especially how they are assessed by the Russian Federation. If they are able to see themselves through the same glasses as the institutions that target them by using RC, they will be better able to identify possible threats. Furthermore, it is essential to be critical every time a decision is made that seems to be the only logical choice, because RC preys on logical reasoning.

While reading this article, one could get paranoid because it appears that we cannot even trust our own logical reasoning anymore. The harsh reality is that one must indeed question one's own decisions to avoid being manipulated within the context of RC. It would be wise to ask oneself over and over again the question with an historical ring regarding the outcome of the decisions to be made: Cui bono? ■



# The Omani Model

## *The model on how to defeat twenty-first century insurgencies?*

In this day and age western states are struggling to find a way to successfully counter irregular threats. Next to conventional threats from countries like Russia or China, they are dealing with an increasing number of non-state adversaries such as Islamic State in Syria and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. Since defence budgets haven't been declining until recently, western strategists are looking for more effective and efficient methods to ensure peace and stability. Important strategic lessons might be found in the past. Almost sixty years ago factions united in the so-called PFLOAG rose against the rulers in the Sultanate of Oman in the Dhofar province. Britain supported the Omani government in its campaign against the rebels. The end game took place between 1970 and 1976 when the PFLOAG insurgents were effectively defeated. The operation in Dhofar is one of the most successful counterinsurgency campaigns of the twentieth century. This article explores the success of the Omani Model.

*Laurens Degenaar\**

*A member of the British Army Training Team (BATT) on a base in Jibjat built for civil aid development after the area was secured from Omani rebels (1972)*



President Trump recently announced a renewed military commitment to Afghanistan in order to turn the tide in the 'longest war'.<sup>1</sup> The West has been struggling to win irregular conflicts for decades. This has only become more apparent as conflicts against insurgents and other violent non-state actors have risen to be the prominent form of conflict since the beginning of the twenty-first century.<sup>2</sup> For the past fifteen years western states have been heavily involved in operations against irregular opponents in Afghanistan, Iraq and many other countries.<sup>3</sup> Despite the billions of dollars spent and the deployment of the most sophisticated armed forces in the world, most of these conflicts have yet to be successfully concluded.<sup>4</sup> The experience of fighting irregular opponents without lasting success for so long has left deep scars in the western military establishment and has even raised the question whether success will ever be.<sup>5</sup>

Western states have therefore been looking for a more successful approach to counter irregular opponents in the twenty-first century. Additionally, western armed forces are now needed to counter other imminent, more conventional threats, such as the rising military might of China and a resurgent Russia.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, most western militaries have until recently been exposed to declining defence budgets, which prevented them from conducting prolonged stability operations.<sup>7</sup> Western defence organisations are, therefore, facing an increasing number of threats while their available resources have become increasingly scarce. Western strategists are looking for more effective and efficient ways to counter the increasing number of irregular threats.

It might be beneficial for them to take a closer look at a campaign that was conducted between 1970 and 1976 in the Omani province of Dhofar. Western historians tend to overlook this campaign because the available literature on the conflict is limited and the conflict only involved

a small number of western troops.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the conflict was overshadowed by other world events, such as the Vietnam War and the so-called Troubles in Northern Ireland.<sup>9</sup> However, the importance of the conflict should not be underestimated since crucial strategic interests were at stake.<sup>10</sup> An interesting coincidence is that the conflict bears significant resemblance with contemporary insurgencies in,

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\* Laurens Degenaar graduated from the University of Birmingham in 2016 with his master thesis about the Omani model for defeating insurgents. This article is a summary of his thesis. Today Laurens is employed by the Dutch Air Force at the Air Operations Control Station Nieuw Milligen as an Instructor Fighter Control.

- 1 'Donald Trump Commits More Troops to Afghanistan and Calls Britain to Follow Suit', *The Telegraph*. See: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/08/21/donald-trump-address-nation-outline-new-afghanistan-strategy/>.
- 2 Laurens Degenaar, 'How Military Change Affected Western States' Ability to End Conflicts Decisively', *Militaire Spectator*, 184:11 (2015) p. 456 and Andrew Mack, 'Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars', in: Klaus Knorr (ed.), *Power, Strategy, and Security: A World Politics Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).
- 3 Adam Roberts, 'Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan', *Survival*, 51:1 (2009) p. 47. Also: Andrew Feickert, *US Military Operations in the Global War on Terrorism: Afghanistan, Africa, the Philippines and Colombia* (Washington D.C., Congressional Research Service, 2005) p. 1-21.
- 4 David Betz, 'The Strategic Bystander: On Mayhem in Century 21', in: *Infinity Journal*, 5:2 (2016) p. 30.
- 5 E. Cohen, 'Lessons from 15 years of War', in: Efraim Inbar and Jonathan Rynhold (eds.), *US Foreign Policy and Global Standing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; Realities and Perceptions* (New York, Routledge, 2016) p. 23-25.
- 6 Matteo Dian, 'The Pivot to Asia, Air-Sea Battle and contested commons in the Asia Pacific Region', *The Pacific Review*, 28:2, (2015) p. 237. Also: Jeffrey A. Larsen, 'US Extended Deterrence and Europe: Time to Consider Alternative Structures?', in: Stéfanie von Hlatky and Andreas Wenger (eds.), *The Future of Extended Deterrence: The United States, NATO and Beyond* (Washington D.C., Georgetown University Press, 2015) p. 48.
- 7 U.S. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defense* (Washington D.C., U.S. Department of Defense, 2012), p. 6. Also: Kyle Haynes, 'Decline and Devolution: The Sources of Strategic Military Retrenchment', *International Studies Quarterly*, 59:1 (2015) p. 490. And Benjamin Pohl, 'NATO and Liberal International Relations Theory', in: Mark Webber and Adrian Hyde-Price (eds.), *Theorising NATO: New Perspectives on the Atlantic Alliance* (New York, Routledge, 2016) p. 131.
- 8 Maj. Eric H. Haas, *Operations at the Border: Efforts to Disrupt Insurgent Safe-Havens* (Fort Leavenworth, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2011) p. 31.
- 9 Winston M. Marbella, *Hearts and Minds: Its Evolution and Relevance to Counter-insurgency Campaigns* (Fort Leavenworth, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2010) p. 45.
- 10 Thomas E. Walton, *Headed the Wrong Way; The British Army's Painful Re-Acquaintance With Its Own COIN Doctrine in Southern Iraq* (Fort Leavenworth, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2011) p. 71-72.





A member of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) in 1970

PHOTO: B. HARRINGTON-SPYER

for example, the Middle East and Afghanistan.<sup>11</sup> Despite its relative unfamiliarity, the operation in Oman is one of the most successful counterinsurgency campaigns of the twentieth century.<sup>12</sup> It was subjected to many of the same limitations and restrictions that contemporary western military planners are facing and the way it was conducted may therefore offer a valuable approach for contemporary conflicts. The main question this article seeks to answer is why the Omani Model has been so successful during the Dhofar insurgency? The article will define the Omani Model as a clearly defined counterinsur-

gency strategy, pursued by a combination of western enablers, in partnership with both regular and irregular indigenous troops, and a legitimate development component.

Before continuing, it is important to note that the Omani Model cannot be applied one-to-one to contemporary irregular adversaries. Firstly, the conflict took place in a geographically confined area that was significantly smaller than the countries western states have found themselves in after 2001.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, most of the province was only sparsely inhabited, which enabled the counterinsurgents to employ their firepower much easier than would have been the case in more urban environments.<sup>14</sup> Thirdly, the secrecy, and resulting lack of public scrutiny was only made possible by the lack of press coverage.<sup>15</sup> It would be unimaginable in present-day campaigns due to the presence of global and social media. Nevertheless, as this dissertation will explain, the campaign provides interesting insights that can be of great value in approaching contemporary counterinsurgency.

This article applies a top-down approach and will first take a closer look at the strategic environment in which the conflict took place in order to determine the existing strategic limitations and political restrictions in the conduct of operations. Next, it will examine the campaign's strategy and operational elements in order to deduce the most valuable characteristics from the campaign. Although the earlier years of the conflict will be briefly examined as well, the article will primarily focus on the years 1970-1976 because it was within this timeframe that the transformation from almost certain defeat to decisive victory for the counterinsurgents took place, which suggests the most important elements can be found in this six-year period.

## The strategic environment

The strategic importance of the Sultanate of Oman lies in its geographical location at the entrance of the Persian Gulf.<sup>16</sup> The sultanate also controls the southern half of the Strait of

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- 11 Walter Ladwig III, 'Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion', in: *Small wars and Insurgencies* 19:1, (Routledge, London, 2008) p. 62-64.  
 12 Geraint Hughes, 'A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 32:2 (2009) p. 302.  
 13 Thomas Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency in the Post-Imperial Era* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995) p. 92.  
 14 LtCol Jon Hawkins, 'Assessing Afghanistan Against Aden and Oman; A Euphemism For Capitulation or the Seeds of Success', in: *Australian Army Journal*, 7:1 (2010) p. 11.  
 15 Ian Illych Martinez, 'The Battle of Mirbat: Turning Point in the Omani Dhofar Rebellion', in: *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 23:3 (2012) p. 517.  
 16 Maj Gen J.D.C. Graham, 'The Sultan's Armed Forces; March to July 1970', in: *SAF Association Newsletter*, 31:1 (1983) p. 54.

Hormuz, making Oman crucial for the world's oil supply as already was the case during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>17</sup> British ties with Oman date back to the late eighteenth century, and a 1958 treaty secured British military basing rights.<sup>18</sup> The sultanate was, therefore, of great strategic interest to the West, and Britain in particular.<sup>19</sup> Despite these important strategic interests, the counterinsurgency campaign in Oman was subjected to several strategic and political restrictions, which had a significant influence on the conduct of the operations.

The first restriction was the confined budget available to the counterinsurgency operations. It was only from 1967 onwards that oil could be exploited in commercial quantities in Oman, which is why the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) had traditionally been under severe financial constraints.<sup>20</sup> Even after 1970, oil revenues could not keep up with increasing government demands, not only for defence, but also for development programmes, which became an integral part of the counterinsurgency campaign.<sup>21</sup> Omani financial resources were, therefore, constrained throughout the conflict. Finances were also tight for the British. The first Wilson government was faced with increasing pressure from the Treasury Department to reduce its defence spending.<sup>22</sup> These reductions came at a time that prices for military equipment increased drastically.<sup>23</sup> The economic crisis seriously affected Britain's defence budget.<sup>24</sup> This forced the British government to scale down its global defence commitments and focus on its NATO responsibilities instead.<sup>25</sup> The withdrawal from East of Suez from 1968 onwards was a direct result of this, as the British defence commitments there constituted about fifteen percent of the total defence budget.<sup>26</sup> British policymakers realised that economic realities forced the British armed forces to concentrate on Europe.<sup>27</sup>

A second limitation made the effects of the withdrawal from East of Suez and the simultaneous budget reductions become only more significant. At a time when British military capabilities were steadily reduced,



Map No. 3730 Rev. 4 UNITED NATIONS  
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Cartographic Section

- 17 Anthony H. Cordesman, *Iran, Oil and the Strait of Hormuz* (Washington D.C., Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007) p. 2. Also Rouhoullah K. Ramazani, *The Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz* (Alphen aan de Rijn, Sijthoff & Noordhoff, 1979) p. 11.
- 18 'Exchange of Letters Between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Sultan of Muscat and Oman Concerning the Sultan's Armed Forces, Civil Aviation, Royal Air Force Facilities and Economic Development in Muscat and Oman', *Treaty Series No. 28* (London, July 25 1958).
- 19 TNA DEFE 24/574, COS 13/74, 'The Principles Governing British Military Assistance to Oman', 29 May 1974.
- 20 J.E. Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies* (London/Lebanon, SAQI, 2007) p. 151.
- 21 The Economist Intelligence Unit, *Economic Review of the Arabian Peninsula: Shaikh Doms and Republics* (London, 18 March 1971) p. 420.
- 22 Denis Healey, *The Time of My Life* (London, Michael Joseph, 1989) p. 256.
- 23 Cmnd 2592, 'Statement on Defence Estimates 1965', February 1965.
- 24 Cmnd. 3515, 'Supplementary Statement on Defence Policy, 1968', January 1968.
- 25 Geraint Hughes, *Harold Wilson's Cold War; The Labour Government and East-West Politics, 1964-1970* (Rochester, The Boydell Press, 2009) p. 84. Also TNA PREM 13/1854, 'Telegram 11855'.
- 26 Robert Self, *British Foreign & Defence Policy Since 1945; Challenges & Dilemmas in a Changing World* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 166. Also Saul Kelly, 'Britain's Abandonment of Arabia and Retreat From the Gulf', in: Robert Johnson and Timothy Clack (eds.), *At the End of Military Intervention* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015) p. 177.
- 27 TNA CAB 148/30, Overseas Policy and Defence (OPD) (67), '14th Meeting', 22 March 1967.



military demands in Europe only increased.<sup>28</sup> This was demonstrated by the intensified British military involvement in Northern Ireland, where the Troubles had broken out in 1969.<sup>29</sup> Ensuing operations would see the involvement of several thousands of British troops, placing a considerable burden on the British Army.<sup>30</sup>

A third limitation of perhaps even greater concern was the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw pact, and its partner states' subsequent increase in defence spending in 1968-69.<sup>31</sup> Western analysts perceived the Soviet military modernisation and its development of a conventional doctrine as a serious threat to Western Europe.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, NATO had to keep up a credible force in West Germany in order to deter the Warsaw Pact.<sup>33</sup> As a result, Britain could not withdraw any substantial forces from Germany without endangering the solidarity and effectiveness of the NATO alliance.<sup>34</sup> Addressing primarily other threats and crises British military resources were not available for use in the Dhofar insurgency.<sup>35</sup>



*The HMS Ark Royal served partly East of Suez. In the late sixties the British government decided to withdraw from this part of the world. It remained in Oman though, because of its strategical position at the entrance of the Suez Canal*

A fourth limitation can be found in the political pressure to keep casualties to a minimum. In 1970 Edward Heath took office as prime minister and, although intending otherwise, was unable to maintain a global military presence.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, the Heath government was willing to conduct low-key military interventions, particularly in areas crucial to the protection of British oil supplies.<sup>37</sup> However, casualties had to be kept to a minimum in order to prevent any unwanted public attention. The aversion of British political leadership to casualties served as an important political restriction throughout the campaign.<sup>38</sup> Military leadership in Dhofar remained anxious that the British government would withdraw from Oman if heavy casualties

28 Cmnd. 3927, 'Statement on Defence Estimates, 1969', February 1969.

29 David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles; The Story of the Conflict in Northern Ireland* (Chicago, New Amsterdam Books, 2002) p. 55-56.

30 Paul Dixon, *Northern Ireland; The Politics of War and Peace* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) p. 101-118. Also Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, *The Origins of the Present Troubles in Northern Ireland* (New York, Routledge, 2014) p. 64-65.

31 Harvey Starr, 'A Collective Goods Analysis of the Warsaw Pact After Czechoslovakia', in: *International Organization*, 28:3 (1974) p. 530. Also TNA CAB 158/65, JIC (67)3, 'Soviet Bloc War Potential', 16 February 1967; F.S. Northedge, *Descent From Power; British Foreign Policy, 1945-1973* (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1974) p. 299.

32 Lawrence Freedman and Geraint Hughes, 'Strategy', in: Saki R. Dockrill and Geraint Hughes (eds.), *Palgrave Advances in Cold War History* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) p. 48-49. Also TNA CAB 158/65, 'Soviet Bloc War Potential', 16 February 1967 and DIS Report DI4(N)119, 'The Soviet Naval Presence in the Mediterranean', 1 January 1967 and CIA Memorandum, 'Soviet Military Policy in 1967', 14 June 1967.

33 James Worrall, 'The Model Counterinsurgency: Dhofar 1962-1975', in: Gregory Fremont-Barnes (ed.) *A history of Counterinsurgency* (Santa Barbara, Praeger Security International, 2015) p. 76.

34 Cmnd. 3927, 'Statement on Defence Estimates, 1969', February 1969; CAB 128/42, CC26(67) 26<sup>th</sup> 'Conclusions', 30 April 1967. Also TNA CAB 148/30, 'Final Report on Trilateral Talks', 3 July 1967.

35 TNA FCO 8/1860, 'Telegram No. 184, Wright to Hawley', 13 May 1972.

36 Roger Louis, 'The British Withdrawal From the Gulf', in: *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* No. 1 (London, 2003) p. 97-99.

37 POWE/63/449 (JIC (68) 24), 'JIC Report on the Implications of Oil Supplies and British Oil Interests in the Middle East', 9 September 1968.

38 TNA PRO DEF 25/187, 'SAS Operations in Oman', 14 December 1971.



PHOTO UK MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

resulting lack of available forces. The British military was refocusing on the threat posed by the Warsaw Pact and simultaneous budget reductions only aggravated the gap between ends and means. The forces that were available for the Dhofar insurgency, therefore, consisted mostly of special forces whose role had to be well-concealed in order to prevent any publicity. Moreover, the military leadership in Dhofar was subjected to significant political pressure by the government in London to avoid casualties, which also restricted the conduct of the campaign.

## The insurgency

Before looking further into the conduct of the counterinsurgency campaign, it is important to take a closer look at the insurgency itself. The province of Dhofar was infamous for its rebellions, often originating from the tribal diversity of its population.<sup>42</sup> The start of the 1960s Dhofar insurgency also preceded the British involvement in the counterinsurgency campaign. This section will look further into the origins and course of the Dhofar insurgency, which can be distinguished in three phases. The first is the development of the rebellion between 1962 and 1967. The second is its expansion into a communist inspired insurgency between 1967 and 1970. The third and culminating phase lasted from 1970 to 1976 and witnessed the foreign intervention on behalf of the Sultan of Oman.

In 1963 rebellion was imminent among the Dhofari population. Sultan Said bin Taimur asserted his authority through medieval measures, thereby fuelling grievances and

were sustained.<sup>39</sup> The British government therefore discreetly deployed units of the Special Air Service (SAS) under the guise of the British Army Training Team (BATT), whose official task was to train and advise the SAF but which was in fact directly involved in combat operations.<sup>40</sup> This continued to be the official stance for the duration of the Omani conflict, also when questions were asked in the House of Commons at a time when the SAS had already been directly involved in combat operations for over five years.<sup>41</sup> Politically, this only emphasized the importance of keeping casualties to a minimum.

All in all, the conduct of the campaign in Dhofar was heavily influenced by several strategic and political restrictions. One of the most important strategic limitations was the British withdrawal from East of Suez and the

39 Ken Connor, *Ghost Force; The Secret History of the SAS* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1998) p. 171.

40 Lt Col John McKeown, *Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981) p. 65. Also Alastair MacKenzie, *Special Force; The Untold Story of 22<sup>nd</sup> Special Air Service Regiment (SAS)* (London, I.B. Tauris, 2011) p. 135.

41 Cmnd. 5976, 'Statement on the Defence Estimates 1975', March 1975, p. 55. Also HC Deb 19 November 1974, Vol. 881 cc356-7W.

42 J.E. Peterson, 'Oman's Diverse Society: Southern Oman', in: *Middle East Journal*, 58:2 (2004) p. 257-266.

creating discontent.<sup>43</sup> The sultan was able to suppress the insurgency for the first few years.<sup>44</sup> The situation changed drastically after the British withdrawal from neighbouring Aden and South Yemen in 1967, which had been British protectorates until then. The British departure enabled the Marxist National Liberation Front (NLF) to seize power and rename the country as the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY).<sup>45</sup> Similarity in political convictions of the PDRY and of the Dhofari rebels soon gave rise to material support flowing into Dhofar.<sup>46</sup> Other communist regimes such as China, North Korea, and eventually the Soviet Union, contributed support by providing weapons, training, and sometimes even advisers.<sup>47</sup> Under communist influence, the Dhofari insurgents changed their name into the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf (PFLOAG).<sup>48</sup> The PFLOAG was divided into two groups, the first consisting of hard-line communists who had been trained abroad and indoctrinated in the communist ideology.<sup>49</sup> The second group was composed of tribesmen who



Leaflet spread by the Marxist Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLOAG) in Dhofar, home of the insurgency against Sultan Said Bin Taimur

- 43 Ian Skeet, *Muscat and Oman: The End of an Era* (London, Faber & Faber, 1974) p. 163-203.
- 44 TNA FCO 51/41, 'Memorandum on the Dhofar Liberation Front', 30 January 1968.
- 45 Humphrey Trevelyan, *The Middle East in Revolution* (New York, Macmillan, 1970) p. 209-266.
- 46 TNA CAB 158/70, JIC (68) 35. Also Fred Halliday, *Revolution and Foreign Policy: The Case of South Yemen, 1967-1987* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990) p. 142-143.
- 47 MEC John Graham Collection 2/2, 'Anti-Guerrilla Operations in Dhofar, 1972, Section 5'. Also John Akehurst, *We Won a War: The Campaign in Oman, 1965-1975*, (Salisbury, Michael Russell, 1982) p. 26. And TNA FCO 8/2018 338047, 'Top Secret: From Major General Timothy Creasy to His Majesty Qaboos bin Said, Annex 'C', Organisation and Future Intentions of PFLOAG in Northern Oman', 4 January 1973.
- 48 Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans*, (New York, Vintage Books, 1975) p. 320-321.
- 49 Maj Gen Tony Jeapes, *SAS Secret War; Codename Operation Storm* (Glasgow, HarperCollins Publishers, 1996) p. 38.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Ranulph Fiennes, *Where Soldiers Fear to Tread* (London, Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 1995) p. 186.
- 52 John McKeown, *Britain and Oman*, p. 42-43. Also TNA FCO 46/609, 'The Employment of an SAS Squadron in Dhofar', 26 February 1970.
- 53 MEC John Graham Collection 2/2, 'Anti-Guerrilla Operations in Dhofar, 1972, Section 4'.
- 54 TNA FCO 46/609, 'Ministry of Defence: Chiefs of Staff Committee, Confidential Annex to COS 8th Meeting/70', 17 March 1970. Also TNA FCO 46/609, 'The Employment of an SAS Squadron in Dhofar', 26 February 1970. And TNA CAB 186/5, JIC(A)(70)6, 'Sultanate of Muscat and Oman: The Military and Political Situation in Dhofar in the Shorter Term', 17 April 1970.
- 55 TNA CAB 158/70 JIC (68) 35, 'Likely Developments in the Persian Gulf and Their Probable Effects for British Interests', 7 June 1968.

were given weapons by the hard-liners but whose operations were largely limited to their own tribal areas.<sup>50</sup>

The infusion of modern weapons, thorough training and a new ideology significantly changed the chances for the insurgency.<sup>51</sup> As a result, the conflict intensified, with the sultan's forces SAF suffering a series of defeats between 1967 and 1970.<sup>52</sup> By March 1970 the insurgents controlled the entire Dhofar province, except for a narrow stretch along the coast and its capital, Salalah.<sup>53</sup> Intelligence reports estimated that it would take the insurgents less than a year to seize the remaining territory, which would threaten the RAF airbase at Salalah as well.<sup>54</sup> The British government feared that loss of Dhofar would enable communist forces to push further into Oman and might even cause instability in the rest of the Gulf region.<sup>55</sup> Despite the magnitude of the setbacks, the



sultan was unwilling to approve political, military and economic reforms needed to turn the tide.<sup>56</sup> However, British strategic interests necessitated the deployment of military forces, despite the fear of becoming involved in an open-ended conflict.<sup>57</sup>

One of the most decisive moments of the conflict came on 23 July 1970 when Sultan Said bin Taimur was overthrown in a nearly bloodless coup by his son Qaboos bin Said, who was covertly supported by the British government.<sup>58</sup> The new sultan had received his education at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and had served as an officer in the British Army.<sup>59</sup> He quickly announced political and economic reforms and asked for British military resources to aid the SAF. Support arrived in 1970 in the form of two SAS squadrons.<sup>60</sup> This enabled the new sultan to create a strong and undivided political leadership, which would prove essential in the years to come.<sup>61</sup> Despite attempts to implement a classical counterinsurgency campaign, the SAF still lacked the necessary resources to dislodge the PFLOAG from its strongholds in Dhofar.<sup>62</sup> Some help started to arrive in the form of so-called Firqats, indigenous tribesmen who had defected from the PFLOAG and started to augment SAF resources.<sup>63</sup> Although this enabled the Sultan's Armed Forces to gain some success, they were unable to defeat the PFLOAG and only managed to turn the insurgency into a stalemate.<sup>64</sup>

The Dhofar insurgency evolved significantly during its first few years. The conflict started out as a tribal rebellion but developed into an ideologically motivated, transnational insurgency receiving significant external support. By 1970 it had almost succeeded in defeating the SAF who were only able to bring about a stalemate in the conflict after Sultan Qaboos assumed power and British support began to arrive. It would still take several years before the PFLOAG was decisively defeated. Therefore, something must have changed significantly between 1970 and 1976. The next sections will demonstrate how the SAF was able to turn the tide at strategic, operational and tactical levels, and to eventually triumph over the PFLOAG.

## Strategy

One of the key points of the entire counter-insurgency campaign in Dhofar was its clear political aim: preventing Oman from falling into communist hands, thus maintaining secure sea lines of communication through the Persian Gulf. This clearly defined a political objective that demonstrated the strategic interests at stake.<sup>65</sup> In order to achieve the political aim, a deliberate strategy had to be devised. The envisioned strategy between 1970 and early 1972 was largely based on a classic counterinsurgency approach intended to win the popular support of the Jebalis, or mountain people.<sup>66</sup> For several reasons this approach was not instrumental in breaking the stalemate.

Firstly, military resources were too limited with regard to what the government forces were facing. SAF forces were outnumbered and outgunned by PFLOAG insurgents, who were continuously being (re)supplied by the Yemenite PDRY.<sup>67</sup> Secondly, the limited military forces

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- 56 TNA FCO 46/609, 'P.J. Bayne, Commodore, Chiefs of Staff Committee, to CDS', 4 June 1970. Also TNA FCO 46/609, 'Chiefs of Staff Committee, Defence Operational Planning Staff, The Situation in Muscat and Oman', 7 July 1970.
- 57 James Worrall, *Statebuilding and Counterinsurgency in Oman* (London, I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 2014) p. 161.
- 58 TNA FCO 46/609, 'Bahrain Residency to FCO, Telegram 340', 13 July 1970; TNA FCO 46/609, 'A.A. Acland to P. Hayman, Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, Possibility of a Coup', 8 July 1970; CAB 186/11, JIC(A)(72)11, 'The Outlook for Oman', 1 March 1972.
- 59 Sergey Plekhanov, *A Reformer on the Throne: Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Al Said* (London, Trident Press Ltd., 2004) p. 78-82.
- 60 TNA DEFE 25/186, 'Department of Military Operations to Vice-Chairman of the General Staff, Assistance to SAF', 13 August 1970.
- 61 Bart Schuurman, 'Trinitarian Troubles: Governmental, Military and Societal Explanations for Post-1945 Western Failures in Asymmetric Conflicts'. In: *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 22:1 (2011) p. 40-41.
- 62 TNA FCO 8/1856, 'Commander of the Sultan's Armed Forces' Assessment, 1972'.
- 63 Tony Jeapes, *SAS Secret War*, p. 53-54.
- 64 MEC John Graham Collection 2/1, 'CSAF's assessment of the situation in Dhofar as at 14 February 1972'. Also TNA FCO 8/1856, 'From A.D. Parsons to Mr. Renwick, Private Secretary, 17 January 1972'. And TNA CAB 148/122/49, 21 November 1972.
- 65 M.L.R. Smith and David Martin Jones, *The Political Impossibility of Modern Counterinsurgency* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2015) p. 145.
- 66 TNA FCO 8/1437, UK Eyes Only - Secret, 'An Outline Plan to Restore the Situation in Dhofar Using Special Air Service Regiment Troops', 7 April 1970.
- 67 TNA PRO FCO 8/1415, 'Muscat and Oman - Dhofar', February 12, 1970. Also TNA PRO FO 1016/791, 'Sultanate's Balance Sheet - 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 1969', 13 October 1969. And John Graham, *Ponder Anew: Reflections on the Twentieth Century* (Staplehurst, Spellmont Ltd, 1999) p. 316.





*Sultan Qaboos bin al Said rose to power in 1970 after overthrowing his father. He countered the PFLOAG insurgency successfully with foreign aid. Qaboos then modernized Oman. He is the longest serving Arab leader*

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available made it too dangerous to maintain a continuous presence in the mountainous region known as the Jebel.<sup>68</sup> An aggravating circumstance was the inability to resupply units at the Jebel.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, it turned out to be impossible for SAF forces to provide sufficient security to the population, which faced reprisals

by PFLOAG insurgents for cooperating with the SAF.<sup>70</sup> This, thirdly, significantly deteriorated the amount and quality of the intelligence received because the population refused to talk to SAF forces.<sup>71</sup> Without good intelligence, no successful operations could be carried out. Together the reasons demonstrated a lack of coherent strategy because no desired end-state could be determined.

Faced with a grinding stalemate, military leadership decided to transform the strategy profoundly from 1972 onwards. This was made possible by the arrival of much-needed critical enablers, such as additional aircraft, Jordanian engineers and Iranian special forces.<sup>72</sup> Perhaps the most important development was a conditions-based redefining of the strategic end-state of the campaign.<sup>73</sup> It signalled a

68 TNA PRO DEFE 4/1831, 'CSAF Maj. Gen. Tim Creasey, brief for Sultan Qaboos', 28 September 1972.

69 McKeown, *Britain and Oman*, p. 45.

70 TNA PRO FCO 8/1668, 'SAF Sitrep', 13 November 1971.

71 TNA PRO FCO 8/1667, 'War in Oman', 17 August 1971. Also MEC John Graham Collection 2/5, 'Resume of Events, January 1 to July 20, 1971', 14 August 1971.

72 TNA FCO 8/1858, 'Patrick Wright to Le Quesne', 2 July 1972. Also TNA FCO 8/2023, 'Engineer Assistance at Simba', 12 March 1973. And Marc Devore, 'The United Kingdom's Last Hot War of the Cold War: Oman, 1963-1975', in: *Cold War History*, 11:1 (2011) p. 17. And MEC John Graham Collection 4/1, 'JDC Graham Oman Diary', 2 October 1972. And TNA DEFE 25/312, 'Review of the Situation by Major General Tim Creasy, Commander of the Sultan's Armed Forces, December 1973 - May 1974', 14 May 1974.

commitment to stay instead of an upcoming deadline to leave, in contrast to the timeline-based conditions set in many other campaigns. The objective of the counterinsurgency campaign became securing Dhofar for civil development.<sup>74</sup> This clear and attainable objective was to be achieved by destroying the hard-line PFLOAG fighters by attrition and simultaneously addressing popular grievances with a legitimate development programme that could take away support for and prevent potential recruitment by the insurgents.<sup>75</sup> This strategy enabled the British and Omani governments to pursue their political objectives, while also demonstrating a willingness to adjust their means to their desired ends.

*Firqats, units of indigenous tribesman who defected from PFLOAG and worked along with the sultan's forces and British SAS in the battle against the Dhofari guerrillas*

## Operational elements

Securing Dhofar was to be achieved through three different operational steps: holding the areas already seized, expanding pacification on the Jebel and mounting a decisive blocking operation in order to cut off the insurgent supply lines from the PDRY.<sup>76</sup> These steps resemble the three elements of classic counterinsurgency in clearing, holding and building, but without the massive troop deployments seen in other classic counterinsurgency battles.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, the Dhofar campaign possessed some components of classic counterinsurgency theory based on fighting in decolonization conflicts of the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>78</sup> The following sections will look more closely at each of the three operational elements of the strategy in Dhofar, as well as the associated tactical actions that were necessary to accomplish each element.

73 Ken Connor, *Ghost Force*, p. 156.

74 John Akehurst, *We Won A War*, p. 65.

75 Ian F.W. Beckett, *Insurgency in Iraq: An Historical Perspective* (Carlisle, Strategic Studies Institute, 2005) p. 13.

76 MOD COS 37/72, 'Future UK Defence Activity in Oman', 29 March 1972.

77 J.E. Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, p. 267.

78 Frank G. Hoffman, 'Neo-Classical Counterinsurgency?' in: *Parameters* 37 (2007) p. 71.





The first operational element for SAF forces was to stabilize the few areas that were still under government control. Many of the Dhofar coastal towns still in government hands, and Salalah airfield in particular, frequently fell victim to stand-off attacks by mortars and rockets.<sup>79</sup> The formation of an additional infantry regiment enabled SAF for the first time to deploy two regiments simultaneously in Dhofar.<sup>80</sup> These forces were put to good use in a series of harassing operations in late 1970 and early 1971.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, BATT teams were deployed to the coastal towns to act as Civil Action Teams (CAT). They organized immediate development locally by providing basic medical care and even veterinary services to the local population.<sup>82</sup> The projects were deliberately limited to tribes and Firqats supporting the government and only

addressed the legitimate grievances 'as perceived by the population'. The relatively simple measures greatly improved the economic situation in the government-controlled part of the Jebel. This was a significant feat because it nullified many of the original causes for the insurgency and persuaded additional PFLOAG fighters to defect to the government side.<sup>83</sup>

Food control measures were established to prevent the PFLOAG from receiving food and supplies from the Salalah plain.<sup>84</sup> As a result, the increased control over the population and support for the government significantly reduced the amount of supplies the PFLOAG insurgents were receiving from these areas.<sup>85</sup> PFLOAG responded by attacking coastal towns in order to demonstrate its resolve. The best known example is the battle for the town of Mirbat in July 1972 when an attack of 200-250 insurgents was repelled. This is often seen as a turning point in the battle for the Salalah plain.<sup>86</sup>

With the coastal plain largely secured, the second operational element was to expand SAF presence on the Jebel, which constituted a sanctuary for the insurgents from where they could attack SAF forces with relative impunity.<sup>87</sup> The rugged landscape consisting of impenetrable mountain regions and wild desert favoured the insurgents tremendously.<sup>88</sup> The only way this area could be controlled was by extensive patrolling, securing the villages and thereby establishing a permanent footprint on the Jebel.<sup>89</sup> The SAF plan for expanding its presence called for securing the areas where PFLOAG was weakest first. It therefore started in the east.<sup>90</sup> SAF began setting up patrol bases in the eastern part of the Jebel during the second half of 1972.<sup>91</sup> The local indigenous Firqat were especially helpful in securing these outposts on the Jebel. The first Firqat were recruited from a group of defected insurgents who chose to abandon the PFLOAG after internal clashes between some of the militias and hard-line communists.<sup>92</sup> The defected fighters were subsequently rearmed and a BATT team was assigned to each Firqat for training purposes and the coordination of air- and fire support.<sup>93</sup> The combination of increasingly brutal methods

79 Bryan Ray, *Dangerous Frontiers; Campaigning in Somaliland and Oman* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Books, 2008) p. 62. Also Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, p. 261.

80 MEC John Graham Collection 2/4, 'Summary of the Dhofar War So Far', September 1971. Also MEC John Graham Collection 4/1, 'JDC Graham Oman Diary', 24 February 1971.

81 TNA PRO FCO 8/1667, 'SAF Activity Report', 22 January 1971. Also Lt. Col. Karsten Kraemer, *Special Operations Forces During the Dhofar Insurgency and in Afghanistan: A Comparative Study for German Special Operations Forces* (Quantico, USMC Command and Staff College, 2011) p. 6. Also Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, p. 255-256.

82 Ian Gardiner, *In the Service of the Sultan: A First Hand Account of the Dhofar Insurgency* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Books, 1988) p. 159.

83 Walter Ladwig III, 'Supporting Allies in COIN', p. 81;

84 MEC John Graham Collection 2/1, 'CSAF's assessment of the situation in Dhofar as at 14 February 1972', 17 February 1972.

85 TNA PRO DEFE 24/1837, JIC(A)(72):1, 'The Outlook for Oman', 10 March 1972. Also MEC John Graham Collection 2/5, 'Captured Enemy Documents, Third National Congress of Rakyut June 1971', 15 December 1971.

86 TNA PRO DEFE 24/1869, 'Marbat Incident July 1972', 5 March 1975.

87 MEC John Graham Collection 2/1, 'CSAF's assessment of the situation in Dhofar as of 14 February 1972', 17 February 1972. Also TNA PRO FCO 8/1667, 'Record of Meeting Dhofar', 7 August 1971.

88 Rory Cormac, *Confronting the Colonies; British Intelligence and Counterinsurgency* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013) p. 159.

89 Worrall, *Statebuilding and Counterinsurgency in Oman*, p. 162.

90 Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies*, p. 275. Also William Seymour, *British Special Forces; The Story of Britain's Undercover Soldiers* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Books, 2006) p. 295.

91 TNA PRO DEFE 13/779, 'Brig John Akehurst, Commander Dhofar 1974-1976, The End of the Dhofar War Speech', January 1976. Also TNA PRO DEFE 24/574, 'A Review of the Period 1 November 1973 to 30 April 1974', June 1974.

92 McKeown, *Britain and Oman*, p. 55.

93 MEC John Graham Collection 2/2, 'Headquarters Sultan's Armed Forces, Plans 7', 12 February 1971. Also MEC John Graham Collection 2/2, 'Irregular Forces - SAF's View'. And MEC John Graham Collection 2/2, 'BATT Notes on the Raising and Training of Irregular Forces in Dhofar'. And Paul Sibley, *A Monk in the SAS* (London, Spiderwize, 2011) p. 63.



used by the hard-line communists and a generous offer for amnesty by Sultan Qaboos encouraged an increasing number of PFLOAG fighters to surrender and join the Firqat.<sup>94</sup> Surrendered Enemy Personnel (SEP) were not necessarily treated as prisoners of war or interrogated as such. Instead, they were treated friendly and asked questions by the Firqat, who tried to persuade the SEP to join them.<sup>95</sup> Eventually the Firqat totalled as many as 2,500 men.<sup>96</sup>

The use of Firqat also had disadvantages. The first was the tribal structure of Jebali society. Firqat often spent more time arguing and fighting each other than they did fighting the communists.<sup>97</sup> As a result they were unable or unwilling to operate outside their own tribal areas.<sup>98</sup> The only attempt to set up a multi-tribal Firqat was abandoned after only three months due to the tensions between the different participating tribes.<sup>99</sup> Another disadvantage was their irregular character making them unsuitable for conventional operations, which was demonstrated as early as 1971. The Firqat's operational success depended on the tribal interests involved. They lacked reliability if their interests did not coincide with those of the government.<sup>100</sup>

Nevertheless, the advantages of the Firqat greatly outweighed the disadvantages, especially because they had qualities the SAF forces lacked.<sup>101</sup> Firstly, they significantly improved the government's intelligence position because they allowed government access to parts of Dhofar that were previously inaccessible to SAF forces.<sup>102</sup> The Firqat knowledge of the terrain, tribal structures and local customs, as well as their ability to distinguish insurgents from civilians on the Jebel made them highly capable of gathering local intelligence and winning the trust of the local population.<sup>103</sup> Secondly, Firqat provided an opportunity to present development projects as an Omani success, thereby increasing the legitimacy of Sultan Qaboos and his government.<sup>104</sup> SAF forces consisted mostly of soldiers from Northern Oman and Baluchistan and were often looked upon with suspicion by the population. The arrival of the Firqat therefore significantly increased the legitimacy of the



PHOTO: B. HARRINGTON SPIER

*The Dhofari war was also waged by civil development programmes improving living conditions of the Omani people. Here military helped drilling for water, needed for the irrigation of local crops*

94 Jeapes, *SAS Secret War*, p. 38-39.

95 DEFE 25/186, 'Folio No. 71, Telegram No. 20, CDS to CBF, 31 December 1970.

96 Jeapes, *SAS Secret War*, p. 277.

97 Ken Connor, *Ghost Force*, p. 160.

98 Jeapes, *SAS Secret War*, p. 109-111.

99 Ibid, *SAS Secret War*, p. 111-113.

100 Ibid II, *SAS Secret War*, p. 102.

101 Jacqueline L. Hazelton, *Compellence and Accommodation in Counterinsurgency Warfare* (Boston, Brandeis University Press, 2011) p. 84.

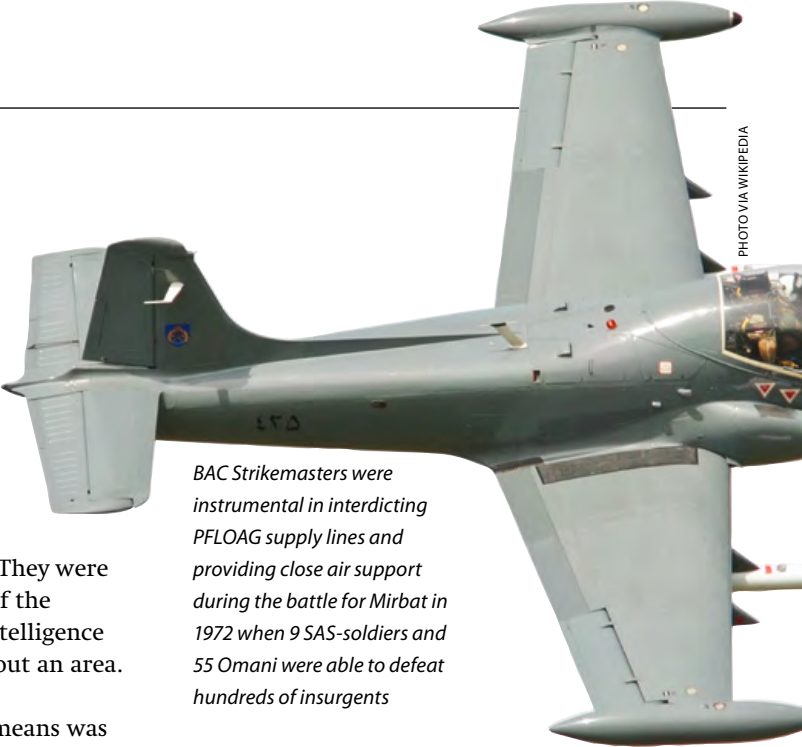
102 MEC John Graham Collection 2/1, 'The Future of Dhofar', 15 July 1971. Also Jeffrey R. Macris and Saul Kelly, *Imperial Crossroads; The Great Powers and the Persian Gulf* (Annapolis, Naval Institute Press, 2012) p. 105-106.

103 Akehurst, *We Won a War*, p. 96.

104 TNA FCO 8/1669, 'D.G. Crawford to Sir Alec Douglas-Home', 4 Jan. 1972.

sultan in the eyes of the Dhofari population.<sup>105</sup> All in all, the partnership between SAF and Firqat was greatly beneficial for expanding the government's influence on the Jebel because of their division of tasks, although it always had to be carefully considered what missions the Firqat were given.<sup>106</sup> They were able to win the hearts and minds of the population and provided crucial intelligence which enabled SAF forces to clear out an area.

Winning the population by other means was also an integral part of the counterinsurgency strategy in Dhofar, which is why development programmes were started. These projects were deliberately limited to the areas of tribes and Firqats supporting the government. The Jebalis still living in insurgent-controlled parts of the province had to do without the economic developments they could witness in the government-controlled areas. This provided a rewarding incentive to that particular part of the population to come over to the government's side.<sup>107</sup> Initial development projects designed to address popular grievances were set up by British engineers, such as building schools, clinics and mosques.<sup>108</sup> Local security then could be left to the Firqat thus making SAF forces available for other, more conventional operations in areas still controlled by the PFLOAG.<sup>109</sup> The relatively simple measures



*BAC Strikemasters were instrumental in interdicting PFLOAG supply lines and providing close air support during the battle for Mirbat in 1972 when 9 SAS-soldiers and 55 Omani were able to defeat hundreds of insurgents*

greatly improved the economic situation in the government-controlled part of the Jebel, which was significant because it nullified many of the original causes for the insurgency and therefore helped persuading additional PFLOAG fighters to join the government side.<sup>110</sup> Consequently the existing tensions between PFLOAG hard-liners and the Jebali population were further increased.<sup>111</sup>

The third and perhaps most crucial operational element in defeating the PFLOAG was interdicting supply lines from the PDRY to the insurgents. SAF forces would remain stuck in a running battle as long as these supply lines stayed intact.<sup>112</sup> Interdiction was implemented simultaneously with expanding SAF influence on the Jebel. It forced the PFLOAG to expand large quantities of ammunition, which at the same time made them increasingly dependent on resupply.<sup>113</sup> The first attempt at cutting at least part of the supply from the PDRY was by constructing a line of minefields and barbed wire with isolated outposts stretching from the coast to the border with Saudi Arabia, known as the Leopard line, in the aftermath of Operation Jaguar.<sup>114</sup> The fixed defensive line frustrated PFLOAG attempts to supply the Eastern sector, thus affecting their ability to conduct operations.

Although the Leopard line achieved some initial success, it had to be abandoned due to the

105 Gardiner, *In the Service of the Sultan*, p. 159.

106 MEC John Graham Collection 2/2, Section 10, Annex B, 'BATT Notes on the Raising and Training of Irregular Forces in Dhofar'.

107 MEC John Graham Collection 2/1, 'Peter Thwaites, Lecture Dhofar 1967- 70'. Undated.

108 John Graham, 'The Sultan's Armed Forces: March 1970 to September 1972, Part I March to July 1970', *Sultan's Armed Forces Association Newsletter*, 31:1 (1983) p. 51.

109 Akehurst, *We Won a War*, p. 63-64.

110 Ladwig III, 'Supporting Allies in COIN', p. 81;

111 MEC John Graham Collection 5/2, 'John Graham, Thirty Months'. Undated.

112 TNA FCO 46/609, COS Committee, Defence Operational Planning Staff, 'The Situation in Muscat and Oman', 30 July 1970.

113 Akehurst, *We Won a War*, p. 20.

114 Clive Jones, 'Military Intelligence, Tribes, and Britain's War in Dhofar, 1970-1976', in: *The Middle East Journal*, 65:4 (2011) p. 567.

difficulties of resupplying the outposts during monsoon season.<sup>115</sup> Another difficulty was the large amount of SAF forces it took to occupy the line, preventing their use in other operations.<sup>116</sup> Nevertheless, the use of fixed defensive lines to interdict PFLOAG supply lines would remain an important element of the campaign in Dhofar.<sup>117</sup> This became obvious as the number of rocket and mortar attacks east of the Hornbeam line declined significantly after its completion.<sup>118</sup> The line managed to prevent about 85% of PFLOAG supplies reaching their destination.<sup>119</sup>

The fourth operational element of the campaign in Dhofar was the air support SAF forces were receiving from the Sultan of Oman's Air Force (SOAF). Without SOAF support, none of the operational elements mentioned above would have been possible.<sup>120</sup> In three areas SOAF had the most impact, the first of which was close air support (CAS). SAF forces and their BATT and Firqat counterparts usually operated in relatively small units on the Jebel and were often outnumbered by PFLOAG formations.<sup>121</sup> As a result, their ability to take on the PFLOAG relied on adequate artillery and air support.<sup>122</sup> CAS was primarily provided by relatively cheap and light ground attack jets, such as Provost and later Strikemaster, operated by RAF loan- and contract officers.<sup>123</sup> The importance of CAS is exemplified by its crucial role in the aforementioned battle for Mirbat. If it had not been for the timely air attacks, the Mirbat garrison would have been overrun, which would have presented an important propaganda victory for PFLOAG.<sup>124</sup> CAS success, however, greatly depended on British officers on the ground that possessed the skills to direct the aircraft to their targets.<sup>125</sup> SOAF also played an important role in interdicting PFLOAG supplies, especially after the completion of the Hornbeam line. SOAF aircraft were able to interdict camel trains at will, without having to worry about civilian casualties, since the Hornbeam line was established between the densely populated eastern sector and the largely uninhabited western sector.<sup>126</sup>



British military inside the BATT-house at Mirbat

PHOTO B. HARRINGTON SPER

Another area of the campaign where SOAF support proved invaluable was air transport. The combination of a non-existent road network and the rugged terrain that favoured ambushes largely prevented resupply by ground vehicles.<sup>127</sup> The establishment of isolated outposts made resupply even more challenging, so SAF relied on SOAF transport aircraft and helicopters to bring in crucial supplies such as food,

115 Hughes, 'A Model Campaign Reappraised', p. 291. Also Anthony Kemp, *The SAS Savage Wars of Peace, 1947 to the Present* (London, Penguin Books Ltd, 2001) p. 107.

116 TNA FCO 8/1856, 'CSAF's Assessment, 1972'; TNA DEFE 24/575, 'CSAF's Assessment, 1972', 14 February 1972.

117 J.E. Peterson, 'Guerrilla Warfare and Ideological Confrontation in the Arabian Peninsula: The Rebellion in Dhufar', in: *World Affairs*, 139:4 (1977) p. 283.

118 TNA PRO DEFE 25/312, 'Review of the Military Situation Since the 10<sup>th</sup> December 1973 to the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1974', 19 December 1973.

119 TNA PRO DEFE 25/312, 'Review of the Military Situation', 26 November 1973; TNA DEFE 11/762, 'Welch to COS Secretary', 11 June 1973; TNA DEFE 11/737, 'Bridges to D. Acland', 12 June 1974.

120 Akehurst, *We Won a War*, p. 39, 96.

121 John Pimlott, 'The British Army: The Dhofar Campaign, 1970-1975', in: Ian Beckett and John Pimlott (eds.), *Counter Insurgency: Lessons From History* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Books, 2011) p. 29.

122 Thomas R. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency in the Post-Imperial Era*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995) p. 82.

123 Rowland White, *Storm Front* (London, Transworld Publishers, 2011) p. 96-97.

124 Martinez, 'The Battle of Mirbat', p. 520.

125 White, *Storm Front*, p. 135-136. Also Gardiner, *In the Service of the Sultan*, p. 116-118.

126 Gardiner, *In the Service of the Sultan*, p. 78.

127 McKeown, *Britain and Oman*, p. 45-46.



The combination of an increasingly strong SAF posture on the Jebel and visibly growing development programmes, persuaded many PFLOAG insurgents to surrender their support for the communist cause

ammunition and water.<sup>128</sup> Its fixed wing fleet consisted of easily maintainable and reliable aircraft that could land on short and improvised airstrips.<sup>129</sup> Although their number was limited, their role in keeping SAF units supplied cannot be underestimated. The amount of SOAF helicopters was also limited, but they were supplemented by Iranian helicopters during the latter years of the conflict.<sup>130</sup> The increase in helicopter availability made it possible to conduct additional air mobile operations. This provided much needed mobility and enabled SAF to keep its units supplied and achieve higher levels of surprise during operations.<sup>131</sup>

Finally, SOAF played an indispensable role in medical evacuations. Initially, the only way wounded men could be taken off the Jebel was by an agonizing journey on the back of a mule.<sup>132</sup> For this very reason, SOAF's first helicopters were acquired. They significantly boosted the morale of the men fighting on the Jebel.<sup>133</sup> This was reinforced by the presence of an RAF field surgical team that provided medical care to both British servicemen and Omani soldiers, including the Firqat.<sup>134</sup>

In conclusion, the operational elements began to pay off from 1974 onwards. The combination of an increasingly strong SAF posture on the Jebel and visibly growing development programmes, managed to persuade many PFLOAG insurgents to surrender their support for the communist cause by either force or reward.<sup>135</sup> By early December 1975 organised resistance by the PFLOAG had collapsed and the province was subsequently declared 'secure for civil development' on 4 December, thereby achieving the overall objective of the campaign.<sup>136</sup> Although a small number of insurgents would continue to hold out for several more years, the conflict had essentially been concluded by 1976.<sup>137</sup>

## Conclusion

Now that the 'longest war' has entered its seventeenth year, it has become clear that western states need a new, more effective and efficient way of countering irregular opponents. A possible solution could be derived from the Dhofar campaign between 1970-1976. From the beginning, the campaign was subjected to significant strategic limitations and political restrictions. British and Omani financial difficulties ensured that the available resources and manpower remained scarce throughout the conflict.<sup>138</sup> This was further aggravated by the continuing British military commitment in Europe, which was necessitated by other threats. Besides these significant limitations, operations in Dhofar were further restricted by the political intention to keep casualties to a minimum in order to prevent any public scrutiny about the

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- 128 James S. Corum and Wray R. Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars; Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists* (Lawrence, University of Kansas Press, 2003) p. 213.  
 129 David C. Arkless, *The Secret War; Dhofar 1971-1972* (London, William Kimber & Co, 1988) p. 14-15.  
 130 TNA DEFE 11/762 'COS Briefing', 17 July 1973; Maj. Gen. Ken Perkins, *A Fortunate Soldier* (London, Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1988) p. 141.  
 131 Douglas Blaufarb and George Tanham, *Who Will Win: A Key to the Puzzle of Revolutionary War* (New York, Crane Russak, 1989) p. 66.  
 132 White, *Storm Front*, p. 118-119.  
 133 Ibid.  
 134 M.A. Melsom, M.D. Farrar and R.C. Volkers, 'Battle Casualties', in: *Annals of the Royal College of Surgeons of England*, 56:1 (1975) p. 289.  
 135 TNA FCO 8/2687, 'Oman Annual Review 1975', 2 January 1976.  
 136 Ian Skeet, *Oman: Politics and Development* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 1992) p. 50  
 137 Ibid.  
 138 TNA FCO 8/1855, 'Oman Economy, Hawley To Wright', 8 May 1972, p. 2.

conflict. Despite these limitations, British strategic interests necessitated the deployment of military forces to Dhofar.

Due to the existing limitations, the British commitment to Oman consisted mostly of special forces personnel, seconded officers to regular SAF and SOAF units, and other critical enablers such as engineers. The latter were used on the basis of a solid strategy that effectively balanced ends, ways and means in order to achieve the main objective of securing Dhofar for civil development. This was done by what was essentially a force and reward approach which aimed to destroy the PFLOAG by attrition, while simultaneously addressing popular grievances by a legitimate development programme addressing only the grievances 'as perceived by the population'.

The combination of regular and irregular forces was critical to the success of the operation. Firqat proved unable to conduct conventional military operations but were very successful when used to gather intelligence and provide security in their local tribal communities. Together with their BATTs they proved to be decisive in holding liberated areas from being retaken by the PFLOAG. Additionally, they enabled regular forces to clear areas of PFLOAG insurgents and conduct operations against their supply lines. The construction of a series of fixed defensive lines by British and Jordanian engineers also contributed largely to severing PFLOAG supply lines from the PDRY. These remote defensive positions were critical in stemming the flow of arms and other supplies, but were isolated and therefore vulnerable to PFLOAG attacks. For this reason, SAF forces heavily relied on air support for their mobility, supplies and fire support.

All in all, the success of the campaign in Dhofar can be attributed to three main factors. The first was the fact that the British and Omani



*British SAS gives medical treatment in the remote Yanqul Plain of Oman*

PHOTO IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

governments pursued a clear strategy with attainable objectives, in which they adjusted their means to their ends. The second factor was the combination of regular and irregular forces which were each assigned tasks that benefitted their respective qualities. They were strongly supported by critical enablers such as airpower, engineers and special forces, in conjunction with a third factor in the form of a legitimate development programme that effectively addressed existing grievances as perceived by the population. Together, these three factors enabled the Omani government to decisively defeat the communist insurgency and re-establish control over the province of Dhofar by 1976.

The similarities with operations against contemporary irregular adversaries are apparent and significant. This article demonstrates it can be highly beneficial for contemporary western strategists to study the Dhofar campaign in greater detail. I venture to suggest that the success factors of the Dhofar campaign can provide the guidelines for defeating twenty-first century irregular adversaries. ■

## Strategische vaagheid

Lkol b.d. Frans Ebbelaar, secretaris werkgroep Defensiebeleid en Krijgsmacht NOV

In het interessante artikel ‘Strategische Vaagheid. Hoe het gebrek aan strategische visie het lerend vermogen van de Koninklijke Landmacht beperkt’ breken dr. M.W.M. Kitzen en F.H. Thönissen MA MSc een lans om de nog aanwezige kennis van recente missies te behouden en niet te laten verdringen door kennis over conventionele gevechten.<sup>1</sup> Bovenal is het een oproep aan de politiek een duidelijke strategie te formuleren, waaruit vooral de landmacht zou moeten afleiden waarop ze zich met voorrang moet voorbereiden: het conventionele gevecht of (stabilisatie)missies. Verder besteden de schrijvers veel aandacht aan het geconstateerde gebrek aan lerend vermogen. Ze lijken hierover enigszins verbaasd, in ieder geval verontrust.

Het artikel is geschreven voordat in maart de nieuwe *Geïntegreerde Buitenland- en Veiligheidsstrategie 2018-2022* (GBVS)<sup>2</sup> werd gepubliceerd. Wellicht dat deze strategie enige vaagheid wegneemt. Echter, ook in deze strategie is niet echt een prioriteit af te leiden waarop de krijgsmacht zich met voorrang zou moeten richten.

Het voorspellen van langetermijntrends op het gebied van dreigingen is een gebruikelijke methode om zich te oriënteren op een veilig-

heidsbeleid. Er zijn echter vele voorbeelden waarbij internationale verhoudingen binnen een of twee jaar volledig veranderden, neem de val van de Muur, de assertievere houding van Rusland of, recent, de situatie met Noord-Korea. Internationale machtsverhoudingen die militaire inzet (kunnen) vereisen, kunnen eveneens snel wijzigen. Denk aan IS, Mali, en de Baltische Staten. Deze vereisen verschillende vormen van inzet. De regering, mede op advies van de Adviesraad Internationale Vraagstukken, kiest daarom bewust en terecht voor een veelzijdig inzetbare krijgsmacht. Daarin ligt tegelijk ook het dilemma voor de krijgsmacht.

### Dilemma

Op basis van de ‘spierballentaal van Rusland’ snappen de schrijvers dat de krijgsmacht, en in het bijzonder de landmacht, weer ‘aandacht’ moet besteden aan artikel 5-operaties.<sup>3</sup> Maar vervolgens vragen zij zich af of dit niet te eenzijdig gebeurt, met veronachtzaming van de geoefendheid voor vredes- of stabilisatiemissies. Als onderbouwing wordt een reden aangehaald die door de politiek tijdens de uithollingsdecennia ook werd gehanteerd: *use it or lose it*. Dat is de reden geweest dat wij capaciteiten als tanks, artillerie en logistiek zijn kwijtgeraakt en nu al weer node missen. De paar tanks die wij van Duitsland mogen gebruiken zijn bij lange na niet het equivalent dat de NAVO van ons per brigade verwacht. Letterlijk wordt gesteld ‘Het is natuurlijk niet meer dan logisch dat het groot-schalig gemechaniseerd optreden weer beoefend wordt, maar men moet zich wel blijven afvragen hoe groot de kans op Nederlandse betrokkenheid bij een dergelijk conflict daadwerkelijk is. Is de kans dat Nederland (weer) bij gaat dragen aan

1 M.W.M. Kitzen en F.H. Thönissen, ‘Strategische vaagheid. Hoe het gebrek aan strategische visie het lerend vermogen van de Koninklijke Landmacht beperkt’, in: *Militaire Spectator* 187 (2018) (4) 206-223.

2 Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, *Wereldwijd voor een veilig Nederland. Geïntegreerde Buitenland- en Veiligheidsstrategie 2018-2022* (Den Haag, Rijksoverheid, maart 2018). Via: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2018/03/19/notitie-geintegreerde-buitenland--en-veiligheidsstrategie-gbvs>

3 Kitzen en Thönissen, ‘Strategische vaagheid’, 220.



een vredes- of stabilisatiemissie, zoals nu in Afghanistan, Irak of Mali, niet vele malen groter? Er schuilt dan ook een groot gevaar in de huidige eenzijdige focus'.<sup>4</sup>

In deze redenering wordt kans op deelname aan operaties of missies gehanteerd als onderbouwing van een focus. Niet genoemd wordt dat afschrikking een ander effect van een geoefende krijgsmacht is. Voorkomen van gevechten is verre te prefereren boven werkelijke inzet. Daarvoor moet je wel slagkracht hebben in de vorm van fregatten, onderzeeboten, jachtvliegtuigen, tanks, artillerie. Speciaal voor wat betreft de landmacht moet in de komende tijd terecht veel aandacht en oefentijd gestoken worden in het opnieuw onder de knie krijgen van het complexe gevecht der verbonden wapens.

#### **Basisinzetbaarheid**

Gaat hiermee ervaring en kennis van vredes- en stabilisatiemissie verloren? Ja. Is dit jammer? Ja, maar wel terecht in relatie tot de hernieuwde dreigingen aan de oost- en zuidoostflanken van het bondgenootschappelijk grondgebied. Gaan wij in de toekomst dan nog missies uitvoeren? Zoals de schrijvers vaststellen, doen we dat nu nog steeds en zal dat in de toekomst ook zeker gebeuren. De GBVS en de *Defensienota* spreken hierbij over een vooruitgeschoven verdediging. Wij zullen keer op keer moeten inschatten welke dreiging het grootst is. Daarbij is het een goede benadering om uit te gaan van een basisinzetbaarheid voor het conventionele gevecht. Vanuit die basis kan met aanvullende training een switch worden gemaakt naar missies.

Omgekeerd kan dat niet op korte termijn, zoals de recente oefeningen aantonen. Dat is ook de reden dat de landmacht eigenlijk voorlopig veel minder belasting wil door missies om gestructureerd in enigszins organieke verbanden te kunnen oefenen in het conventionele gevecht. Onze krijgsmacht is zo klein dat wij niet voortdurend beide taken kunnen uitvoeren. Zolang wij onvoldoende zijn getraind voor het groot-schalige conflict maakt Commandant CLAS de juiste keuze om daar op dit moment voorrang aan te geven. Zodra die geoefendheid terug is en

de veiligheidstoestand dat toestaat, kan er weer meer aandacht worden besteed aan missies.

#### **Beperkt lerend vermogen**

De schrijvers zetten vraagtekens bij het beperkte lerend vermogen en vinden het moeilijk daar een precieze oorzaak voor aan te wijzen. Er wordt gewezen op een onderzoek in 2015 bij het 12 Infanteriebataljon waaruit bleek dat de kennis over counterinsurgency-operaties grotendeels zou zijn verdwenen. Het behoud van de kennis wordt blijkbaar bemoeilijkt door het informele karakter van kennisdeling. Er is een gemis aan institutionalisering van de geïdentificeerde lessen.

Toch wordt een belangrijke oorzaak voor het tegenvallende lerend vermogen onderkend: de hoge werkdruk. Mijns inziens is dat een goede observatie. Eenheden hebben oefenjaarprogramma's die met vertrouwen worden samengesteld. Het is echter van alle tijden dat die programma's regelmatig worden gefrustreerd door allerlei extra bezigheden, die zich later aftekenen. Denk aan steunverlening, ceremoniële taken of individuele uitzendingen. Ook de nog altijd doorgaande missies trekken in de praktijk van alledag op pelotons- of compagniesniveau een veel grotere wissel dan vanaf een planningsbureau berekend. Neem daarbij de ondervulling van de eenheden en de gemiddelde pelotons- en compagniescommandant is al blij dat hij de gevechtsvormen voor het conventionele gevecht kan beoefenen.

#### **Ernstig?**

Bevreemdend is de uitspraak 'Nog veel ernstiger is de constatering dat zowel op de werkvloer als vanuit de leiding weer de nadruk was komen te liggen op het conventionele gevecht en dat er nauwelijks meer aandacht was voor stabilisatie-optreden'.<sup>5</sup> Het zou pas ernstig zijn als die nadruk niet zou zijn verlegd als je jaren en jaren te weinig aan kennis over en ervaring met het conventionele gevecht hebt behouden, terwijl de veranderde geopolitieke werkelijkheid daarom vraagt.

4 Idem.

5 Idem, 214.

# MENINGEN VAN ANDEREN

Verder zullen kennis en ervaring in een sterk roulerende organisatie nooit lang beklijven. Enerzijds zijn er de functiewisselingen, anderzijds is er een grote uitstroom. In zijn tijd wist Von Clausewitz al dat een leger vijf jaar zonder oorlog weer even onervaren is als voor de laatste inzet. Het huidige gebrek aan kennis en vaardigheden bij de landmacht om de eerste hoofdtaak uit te voeren bewijst zijn gelijk. Het is prijzenswaardig dat de schrijvers pleiten voor een meer zelflerende organisatie. Het is goed om institutioneel kennis vast te leggen, maar kennis uit boeken en doctrines omzetten in vaardigheden vergt jaren training. De laatste tien jaar wordt meer gesproken over *lessons identified* in plaats van *lessons learned*. Het eerste benadert de realiteit meer. Helaas.

#### **Bewuste keuze**

Strategische vaagheid is er en zal er met de nieuwe GBVS ook nog wel blijven. De *Defensienota*

2018 spreekt over het toegenomen belang van de eerste hoofdtaak in de laatste jaren, de bescherming van het eigen en het bondgenootschappelijke grondgebied. Daarom is het goed dat CLAS wel een keuze maakt: herstellen van de geoefendheid voor een grootschalig conflict. Nu nog met gehandicapte brigades, die niet de middelen hebben om het gevecht van verbonden wapens te voeren. Te veel uitgekleeft door een overaccent op vredes- en stabilisatiemissies. Te lang doorgezet terwijl de wereld aan het veranderen was.

Laten we hopen dat de basisgeoefendheid binnen enkele jaren weer op niveau is. Het herwinnen van de slagkracht zal helaas langer duren. Als de dreigingen weer veranderen kan of moet vanuit deze voorwaarde weer worden deelgenomen aan missies. Gaan we dan op dat gebied ergens weer een wiel uitvinden? Ik denk het wel. Maar dan is daar bewust voor gekozen. ■

## MEDEDELING

### Lezing en algemene ledenvergadering KVBK

*Noord-Koreaanse nucleaire afschrikking: propaganda of realiteit?*

9 juli Den Haag

Dr. ir. Ralph Savelsberg, technisch natuurkundige en universitair docent *missile defence* bij de Nederlandse Defensie Academie, spreekt op 9 juli over het kernwapen- en raketprogramma van Noord-Korea. Wat kan er, op basis van kennis over de werking van ballistische raketten en analyse van foto's en video's, worden afgeleid over de mogelijke capaciteit?

Voorafgaand aan de lezing vindt de jaarlijkse algemene ledenvergadering van de KVBK plaats. Hierin komen de activiteiten van 2017, de financiële verantwoording en enkele initiatieven voor de komende periode aan de orde.

**Locatie:** ministerie van Defensie, Kalvermarkt 38  
Den Haag

#### **Programma:**

- 15.00 uur ontvangst voor de algemene ledenvergadering in de Leeuwenkuil
- 15.30 uur algemene ledenvergadering in de Perszaal
- 16.00 uur ontvangst voor de lezing in de Leeuwenkuil
- 16.30 uur lezing met aansluitend Q&A in de Perszaal
- 17.30 uur borrel in de Coffee Corner
- 18.30 uur einde

Aanmelden voor de lezing en opvragen van de vergaderstukken van de algemene ledenvergadering kan via de secretaris van de KVBK, majoor drs. D. Boissevain:  
D.Boissevain.01@mindef.nl of 06-30858838.

## Zure happen voor twee

Linda Polman

**T**er gelegenheid van de historische onderhandelingen in Singapore vertoonde de Amerikaanse president aan de Noord-Koreaanse leider een promotiefilmje waarin zij getweeën de hoofdrol spelen. In de film worden ze toegejuicht door het volk en ze zwaaien terug. En er waren allemaal glimmende dingen in te zien: monorails, een drone, torenflats, laboratoria die oogden alsof er belangrijke wetenschappelijke ontdekkingen in werden gedaan. De beelden waren bedoeld om Kim Jong-un te laten zien hoe de toekomst voor Noord-Korea eruit zou kunnen zien. Als Noord-Korea zijn nucleaire arsenaal ontmantelt, kan het net zo welvarend worden als Amerika's bondgenoot Zuid-Korea, was de boodschap.

'He really enjoyed it', verzekerde de Amerikaanse president. Hij roemde ook de schoonheid van Noord-Korea's stranden (hoe mooi die zijn, kun je op tv steeds zien 'als ze kanonnen in zee laten ontploffen', zei hij). Trump doe je geen groter plezier dan met toplocaties om *beach resorts* op te bouwen. Maar Kim Jong-un heeft een andere liefhebberij.

Om te gedijen heeft de Noord-Koreaanse leider de VS wel nodig, maar als aartsvijand, niet als bondgenoot. Volgens de Noord-Koreaanse geschiedenisboeken viel de VS op 26 juni 1950 Noord-Korea binnen om er chaos en leed te veroorzaken. Noord-Korea's eerste grote leider, Kim Il-sung, was er destijds bij en zag met eigen ogen dat de Amerikanen er op uit waren om 'van het Koreaanse volk hun slaven te maken en van Korea hun kolonie'.

Het was natuurlijk andersom in 1950: Noord-Korea viel Zuid-Korea binnen. Maar nog steeds leren Noord-Koreaanse kindertjes op school dat drie dode Amerikaanse militairen plus vier dode Amerikaanse militairen, zeven dode Amerikaanse militairen zijn. Nog steeds hangen in heel Noord-Korea posters met de waarschuwing dat de Amerikanen op het punt staan om Noord-Korea opnieuw binnen te vallen. De constante dreiging uit Amerika verklaart voor het Noord-

Koreaans volk waarom de grote leider zijn nucleaire wapens, zijn parate krijgsmacht (de op drie na grootste ter wereld) en zijn totale, genadeloze interne controle nodig heeft: Amerikaanse agenten schuilen onder elke Noord-Koreaanse steen.

Voor de dictator is het noodzakelijk om een aartsvijand te hebben en het volk denkt er ook wel bij te varen. Hannah Arendt schreef het al: totalitarisme elimineert de afstand tussen mensen. In een dictatuur versmelten alle mensen tot één gigantische creatuur, die gedijt in de illusie van warmte en saamenzijn. Totalitaire regimes verbroederen, helemaal tegen een vijand, en ze mobiliseren: kijk naar de pleinen waar het volk schouder aan schouder met vlaggetjes zwaait en juicht.

Als Amerikaanse toeristen vakantie reizen gaan boeken naar Trumps gedroomde recreatieoord op Noord-Koreaanse stranden, is de dictator zijn rechtvaardiging kwijt. Dat Noord-Korea op Zuid-Korea kan gaan lijken is voor Kim Jong-un geen verlokkelijk vergezicht, maar een gruwel. Het Noord-Koreaanse volk, in *splendid isolation*, heeft überhaupt geen beelden bij het concept van Amerikaanse toeristen in een Noord-Koreaans strandhotel. Om met George Orwell te spreken: net zoals dat gaat met de meeste wilde dieren, floreert de menselijke verbeelding niet in gevangenschap.

Alleen de president van Amerika droomt. Eerder vertelde hij journalisten dat hij voor zich zag wat hij in de lunchpauze van de vredesonderhandelingen zou doen: hij zou hamburgers voor Kim Jong-un laten aanrukken. Die zouden de Noord-Koreaans leren wat hij allemaal zou kunnen hebben, als hij maar voor de Amerikaanse eis zou buigen. Mooi dat er bij de top in Singapore niet één hamburger op tafel kwam. In plaats daarvan liet Kim Jong-un gevulde komkommers à la Noord-Korea serveren. Met stukjes ui erin. Zure happen voor twee. ■



In deze *Militaire Spectator* is plaatsgemaakt voor een gastcolumn. Kapitein Wouter Eidhof schrijft over de uitstroom van jonge militairen uit de defensieorganisatie.

De redactie van de *Militaire Spectator* daagt ook andere lezers uit om een gastcolumn te schrijven. Het thema is vrij, maar moet passen binnen de formule van het tijdschrift. De boodschap moet relevant zijn voor de lezers. Het moet gaan om een

gefundeerde eigen mening, om een logisch opgebouwd betoog en de feiten moeten kloppen en verifieerbaar zijn. Een bijdrage mag maximaal duizend woorden tellen. U kunt uw gastcolumn sturen naar de bureauredactie (zie colofon) of aanbieden via de website. De redactie wacht uw bijdrage met belangstelling af.

*De hoofdredacteur*

## Rechtsomkeert

### *De uitstroom van jonge officieren bij de landmacht*

*Kapitein ir. W.B. Eidhof*

**D**e jonge militair die vooruit wil, kiest toch maar voor een gewone baan', kopte *Trouw* afgelopen januari.<sup>1</sup> Ik begrijp dat. Als Mark Zuckerberg, de 34-jarige CEO van miljardenbedrijf Facebook, bij de landmacht had gewerkt, was zijn rang nu hoogstwaarschijnlijk kapitein en had hij zich afgevraagd of het mogelijk was om majoor te worden. En zelfs dan duurt het nog een jaar of twintig voor hij een positie kan bekleden die in de buurt komt van zijn functie nu.

Als het reguliere opleidingstraject wordt gevolgd is een officier bij de landmacht een jaar of dertig wanneer hij of zij de rang van kapitein bekleedt. De uitstromers in deze rang zijn mannen en

vrouwen die een opleiding hebben genoten, een aantal jaar hebben gediend en de keus maken om regelmatig werk te zoeken. Omdat ze een gezin willen stichten, of omdat ze juist de eerste jaren op het operationele niveau erg leuk vinden, maar zich niet aangetrokken voelen tot de wereld van de strategie, stafdiensten en beleid.

#### **Kort door de bocht**

Naar schatting verlieten in 2017 zo'n 2800 jonge militairen onze organisatie. Deze uitstroom is normaal en hierop wordt geanticipeerd in het personeelsbeleid van Defensie. De afgelopen jaren valt mij echter op dat er in mijn kennissenkring binnen de organisatie – voornamelijk jonge officieren – veel zijn die de landmacht verlaten met pijn in het hart. Ze willen 'het pak niet uitdoen' maar kiezen er toch voor hun heil elders te zoeken. Oudere collega's zeggen dan: 'Het is een gevolg van de bezuinigingen.' Ik denk dat dat te kort door de bocht is.

<sup>1</sup> K. van Teeffelen, 'De jonge militair die vooruit wil, kiest toch maar voor een gewone baan', in: *Trouw*, 23 januari 2018.

Veel belangrijker is naar mijn mening of de onderliggende waarden van het individu en de organisatie wel overeenkomen. Dit is belangrijk, omdat geloof in de visie van de organisatie en 'waarom' een organisatie doet wat ze doet, de al aanwezige intrinsieke motivatie van een medewerker naar boven brengt. Op het moment dat de waarden en de doelen van de medewerker in lijn zijn met die van de organisatie wordt de motivatie om het werk te doen een vanzelfsprekendheid.

### Kernwaarden

De kernwaarden van de landmacht zijn prestatiegericht.<sup>2</sup> Het zijn drie centrale waarden, die essentieel en onderscheidend zijn:

- Moed. Moed komt neer op het doen wat noodzakelijk is, ongeacht de gevolgen voor de militair zelf. Het belichaamt de wil om te winnen en door te gaan waar anderen stoppen.
- Toewijding. Toewijding staat voor teambelang boven individueel belang, kameraadschap, esprit de corps en het vermogen om te kunnen handelen in de geest van de opdracht.
- Veerkracht. Veerkracht kenmerkt zich door het vermogen snel te kunnen schakelen binnen een complexe operationele omgeving, incasseren, om flexibel en adaptief te zijn. Het geheel is gericht op het halen van de opdracht.

De manier waarop prestaties geleverd moeten worden blijkt ook uit de kernwaarden: handelen in de geest van de opdracht, snel kunnen schakelen, flexibel en adaptief zijn. Dit zijn alle elementen uit de opdrachtgerichte commandovoering.<sup>3</sup> Kenmerkend hiervoor zijn een hoge mate van beslissingsbevoegdheid en zelfstandigheid voor de *on-scene commanders*. Dit zijn veelal de jonge officieren. In deze situatie ontvangt een jonge officier een hoge mate van verantwoordelijkheid en beslissingsbevoegdheid, en wordt hij of zij gestimuleerd om zelf richting te geven aan zijn of haar eenheid.

### Drijfveren

Deze jonge officieren vormen een vrij homogene groep. Qua leeftijd, maar zeker ook qua drijfveren lopen de verschillen niet ver uiteen. Grosso modo hebben we het vandaag de dag dan over zeer gemotiveerde, jonge mensen uit

Generatie Y wil gezien en gewaardeerd worden. Hiërarchie en het principe van anciënniteit is haar vreemd. Hier ontstaat een generatieconflict in de bedrijfsvoering

generatie Y, ruwweg geboren tussen 1981 en 1995. Betekenisvol werk is voor generatie Y over het algemeen belangrijker dan salaris. Deze generatie wil een bijdrage leveren aan de maatschappij. Ze willen weten waarom een taak wordt uitgevoerd, zodat hogere doelen en drijfveren duidelijk worden. Verder streven ze naar flexibiliteit.<sup>4</sup>

Veel jonge officieren zijn in mijn beleving enthousiast over oefeningen en uitzendingen, juist omdat hun werkzaamheden in die situaties vaak naadloos aansluiten bij de waarden. Daarnaast worden zij niet zozeer gedreven door financieel gewin, maar eerder door idealisme of een gevoel van status. Het zijn mensen die op zoek zijn naar een hoge mate van verantwoordelijkheid, zelfsturing en flexibiliteit. En dit verwachten ze te vinden bij de landmacht.

### Gezien en gewaardeerd worden

Daarnaast wil generatie Y gezien en gewaardeerd worden. Ze wil worden benaderd op basis van gelijkwaardigheid. Hiërarchie en het principe van anciënniteit is haar vreemd. Zonder schroom durft generatie oudere collega's in te halen. Het gaat immers om het goed uitvoeren van het werk en niet om hoe lang iemand ergens

2 Opleidings- en trainingscommando, *Vorming in de Koninklijke Landmacht* (Amersfoort, Ministerie van Defensie, 2017).

3 OTCOPn, A. D., *Leidraad Commandovoering* (Amersfoort, Doctrinecommissie Koninklijke Landmacht, 2011).

4 PAK organisatieontwikkeling, *Generatie Y op de werkvloer* (2017). Zie: communicatietraining.nl: <https://communicatietraining.nl/inspiratie/generatie-y>.

5 C. Oostveen, *Generatie Y en leiderschap* (2017). Zie: *Opleiding & Carrière Magazine*: <https://carrieremagazine.nl/artikel/195-generatie-y-en-leiderschap>.

zit.<sup>5</sup> Hier ontstaat een generatieconflict in de vredesbedrijfsvoering. De zelfbeschikking die een jonge officier in het veld ervaart, maakt plaats voor een overdaad aan regels en procedures wanneer hij of zij terugkeert in de vredesbedrijfsvoering. Deze bedrijfsvoering bestaat voornamelijk uit procedures die worden bewaakt en gehandhaafd door een organisatie gericht op conformisme, traditie en veiligheid. Deze waarden zijn niet alleen anders, maar antagonistisch!

De initiële opleiding op de KMA richt zich voor een groot deel op militaire basisvaardigheden. Lekker het bos in en stoere dingen doen, met een hoge mate van beslissingsbevoegdheid en zelfstandigheid. Dit is het werk van de junior officier bij de operationele eenheden. Voor alle officieren geldt dat zij, naarmate hun carrière vordert, steeds verder van het gevechtveld verwijderd raken. Met andere woorden, het werk van een officier is voornamelijk *niet* in het bos stoere dingen doen, maar meedraaien in de bureaucratische vredesorganisatie.

## Kloof

Wanneer de jonge officier verderop in zijn carrière steeds meer werkzaam wordt in de vredesbedrijfsvoering verandert er veel. Waar de landmacht op missie daadwerkelijk functioneert als een professionele organisatie,<sup>6</sup> is ze in de vredesbedrijfsvoering een machinebureaucratie. Dat is niet de verwachting die velen bij het vak hadden toen ze begonnen. Ook de gepercipieerde waarden in de organisatie komen niet meer overeen. In tegenstelling tot de genoemde waarden die zo goed pasten bij de jonge officier, zijn het nu eerder de antagonistische waarden die de sfeer en gang van zaken bepalen: conformisme en tradities. In het personeelsbeleid wordt door het rigide toepassen van regels

de rangorde bepaald door de duur van de aanstelling: de anciënniteit. Niet de slimste of de best functionerende officier bepaalt, maar degene die er het langst zit.

De negatieve effecten die dit heeft op de jonge officier zijn tweeledig. Het gebrek aan bewegingsruimte door rigide procedures en aan zeggenschap over de eigen carrière zijn frustrerend. Daar komt bij dat de landmacht momenteel niet in staat is haar taak op een goede wijze te vervullen.<sup>7</sup> En wanneer dat duidelijk wordt, gaat dat ten koste van de trots op ons bedrijf, misschien wel de belangrijkste drijfveer om dit werk te doen.

## Openstaan voor nieuwe ideeën

Om de nieuwe aanwas te behouden zal de organisatie zich moeten openen voor de nieuwe ideeën, werkwijzen en waarden die de nieuwe generatie meebrengt. Niet alleen om de jonge mensen te behouden, maar om de Koninklijke Landmacht een flexibelere en adaptievere organisatie te maken die zich ook staande kan houden in het gevecht van morgen en overmorgen. Om dit gevecht te voeren zullen we de jonge mensen niet alleen binnen moeten houden, maar ook moeten betrekken bij de ontwikkeling van de krijgsmacht van de toekomst. Laat jonge officieren zich meer bemoeien met innovatie- en materieelprojecten. Ook een schaduwraad van jonge mensen naast de Landmachtraad kan een verfrissend geluid laten horen.

Te veel jong talent gaat nu de dienst uit. Niet omdat ze te weinig betaald krijgen of omdat de werkdruk te hoog is. Ze gaan de dienst uit omdat ze geen verantwoordelijkheid krijgen, omdat ze geen beslissingsbevoegdheid krijgen en omdat ze niet gehoord worden. Ze willen vooruit en maken daarom rechtsomkeert naar een gewone baan. ■

6 Ministerie van Defensie (4-4-2007). Zie: *Gedragscode Defensie*: <https://www.defensie.nl/downloads/publicaties/2007/04/04/gedragscode-defensie>.

7 'Prominenten: Leger kan 'grondwettelijke taak' nauwelijks vervullen', in *NRC Handelsblad*, 23-4-2015. Zie: [www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2015/04/23/prominenten-leger-nauwelijks-in-staat-grondwettelijke-taak-te-vervullen](http://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2015/04/23/prominenten-leger-nauwelijks-in-staat-grondwettelijke-taak-te-vervullen).





FOTO ANP

## ‘De bal het werk laten doen’

Lang niet alle nationale elftallen van de NAVO-lidstaten doen mee aan het WK-voetbal in Rusland, maar vele zijn wel betrokken bij de plannen van de alliantie om de paraatheid aan haar noord- en oostgrens op te voeren.

Bestaande of toegenomen dreiging voor het NAVO-grondgebied was in het verleden aanleiding voor auteurs om naar de pen te grijpen. Daarbij werden geregeld voetbaltermen gebruikt. Bijvoorbeeld door generaal-majoor der mariniers b.d. Lamers toen hij pleitte voor de inzet van amfibische eenheden aan de noordflank: ‘Dat is militaire macht die afwezig/aanwezig is en direct kan scoren als dat moet. Heet zoiets in het voetbalspel niet een hangende spits?’<sup>1</sup>

Spel of ernst, cruciaal is het adagium ‘ken uw tegenstander’, dat kolonel van de luchtmacht Weers noemde in zijn stuk ‘Sovjetgedachten over de oorlogvoering’. Ook hij trok de vergelijking met de sport en wees op de buitenlandse trainers die ‘naar Nederland komen om zich op de hoogte te stellen van de tactiek en techniek van de Nederlandse clubs die in de Europacupwedstrijden meedingen’.<sup>2</sup>

In zijn artikel ‘Is aanvallen de beste verdediging van de Europese centrale sector?’ ging luitenant-kolonel der infanterie Egter van Wissekerke in op het veelbesproken concept van de Follow-on-Forces Attack (FOFA): ‘De charme van concepties als FOFA (...) ligt in het feit dat wij ‘de bal het werk laten doen’, om in voetbaltermen te spreken.’ (...).<sup>3</sup>

De RAF nam dat volgens het archief van de *Militaire Spectator* trouwens ooit heel letterlijk, door ‘op een der Duitse vliegvelden fel gekleurde voetballen gevuld met heliumgas’ te werpen, ‘een goedkope manier’ van misleiding om de Duitsers ‘een tijdlang van hun werk te houden’.<sup>4</sup>

- 1 A.C. Lamers, ‘De militaire situatie op de Noordflank’, in: *Mars in Cathedra* (1987) 2497; zie: [http://www.kvbk-cultureelerfgoed.nl/MS\\_PDF/Mars\\_in\\_Cathedra/1987-2492-01-0023.PDF](http://www.kvbk-cultureelerfgoed.nl/MS_PDF/Mars_in_Cathedra/1987-2492-01-0023.PDF).
- 2 M.W.A. Weers, ‘Sovjetgedachten over de oorlogvoering’, in: *Militaire Spectator* 146 (1977)(5) 53-54.
- 3 F.J.D.C. Egter van Wissekerke, ‘Is aanvallen de beste verdediging van de Europese centrale sector?’, in: *Militaire Spectator* 158 (1989) (5) 207.
- 4 ‘Misleiding van de vijand’, in: Uit de buitenlandse vakpers, *Militaire Spectator* 121 (1952) (5) 325.

## Commandanten, deel 1

*Drs. Frans Matser – publicist\**

**D**e laatste maanden is er in de media veel te doen over militairen die zich gedwongen voelen zelf uitrusting aan te schaffen omdat het van rijkswege verstrekte materiaal niet deugt of niet in de juiste maat voorradig is. Dat brengt mijn gedachten terug naar de jaren 80 van de vorige eeuw, toen ik als Artillerie LSO diende, bij een infanteriebataljon in het Duitse Seedorf. In de maand januari was het vaste prik dat alle waarnemers met de afdeling op schietserie gingen naar Münster-Süd. Deze oefening was doorgaans in de laatste weken van januari en dus de koudste periode van het jaar.

Ik weet dat er de laatste jaren veel gedoe is geweest over de militaire schoenen. Maar wat ikzelf de laatste twintig jaar van mijn diensttijd heb mogen ontvangen aan kisten en Meindlbergschoenen, was in ieder geval van heel wat betere kwaliteit dan de schoenen die we in de jaren 80 verstrekt kregen. Het waren bruine laarzen, die gemaakt leken van een soort geperst karton. Ze waren niet geïsoleerd, hadden dunne plastic zolen, waren in nieuwstaat circa 15 minuten waterdicht (geen seconde langer) en waren ongetwijfeld de output van een perfect uitgevoerd verwervingstraject, waarbij een lage kostprijs net even belangrijker was ingeschaald dan enige kwaliteitsnorm. U moet niet vergeten

dat de landmacht in die tijd nog jaarlijks 50.000 dienstplichtigen innam (allemaal met twee paar schoenen), dus met de aanschaf van jaarlijks honderdduizend paar schoenen waren vele miljoenen guldens gemoeid.

Op papier waren de waarnemers in Münster-Süd uitgerust met de YPR, in die tijd het nieuwe voertuig van de pantserinfanterie. Maar de YPR's stonden al maanden op nalevering, omdat het verstrekken van de voertuigen aan de tirailleurscompagnieën een hogere prioriteit had gekregen dan het verstrekken aan de voorwaartse waarnemers. Het gevolg was dat enkele tientallen waarnemers gedurende een schietserie van veertien dagen van 's morgens vroeg tot 's avonds laat op de waarnemingsposten stonden, zonder voertuig. Ze werden daar 's morgens afgezet door een 4-tonner en er waren een paar jeeps (van de LSO's) voor de radioverbindingen. De waarnemingsposten in het oefengebied Münster-Süd waren doorgaans onbeschermd, open modderige loopgraven. Met het van rijkswege verstrekte schoeisel was dit bij temperaturen ver onder nul geen pretje.

Aanschaffen van eigen schoeisel was een oplossing, maar bracht ons in conflict met een ander dogma uit de landmacht van de jaren 80: de eenheid van tenue! Deze onfunctionele mantra werd, bij gebrek aan betere meetinstrumenten zoals een echte oorlog of een uitzending, gebruikt als graadmeter voor de discipline. Dat wil zeggen dat iedereen op een oefening in exact dezelfde kleding moest rondlopen. Iets wat mij en veel jonge collega's bij een parade heel nuttig leek, maar bij een

\* Op deze plaats vindt u afwisselend een column van luitenant-kolonel der mariniers dr. M.F.J. Houben en publicist drs. Frans Matser.

oefening weinig zinvol voorkwam. Voor mensen die in een voertuig bij een kachel zaten, of die fysiek hard moesten werken (lijnwerkers), was de kleding te warm en voor de rest die buiten stond was het tenue natuurlijk weer te koud. Dit resulteerde meestal in een soort ‘gemiddeld’ tenue, waar niemand enig comfort aan had, maar waarmee je dan wel een voldoende kreeg op het onderwerp discipline bij de een of andere test.

Om deze twee problemen het hoofd te bieden, had ik mijn waarnemers vóór de oefening gevraagd om zelf allemaal een paar groene gevoerde laarzen te kopen. Voor 29,95 DM<sup>1</sup> waren deze te verkrijgen bij een benzinepomp in het centrum van het plaatsje Zeven. Deze laarzen waren van stevig rubber en ze waren gevoerd met een soort nepbont, wat ze in ieder geval een stuk comfortabeler maakte dan de verstrekte bruine rommel. En omdat alle soldaten (vrijwillig én uit eigen zak) dezelfde laarzen hadden aangeschaft en bovendien in een decent groene militaire kleur, dacht ik de klip van de eenheid van tenue – althans plaatselijk – voldoende te hebben omzeild.

Zo stonden we ergens halverwege de week bij temperaturen net onder nul, in de natte sneeuw op de waarnemingspost, toen een tamelijk forse donkerblauwe KP-auto<sup>2</sup> binnenreed. Omdat ik wist dat hier meestal geen soldaat-geschuts-monteur uitrolt, begaf ik mij spoorwegs naar het voertuig, dat, licht slippend in de modder, precies tussen twee met ijs bedekte plassen tot stilstand kwam. Een wat oudere korporaal krom enigszins stram achter het stuur vandaan en liep naar de achterzijde van de auto, om de deur te openen voor de autoriteit die op de achterbank zat. Op het moment dat het portier open ging, werd ik een moment aangenaam getroffen door een warme luchtstroom uit het interieur van de Peugeot. Een mij onbekende kolonel stapte uit, gekleed in Veld-Tenue (VT), bij de ouderen onder u wellicht nog bekend: een soort DT met een kort jasje en lage, glimmend gepoetste schoenen. Het oogde wat misplaatst zo midden in het grauwe oefenterrein.

De plassen en modder zorgvuldig ontwijkend, stapte de kolonel op mij af. Ik bracht de groet en probeerde mij te melden. Hij liet mij echter niet uitspreken en begon gelijk te bulderen ‘hoe het in godsnaam mogelijk was dat ik en mijn mannen op niet organiek verstrekt schoeisel rondliepen.’ Ik probeerde nog het een en ander uit te leggen, maar dat was voor dovemansoren. Ik moest mijn naam en eenheid doorgeven en even snel als hij gekomen was vertrok de briesende hoofdofficier in zijn donkerblauwe sedan na het slaken van de dreigende mededeling: ‘U hoort hier nog van luitenant. Ik zal dit rapporteren aan uw afdelingscommandant.’

Met enige schroom keerde ik die avond terug in het bivak, waar de afdelingsadjutant mij verzocht even bij de afdelingscommandant in zijn tent langs te komen. Ik maakte gelijk maar even melding van mijn aanvaring met de kolonel. De overste keek mij met een vage glimlach aan en zei: ‘Frans, goed onthouden dat je nooit zo wordt.’ Ik haalde opgelucht adem en informeerde wat ik nu moest met die laarzen. ‘Morgen gewoon weer aantrekken. Iedereen die daar over komt zeuren, stuur je door naar mij’, sprak de overste strijdlustig, ‘al is het de Legerkorpscommandant.’ En hij meende het nog ook.

Ik moest even aan dit voorval van 35 jaar geleden terugdenken, bij een ander media relletje: de verhuizing van de mariniers naar Vlissingen, waarbij een generaal der mariniers niet slaafs de gewenste politieke lijn volgt, maar opkomt voor zijn mannen, met alle risico voor zijn eigen carrière. Gelukkig, ze zijn er nog, commandanten die eerst aan hun mannen en dan aan hun eigen hachje denken! Mijn oude afdelingscommandant en de generaal der mariniers kennen elkaar waarschijnlijk niet, maar ze zouden het denk ik verdraaid goed met elkaar kunnen vinden. ■

1 Deutsche Mark, een wettig betaalmiddel bij onze oosterburen in de vorige eeuw.

2 Aanduiding voor Niet-Operationeel Dienstvoertuig (PNOD) in de vorige eeuw.



## Statements of Resolve

Achieving Coercive Credibility in International Conflict  
 Door Roseanne McManus  
 Cambridge (Cambridge University Press) 2017  
 242 blz.  
 ISBN 9781107170346  
 € 85,-

**E**r zijn de afgelopen eeuw diverse momenten geweest dat een uitspraak van een Amerikaanse president cruciaal bleek voor het verdere verloop van een crisis of conflict. Een voorbeeld zijn de uitspraken van president Eisenhower ten tijde van de Suez Crisis (1956). Deze weerhielden de Sovjet-Unie van inmenging en dwongen Frankrijk en het Verenigd Koninkrijk hun interventie te staken. Roseanne McManus, politicologe aan Baruch College, City University of New York, deed promotieonderzoek naar het effect van presidentiële uitspraken, wat heeft geresulteerd in *Statements of Resolve*. In dit boek staat de vraag centraal waarom daadkrachtige uitspraken van Amerikaanse presidenten<sup>1</sup> er in het kader van een (dreigend) militair conflict toe leidden dat opposenten hun militair optreden of het dreigen daarmee bijstelden of daar zelfs helemaal vanaf zagen.

Volgens McManus is doorzettingsvermogen – ‘the ability to follow through’ – de bepalende factor voor een effectieve presidentiële uitspraak. Op het eerste gezicht logisch, maar dit blijkt nog nooit wetenschappelijk bewezen. Dat komt omdat de gangbare theorieën uit de Internationale Betrekkingen over dit vraagstuk vooral naar de kosten van een presidentiële uitspraak kijken (*domestic audience costs* en *international reputation costs*). Uitgangspunt voor deze benadering is niet ‘zal hij doorzetten, hoe lukt hem dat en wat heeft hij daarvoor nodig’, maar ‘hoe groot is de kans dat hij alsnog terugkrabbelt of niet verder tot actie overgaat’ vanwege de te verwachten politiek-strategische kosten, zowel in de buitenlandse als de binnenlandse politiek.

### Statistisch huzarenstuk

Voor haar onderzoek maakte McManus eerst een inventarisatie

van militaire conflicten in de periode 1975-2000 en de aard en toon van de presidentiële uitspraken die in het kader daarvan werden gedaan. Hiertoe heeft zij uit een database met presidentiële uitspraken<sup>2</sup> circa 280 woorden en zinnen gelicht en deze gewaardeerd aan de hand van een door haar zelf ontwikkelde codering. Met behulp van de *Militarized Interstate Disputes* (MID) database<sup>3</sup> was zij in staat exact te bepalen bij welke conflicten de VS militair betrokken waren. Vervolgens heeft zij drie randvoorwaarden getoetst die volgens haar bepalen of en in welke mate een presidentiële uitspraak doorzettingsvermogen bezat. Dat zijn: de president moest beschikken over voldoende militaire capaciteit, zijn kans op herverkiezing was groot of speelde niet (tweede termijn) en de politieke oppositie door ‘duiven’ was beperkt. Met behulp van statistiek onderzocht McManus voor elk van de drie genoemde randvoorwaarden, maar ook voor de kostentheorieën, de relevantie voor haar stelling. Een statistisch huzarenstuk, waarmee zij er in slaagt allerlei verbanden bloot te leggen, maar ook de onderlinge wisselwerking van al deze input weet aan te tonen en niet ‘te bewijzen’, want daarvoor is statistiek, zoals zij ook zelf benadrukt, niet geschikt. Maar de correlaties die zij naar boven haalt, leveren niet alleen een zeer herkenbaar en overtuigend beeld op, zij zijn ook statistisch zeer robuust. Dit empirisch onderzoek is het unieke aan haar onderzoek en tevens haar kritiek op eerdere studies naar het effect van presidentiële uitspraken. De theorievorming die hierover heeft plaats gevonden is volgens de auteur namelijk nooit echt getest. Het empirisch

1 McManus definieert de term *statement of resolve* als ‘(...) public statements which indicate a country is committed to a position; (...) includes threats, demands, refusals, negative characteristics (...)’

2 McManus gebruikte de *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*, waarin sinds 1929 alle presidentiële verklaringen en uitspraken worden gepubliceerd. Digitaal toegankelijk via: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/>.

3 Correlates of War Project: <http://cow.dss.ucdavis.edu/data-sets>.



onderzoek dat wel gedaan is, had een te beperkte *scope*, maar testte evenmin de verschillende theorieën, zoals de hiervoor aangehaalde kostentheorieën, onderling. Dit doet McManus allemaal wel.

### Kwalitatieve analyse

McManus laat het niet alleen bij kwantitatief onderzoek. Omdat een statistische correlatie geen verklarende waarde heeft, doet zij aansluitend een kwalitatieve analyse van drie conflicten: Cuba Crisis (1962), het herleven van de Koude Oorlog (1981-1987) en de Vietnam Oorlog (periode 1964-1971). Het effect van presidentiële uitspraken op deze conflicten varieerde van 'doorslaggevend' tot 'bijna geen'. McManus verifieert aan de hand van primaire bronnen of de opponent de drie eerder genoemde randvoorwaarden inderdaad zo inschatte zoals op grond van haar stelling verwacht mocht worden. Hiermee maakt zij het 'waarom' inzichtelijk van het eerder vastgestelde statistische verband. Samengevat zegt McManus dat haar kwantitatieve en kwalitatieve

onderzoek een aantoonbaar verband vaststelt tussen de effectiviteit van presidentiële uitspraken en de 'ability to follow through'.

McManus vindt niet of nauwelijks voldoende aanwijzingen dat de *domestic audience*-kostentheorie een bepalende factor voor de effectiviteit van krachtadige uitspraken is. Dit is opmerkelijk, omdat in het afgelopen decennium onder politicologen juist hiernaar de aandacht uitgaat. Ten aanzien van de theorie over verlies van internationale reputatie vindt zij wel aanwijzingen van relevantie.

### Kleine landen

In haar eindconclusie gaat McManus niet voorbij aan de vraagtekens en onduidelijkheden die na haar onderzoek blijven bestaan en die nog verder uitgediept moeten worden. Een potentieel boeiend onderwerp dat zij noemt is onderzoek naar de rol die de persoonlijkheid van de president in dit vraagstuk speelt. Het minst sterke punt in het boek is het 'algemeen geldende' predicaat dat McManus aan haar conclusies hangt.

Zou bijvoorbeeld een vergelijkbaar onderzoek naar conflicten tussen kleine landen inderdaad dezelfde uitkomsten opleveren? Mogelijk dat op dit niveau een andere dynamiek speelt dan op het internationale toneel, de plaats waar een conflict met de VS zich toch al gauw afspeelt.

Hoewel dit de vereenvoudigde (handels)versie van McManus' promotie is, blijft dit boek iets voor fijnproevers, voor hen die het naadje van de kous willen weten. Zij treffen een uitstekend gestructureerde en in helder Engels geschreven tekst aan, die het complexe onderzoek toegankelijk en begrijpelijk maakt, ook voor hen die geen statistiekexperts zijn. Het lijkt onmogelijk voorbij te gaan aan de verbanden die McManus zichtbaar maakt. Het zal daarom interessant zijn te zien hoe vakgenoten in de politicologie en Internationale Betrekkingen gaan reageren op haar onderzoeksresultaten.

LtKol KLu b.d. drs. J.L. Voetelink

## Schrijft u een gastcolumn in de Militaire Spectator?

De redactie van de *Militaire Spectator* daagt de lezers uit een gastcolumn te schrijven.

Het thema is vrij, maar moet passen binnen de formule van het tijdschrift. De boodschap moet relevant zijn voor de lezers. Het moet gaan om een gefundeerde eigen mening, om een logisch opgebouwd betoog en de feiten moeten kloppen en verifieerbaar zijn.

Uw bijdrage mag maximaal duizend woorden tellen. U kunt uw bijdrage sturen naar de bureauredactie (zie colofon) of aanbieden via de website. De redactie wacht reacties met belangstelling af.

De hoofdredacteur



## Battlefield tour KVBK

*De strijd op de Brabantse Wal in oktober 1944*

***zaterdag 1 september 2018***



FOTO BEELDBANK NIMH

Op 7 oktober 1944 begon de Canadese 2e Infanteriedivisie vanuit Ossendrecht aan de opmars richting Hoogerheide om Walcheren en Zuid-Beveland af te snijden, als opmaat naar de Slag om de Schelde. De Duitse verdedigers maakten gebruik van het terrein en inundeerden meerdere polders. In Hoogerheide liep de opmars vast, waarna Duitse parachutisten een tegenaanval uitvoerden. Een Canadese nevenaanval richting de Kreekrakdam mislukte.

Een nieuwe aanval richting Woensdrecht slaagde niet en uiteindelijk was de massale inzet van Canadese en Britse artillerie nodig om een ingezette Duitse tegenaanval te stoppen. Pas eind oktober, met het innemen van Bergen op Zoom door de Canadese 4e Pantserdivisie, werden de Duitse troepen op Walcheren en Zuid-Beveland afgesneden. De strijd om die eilanden en de opening van de Schelde kon toen pas beginnen.

Inleider bij deze battlefield tour is militair historicus Johan van Doorn.

### **Programma en tijden:**

9.00-9.20 uur Bus op NS-station Bergen op Zoom (wacht aankomst trein van 9.15 vanuit Roosendaal af)

9.30-10.15 uur Ontvangst en inleiding in Woensdrecht

10.15-16.30 uur Per bus langs diverse bespreekpunten in Hoogerheide en Bergen op Zoom

16.30 uur Retour naar locatie inleiding, mogelijkheid voor een drankje

17.00 uur Bus retour naar NS-station Bergen op Zoom

**Aanmelden** kan door het sturen van een e-mail naar [d.boissevain.01@mindef.nl](mailto:d.boissevain.01@mindef.nl). KVBK-leden nemen gratis deel aan de battlefield tour, niet-leden betalen 20 euro. Deelnemers krijgen medio augustus een bevestigingsbrief of e-mail met meer details. Bij overtekening van het maximum aantal deelnemers hebben leden van de KVBK voorrang op niet-leden.

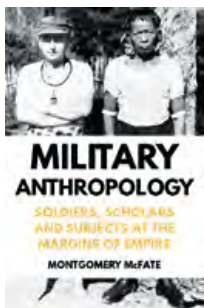
# SIGNALERINGEN



## Stilte voor de storm?

Strategische Monitor 2017-2018  
Door Stephan de Spiegeleire e.a. (red.)  
Den Haag (the Hague Centre for Strategic Studies) 2018  
90 blz.  
ISBN 9789492102638  
Te raadplegen via: <https://hcss.nl/report/strategische-monitor-stilte-voor-de-storm>

Hoewel Nederland 'goed gepositioneerd' is in de 'internationale krachtenvelden' en overwegend goede betrekkingen heeft met 'grote mogendheden, Europese partners en opkomende landen', is het ook mogelijk dat er veranderingen op stapel staan. Dat concluderen experts van het the Hague Centre for Strategic Studies in *Stilte voor de storm? Strategische Monitor 2017-2018*. Zij baseren hun conclusie op trends voor de middellange termijn, waarbij het beeld van 'internationale coöperatie en confrontatie en assertiviteit van grote mogendheden' negatief is. Nederland zal moeten proberen de juiste strategische keuzes te maken in het buitenland- en veiligheidsbeleid om partners te blijven vinden waarmee belangen en waarden worden gedeeld.



## Military Anthropology

Soldiers, Scholars and Subjects at the Margins of Empire  
Door Montgomery McFate  
Londen (Hurst & Company) 2018  
352 blz.  
ISBN 9781849048125  
€ 40,-

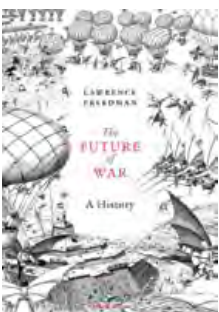
In het merendeel van zijn militaire interventies heeft de VS door een gebrek aan *cultural awareness* fouten gemaakt die het behalen van de politieke doelen hebben gehinderd of onmogelijk gemaakt. Die conclusie trekt hoogleraar culturele antropologie Montgomery McFate in haar studie *Military Anthropology*. Volgens McFate fungeert culturele antropologie vanouds als een intellectuele brug, maar is er weinig aandacht voor en kunnen militairen daardoor verkeerde acties ondernemen. McFate laat antropologen aan het woord die met de Amerikaanse strijdkrachten naar diverse landen werden uitgezonden, waaronder Vietnam. Ondanks historische voorbeelden van mislukkingen, zoals het willen opleggen van bestuursmodellen, worden zulke patronen ook nu nog herhaald.



## De nieuwe machten op zee

Door Haroon Sheikh  
Amsterdam (Uitgeverij Boom) 2018  
208 blz.  
ISBN 97890244221107  
€ 20,-

In *De nieuwe machten op zee* analyseert Haroon Sheikh het geopolitieke landschap van de huidige, snel veranderende wereld. Hij richt zich in het bijzonder op het Verenigd Koninkrijk, India, de VS, Indonesië en Japan. Sheikh ziet deze landen naar elkaar toe groeien in een nieuw soort alliantie. Centraal in Sheikh's analyse staan de relatie tussen land- en zeemachten, de verbinding tussen water en handel en innovatie. Hij gaat in op de ontwikkeling van kuststeden als New York, San Francisco, Dubai en Singapore en bespreekt actuele thema's zoals migratie via de Middellandse Zee, piraterij en de bouw van kunstmatige eilanden in de Zuid-Chinese Zee.



## The Future of War

A History  
Door Lawrence Freedman  
Londen (Penguin/Allen Lane) 2017  
400 blz.  
ISBN 9781610393058  
€ 29,-

Lawrence Freedman, emeritus-hoogleraar conflictstudies aan King's College London, beschrijft in *The Future of War* hoe in het verleden over toekomstige oorlogen werd nagedacht. Terugkerend thema daarbij was het toebrengen van de beslissende slag, waardoor de oorlog kort zou duren en beperkt zou blijven tot een bepaald ruimtelijk gebied. Uit de analyse van Freedman blijkt dat die gedachte vaak op een ideaalbeeld berustte. Hij begint zijn betoog in het midden van de negentiende eeuw en trekt het door naar de militaire interventies van nu. Volgens Freedman leeft het idee van de *knockout blow* nog steeds, ook in de nucleaire en cybercontext.



