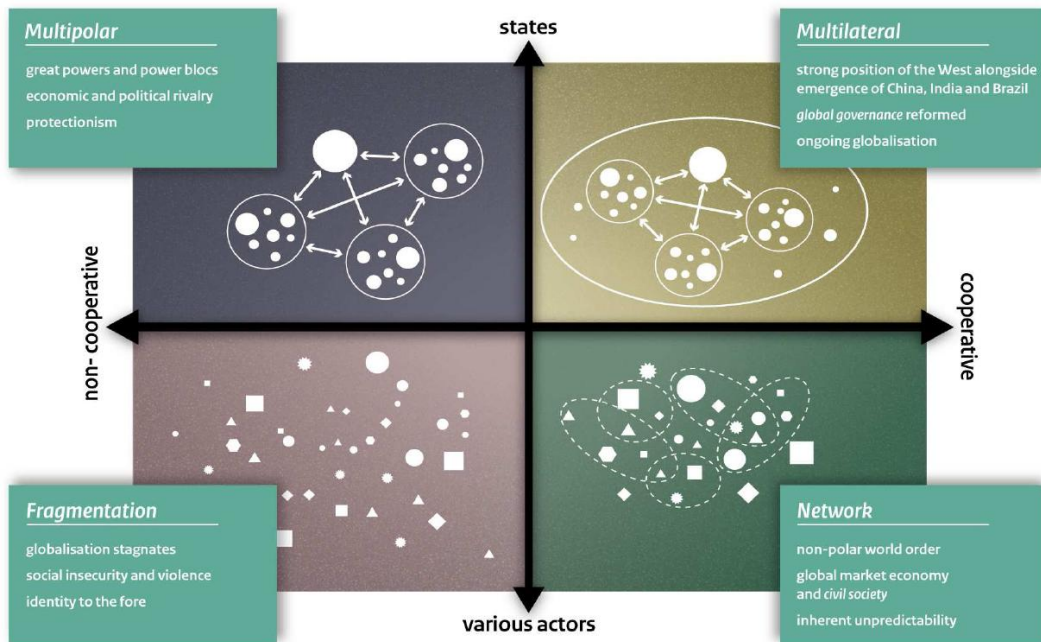


## Ministry of Defence – Future Policy Survey



## A new foundation for the Armed Forces of the Netherlands

July 2010

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### A new foundation for the Armed Forces of the Netherlands

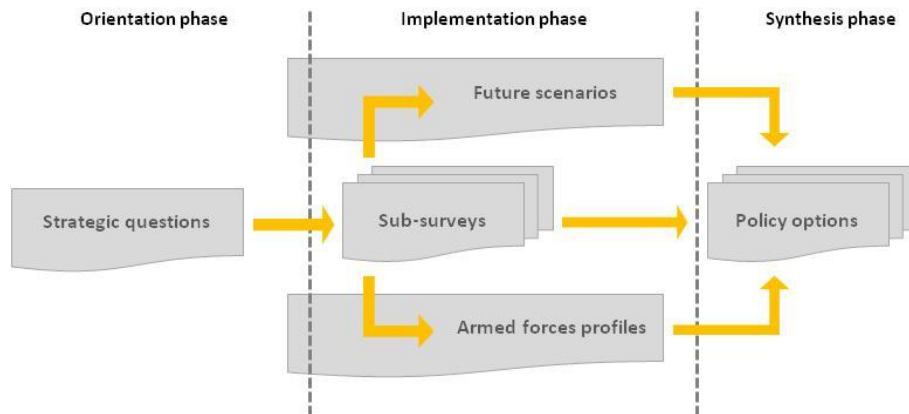
The Future Policy Survey initiated by the Dutch government is an attempt to develop an adequate conceptual foundation for decision making regarding the role and ambitions of the Dutch Armed Forces. The future is uncertain, unpredictable and there are no data available. Hence, we run the risk of making decisions solely based on past experience or on highly questionable predictions about the future. In effect this means we are preparing for the previous conflict situation instead of the next one. To be able to proactively prepare for future conflict situations an adequate, future oriented conceptual foundation for decision making is essential. Especially since armed forces face long delivery times of material and personnel. Therefore, to ensure availability of the right people and materials tomorrow, investments have to be made today: sound investments, based on strategic decisions made with a long term view of the future. The Future Policy Survey provides a conceptual foundation for making those decisions. It can be applied to develop an informed political vision on and a long term strategy for the Dutch Armed Forces.

The Future Policy Survey project started on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2008. Its assignment: *“To formulate, on the basis of expected long-term developments and possible scenarios, and without constraints, policy options with regard to the future ambitions of the Dutch Defence effort, the appropriate composition and equipment, and the associated level of Defence expenditure.”* (House of Representatives, 2008 31 243, No. 6) The project was executed by a team drawn from the Ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs, Interior and Kingdom Relations, Justice and Finance.

In the following two years, the team organized a challenging process. This interdisciplinary, interagency and international exercise in the area of Defence was unprecedented in the Netherlands. Many Dutch and international experts from both inside and outside the Defence organisation participated. An extensive analysis, scenarios and policy options were published in the Final Report in March 2010. However, as a result of the process, the Future Policy Survey has produced much more than what is contained in its final report. From now on, this kind of multi stakeholder, knowledge mobilizing and future orientated thinking will be structurally embedded into the process of policy making in the Defence organisation.

### Future Policy Survey: the process

When the Future Policy Survey started in March 2008, parts of the project framework were established. The process was divided in three phases:



In the **orientation** phase thirty-eight strategic questions were drawn up to focus on the main subjects of the survey. These questions were divided in three categories:

1. *Point of departure of the Dutch Armed Forces*
  - How did the international employment of the Dutch Armed Forces develop since 1990 ?
2. *Future demand on the Dutch Armed Forces*
  - How might security related global developments impact national security?
3. *Future organisational development of the Dutch Armed Forces*
  - How might technological developments and changes concerning the gathering of intelligence impact the organisation of the Armed Forces?

After drawing up research plans to answer these strategic questions the **implementation** phase started. In this phase sub-surveys were performed and research plans executed. Based on the results of these surveys outlines of four plausible future scenarios and seven strategic functions for the Defence organisation were developed. From November 2008 onwards, workshops were organized to write the first drafts of the scenarios, think of possible strategic shocks and describe strategic functions. These workshops were aimed at adding creativity to the tentative results, enforce the interactive character of the process and involve experts, policy makers and politicians in the results of the Survey. The process resulted in four relevant, plausible and surprising – and therefore authoritative – future scenarios, seven strategic functions and ten Armed Forces Profiles.

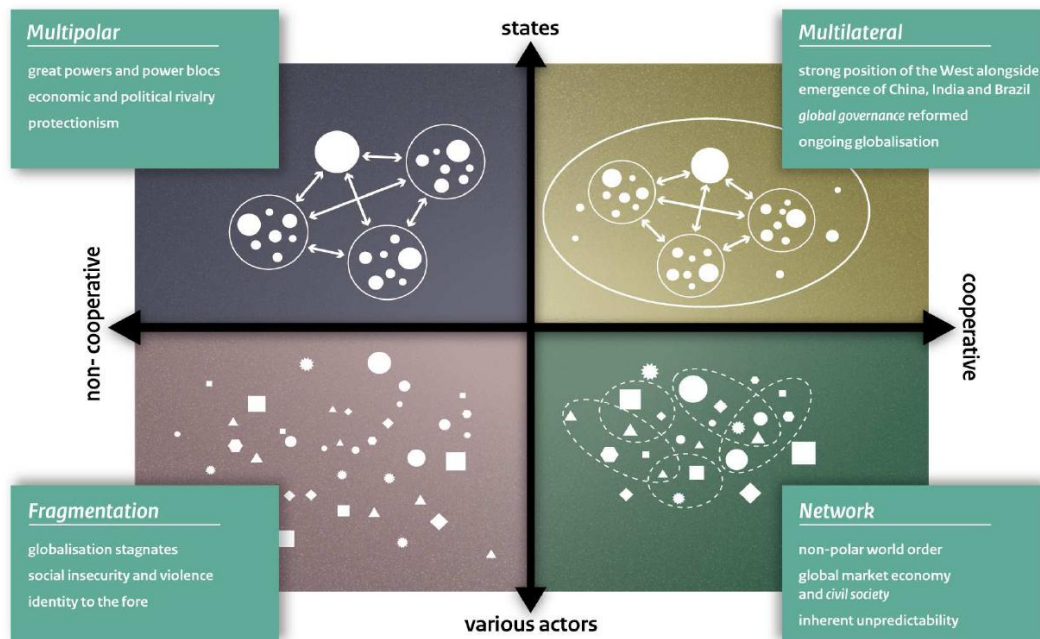
Subsequently, these were used in the **synthesis** phase to generate ‘future proof’ and contingent policy options. This was done in another series of workshops with different stakeholder groups. The Armed Forces Profiles were wind tunnelled against the future scenarios and the results of the sub-surveys. Four robust policy options were formulated. These options each outline a long term perspective on and a strategic direction for the Dutch Armed Forces in order to benefit short term political decision making regarding the Dutch level of Defence effort.

## Exploring geopolitical futures and roles for the Armed Forces

### Future Scenarios

The scenario method is a way to judge and deal with uncertain future developments in the environment. Its aim is not to predict the future, but to imagine possible future situations. Scenarios reduce complexity without oversimplifying. They help make sense of the significance of today's events, developments and uncertainties. A scenario set provides a point of reference projected in the long term future that can be used to generate options for today.

In this project, scenarios have been used as a touchstone for the development of policy options. The scenarios that were created outline four possible future situations for the coming two decades. Their framework combines the bandwidth of perceived uncertainty on two dimensions relating to the participants' basic questions: who will be the dominant actors in geopolitics: states or various non-state actors? And how will these actors behave towards each other: cooperative or non-cooperative? Using this framework complex and full-fledged scenarios were created incorporating results on other issues from the sub-surveys and workshops.



#### 1. MULTILATERAL: 'What can we address together?'

In this scenario, a further developed system of international cooperation is working to resolve conflicts and conflicts of interest. The changed economic and political power relations in the world are reflected more accurately in the United Nations and other international forums, which function better as a result. The strengthening of global governance does not prevent nations from asserting their national interests, which sometimes sharply brings conflicting interests to light. Nevertheless, agreement is often

reached by a collective approach to international issues. The armed forces are often enlisted to promote and enforce international rules of law. Examples include putting collective international pressure on countries that present a threat to international peace and security or that are committing gross violations of human rights. The same applies with respect to combating international terrorism and international crime, which have become more intertwined. It also applies to the resolution of regional conflicts and the use of both civil and military means (preventively and reactively) to support states that are functioning poorly.

## **2. MULTIPOLAR: “Who operate the power button?”**

Power blocs have formed and international conflicts of interests have become more pronounced. The U.S. and China dominate the multipolar world. They clash over hegemony in the Pacific region and the Indian Ocean region, and over access to energy reserves in Central Asia and the Middle East. The EU, India, Japan and Brazil are also powers of considerable significance, as is an authoritarian Russia which, thanks to structurally high raw materials prices, is wealthy and autonomous. Russia will not tolerate interference in ‘her’ Arctic Ocean, where important new shipping routes and areas for extraction of raw materials have developed as a consequence of global warming. In this area of the world Russian interests therefore mainly clash with Canadian, American and European interests. India and China dispute each other’s claims and spheres of influence around the Indian Ocean and on the Eurasian mainland, where the most important sea lanes in the world for energy, food supply and international trade are situated.

## **3. NETWORK: “Are you connected?”**

Globalization continues, but part of the world’s population is not connected. In this scenario, the most important driving forces are the dynamics of the global market, major capital and technological renewal. The ‘thickening’ of the international system and dilution of the nation-state have continued in large measure. Social traffic is dominated by a diverse collection of global networks. These networks link a wide range of non-state actors: multinationals, NGOs, trading conglomerates, metropolises, philanthropists, transnational criminal networks, terrorist organisations, private military companies, etc. These networks are oblivious to national borders. The market has a great influence. Economic, political and military forces in this open global system are so diffuse that even large powers are not able to impose their will. A more accurate designation for this system is a non-polar global system. Security issues are primarily connected to groups and/or countries that have been unable to join the global network. The friction between losers and winners represents a risk to international security and stability. In addition to mass migration flows, this friction also serves as an impetus to ill-willed non-state actors in areas of failed state-formation. Terrorist groups, crime syndicates and even individuals will be able to use the global network to strengthen their socially disruptive objectives. Many of these security issues stem from the increased interwovenness of internal and external security and the vulnerability of modern societies to external influences.

## **4. FRAGMENTATION: “How do WE stay safe?”**

Globalisation stagnates, because anti-globalisation forces get the upper hand in the political systems of many countries. Defining one’s own identity, prosperity and security dominate. Owing to a series of disastrous events, many individuals, groups and societies feel themselves thrown back on their national, cultural, social or political circles and identities.

They have therefore become inward-looking to a great extent. Belief in the advantages of international cooperation and an international market economy has diminished substantially. In many cases, people no longer trust their 'own' country for their security and well-being, leading to political and social division and unrest in many countries. In relatively stable regions, states are successful in protecting their citizens from internal and external threats. The U.S. economy does not fully recover from the current crisis, resulting in a decline of U.S. political and military power. At the same time, other (potential) great powers are being increasingly plagued by internal problems. Separatism in Russia and China in particular will be fuelled by major income differences between regions and changes in the composition of populations. Countries such as India, Pakistan and Indonesia have been dealing with these types of problems for some time already.

### Strategic Shocks

In addition, we should assume that, over the next two decades, specific events or sudden developments will occur that will place Dutch internal security in a new light and may also involve recourse to the Armed Forces. These include events and developments that appear to be extremely unlikely at the moment or seem beyond our imagination, but may nevertheless occur. Such events and developments are referred to as strategic shocks. The possible occurrences of this type of strategic shock should receive serious attention in any decision making process on the future of the Dutch Defence effort. Twenty-five strategic shocks that could occur during the next two decades were delineated in a series of workshops. For example: a NATO break up, a large-scale outage of information systems and financial transaction systems following digital attack, a climate catastrophe, a decline of U.S. power.

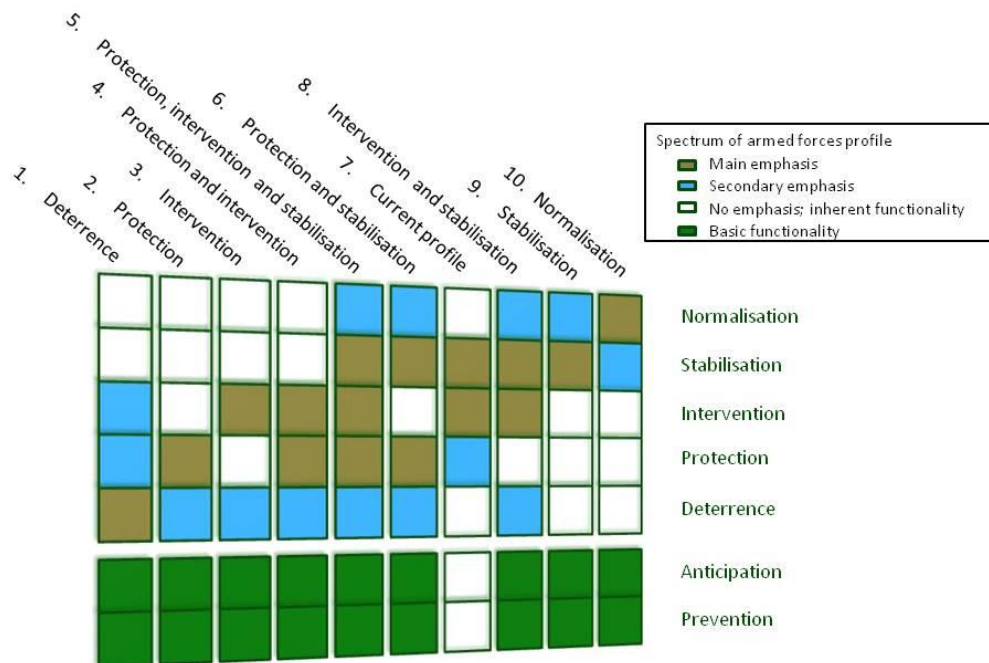
### Strategic functions for Defence

Providing security is one of the core tasks of the Dutch government. For this project it proved useful to describe this task in seven strategic functions:



## Armed Forces Profiles

The role of Defence in executing these strategic functions naturally focuses on the use of military means and the contribution of other parts of the Defence organisation. An overview of these means and possible contributions based on the strategic functions was used to develop the broadest possible spectrum of Armed Forces profiles. An Armed Forces profile is defined as a qualitative description of the main outlines of a policy option. In a series of workshops ten Armed Forces profiles were described, including the current profile of the Armed Forces:



## Future Proof Policy Options

In order to be able to select future proof policy options based on the Armed Forces Profiles, these were wind tunnelled against the four scenarios and the results of the sub-surveys in a number of workshops with different groups of stakeholders. This resulted in four robust policy options.

The options each outline a long term perspective on and strategic direction for the Dutch Armed Forces in order to benefit short term political decision making regarding the Dutch level of Defence effort. They do not provide blue prints. A long term perspective of ten to twenty years is essential given the time it takes to develop, acquire and implement military assets. Each option derives from a different basic view and expresses a different strategic posture of the Netherlands in the world. They are all to a certain extent multi functional.

1. **STAYING SECURE** (main emphasis on *Protection*)  
The Armed Forces are to protect – and defend, if necessary – the territory of NATO, EU the Dutch Kingdom and its subjects against a wide range of security risks and threats. This policy option is a radical departure from our current Defence policy which is dominated by improving capabilities for participating in complex stabilisation operations. However, it continues the recently increased Armed Forces’ assistance to civil organisations in the Netherlands. Prime feature of this option is the fight against symptoms of security problems that interfere with the Kingdom’s interests, instead of fighting these problems at the source.
2. **SWIFT AND DECISIVE** (main emphasis on *Intervention*)  
Maintaining – and imposing if necessary – the international rule of law and defending the interests of the Kingdom beyond its national borders is leading in this option. The Armed Forces are capable, in an international or multinational configuration, of standing in the front lines of a rapid conflict resolution. This might involve military intervention within, between or against states, individuals and groups. A rapid and decisive achievement of concretely formulated objectives is a key factor. The high-tech expeditionary character of the current Armed Forces is maintained.
3. **BRINGING SECURITY** (main emphasis on *Stabilisation*)  
Prime focus is on promoting the international rule of law by participating in stabilisation operations, military cooperation with other countries, and providing military assistance to security organisations in fragile states and regions. The concept underpinning this option is that the interests of the Kingdom are best served by global promotion of stability and development. The Armed Forces continue to build on their experiences with stabilisation operations in the Middle East, Africa and, more recently, South and Central Asia. The distinction currently made between the level of ambition at the higher and lower end of the spectrum of conflict no longer applies. In relation to current policy this option assumes a substantially lower ambition with respect to participation in intervention operations and a higher ambition with respect to advising, training and developing local, national and regional security entities.
4. **AGILE FORCE** (a balance is sought between the three strategic functions: *protection, intervention and stabilisation*)  
Here focus is on the multifaceted nature and flexible employability of the Armed Forces. This policy option is an extension of efforts that have been underway since the 1990s to transform the Armed Forces into an organisation that can be deployed under very diverse circumstances to defend national and allied territory, protect Dutch interests abroad and serve the international rule of law. As is currently the case, the Armed Forces will be able to continue to operate in conjunction with our allies in all phases of conflict. Possibly at great distances from our own territory. This multifunctional approach means that, in comparison with the other policy options, operations are restricted in scale and/or duration. Possibilities for independent action by the Dutch Armed Forces are also restricted.



## **Five strategic questions for our political leaders**

Political decisions concerning the future of the Dutch Armed Forces should first and foremost be based on integral considerations of interests and objectives vital to the Kingdom. An integral political view on the future of Dutch Defence involves answering the following five strategic questions:

- 1. What military contribution does the Netherlands want to make in international collaborations and vis-à-vis other countries? What do we want to achieve in the world? What interests and values do we stand for? Who are we?**
- 2. What Defence effort is required or desirable in the light of the analysis of the Future Policy Survey? How do we deal with fundamental uncertainty regarding future developments?**
- 3. What balance must be found between protection and defence of national and allied territory on the one hand, and engaging in countering threats to our security at the source, on the other?**
- 4. What contribution should the Dutch Armed Forces make within the national borders to the security of our society in the light of its growing vulnerability to social unrest?**
- 5. In what security and defence areas is the Netherlands willing to accept dependence on other countries? To what degree do we want to remain autonomous?**

Summary of process and results of the Future Policy Survey of the Ministry of Defence with permission of its project team  
De Ruijter Strategy, July 2010