

Public opposition and parliamentary support

The role of public opinion in the decision to deploy a military operation to Uruzgan



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“De kiezers, 2/3 van de Nederlanders, hebben gezegd een missie niet te zien zitten. Waar haalt men de arrogantie vandaan om dan te zeggen toch te gaan. Iedere geloofwaardigheid, dat de kamer(s) de kiezers vertegenwoordigen is nu zeker verdwenen.” (Truus, cited in Van der Meulen & Vos, 2012, p.1).

“[T]o Hell with public opinion... . We should lead not follow.” (US State Department Official cited in Aldrich, et al., 2006, p.491).

PREFACE

I did it! After a long and difficult journey it feels good to look back. Why I cannot make it myself easy? I could work half-days, party every week and submit a thesis that would be just enough to pass, like that it would already feel like holidays. I guess, this is just not who I am. I wanted more. The most interesting way was not the easiest however. This first time to do research brought a lot of challenges with it. Furthermore, to *do* research is one thing, to write it down in an understandable way is another... 'Laugh, sweat and tears' is perhaps the best description of the process. I had to be like the soldiers on the cover, to work hard with an iron discipline, and I had to be like politicians as well, to carefully weight my decisions to make the right choices.

In the end, it was worth it. It was a great journey. I learned a lot because all I discovered was really interesting. The most interesting was to see the story of both sides, from official documents as well as from former politicians themselves. I am proud with this thesis as result. Thanks to my family and friends who gave their support. Thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Michael Meffert, as well for his advice.

With this thesis my adventure of three years International relations & Organizations at the University of Leiden comes to an end. I think I can look back happily and satisfied on those three years and I already look forward to what the future might bring. First, I will enjoy a well-deserved holiday.

Pieter de Wit

Leiden, June 12, 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Dutch mission to Uruzgan was perhaps the most dangerous military operation since World War II (Hazelbag, 2009, p.251). Besides, it was a 'very disputable' decision (Jockel, 2014, p.4). Recently, the debate evolved about the results after the Dutch soldiers left Uruzgan in 2010 (for instance: Trouw, 2016; De Correspondent, 2017; Ministry of Defense, 2016). Before the mission started in August 2006, opinions were already mixed. In different newspapers the mission was portrayed as either a 'fighting mission' or a 'reconstruction mission' and this was something where the political debate was shaped by ever since (Dimitriu & De Graaf, 2016, p.12).

With these debates and the mixed results in Uruzgan the question arises how this decision was made. On February 2, 2006 the Second Chamber in Dutch Parliament ('House of representatives' or 'Lower House') voted in favor of government's plans to deploy its military forces to the South of Afghanistan. Out of 150 members of the Second Chamber, 127 voted in favor and 23 voted against the mission (NRC, February 3, 2006). At the same time, a majority of the population opposed the mission, 45 percent was against, 33 percent was in favor and 22 percent was neutral (AIV, 2006, p.9). Considering that the Second Chamber reflects the opinion of the Dutch population, a difference that large between public and parliamentary support is surprising.

It is understandable that citizens would like to see policy decisions in line with the public opinion. The quote of 'Truus' (cited in Van der Meulen & Vos, 2012, p.1) at the beginning of this thesis illustrates the frustration of someone who feels being played when parliament takes a decision that goes against the will of the population. On the other hand, it is understandable that politicians make their own decisions regardless of the public opinion. This is illustrated by the second quote, where a US State Department official (cited in Aldrich, et al., 2006, p.491) argues that he should lead instead of follow the public opinion. These conflicting ideas form the background of this research.

To see how these two views relate to each other and more specifically, how public opinion is used by politicians in the decision to deploy a mission to Uruzgan the following research question is used:

'To what extent and how, did politicians use public opinion in the decision to deploy a military operation to Uruzgan in 2006, and how can this be explained?'

It is suggested that public opinion did not play a determining role in this decision (Voogd & Vos, 2010, p.442; Van der Meulen, 2009, p.136; Van der Meulen & Vos, 2008, p.393). However, when opinion polls are compared to the eventual decision, these suggestions are not very grounded. Public opinion could be a very important factor in the decision making process for the deployment of *'our boys and girls'* to conflict zones, especially after the often discussed Srebrenica debacle where Dutch troops failed to protect a United Nations Safe Haven and where 7.000 people died as a result (BBC, 2012). After weighting the public opinion carefully, the decision could still be against the opinion of the public. To get a clear picture of the underlying mechanism this research was needed.

Next to an answer to the research question it is expected that the findings of this research will shed some light on the broader question of what role public opinion plays in the decision making process of political and policymaking elites when it comes to military operations, or more generally, in the foreign policy making of the Netherlands. An answer to the research question and insight in the broader question is important because without a clear understanding of how politicians use public opinion in decisions such as the deployment of a mission to Uruzgan, an accurate debate about the desirability of the current decision making process is impossible. This research is a good start. However, it is not enough to provide a complete answer to the broader question - the role of public opinion in foreign policy making – therefore, further research with other methods and other cases is recommended.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Elite decision making in foreign affairs

Within the vast amount of literature on elite decision making in foreign policy two observations can be distilled relevant for this research. The first observation is the process of 'domesticization', a process in which domestic actors increasingly influence foreign policy. Verbeek & Van der Vleuten (2008) argued that foreign policy makers in the Netherlands have become more sensitive to the influence of domestic actors after the Cold War due to these four developments: 1) the end of the international bipolarity (United States and its allies against Russia and its allies), 2) an increase in the connections of the international system (globalization), 3) the growth of international organizations, and 4) the increased awareness of foreign policy issues in the domestic arena (Verbeek & Van der Vleuten, 2008, p.358). Together, these developments decreased the total possible agreements that can be reached in international negotiations with other states (the so called 'win-set'), as a result foreign policy makers have become more sensitive to the influence of domestic actors (Verbeek & Van der Vleuten, 2008, p.358).

The same process is described by Vollaard & Van Willigen (2011). It is argued that Dutch foreign policy makers have to deal with the increasing influence of domestic actors, such as other ministries, parliaments, companies, pressure groups and non-governmental organizations over the last few decades (Vollaard & Van Willigen, 2011, p.2). The involvement of more actors means that more opinions about the Dutch position in international affairs are confronted with each other and therefore, foreign policy makers can no longer take public support, or indifference, for granted (Vollaard & Van Willigen, 2011, p.2).

The second observation is that Dutch foreign policy making is portrayed as an 'elitist process'. This means that only a small group can participate in the making of foreign policy, including government, parliament, policymakers, advisory groups and multinationals (Van der Windt, 2014, p.1; Vollaard & Van Willigen, 2011, p.8). Often, foreign policy is shaped according to publications such as *'Aan het buitenland gehecht'* (2010), of the *'Wetenschappelijk Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid'* (WRR), *'Maatschappij en krijgsmacht'* (2006), of the *'Adviesraad Internationale Vraagstukken'* (AIV), or publications of *'Clingendael'* and *'The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies'*. These advisory groups give advice on the best position for the Netherlands in international affairs, regardless of public support. Since only a few actors participate in this process, there is a large distance between foreign policy and the public (Van der Windt, 2014, p.1).

2.2 The role of public opinion

According to Everts (2000) and Everts & Isernia (2001) western politicians including the Dutch, are constrained by the public opinion. It is for instance argued that the Clinton Administration did not deploy ground troops to Kosovo because it was afraid of a negative public opinion (Everts & Isernia, 2001, p.5). The other way around, it is argued that the public can also demand for the deployment of military forces in the form of peace operations in case human rights are violated elsewhere (Everts, 2000, p.91). This has become easier due to increased communication technology and new types of media (for instance: Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram) which allows the public to follow developments in other parts of the world. Therefore, it is argued that governments are under 'constant pressure' since the public is 'always involved in war' (Everts, 2000, p.91).

To go one step further, it is even argued that politicians would only act according to what they understand as 'public opinion'. Different politicians, for instance André Rouvoet (former Member of Parliament and vice-president in the cabinet Balkenende IV) and Jacques Tichelaar (former chairman of the PvdA fraction in the Second Chamber) stated that politicians too often act according opinion polls (Koop & Van Holsteyn, 2008, p.276). Politicians have been accused of following the 'sense of the day' (*'waan van de dag'*). This means that politicians do not make their own judgments, but simply follow the public opinion and act accordingly (Koop & Van Holsteyn, 2008, p.276).

A more moderate view on the role of public opinion in elite decision making is that politicians anticipate on future responses of public opinion. This so called 'latent' public opinion describes how politicians make decisions and take into account how the public might react on these decisions (Hutchings, 2003). When politicians shape policy in this way, policy outcomes will always be in line with the public opinion. To what extent politicians are led by the 'latent' public opinion depends primarily on how easily the public can express its opinion after a decision (Hutchings, 2003). Generally, elections are the mechanism in which the public can express its feelings. By voting for other politicians the incumbent politicians might lose their jobs. To prevent this, the public opinion is taken into account before decisions are made.

From another perspective, it is argued by Koop & Van Holsteyn (2008) that members of the Dutch Parliament are not sensitive to the public opinion. Instead, politicians always form their own opinions and make their own judgments. Just like Edmund Burke did in 1774 when, as a representative of Bristol, he closed a shipyard in his own district because he thought it was the best option for the whole country. Politicians value

arguments coming from public opinion, but their position is not influenced by the public opinion as an independent factor (Koop & Van Holsteyn, 2008).

Politicians can take public opinion into account in a different way than just following the *'sense of the day'*. According to Aldrich et al. (2006) the public influences foreign policy via elections. It is argued that the public is able to form coherent opinions regarding foreign policy issues and expresses this in its voting behavior (Aldrich et al., 2006). At the same time, government takes public opinion into account while it shapes foreign policy because it does not want to lose votes in the next elections. It is assumed of course, that government officials wish to remain in office.

To go even further, it is argued (often by government itself) that politicians should shape public opinion instead of representing it. In the literature the 'elite cues theory' suits this point of view. A common observation is that a public debate is often the result of a political debate, but if there is political consensus the public is likely to share the same view (Berinsky, 2006). In this case, public opinion can only influence foreign policy when politicians have divergent views. Therefore, it is likely that government wants to create as much consensus as possible. Just like a US State Department official replied on the question of how he dealt with public opinion: 'to Hell with public opinion. . . .We should lead not follow' (US State Department official cited in Aldrich et al., 2006, p.491).

2.3 'The' public opinion

Within the literature regarding the concepts of 'public opinion' different definitions are used. A distinction can be made between several groups of definitions (Koop & Van Holsteyn, 2008, p.280): 1) public opinion as an aggregate of all individual opinions within society, 2) the opinion of the majority, 3) the reflection and outcome of opposing interests, 4) the opinion displayed in media (so called 'published opinion') and 5) public opinion as an illusion. In this research it is looked at references politicians made to whatever they thought of as 'public opinion'. Therefore not one single definition of the above is used. In fact, all of these definitions might apply.

Box 1. Political decision making procedure for the deployment of military forces

In the Netherlands government and parliament have to conduct the so called 'article 100 procedure' in order to use military force in peace operations. This procedure refers to article 100 of the Dutch constitution and describes that first government informs parliament about an investigation about the feasibility and desirability to use military force, second government informs parliament about their decision of contributing, third there is a debate between parliament and government followed by an unbinding vote in parliament, fourth government informs the international organization about their participation.

Box 2. The Dutch mission to Uruzgan

The mission to Uruzgan was part of the greater peace operation 'International Support and Assistance Force' (ISAF) in Afghanistan. ISAF started in December 2001 to protect the city and surroundings of Kabul. In October 2003 the United Nations Security Council decided expand the ISAF mandate to the rest of Afghanistan which would occur in 4 phases (UN resolution 1510, 2003). The United States conducted a counter insurgency operation earlier, in October 2001, with the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and Germany under the name 'Operation Enduring Freedom' (OEF). The Netherlands contributed with its special forces and with maritime and aerospace material to OEF. To ISAF The Netherlands contributed from the beginning in 2001 with 220 soldiers and by taking the lead command together with Germany in 2003, from February until August (Ministry of Defense, 2017). From August 1, 2006 until the fall of Cabinet on February 20, 2010 The Netherlands was active in the southern province of Uruzgan. During the mission in Uruzgan 25 Dutch soldiers lost their lives and the amount of soldiers per rotation varied between 1.200 and 2.000 (Dimitriu & De Graaf, 2016, p.2). Therefore, the mission to Uruzgan was the largest Dutch military operation since the Korean War (Dimitriu & De Graaf, 2016, p.2).

2.4 Puzzle and expectations

It is understandable that government makes its own judgments regarding foreign policy issues and takes actions that go against public opinion. Government has to form policy that is in the best national interest on an international level. Therefore, it can make different judgments than the public. For instance, motives for participating in international peace operations such as the protection of the international legal order and the protection of human rights (Traas, 2012, p.17; Van Veen, 2012, p.17; Van der Lijn, 2017, p.1), or the 'prevention' of terrorism (Vollaard & Van Willigen, 2011, p.14; Beeres et al., 2012, p.23; Traas, 2012, p.14) are likely to be supported by public as well as by politicians. However, motives such as loyalty to allies and maintaining a good reputation in international organizations (Vollaard & Van Willigen, 2011, p.14; Beeres et al., 2012, p.28; Traas, 2012, p.9) are more likely to be supported by politicians without support of the public. So public and government can give different weights to motives to participate in international peace operations.

At the same time, it can be argued that the public is where government is pursuing the 'national interests' for. When it is looked at how national interest come into existence, it has to be noted that the public elects government in the first place. Therefore, it is likely that the public shapes national interest at least to some extent. Furthermore, the public is subject to government's policy at the same time. A government can only form policy for its own inhabitants, the inhabitants of other states are out of its jurisdiction. So, at least during the elections, the public can shape national interests and afterwards it is subject to government's policy regarding the pursue of national interests in international affairs.

To see how public opinion is used in the decision making, it has to be looked at the parliament. In case of the Dutch participation in the peace operation in Uruzgan, where a large difference existed between public and political support, the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament is the place that should give more insight into this puzzle. Answers should be found here because this is the place where government's plans and the public opinion are confronted with each other. The politicians of the Second Chamber decide on policy initiatives and form a check on government that makes the balance in power. Besides, the politicians of the Second Chamber represent the public.

Drawing from the literature it can be expected that members the Second Chamber, act in two ways: 1) Members of the Second Chamber represent the public in a *direct* way, they refer to 'public opinion' to justify their decisions. This is probably the way in which the voters of Edmund Burke liked to be represented. 2) Members of the Second Chamber represent the public in an *indirect* way, they only make their own judgments after the mandate of the public is gained during elections. This is the way in which Edmund Burke himself represented the public of his constituency. Since these two opposing ways of representing the public do not have to be mutually exclusive, it is likely that both were present during the debate regarding the mission to Uruzgan. So, within the explained theories, concepts and ideas this research focuses on the 'sense of the day' (direct representation) and the idea that politicians always make their own decisions regardless of the public opinion (indirect representation), which is shown in table 1.

Table 1. Theories, concepts & ideas

<i>Way of representing the public (this research):</i>
1. Sense of the day (Rouvoet, Tichelaar in Koop & Van Holsteyn, 2008)
2. Representatives make their own decision (Koop & Van Holsteyn, 2008)
<i>Role of public opinion in foreign policy (related concepts):</i>
3. Motives for participating in peace operations (Traas, 2012; van der Lijn, 2017; Veen, 2012; Beeres et al., 2012; Vollaard & Van Willigen, 2011)
4. Elite cues theory (Berinsky, 2006)
5. Public influences foreign policy via elections (Aldrich et al., 2006)
6. Latent public opinion (Hutchings, 2003)
7. Constant pressure (Everts, 2000; Everts & Isernia, 2001)
8. Domesticization (Verbeek & Van der Vleuten, 2008; Vollaard & Van Willigen, 2011)
9. Elitist process (Van der Windt, 2014)

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The objective of this research is to see whether and how politicians used public opinion in the decision to deploy a mission to Uruzgan in 2006. On a broader level, this research can be seen as a study of elite decision making. Within this bigger picture, it focuses on politicians within the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament because this is the place where government's plans and public opinion are confronted with each other. Since the Second Chamber consists of elected representatives and since parliament forms the check in balance on government, this is where the public opinion can be displayed against government's opinion. Therefore, the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament is the arena where should be looked at.

3.1 Approach & Design

This research is executed in a qualitative way because it is tried to 'see through the eyes' of the politicians and to explain the underlying mechanisms. To place oneself in someone else's position is an important characteristic of qualitative research, whereas quantitative research is characterized by sympathizing as less as possible with the studied objects (Bryman, 2012). Besides, a qualitative approach allows the researcher to explain mechanisms better than effects, effects can be explained better with quantitative research (Bryman, 2012). Even though the distinction between qualitative and quantitative can be blurred sometimes (because different research designs can be used within both approaches and because a distinction between inductive and deductive research can be difficult in reality) (Bryman, 2012), this research can be seen as more qualitative in nature because it tries to sympathize as much as possible with the studied objects and because it explains the underlying mechanism rather than effects.

An in-depth single case study is used in this research. This is appropriate because it allows the researcher to study public opinion in the decision making process of politicians in as much depth as possible. The strength of an in-depth single case study is its internal validity (Bryman, 2012). Internal validity is high when all steps are following logically after one another and end with a conclusion that is grounded in the mechanism that is found or tested. The weakness of an in-depth single case study is its external validity because findings are difficult to generalize to other cases (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, no claims can be made about other cases. Instead, the findings of this research will give insight in the underlying mechanism which could be relevant for other cases as well.

The Dutch mission to Uruzgan is selected as the case because of two reasons. First, a military operation executed by the Netherlands was practical. It was known where to find

the official parliamentary documents and these documents were in the native language of the researcher. Besides, it was thought that it would be easier to make contact with former members of parliament in the Netherlands than abroad. Second, the mission to Uruzgan was chosen because this is the most recent, big peace operation with a substantial threat of casualties (Ministry of Defense, 2017). Since this mission was heavily debated, from the start until the end (eventually the Cabinet of Balkenende IV fell because of this issue in 2010), this mission was chosen as the case.

3.2 Content analysis

A content analysis is used in this research. Data is collected from official parliamentary documents, the so called '*Kamerstukken*'. The period that is been studied starts on June 16, 2006 when the Second Chamber was informed about government's intention to deploy a mission to Uruzgan. The period that is analyzed ends on February 2, 2006 when the Second Chamber voted in favor of the mission. This period is defined by making a reconstruction of the debate first (Appendix 1), after which the relevant documents could be traced.

Data was collected in two rounds. In the first round the '*Kamerstukken*' were searched on the following words: 'publiek, opinie, steun, gedragen, breed, maatschappelijk, samenleving, vertegenwoordigen, draagvlak, bevolking, signalen, signaal, debat, meningen, mening, middenveld, Nederlanders'. These words were used to see whether politicians made a reference to whatever they understood as 'public opinion'. In the second round all documents were studied thoroughly to see in what context the references were made and to see what the debate was about apart from the public opinion. These two rounds were used get as much insight as possible on the debate regarding Uruzgan.

3.3 Questionnaire

Next to the content analysis a questionnaire of ten questions is used (Box 3) to collect data from different members of parliament that were active during the analyzed period. The questions were asked to former chairmen of the Second Chamber fractions: Maxime Verhagen (CDA), Mathieu Herben (LPF; on the advice of chairman Gerard van As), Boris Dittrich (D66), Femke Halsema (GroenLinks), Wouter Bos (PvdA) and Jozias van Aartsen (VVD). Answers were received from Maxime Verhagen (CDA), Wouter Bos (PvdA) and Mathieu Herben (LPF). Due to practical reasons it was not possible for the others to participate.

The strength of a questionnaire is that the opinion of participants can be asked. This is helpful for this research because it is not only tried to see whether and how public opinion was used in the decision to go to Uruzgan, but it is also tried to find explanations.

To get a better understanding of why politicians used public opinion in the way they did (or did not), the questionnaire is an appropriate tool. The weakness of a questionnaire is that answers are by definition subjective. Reality however, might have been different than the respondents describe.

Box 3. Questionnaire

The following questions were asked and responded by email:

- *Hoe is het standpunt van uw partij tot stand gekomen voor de missie in Uruzgan? Welke actoren hebben daar een belangrijke rol in gespeeld (experts uit ministeries van Defensie of BuZa, partijleiding, Kamercommissies, etc.)?*
- *Is tijdens de besluitvorming binnen uw partij om deel te nemen aan de missie in Uruzgan, op enige manier rekening gehouden met de 'publieke opinie'? Waarom wel of juist niet? Hoe werkt dat?*
- *Hoe definieert u publieke opinie?*
- *Hoe is volgens u het Nederlandse volk gerepresenteerd in het besluit om deel te nemen aan de missie in Uruzgan?*
- *Denkt u dat politici (uzelf en uw collega's in de Tweede Kamer) zich op sommige momenten hebben laten leiden door de 'waan van de dag', door wat politici dachten dat het volk van de missie vond?*
- *Of, denkt u dat politici het volk in de beslissing om deel te nemen aan de missie in Uruzgan alleen op een indirecte manier hebben gerepresenteerd, dat het volk de Tweede Kamerleden heeft kunnen kiezen die vervolgens zelf een afweging hebben gemaakt om wel of niet deel te nemen?*
- *Heeft de eigen achterban voor u een rol gespeeld in het besluit om wel of niet deel te nemen aan de missie in Uruzgan? Is er in de afweging om een missie in Uruzgan te steunen gedacht aan volgende Tweede Kamerverkiezingen en daarmee de beoogde kiezers?*
- *Wordt er in het algemeen, als het gaat om het uitzenden van Nederlandse militairen in vredesoperaties, een afweging gemaakt op basis van wat de publieke opinie vindt van een missie? Kunt u uitleggen waarom dat volgens u wel of niet gebeurt?*
- *In de aanloop naar het besluit om deel te nemen aan de missie in Uruzgan op 2 februari 2006, is de publieke opinie nooit als argument gebruikt in de Tweede Kamer om de missie wel of niet te steunen. Hoe is dat volgens u te verklaren?*
- *Wordt er in de Tweede Kamer niet over publieke opinie gesproken als het gaat om de uitzending van Nederlandse militairen of was dat toevallig alleen het geval voor de missie in Uruzgan? Wat zou u ervan vinden als een van uw collega's zijn/haar standpunt zou onderbouwen met de mening van het publiek over een militaire missie?*

3.4 Validity & Reliability

In every scientific research requirements of validity and reliability have to be satisfied. The validity (specifically the 'validity of measurement') of the content analysis is strong because the two rounds of data collection allowed the researcher to filter all possible references to public opinion. The first round started with only a few words that could indicate a reference to public opinion, but by studying the documents thoroughly it was possible to add more words to search for references. This enabled the researcher to see clearly how many times and in what context references to public opinion were made. To guarantee the validity of the questionnaire is a slightly bigger challenge because it is always difficult to discover exactly which factors play a role in a decision making process, partly because respondents could not even be aware of this themselves. Still, the validity of the questionnaire is sufficient because multiple open questions were asked where the role of public opinion in the decision making is asked in several different ways. Therefore, it could be observed whether the respondents gave contradicting or similar answers to the questions.

In terms of reliability this research is sufficient as well. The reliability of the content analysis is strong because a reconstruction is made first, so a period could be defined in which the publicly available documents could be downloaded from:

https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/zoeken/parlementaire_documenten. Therefore, replication should be easy. The reliability of the questionnaire is less since only three former members of the Second Chamber participated. When all chairmen of the fractions at the time analyzed participated, or when other members of the Second Chamber participated, another picture could arise. Even though the validity and reliability of the questionnaire are less than of the content analysis, the addition of this second method makes this research more complete.

3.5 Triangulation

Two methods of data collection are used in this research, the content analysis and the questionnaire. This strategy was used to check the findings of one method with the findings of the other. In other words, triangulation was used. This strategy proved beneficial because the two methods explain different parts of the puzzle. The content analysis only shows what has been said and written in the official documents, such as minutes of debates, letters from government to parliament, motions and other official reports. Whereas in the questionnaire personal opinions are observed. The combination of both is an appropriate method to place oneself in the position of politicians and to explain whether, how and why public opinion is used in the decision to go to Uruzgan.

3.6 Limitations

This research has two limitations. The first limitation is related to the used methods. Even though the combination between a content analysis and a questionnaire proved to be a good strategy to answer the research question, it is still not enough to explain what really happened. The actions and arguments of politicians can be traced in the official parliamentary documents and the opinions of politicians can be traced in the answers of the questionnaire, however this is not enough to say something about the role public opinion played in the decision to go to Uruzgan. For example, politicians can use references to public opinion in debates, or politicians can say in the questionnaire that they are not influenced by public opinion, this does not necessarily mean that reality is the same. It could be that politicians are not always aware of their own decision making process. Therefore, this research could only reach conclusions about whether politicians used public opinion in a direct way (by using it as an argument in debates) or indirect way (by not including public opinion in the justification of party positions) in the decision to go to Uruzgan. No conclusions can be reached about the actual weight of public opinion in the decision to go to Uruzgan, or about the elite decision making in general. In other words, no claims can be made regarding the broader questions.

The second limitation is related to the use of a single case study. Other cases might be different than the decision to deploy a mission to Uruzgan. Research to other Dutch military operations, missions executed by other countries or other topics within the policy area of Foreign Affairs might have different outcomes. Therefore no claims will be made about other cases.

Therefore, recommendations for further research can be made about the methods and about the research design. Combining methods is a good strategy, but to overcome the limitations of a content analysis and a questionnaire, in-depth interviews and participative observation might be helpful. Recommendations can also be made regarding the research design. Different Dutch military operations, other missions executed by other states and other topics within the field of Foreign Affairs will show whether the findings of this research are generalizable. In short, there is still much to discover.

4. CONTENT ANALYSIS

The content analysis shows whether and how the members of the Second Chamber used public opinion in the decision making process.

4.1 The data

A reference to 'public opinion' is only made three times in the debate regarding the Dutch mission to Uruzgan. The first reference to public opinion was made by Member of Parliament of the PvdA, Bert Koenders, during the 'General Consultation' (*'Algemeen Overleg'*) of February 2, 2006. He stated that there is doubt about the mission among the public:

'Dit debat bepaalt de eindafweging van de PvdA-fractie als het gaat om de uiterst risicovolle uitzending van Nederlandse militairen naar de provincie Uruzgan. Bij de Nederlandse bevolking en in de publieke opinie bestaat twijfel over de missie. De discussie heeft door interne verdeeldheid in het kabinet te lang geduurd. Het parlement heeft zelf het heft in handen moeten nemen. Het ging ons er steeds om, via een uiterst zorgvuldige procedure, via het inzien van rapporten van de inlichtingendiensten, via hoorzittingen en briefings met voor-en tegenstanders tot een verantwoord eindoordeel te komen.' Koenders, TK 2005–2006, 27 925 nr. 207, p.5.

Koenders' party, the PvdA, had not given its support to the mission yet. The PvdA first wanted to have answers on a couple of matters before it gave its support. The statement of public opinion containing doubts strengthened their position to ask questions or maybe even to change the mission (TK 2005–2006, 27 925 nr. 207, p.5).

The other two times when public opinion was used in the argumentation of politicians was during the Plenary Debate on February 2, 2006. This was the final debate on the mission in Uruzgan. Wouter Bos, chairman of the PvdA fraction, referred to public opinion twice. The first time, Bos used 'public opinion' when he stated that after a period of weighting arguments and struggling with questions where the public was struggling with as well, now was the time to decide:

'Alle leden van de fractie van de Partij van de Arbeid hebben de afgelopen weken en maanden wikkend en wegend over het wel of niet verlenen van steun aan de missie naar Zuid-Afghanistan, geworsteld met de vragen, twijfels en dilemma's

waar vele Nederlanders ook mee geworsteld hebben. Vandaag, nu, moeten er knopen doorgehakt worden, ook door het kabinet.’ Bos, TK 2005-2006, 45, p.3014.

By now, the PvdA was in favor of the mission. It could be argued that by referring to the public that was struggling with questions just like the politicians were, the eventual decision would gain weight in the debate. When it is recognized that a certain decision is difficult to make, and when it is recognized that the public is struggling with the same doubts as politicians, it could be stated that the PvdA was making a well weighted decision.

The second time Bos referred to the public opinion, he argued that the actual question was not whether to deploy a *new* mission to Uruzgan, but whether to *extend* the already existing contribution to ISAF in Afghanistan. He stated that at the beginning of the operation in Afghanistan in 2001 the Netherlands and ‘many groups within society’ supported the operation, question is now, according to Bos, whether The Netherlands is still supporting the United Nations:

‘Laten wij bijvoorbeeld niet vergeten dat wij ons vanavond niet buigen over de vraag of wij aan een operatie in Afghanistan moeten beginnen, maar of wij er mee moeten doorgaan. Deze missie heeft een voorgeschiedenis, die begint op 11 september 2001. Het waren de Amerikanen die getroffen werden door een terroristische aanslag. Er ontstond wereldwijd steun, ook in Nederland door grote groepen van de bevolking gedragen, om broeinesten van terrorisme in Afghanistan op te ruimen en de bestuurders die terroristen steunden op te pakken. Dat was geen Amerikaans belang, maar een internationaal belang. Het was geen ideetje van Bush, maar het werd gedragen door Kofi Annan. Het waren niet de Verenigde Staten, maar de Verenigde Naties. Wij steunden Kofi Annan en de Verenigde Naties toen, in 2001. De vraag is vandaag of hij nog steeds op onze steun kan rekenen.’ Bos, TK 2005-2006, 45, p.3015.

So, three times a reference was made to public opinion. However, none of these references were used as an argument. It was never stated that the public opinion was in favor or against the mission, regardless whether this would be true. Even the opposing parties, GroenLinks or SP for example, did not use the public opinion as an argument. For them it would have been very easy to refer to negative public support for the mission. Yet, no reference was made and no questions were asked about public support. GroenLinks did ask Parliamentary Questions on the differences in opinion between Ministers Kamp and Bot

on October 28, 2005, early in the debate, however not about the public opinion or support in society (TK, Handelingen 2005-2006, 15-865).

Another notable thing is that only members of the PvdA made references to the public opinion in their argumentation. Besides, these references were made at the very last day of the political debate. Most likely both can be explained by the time that the PvdA took a decision to support the mission, which was between the General Consultation and the Plenary Debate. It could be argued that because the PvdA did not take position until the last day of the debate, it could legitimize its doubts by referring to the doubts in society.

Rather than public support, political support was an important point of discussion in the debates. During the General Consultation of February 2, 2006 it was argued by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ben Bot, that the mission would be deployed only if there would be broad political support:

‘Wij winnen uw adviezen in en wij hebben van meet af aan gezegd: als er een breed draagvlak is, kwalitatief en kwantitatief, dan gaan wij natuurlijk.’ Bot, TK 2005–2006, 27 925 nr. 207, p.54.

In addition, Koenders (PvdA) argued that Cabinet had to be united in their support for the mission if there would be a broad majority in parliament in favor of the mission:

‘Wij zullen vanavond zien of voor deze missie een breed draagvlak bestaat in de Kamer. Mocht dat het geval zijn, dan moeten wij ervan uit kunnen gaan dat het besluit van deze Kamer wordt uitgevoerd en dat het dus ook door het kabinet wordt uitgedragen.’ Koenders, TK 2005–2006, 27 925 nr. 207, p.71.

Later on, during the final debate, political support was the main focus. It was stated that a two-thirds majority in the Second Chamber was needed for the mission (TK 2005-2006, 45, p.3027). Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende stated that it was decided after the Srebrenica debacle, where Dutch troops failed to protect a UN Safe Haven in Bosnia which resulted in the death of 7000 people, parliamentary support had to be as much as possible for dangerous military operations like the one to Uruzgan (TK 2005-2006, 45, p.3032-3034). According to chairman of the D66 fraction, Boris Dittrich, there was a majority in the Second Chamber broad enough to deploy the mission (TK 2005-2006, 45, p.3027). During this debate politicians tried to convince the parties who were still having doubts to create as much political support as possible.

One of the reasons for this broad political support in parliament is named Bos (PvdA), who argued that it was needed for Cabinet to be united in their decision to deploy a mission because if not it could lead to difficult debates when casualties would arise:

‘Als het kabinet ons verantwoordelijk wil maken voor het uitzenden van soldaten naar Afghanistan, is dat ook voor het kabinet niet vrijblijvend. Wij gaan er dan van uit dat ook het kabinet verantwoordelijkheid neemt en kleur bekent. Daarnaast gaan wij ervan uit dat bij een gebleken meerderheid in de Kamer en een dientengevolge positief besluit van het kabinet om troepen uit te zenden alle ministers dat besluit in de openbaarheid zullen uitdragen en verdedigen. [...] Dat is geen procedurekwestie, maar het is van groot belang voor de uitgezonden mannen en vrouwen. Wij mogen het hen niet aandoen dat het kabinet verdeeld is over deze kwestie, want dat zou tot onverkwikkelijke discussies leiden op het moment dat er soldaten sneuvelen. Onze uitgezonden mannen en vrouwen moeten zich door alle ministers gesteund weten, in goede en in slechte tijden.’ Bos, TK 2005-2006, 45, p.3014.

Here, it becomes clear that Bos is aware of the possible mechanism in which a public debate could occur as a result of a political debate. When a military operation is deployed and Cabinet is not unified in its decision, it could lead to a political debate once casualties arise. This could in turn, start a public debate and perhaps a loss of votes or a political crisis as consequences. With a unified Cabinet and a broad majority in parliament, this risk can be minimized. Therefore, it was probably argued by Prime Minister Balkenende, that society needed a clear sign from government as well as from parliament and that the politicians would give their full support to the mission:

‘Wij hebben op het ogenblik behoefte aan een helder signaal van steun vanuit het parlement en vanuit de regering voor de mensen die het werk moeten gaan doen. Dat is wat er aan de orde is!’ Balkenende, TK 2005-2006, 45, p.3034.

To share the responsibility of the deployment of Dutch soldiers to Uruzgan was an important issue during the whole period analyzed. It started with the first notification of Minister of Defense, Henk Kamp, to parliament about the possible participation in a new mission to the South of Afghanistan on June 16, 2005. This was criticized by members in parliament because the announcement was written in a broader report about the NATO

meeting of 9 and 10 June 2005 held in Brussels, so it was not a letter containing only the notification (TK 2004-2005, 28 676 nr. 22). Later, Parliamentary Questions (*'Kamervragen'*) were asked by member of the Second Chamber for GroenLinks, Karimi, about the probable differences in opinion between Minister of Defense, Kamp, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bot, regarding the new mission because this was portrayed in a newspaper (Hazelbag, 2009, p.257). Both Ministers replied with a letter to parliament in which it was stated that they were both in favor of the mission (TK 2005-2006, 27 925 nr. 189). Then, on 22 December 2005, when parliament received the article 100 letter (TK 2005-2006, 27 925 nr. 193) parliament was reluctant to review the case because of government's 'intention' instead of 'decision' to deploy a mission to Uruzgan. It was argued that it is government's job to decide on a mission and parliament's job to critically assess that decision. By changing 'decision' into 'intention' the responsibility of a military mission was placed into the hands of parliament. To confirm its plans, cabinet send another letter in which it was stated that government 'decided on the intention' to deploy a mission to Uruzgan (TK 2005-2006, 27 925 nr. 195).

Next to political support, the execution of the mission was heavily discussed. In the article 100 letter it was stated that the mission had the purpose of reconstructing Afghanistan (TK 2005-2006, 27 925 nr. 193). At the same time, it was stated that the occurrence of casualties could not be ruled out (TK 2005-2006, 27 925 nr. 193). This created the debate whether the mission would primarily be a 'fighting' or a 'reconstruction' mission (TK 2005-2006, 45, 3013-3035). To prove that the mission would be a bit of both, Kamp (Defense) created a list of 16 specific points (more elaboration in timeline reconstruction Appendix 1) that had to be taken care of before Dutch forces would be deployed. For example, one of the concerns of parliament was that captives would end up in secret detention centers or even in Guantanamo Bay where human rights would be violated (TK 2005-2006, 27 925 nr. 201, p.41). By drafting this list government increased its chances to get parliamentary approval for the mission.

A clear distinction between ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) was seen as the most important issue for the members of parliaments. OEF was seen as a *'counter insurgency'* mission which means that its purpose was 'to counter terrorists' (Grandia, 2015, p.82). ISAF on the other hand, had its emphasize more on reconstruction, like government stated in the article 100 letter. For many in parliament a clear distinction between the two missions had to be visible for the people in Afghanistan because one of the components of ISAF was to win the *'hearts and minds'* of the Afghan population. To win people's hearts and minds was seen as a necessary condition for reconstruction. Opposing

parties GroenLinks, SP and D66, believed that a clear distinction between ISAF and OEF was not possible and therefore the mission would not be able to provide the desired reconstruction (TK 2005-2006, 27 925 nr. 204).

4.2 Results

It becomes clear that public opinion is used three times in the debates prior to the decision to deploy a mission to Uruzgan. Bert Koenders (Member of the Second Chamber of the PvdA) made a reference during the General Consultation on February 2, 2016 and Wouter Bos (chairman of the PvdA fraction) made a reference to public opinion twice during the Plenary Debate on February 2, 2006 which was the final debate before the decision was taken. These references were probably made to justify the doubts of the PvdA because public opinion was not used as an argument in favor or against the mission, it was only stated that there was doubt amongst the public. Even the opposing parties (GroenLinks and SP), did not use the public opinion as an argument against the mission.

Rather than public support, political support was an important issue in the debates. It was tried to get a majority as broad as possible in favor of the mission. The reluctance of parliament to review the article 100 letter showed that it was tried to share the responsibility of the Dutch troops that would possibly be deployed. Therefore, government first had to be unified in its decision to deploy military forces to the South of Afghanistan. Otherwise, it would lead to difficult debates when casualties would arise according to Bos.

The debates were primarily about the military execution of the mission. The most debated issue was whether the mission would be more about reconstruction or more about fighting the Taliban. Therefore, a clear distinction between ISAF and OEF was needed. The parties who opposed the mission thought it was impossible to make such a distinction and thought that the mission would therefore not have the desired results.

In sum, public opinion was not part of the discussions. Debates were about the military execution of the mission, a unified decision of government and as much support as possible in the Second Chamber.

5. QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

The questionnaire analysis shows how public opinion was used in the decision to deploy a mission to Uruzgan and what the opinion of the respondents was regarding the public opinion at that time.

5.1 The data

The position of the respondents regarding the mission to Uruzgan is determined by several factors. The motives for participating were described by chairman of the CDA fraction, Maxime Verhagen and Mathieu Herben (former chairman of the LPF fraction but not at the time analyzed) as the 'preservation of the international legal order' and the 'obligations as NATO ally' (Appendix 2 and 4). These motives were seen as the most important points to base an opinion upon. The party positions were shaped during party meetings where it was looked at support among members for the mission. Bos for example explained that during party meetings of the PvdA, the opinions of Afghan refugees were heard who were pro intervention (Appendix 2).

The role of public opinion in the decision making can be described as a fifth wheel on a car, it is always there but not used. Verhagen and Bos are clear about this, the public elects representatives who make their own decisions in parliament (Appendix 2 and 3). *'If the public is against the participation in peace operations, it should vote otherwise'*, stated Verhagen (Appendix 2). Verhagen explained that public opinion was not weighted in the party position of the CDA, while Bos argued that public opinion is always 'relevant' but in weighting the position of the PvdA the opinions within the party were seen as more important (Appendix 3). The respondents ruled out the possibility that their party acted according to the *'sense of the day'*. Bos argued that decisions like the one to go to Uruzgan belong to the most important and well weighted decisions in Dutch politics (Appendix 3). Therefore, politicians would not act according to the sense of the day. Verhagen argued that the CDA did certainly not act in such a way, but that the PVV and PvdA did during the discussion whether to extend the mission or not in 2010 (Appendix 1). Furthermore, Verhagen and Bos argued that they did not anticipate on the next elections (Appendix 2 and 3), which is plausible since the elections were scheduled on May 15, 2007, so there were still 15 months to the next elections.

It is interesting to see that involving the public opinion in the weighting of a party's position is seen as acting according to the sense of the day. Verhagen for example, replied on the question what he would think of a colleague that would strengthen its position on the mission by using an argument about public opinion, by saying that *'[t]here are always*

opportunistic politicians and parties who let their position depend on the sense of the day' (Appendix 2). Besides, acting according to the 'sense of the day' is seen as problematic. Bos replied to the same question by saying that *'[i]t happens, but then it is called "support in society" ('maatschappelijk draagvlak') and there is nothing wrong with that'* (Appendix 3). So, public opinion is not seen as a credible argument because it is associated with acting according to the sense of the day. However, according to Bos, 'support in society' could be a credible argument. Instead, factors such as the preservation of the international legal order (Verhagen, Appendix 2), obligations as a NATO member (Verhagen, Appendix 2), international reputation (Herben, Appendix 4) are named to be part of a well weighted decision. Finally, Herben named that a cost-benefit decision was made inside the LPF (Appendix 4).

As a final point, the differences in answers from the respondents are remarkable. First, regarding the difference in the format of answers has to be noted that Herben did not directly answer the questionnaire but wrote down five points which had to be taken into account while reading the four attached appendices. Probably this was because of his enthusiasm because he already explained some things during a phone call in which the researcher only asked whether he would be willing to cooperate. Second, the way in which the party positions were shaped is described differently between Bos and Verhagen. According to Bos the position of the PvdA is influenced by actors within the party such as experts on the topic, refugees, and other stakeholders. While according to Verhagen the position of the CDA is influenced during party meetings as well as by external actors such as the American and Afghan Embassies. This difference could be only in the explanation of the process, or it could be true that the parties were influenced by different actors. With the existing data it is difficult to explain this difference. Last but not least, it is remarkable that Verhagen is clear about the role of public opinion, it was simply not part of the decision making of CDA, while Bos argued that public opinion is always playing a role, but that in case of Uruzgan other considerations were more important.

5.2 Results

It becomes clear that the most important thing for the respondents was to make a well weighted decision. This decision was based on several things. First, the motives for participating in the mission were described as the preservation of the international legal order, the obligations forthcoming of NATO membership and the Dutch reputation towards allies. Second, the relevant actors that participated in the decision were described as

experts within ministries, the Embassies of the US and Afghanistan, experts on the topic within the party, and other party members.

Public opinion was seen as unimportant for the decision to deploy a mission to Uruzgan. Verhagen said it was not used in the position taking of the CDA. Bos said public opinion is always present, but in this decision the opinion of the party members were more important.

To justify a party position by the public opinion is seen as acting according the 'sense of the day'. This, in turn, is thought of as undesirable. The respondents said they did not act according the sense of the day, however Verhagen accused the PVV and PvdA of acting according the sense of the day in 2010 when Cabinet fell. Furthermore, it was stated that the next elections were not taken into account when the respondents made their decision regarding Uruzgan.

Finally it was explained that the public could vote for its representatives in parliament, so if it did not agree with the decision to deploy the mission it should have voted otherwise. In other words, public opinion is not seen as an important factor in the decision making process because it is associated with acting like the sense of the day. The public votes and the politicians take the decisions.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Research question & expectations

When the Dutch Second Chamber of Parliament decided to deploy a mission to Uruzgan on February 2, 2006 there was a broad majority that gave its support. The majority of the public however, opposed the mission (AIV, 2006, p.9). Considering that the Second Chamber represents the public, this difference between parliamentary and public support is remarkable. On the one hand, government pursues national interests even when the public does not support its actions. On the other hand, it raises questions when the public has such a strong different opinion. To see how the public is represented in this decision the following research question is used:

'To what extent and how did politicians use public opinion in the decision to deploy the mission to Uruzgan in 2006, and how can this be explained?'

It was expected that the Members of the Second Chamber could act in two ways: 1) they could represent the public in a *direct way* by referring to public opinion to justify their decisions, or 2) they could represent the public in an *indirect way* by making their own judgments regardless of public opinion.

6.2 Conclusions

The results of this research support the second expectation, the Members of the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament represented the public in an indirect way in the decision to deploy a military operation to Uruzgan. Public opinion is not used to justify party positions in the debates. It was seen as important to make a well weighted decision and the public opinion was named as an unimportant factor for this decision. To include the public opinion in the decision to go to Uruzgan was seen as acting according the sense of the day which is described as undesirable. Rather than public support, parliamentary support was an important factor in the decision making. It was tried to find a majority as broad as possible in the Second Chamber. The public could influence the composition of the Second Chamber during the elections. People could vote for their representatives in parliament. So the way in which the public could influence the decision was via elections.

To answer the research question, three things can be said. First, Koenders (PvdA) used public opinion once and Bos (PvdA) used public opinion twice in the debates prior to the decision to go to Uruzgan. These three references were probably made to justify the party's doubts on the mission which lasted until the Plenary Debate on February 2, 2006. It

was argued that there was doubt amongst the public. Second, public opinion was seen as an unimportant factor in the decision making process. Other factors were seen as more credible to base an opinion on, such as whether or not the mission would contribute to the preservation of the international legal order, the international reputation of The Netherlands and the obligations forthcoming of NATO membership. Therefore, it could be said that public opinion was used as a spare wheel on a car. It was present, but nothing was done with it. Third, this can be explained by the way in which politicians view the use of public opinion in justifying their party positions. The use of public opinion for defending an opinion is associated with acting like the sense of the day. In turn, acting like the sense of the day and making a well weighted decision are seen as mutually exclusive. The members of the Second Chamber see their role as representatives that have to make their own decisions regardless of the public opinion. The party positions are shaped by the party members during party meetings and the politicians represent this position in parliament. In other words, the opinion of the party is considered to be the most important factor in the decision making process of politicians.

The combination of the content analysis and the questionnaire proved to be beneficial because the same conclusions are reached which gives more certainty about the conclusions. Besides, both methods can explain a different part of the puzzle. The content analysis explains what the debates were about and what has been said literally, while the questionnaire explains what the respondents thought about what has been said. In sum, the use of both methods enriched this research.

6.3 Discussion

Next to an answer to the research question this research gives some insight into related and broader concepts as well. To some degree, support can be found for the stated motives of participation in peace operations (for instance: Traas; van der Lijn, Veen, Beeres, Vollaard & Van Willigen), the mechanism of public influence on foreign policy making via elections (for instance Aldrich et a.) and the mechanism of latent public opinion (for instance Hutchings). For the elite cues theory support can be found to a lesser extent and no support can be found for the constant pressure (for instance Everts, 2000; Everts & Isernia, 2001). However, as shown in table 1, these things can be said with moderate certainty since this research only focused on the first two concepts: the sense of the day and the representatives that make their own decisions.

Table 2. Findings related to the literature

Theories, concepts, ideas	Content analysis	Questionnaire	Certainty
<i>Way of representing the public (researched):</i>			Green (strong)
1. Sense of the day (Rouvoet, Tichelaar in Koop & Van Holsteyn, 2008)	-	-	
2. Representatives make their own decision (Koop & Van Holsteyn, 2008)	+	+	
<i>Role of public opinion in foreign policy (related concepts):</i>			Yellow (moderate)
3. Motives for participating in peace operations (Traas, 2012; van der Lijn, 2017; Veen, 2012; Beeres et al., 2012; Vollaard & Van Willigen, 2011)	+	~	
4. Elite cues theory (Berinsky, 2006)	~	~	
5. Public influences foreign policy via elections (Aldrich et al., 2006)	~	+	
6. Latent public opinion (Hutchings, 2003)	+	~	
7. Constant pressure (Everts, 2000; Everts & Isernia, 2001)	-	-	
<i>Elite decision making in foreign affairs (the difficult questions):</i>			Red (weak)
8. Domesticization (Verbeek & Van der Vleuten, 2008; Vollaard & Van Willigen, 2011)	~	~	
9. Elitist process (Van der Windt, 2014)	+	+	

To most interesting questions are at the same time the most difficult. It was not possible to see what weight public opinion really had in the decision to deploy a mission to Uruzgan in 2006 because it could not be looked *inside* the heads of politicians. Besides, whether or not Dutch foreign policy making can be better described as an elitist process, or as domesticization remains unclear. Therefore, recommendations are made about further research. Even so, is the question left for others to argue whether the decision making process of Dutch foreign policy is the most desirable.

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Responses of former politicians:

Maxime Verhagen (party leader of CDA)
Wouter Bos (party leader of PvdA)
Mathieu Herben (LPF)

8. APPENDIX 1. Timeline Reconstruction

13-10-2003 UN Security Council votes for an extension of the mandate of the *International Security and Assistance Force* (ISAF) to the rest of Afghanistan. (Hazelbag, 2009, p.251). Kamerstukken II 2004-2005, 27 925 nr. 177.

*Until this moment, ISAF was only present in Kabul, however with this mandate it could expand its operations to the rest of Afghanistan. This was done in four stages: 1) To the north, 2) to the west, 3) to the south where Uruzgan is located and 4) to the east (Hazelbag, 2009, p.251).

10-01-2005 Canada presents its idea to establish a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in the southern province of Kandahar during a meeting of the *Stuurgroep Militaire Operaties* (SMO) (Hazelbag, 2009, p.251).

*The Steering Group Military Operations is working group where the ministries of General Affairs, Defense and Foreign Affairs work together on a weekly basis. Because the Netherlands had a good experience with its PRT in the north of Afghanistan it was considering to establish a second one (Hazelbag, 2009, p.251).

20-01-2005 First contacts between the Netherlands and Canada take place (Hazelbag, 2009, p.252).

10-02-2005 Director of Operation of the defense Staff reports to the SMO that a meeting took place with the United Kingdom and Canada about ISAF stage 3 in southern Afghanistan (Hazelbag, 2009, p.252).

* The Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Canada were investigating the possibility to deploy a combined mission to the south of Afghanistan (Hazelbag, 2009, p.252).

Spring 2005 The Netherlands decides to not extend the mission 'Stabilization Force Iraq' (SFIR) (Hazelbag, 2009, p.252).

* Within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs questions were raised about whether it would be smart to announce its plans to deploy a mission to Afghanistan after it just ended this mission in Iraq. At the same time, it was thought of the political consequences of not participating in Afghanistan, especially the Dutch relations with the United States, the United Kingdom and within NATO (Hazelbag, 2009, p.252).

03-05-2005 Prime Minister Balkenende, Minister Kamp (Defense) and Minister Bot (Foreign Affairs) attend a briefing at the Ministry of Defense about the state of affairs in Afghanistan (Hazelbag, 2009, p.254).

24-05-2005 Meeting of Kamp, Bot and civil servants on the possibility of a mission to southern Afghanistan (Hazelbag, 2009, p.254).

* It was agreed that the ministries would continue with the preparations of the mission. Besides, it was decided that Minister Bot would look whether the D66 and the PvdA would support the mission to Uruzgan. This was needed because in the earlier mission in Afghanistan, OEF, the PvdA was against the mission. To prevent this from happening again the opposition parties were sounded out. Both D66 and PvdA were now likely to support the new mission (Hazelbag, 2009, p.254).

14-06-2005 A team of Defense and Foreign Affairs officials went to Afghanistan on a Fact-Finding Mission to determine in which province the Netherlands wanted and could participate (Hazelbag, 2009, p.254).

16-06-2005 Parliaments is informed for the first time about the plans of government to extend its participation in ISAF to the south of Afghanistan (Hazelbag, 2009, p.255).

Analysis starts at this date!

Kamerstukken II 2004-2005, 28 676 nr. 22.

* Minister Kamp send a letter to parliament, also on behalf of Minister Bot in which it was stated that after a request of the NATO Secretary General De Hoop Scheffer, it was announced that the Netherlands was going to investigate a possible mission to the south of Afghanistan in cooperation with the United Kingdom and Canada (Hazelbag, 2009, p.255).

End of September 2005 Prime Minister Balkenende, Minister Bot and Minister Kamp decide and let the NATO Secretary General De Hoop Scheffer know that the Netherlands will participate in the extension of ISAF to the province of Uruzgan. At least, if parliament approves the plan (Hazelbag, 2009, p.256).

19-10-2005 '*Militaire Inlichtingen en Veiligheidsdienst*' (MIVD, 'The Military Intelligence and Security Service') releases a very critical report about the possible mission to Uruzgan (Hazelbag, 2009, p.256).

18-10-2005 – 20-10-2005 A group of civil servants and directors of the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs visit Afghanistan in which Australia says that it would be impossible to win people's hearts and minds in Uruzgan (Hazelbag, 2009, p.256).

27-10-2005 '*Commandant der Strijdkrachten*' (CDS, 'Commander in Chief') presents his military advice to the Minister of Defense, he describes the mission as challenging but feasible (Hazelbag, 2009, p.256).

28-10-2005 A newspaper states that Minister Kamp and Both have different opinions about the mission to Uruzgan, as a result '*Kamervragen*' ('Parliamentary questions') were raised (Hazelbag, 2009, p.257).

Kamerstukken II, 2005-2006, 27 925 nr. 189.

* Member of the Second Chamber Karimi of GroenLinks asked parliamentary questions on the differences in opinion between Kamp and Bot after which both Ministers send a letter

to parliament in which they assured the members of parliament of their shared opinion regarding the mission to Uruzgan (Hazelbag, 2009, p.257).

31-10-2005 – 02-11-2005 Minister Kamp visits the Dutch special force in the north of Afghanistan and he attends a briefing of the Americans. This results in a list of 16 points that need to be taken care off to get parliamentary support (Hazelbag, 2009, p.258).

* These 16 points were all technical things about the mission including:

[T]he retention of a US contingent in the northern part of Uruzgan at the bases Anaconda in Kaz Uruzgan and Cobra in Shahidi Hassas; the retention of a US military contingent of at least battle group size and one PRT in Zabul (province southeast of Uruzgan); financing of Kandahar Airfield by NATO instead of the participating countries; enough budget to finance reconstruction projects; back up of NATO forces if the Netherlands needs more troops in Uruzgan; the continuing involvement of the US in the reconstruction of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) in Uruzgan; good governance of the Afghan government and a functioning ANP from the beginning of the mission for the Dutch mission to build on; provisions by Afghan government which allow a responsible transfer of prisoners to Afghanistan and the matter of the special forces in Kandahar.' (Hazelbag, 2009, p.273).

14-11-2005 Minister Bot meets the Afghan President Karzai in Vienna. At this meeting, Karzai makes several concessions including the proper treatment of prisoners and the strengthening of the Afghan police and army in the region Uruzgan (Hazelbag, 2009, p.259).

23/24-11-2005 Van Baalen, VVD Foreign Affairs parliamentary spokesman proposes a motion in which government was asked to investigate the possibility that the whole mission ISAF will be executed with respect to international law and inform parliament about this. He is critical about the human rights violations in Afghanistan and states that the VVD will not support a mission that is not respecting the international rule of law (Hazelbag, 2009, p.259).

*Minister Bot responded by saying that he is negotiating Memoranda of Understanding (MUOs) with President Karzai about the treatment of prisoners and the death penalty (Hazelbag, 2009, p.259).

At the same time, NATO Secretary General De Hoop Scheffer said that the Netherlands should make haste with its decision to participate in Uruzgan (Hazelbag, 2009, p.259).

30-11-2005 Minister Bot experiences pressure from the US by meeting the two Under Secretaries Florey (Defense) and Fried (State, *'Buitenlandse Zaken'*) to discuss the mission to Uruzgan (Hazelbag, 2009, p.259).

02-12-2005 Discussion in the Council of Ministers takes place and is put on the agenda for the Council of Ministers of 9 December (Hazelbag, 2009, p.259).

08-12-2005 Minister Bot says he feels comfortable with the protection of Dutch soldiers and the treatment of prisoners as well as defending the mission in government (Hazelbag, 2009, p.260).

09-12-2005 CDS presents the mission in the Council of Ministers, supported by Kamp and Bot. No decision is reached because of criticism, by Minister Pechtold. The council will discuss the mission again in 19 December (Hazelbag, 2009, p.260-161).

16-12-2005 D66 is briefed by the CDS and Castelijin, the Director of General Policy Affairs of the Ministry of Defense. After the briefing party leader Dittrich states on television that D66 will not support a mission to Uruzgan (Hazelbag, 2009, p.274). So, this is even before the official article 100 letter!

* This statement was result of a struggle for power within D66 and caused a problem for cabinet with two ministers of the party D66, Pechtold and Brinkhorst. At this stage, the Netherlands got some concessions of other allies who would need a serious explanation if the mission would not happen. At the same time, it would be a problem within D66 when the two Ministers would support the mission while the rest of the party would oppose it (Hazelbag, 2009, p.261).

19-12-2005 Because Minister Brinkhorst was still on a working trip to Hong Kong Cabinet cannot take a decision on the matter of Uruzgan. Therefore, the mission is placed on the agenda for December 22 (Hazelbag, 2009, p.262).

21-12-2005 Ministers Kamp, Bot, Pechtold and Brinkhorst meet in Brinkhorst's office. Bot suggests that they replace 'decision' by 'intention' in the article 100 letter to get the support of the Ministers of D66 (Hazelbag, 2009, p.262).

22-12-2005 Council of Ministers decides to send the article 100 letter to parliament (Hazelbag, 2009, p.262).

Kamerstukken II 2005-2006, 27 925, nr. 194.

Kamerstukken II 2005-2006, 27 925 nr. 193.

* Parliament was reluctant to review the article 100 letter because of governments 'intention' instead of decision to deploy a mission to Uruzgan. It was argued that it is government's job to decide on a mission and parliament's job to critically asses the decision. By changing the article 100 letter into 'intention' the responsibility of a military mission was placed in hands of parliament. As a result, cabinet send another letter in which it was stated that government decided on the intention to deploy a mission to Uruzgan (Hazelbag, 2009, p.263).

Kamerstukken II 2005-2006, 27 925 nr. 195

13-01-2006 Ministers Kamp and Bot send a letter to parliament again to assure that they took a decision for the mission to Uruzgan (Hazelbag, 2009, p.263).

Kamerstukken II 2005-2006, 27 925 nr. 197.

17-01-2006 Kamp states that MIVD report cannot be send to parliament, instead parliament can be briefed about Uruzgan by the CDS and the MIVD Director (Hazelbag, 2009, p.264).

Kamerstukken II 2005-2006, 27 925 nr. 198.

25-01-2006 Minister Kamp allows the Second Chamber to read the MIVD report, but parts were blacked out (Hazelbag, 2009, p.264).

26-01-2006 The CDS and the MICD Director give a confidential meeting in presence of Minister Kamp, to the Permanent Commission of Foreign Affairs (Hazelbag, 2009, p.264).

30-01-2006 The slides of the confidential meeting are send to the Second Chamber (Hazelbag, 2009, p.264).

Kamerstukken II 2005-2006, 27 925 nr. 200.

* The procedure of the decision to go to Uruzgan was subject to discussion as well as the content of the decision because for parliament it was not very clear whether the Netherlands would predominately fight the Taliban or whether it would take actions for reconstruction and development. However, a peace operation cannot be assigned to one of these extremes because it incorporates both. The reason for this debate was that the article 100 letter of December 22, 2005 stated that the mission had the purpose of bringing stability and reconstruction, but that at the same time the occurrence of casualties could not be ruled out, so the mission was already expected to become dangerous. This led to a discussion whether it would be a 'fighting mission' or a 'reconstruction mission' (Hazelbag, 2009, p.264-265).

Kamerstukken II 2005-2006, 27 925 nr. 193.

30-01-2006 The public hearing takes place. From 08:30 until 22:00 the MPs could question experts + UN Secretary general Kofi Annan visits the Netherlands.

Kamerstukken II 2005-2006, 27 925 nr. 201.

* The Ministers of Defense, Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation thought that a public hearing could take away the doubts among PvdA members and that it could increase support in society. At the same day, Secretary General of the UN Kofi Anan stated that he was hoping that the Dutch parliament would take the right decision towards Uruzgan. Besides Australia announced that it would send a reconstruction force to Afghanistan. This was yet another impulse for Dutch politicians because the Netherlands could cooperate with Australia in Afghanistan (Hazelbag, 2009, p.266).

Kamerstukken II 2005-2006, 27 925 nr. 193.

01-02-2006 A confidential briefing is given on the Rules of Engagement to the Permanent Commissions for Foreign Affairs and Defense.

!02-02-2006 Parliament approves Cabinet decision to deploy a mission to Uruzgan (Hazelbag, 2009, p.251).

The analysis stops at this date!

Kamerstukken II, Handelingen 2005-2006, 45-3035

Coalition party D66 and opposition parties GroenLinks and SP and PvdA MP Van Heteren voted against, all the other MPs (127 out of 150) voted in favor of the mission.

First the General Consultation (*'Algemeen Overleg'*) was held in which the Permanent Commissions of Foreign Affairs, Defense and Overseas Development could debate with the ministers in two rounds. Afterwards the plenary debate took place with all members of the Second Chamber.

In the first term, it became clear that CDA supported the mission because it wanted to bring reconstruction to Afghanistan. The PvdA looked like to support the mission after several conditions were met, for instance a clear separation between OEF and ISAF. The VVD supported the mission as well because earlier doubts about the treatment of prisoners (Motion Van Baalen) were taken away during the confidential briefing of the MIVD Director and the CDS. The SP was against the mission because it thought Dutch forces would not be able to reconstruct the province of Uruzgan since the security risks were too high. D66 had to stick with its party leader's announcement that it would not support a mission to Uruzgan, so it did not give its support. The LPF initially supported a mission of only one year because it thought a one-year mission would be in line with the ability of the Dutch forces, in the end however the LPF gave its support for the two years. Smaller parties like the CU, SGP, Groep Wilders and Groep Nawijn said they would support the mission (Hazelbag, 2009, p.251).

Kamerstukken II 2005-2006, 27 925, nr. 207.

Within the time between the General Consultation and the plenary debate the PvdA met to determine their standpoint. The other parties already did this on January 31, but the PvdA still did not decide. During this meeting party leader Bos and spokesman Koenders convinced the other members to support the mission. So, during the plenary debate the PvdA voted in favor of the mission. The CDA, VVD, LPF voted in favor as well. This created enough support (127 members out of 150) that the opposition of SP, GroenLinks and D66 did not matter (Hazelbag, 2009, p.251).

Kamerstukken II 2005-2006, 27 925 nr. 204.

Kamerstukken II, Handelingen 2005-2006, 45-3013-3035.

03-02-2006 The decision to deploy a mission to Uruzgan is confirmed in the meeting of Cabinet (Hazelbag, 2009, p.251).

01-08-2006 The mission in Uruzgan starts.

Documents that are observed but not present in the timeline:

Kamerstukken II 2005-2006, 30 162 nrs. 2-3

Kamerstukken II 2000-2001, 26 454 nr. 11

9. APPENDIX 2. Answers Maxime Verhagen (CDA)

Answers received at May 30, 2017, by Maxime Verhagen.

- Hoe is het standpunt van uw partij tot stand gekomen voor de missie in Uruzgan? Welke actoren hebben daar een belangrijke rol in gespeeld (experts uit ministeries van Defensie of BuZa, partijleiding, Kamercommissies, etc.)?
Met experts uit ministeries van Defensie en Binnenlandse Zaken; minister van Buitenlandse Zaken; Amerikaanse Ambassade; Ambassade Afghanistan en partijbijeenkomsten
- Is tijdens de besluitvorming binnen uw partij om deel te nemen aan de missie in Uruzgan, op enige manier rekening gehouden met de ‘publieke opinie’? Waarom wel of juist niet? Hoe werkt dat?
Neen, in verkiezingsprogramma staat dat we deelnemen aan NAVO en VN-operaties van groot belang achten.
- Hoe definieert u publieke opinie?
Opvattingen van de Nederlandse bevolking kenbaar volgens opiniepeilingen en eigen reacties.
- Hoe is volgens u het Nederlandse volk gerepresenteerd in het besluit om deel te nemen aan de missie in Uruzgan?
Door stem op partijen die deelnamen aan VN- en NAVO missies voorstaan.
- Denkt u dat politici (uzelf en uw collega’s in de Tweede Kamer) zich op sommige momenten hebben laten leiden door de ‘waan van de dag’, door wat politici dachten dat het volk van de missie vond?
Neen, CDA niet, maar PVV wel en PvdA in 2010 ook.
- Of, denkt u dat politici het volk in de beslissing om deel te nemen aan de missie in Uruzgan alleen op een indirecte manier hebben gerepresenteerd, dat het volk de Tweede Kamerleden heeft kunnen kiezen die vervolgens zelf een afweging hebben gemaakt om wel of niet deel te nemen?
Ja.
- Heeft de eigen achterban voor u een rol gespeeld in het besluit om wel of niet deel te nemen aan de missie in Uruzgan? Is er in de afweging om een missie in Uruzgan te steunen gedacht aan volgende Tweede Kamerverkiezingen en daarmee de beoogde kiezers?

1. Ja -> via partijbijeenkomsten voor draagvlak gezorgd.

2. Neen.

- In de aanloop naar het besluit om deel te nemen aan de missie in Uruzgan op 2 februari 2006, is de publieke opinie nooit als argument gebruikt in de Tweede Kamer om de missie wel of niet te steunen. Hoe is dat volgens u te verklaren?

Omdat dat geen bepalend argument was.

- Wordt er in het algemeen, als het gaat om het uitzenden van Nederlandse militairen in vredesoperaties, een afweging gemaakt op basis van wat de publieke opinie vindt van een missie? Kunt u uitleggen waarom dat volgens u wel of niet gebeurt?

Neen, maar wel t.a.v. voorwaarden waaronder militairen worden uitgezonden.

Uitzondering PvdA die Kabinet Balkenende IV ten val bracht door tegen verlenging Afghanistan te zijn om electorale redenen.

- Wordt er in de Tweede Kamer niet over publieke opinie gesproken als het gaat om de uitzending van Nederlandse militairen of was dat toevallig alleen het geval voor de missie in Uruzgan? Wat zou u ervan vinden als een van uw collega's zijn/haar standpunt zou onderbouwen met de mening van het publiek over een militaire missie?

1. Gaat om principiële keuzes, waaronder handhaven internationale rechtsorde en bondgenootschappelijke verplichtingen. Als publiek tegen uitzending is moet men op andere partijen stemmen.

2. Er zijn altijd opportunistische politici/partijen die hun standpunt laten afhangen van de waan van de dag.

10. APPENDIX 3. Answers Wouter Bos (PvdA)

Answers received at June 7, 2017, by Wouter Bos.

- Hoe is het standpunt van uw partij tot stand gekomen voor de missie in Uruzgan? Welke actoren hebben daar een belangrijke rol in gespeeld (experts uit ministeries van Defensie of BuZa, partijleiding, Kamercommissies, etc.)?
Onze partij was steeds verdeeld over dit vraagstuk, zowel toen we naar Afghanistan gingen als toen er wel of niet verlengd moest worden. Binnen de partij barstte het van experts en betrokkenen, die konden allemaal hun zegje doen op bijeenkomsten. Interessant was de rol van gevlucht Afghanen in die debatten, die waren fel voor interventie.
- Is tijdens de besluitvorming binnen uw partij om deel te nemen aan de missie in Uruzgan, op enige manier rekening gehouden met de ‘publieke opinie’? Waarom wel of juist niet? Hoe werkt dat?
De publieke opinie is altijd relevant maar de meningen binnen de partij zijn soms nog belangrijker. Zo ging dat ook in 2006.
- Hoe definieert u publieke opinie?
Het geheel aan diffuse en multi interpreteerbare geluiden en standpunten zoals dat via media tot je komt.
- Hoe is volgens u het Nederlandse volk gerepresenteerd in het besluit om deel te nemen aan de missie in Uruzgan?
Via hun vertegenwoordigers in het parlement.
- Denkt u dat politici (uzelf en uw collega’s in de Tweede Kamer) zich op sommige momenten hebben laten leiden door de ‘waan van de dag’, door wat politici dachten dat het volk van de missie vond?
Nee. Dit soort beslissingen behoren tot de meest intensief bediscussieerde beslissingen in de politiek
- Of, denkt u dat politici het volk in de beslissing om deel te nemen aan de missie in Uruzgan alleen op een indirecte manier hebben gerepresenteerd, dat het volk de Tweede Kamerleden heeft kunnen kiezen die vervolgens zelf een afweging hebben gemaakt om wel of niet deel te nemen?
Ja maar ze houden altijd rekening met de achterban en dat is normaal, niet meteen “waan van de dag”.
- Heeft de eigen achterban voor u een rol gespeeld in het besluit om wel of niet deel te nemen aan de missie in Uruzgan? Is er in de afweging om een missie in Uruzgan te steunen gedacht aan volgende Tweede Kamerverkiezingen en daarmee de beoogde kiezers?
Ja eigen achterban, nee volgende verkiezingen.

- Wordt er in het algemeen, als het gaat om het uitzenden van Nederlandse militairen in vredesoperaties, een afweging gemaakt op basis van wat de publieke opinie vindt van een missie? Kunt u uitleggen waarom dat volgens u wel of niet gebeurt?

Publieke opinie speelt altijd een rol, missies zonder draagvlak zijn kwetsbaar met name zogauw er slachtoffers vallen. Maar nogmaals, deze discussies over dit soort besluiten behoren bij de meest intensieve en zorgvuldige.

- In de aanloop naar het besluit om deel te nemen aan de missie in Uruzgan op 2 februari 2006, is de publieke opinie nooit als argument gebruikt in de Tweede Kamer om de missie wel of niet te steunen. Hoe is dat volgens u te verklaren?

Publieke opinie misschien niet maar draagvlak in partij en samenleving wel. Zoek de verschillen.

- Wordt er in de Tweede Kamer niet over publieke opinie gesproken als het gaat om de uitzending van Nederlandse militairen of was dat toevallig alleen het geval voor de missie in Uruzgan? Wat zou u ervan vinden als een van uw collega's zijn/haar standpunt zou onderbouwen met de mening van het publiek over een militaire missie?

Het gebeurt wel maar dan heet het maatschappelijk draagvlak en daar is niets mis mee.

11. APPENDIX 4. Answers Mathieu Herben (LPF)

Answers received on June 9, 2017, by Mathieu Herben.

Beste Pieter,

We zitten allebei in tijdnood, daarom mail ik je de originele teksten uit 2005 en een toespraak tot het LPF-partijcongres. Daaruit kun je veel info halen.

Als je het leest, moet je het volgende in gedachten houden:

1. Er kwam een wederopbouwmissie in Afghanistan door de NAVO op verzoek van de Duitsers, de rood-groene coalitie van SPD en De Groenen. Niet op verzoek van de Amerikanen. De Groenen wilden laten zien dat een vredesmacht anders kon optreden dan het Amerikaanse leger dat in hun ogen teveel geweld gebruikte. In Nederland steunde GroenLinks de missie. Wij werden dus rechts ingehaald door GroenLinks.
2. De LPF vond de missie helemaal niet kosten-effectief: teveel geld en inspanning voor een provincie met 350.000 inwoners. Afrika was volgens ons veel belangrijker.
3. Uiteindelijk gingen wij akkoord met maximaal twee jaar, mits ook islamitische en Aziatische landen troepen zouden leveren. Is nauwelijks gebeurd. Daarom schreef ik in 2007 een artikel in dagblad Trouw tegen verlenging (zie bijlage).
4. Een lid van de Tweede Kamer controleert de regering. Er is een uitdrukking: de regering regeert, het parlement controleert. Het is de plicht van de regering de Kamer juist te informeren. Dat hoort ook de voornaamste informatiebron voor een Kamerlid te zijn. De publieke opinie is lastig te definiëren en mag zeker niet worden gelijkgesteld aan de berichtgeving door de kranten. Met name invloedrijke kranten als De Volkskrant en de NRC spelen graag politieke spelletjes. Hun mening deed voor mij niet ter zake. Bovendien ben ik zelf defensiespecialist, dus ik heb alleen behoefte aan officiële informatie en geverifieerde feiten, niet aan meninkjes van journalisten. Ik heb 23 jaar gewerkt bij Defensie o.a. als hoofdredacteur bij de Directie Voorlichting.
5. De LPF is nooit voorstander geweest, wij zijn slechts akkoord gegaan met een passende bijdrage voor een beperkte tijd, omdat iedere bondgenoot een bijdrage moet leveren. Ik denk dat het voor veel mensen een eye-opener is dat de NAVO in Afghanistan is verzeild door GroenLinks (op verzoek van de Duitsers).

Succes,

Vr.gr.

Mat Herben