Dutch foreign policy with regard to Francoist Spain, 1945-1955

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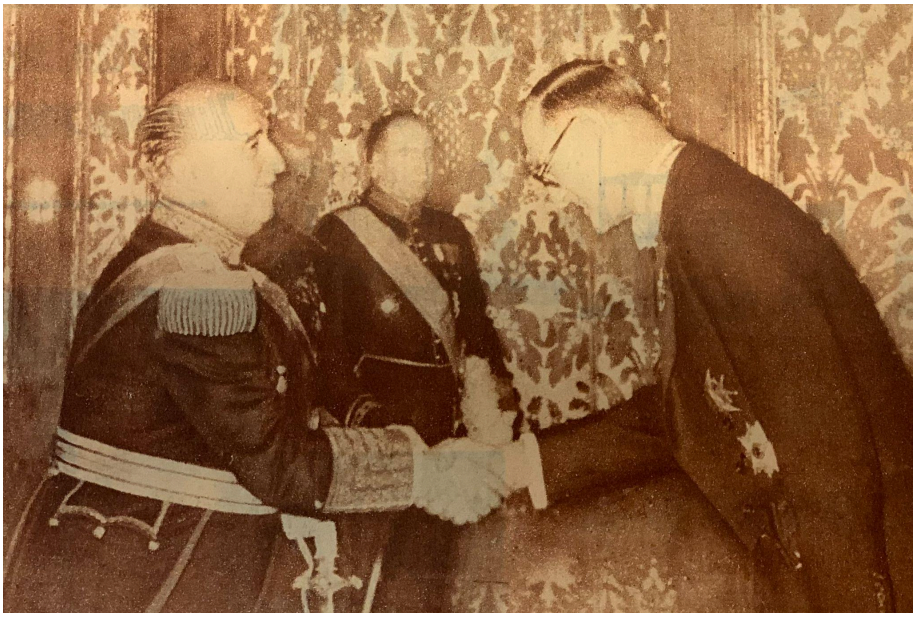

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By

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[1] Cover picture: Dutch ambassador Willem van Rechteren Limpurg (right) offers his letters of credence to Francisco Franco (left) on March 18, 1954. Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archive No. 2.05.286, Inventory No. 722 (Stukken betreffende de verheffing van het gezantschap te Madrid tot ambassade. Met bijlagen): picture from an article from the Spanish newspaper “ABC,” March 19, 1954.

List of abbreviations

Benelux	Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg Customs Union
BLEU	Belgian-Luxembourgian Economic Union
EEC	European Economic Community
IR	International Relations
KVP	*Katholieke Volkspartij*
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OEEC	Organisation for European Economic Co-operation
PCA	Permanent Court of Arbitration
PvdA	*Partij van de Arbeid*
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States

Table of contents

Introduction

With the end of the Second World War a new world order emerged. Subsequently, Dutch foreign policy in the postwar era was also distinctly different from what it had been before. Before the war The Netherlands had pursued a strict policy of neutrality, with the objective to avoid being drawn into conflicts it did not want anything to do with. As a small country geographically squeezed between the powerful German Empire, France and Great Britain, the assumption was that the balance of power between the three would prevent any of them from taking Dutch territory, as this could not be tolerated by the others. This policy had served The Netherlands well during the First World War, when it managed to stay neutral in the conflict that is known for having drawn in many countries - among other reasons of course - due to their alliance structures.

The Second World War, during which the Dutch government had no choice but to surrender to the Nazi invaders within a matter of days, shattered this policy of neutrality. When The Netherlands was liberated by Allied forces in 1945, rather than being a neutral country it found itself in a firm alliance. From the alliance of countries fighting the Axis powers during the war a new international organisation emerged that was tasked with the maintenance of international peace and security: the United Nations.

This is the context in which the topic of this thesis plays out, namely the relations between The Netherlands and Spain during the decade following the Second World War. The object of study, Dutch foreign policy, will be approached more specifically in how it related to Spain under the autocratic leadership of Francisco Franco. Franco's Spain occupied a very different place in the international sphere than The Netherlands did. In the new world order that had emerged after the Allied victory in 1945, Spain was an outcast. In the United Nations there was no place for a fascist dictatorship that had been established with the help of Hitler and Mussolini, and the organisation would even encourage its members to sever diplomatic relations with the country. Western European integration, which The Netherlands pioneered with a few others, did not extend to Spain. The country was also

denied the economic aid that the United States provided for reconstruction in Europe, commonly known as the Marshall Plan.

This thesis will aim to answer the following research question: *How did Dutch foreign policy with regard to Francoist Spain evolve between 1945 and 1955?* In order to answer this question, different aspects of the Dutch government's Spain-policy throughout the timeframe will be analysed. The first chapter will look at how the Dutch government positioned itself in the UN resolutions on Spain; the second chapter will look at the Marshall Plan negotiations and the question of Spanish participation in which The Netherlands took part; chapter three will look at how European integration in which The Netherlands took part and in which Spain was excluded affected the relations between the two countries; and finally chapter four will consider the trade agreement that The Netherlands and Spain would sign. Each time the question will be asked whether the decision making by the Dutch government stemmed more from idealistic convictions or more from national self-interest. In the literature about Dutch foreign policy there is disagreement whether The Netherlands has followed an 'international-idealistic' tradition, and so this thesis will contribute to this debate.

Analysing Dutch foreign policy in its approach to Spain during the immediate postwar is important in a broad sense because it sheds some light on how a small country like The Netherlands developed its foreign policy in a highly globalised world that was dominated by a few powerful states. The Dutch case can illustrate what the important considerations were, especially for small countries, in dealing with a repressive dictatorship. Idealistic versus interests-based foreign policy is also something which still plays out today. The Netherlands is not the only small country that likes to present itself as an activist for progress in the world - which refers to the idealistic component which this thesis will put to the test - others would include counties such as Switzerland and Norway. In a more narrow sense this research is relevant because it addresses a research gap; there is little noteworthy literature specifically about Dutch-Spanish relations during the immediate postwar decade. Although both countries were not each other's first priority, The Netherlands was looking for potential benefits which might result from engagement with other countries, including Spain, and

reversely Franco had much to gain from trying to cultivate better relations with countries such as The Netherlands, which was at the heart of the new world order that was reluctant to open up to Spain.

The thesis will show that with regards to Spain the Dutch government ultimately based its decision making on interests-based considerations, much more than idealistic ones, although at least the political left had some reservations about this. Interests-based decision making was a factor that would remain constant during the timeframe of the thesis. What did evolve over time, however, was the Dutch government's confidence in pursuing its interests vis-à-vis Spain. It was very important to the Dutch government to stay on good terms with its Western allies, and this meant the Dutch government did not want to deviate too much from how they approached Spain. Especially during the early years this led the Dutch government to take a more cautious approach, because the international outrage about Franco's regime was the strongest shortly after the Second World War, before the Cold War really kicked into gear. This cautious approach was visible, for example, when The Netherlands abstained from voting about the 1946 UN resolution on Spain (which would cut Spain's official diplomatic relations with many countries), even though the Dutch government had strong reservations about this resolution and could have voted against it. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, however, Spain slowly became incorporated into the Western bloc in the context of the Cold War. More pragmatic Western policies with regard to Spain in general made it easier for the Dutch government to do the same, although rhetorical disapproval of the Franco regime persisted.

Literature Review

As mentioned before, there is no noteworthy literature specifically about the Dutch approach with regard to Spain in the years directly following the Second World War. Literature on Dutch foreign policy during that time tends to focus on issues that were then perhaps more potent to the Dutch government, such as its position within the Western alliance, European integration and the creation of a rules-based international order. Dutch foreign policy with regard to Spain is only touched upon insofar it relates to this broader context.

There is quite a body of literature about Spain in relation with the outside world during the timeframe of the thesis, but The Netherlands only really features in this as part of the six countries that were at the forefront of European integration. Much of it puts the emphasis on the larger and more powerful states when discussing Spain in the international context. This is true both in the literature on European integration and literature which is not specifically about this topic.

This thesis will attempt to fill this gap. It will take the Dutch government as the protagonist, rather than a small piece of a larger system, in its approach to Spain. This is not to deny the importance of this larger context, as will also become apparent throughout the thesis, but does allow us to better understand what exactly motivated the Dutch government in this specific case, as a small state in general and as a sovereign country in particular.

Because not much has been written specifically about Dutch-Spanish relations during the postwar years, this literature review is divided into two components that are of importance for the topic of this thesis. The first section will address literature about Dutch foreign policy, which although not directly engaging with Spain is the foundation on which The Netherlands built its approach to Spain. The second section will address Spain in relation to the outside world.

Dutch foreign Policy

Much of the literature on Dutch foreign policy during the decade following World War Two emphasises how radically it differed from pre-war foreign policy. Within this body of literature, distinctions can be made between political and security aspects of the new foreign policy.

Authors such as Gerke Teitler and Wim Klinkert have written extensively about Dutch military history. In the period before the Second World War, territorial security was to be maintained by an official policy of neutrality. After the war, however, defence came to be organised within the framework of alliance, and the main product of this was of course NATO membership. However dominant the United States was in this collective security framework, Teitler and Klinkert argue in a joint chapter that The Netherlands was a loyal ally but never blindly followed the United States. Though loyal to the United States, the Dutch government was sometimes critical of American defence policies. The Dutch vision on how Western European security should be organised differed in subtle ways from that of the United States.[2]

More relevant for this thesis, however, is the discussion about the role of The Netherlands in the promotion of an international legal order and the strife for a 'just' world. Joris Voorhoeve, building on for example the work of Johan Boogman, argues that there is an 'international-idealistic' tradition in Dutch foreign policy. What he means by this is a tendency towards moralism, legalism and pacifism, and a subsequent distaste of power politics.[3] Other scholars criticise this, however. Alfred van Staden argues that one should differentiate between presentation and execution of policy. He accepts that there might be such a thing as an 'international-idealistic' tradition in the presentation of Dutch foreign

[2] W. Klinkert and G. Teitler, "Nederland van neutraliteit naar bondgenootschap: Het veiligheids- en defensiebeleid in de twintigste eeuw," in *De Nederlandse buitenlandse politiek in de twintigste eeuw*, ed. Bob de Graaff, Duco Hellema and Bert van der Zwan (Amsterdam: Boom, 2003), 10, 26-27.
[3] J.J.C. Voorhoeve, *Peace, Profits and Principles: A Study of Dutch Foreign Policy* (The Hague: Marinus Nijhoff, 1979), 49-53; J.C. Boogman, "De Nederland-Gidsland-conceptie in historisch perspectief," *Ons Erfdeel* Vol. 27, No. 2 (1984): 161-170.

policy, but questions whether this actually translates into practice.[4] Herman Schaper and Duco Hellema argue that The Netherlands as a small country is mostly led by international currents in its foreign policy, and less so by domestic considerations. To them, therefore, Voorhoeve overestimates the Dutch capability to influence the international legal order.[5] Peter Malcontent and Floribert Baudet accept Van Staden's differentiation between presentation and execution of policy, but argue that The Netherlands did actually act more in accordance with its idealistic presentation from the 1960s onwards. They add nuance, however, by giving concrete examples in which the Dutch government pursued idealistic or moral policies more for international prestige than actual concern, or did not pursue such policies because they would not be in the national interest.[6]

Spain in relation to the outside world

The period directly following the Second World War is often characterised as a period of *ostracism* for Spain. The country, out of the international community's disapproval of the Franco regime, was formally excluded from the UN, NATO and Councils of Ministers. For this reason many have called this a period of commercial and diplomatic isolation for Spain. There are different perspectives on when exactly the isolation ended. Boris Liedtke argues that things already started changing around 1947-1948, due to economic and strategic interests of the US and the UK.[7] Wayne Bowen, on the other hand, sees early 1950 as the turning point, as around that time US president Truman saw that normalising relations with Spain was potentially necessary, and began to change policies.[8] Ángel Viñas sees the Pact

[4] A. van Staden, "De rol van Nederland in het Atlantisch Bondgenootschap: Wat veranderde en wat uiteindelijk bleef," in *De Kracht van Nederland: Internationale positie en buitenlands beleid*, ed. N.C.F. van Sas (Haarlem: Becht, 1991), 23.
[5] H.A. Schaper, "De geschiedenis als wapenkamer," in *Lijn in de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland*, ed. B.R. Bot (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1984), 39; D.A. Hellema, *Buitenlandse politiek van Nederland* (Utrecht: Het Spectrum, 1995), 40-46, 304.
[6] Peter Malcontent and Floribert Baudet, "The Dutchman's burden?: Nederland en de internationale rechtsorde in de twintigste eeuw," in *De Nederlandse buitenlandse politiek in de twintigste eeuw*, ed. Bob de Graaff, Duco Hellema and Bert van der Zwan (Amsterdam: Boom, 2003), 97-98.
[7] Boris N. Liedtke, *Embracing a Dictatorship: US Relations with Spain, 1945-1953* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 1.
[8] Wayne H. Bowen, *Truman, Franco's Spain, and the Cold War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2017), 108.

of Madrid in 1953 (which allowed the US to establish three airfields and one naval base in Spain, in exchange for a pledge to help defend Spain in the case of a foreign invasion.[9]) as the culmination of a process that according to Viñas already started in 1945, when Spain slowly started becoming a satellite of the US and the UK.[10] There is a general consensus, however, that the 1950s brought significant changes in Spain's standing in the world.

More recently, however, scholars have started to question whether *isolation* is the right characterisation of the condition to which Franco's Spain was condemned during the period described above. Glennys Young argues that many historians find themselves stuck in the 'isolation paradigm,' which he argues is nothing more than a historical construct. The term 'isolation' was used both by Spanish and US officials in emphasising that this had ended with the Pact of Madrid, but Young argues that this was a deliberate strategy by the US to portray Spain as being dependent on the US to bring it into the postwar international order.[11] He emphasises that Spain, though excluded from 'first tier' organisations such as NATO and the UN, did have diplomatic relationships, commercial relations and cultural exchanges, among other forms of interaction with other countries. It also pursued its interests through bodies such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.[12]

There are also those who argue that the new European institutions that arose in the face of integration actually facilitated the survival of Franco's regime. Fernando Guirao looks at trade and economic assistance to make this argument. While publicly European governments maintained fierce anti-Franco rhetoric in line with public opinion, no discriminatory trade policies were adopted immediately after World War Two. When Spain was excluded from the Marshall Plan, efforts were made to prevent the worst damage to the Spanish economy. These efforts came in the form of bilateral credits, and the extension of trade-liberalisation measures sponsored by the Organisation for European Economic

[9] Boris N. Liedtke, "Spain and the United States, 1945-1975," in *Spain and the Great Powers in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Sebastian Balfour and Paul Preston (London: Routledge, 1999), 234-236.
[10] Ángel Viñas, *En las garras del águila: Los pactos con Estados Unidos, de Francisco Franco a Felipe González (1945-1995)* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2003), 16.
[11] Glennys J. Young, "Spain and the Early Cold War: The 'Isolation Paradigm' Revisited," *Journal of Cold War Studies* Vol. 24, No. 3 (2022): 46-47.
[12] Ibid; 46-48.

Co-operation (OEEC). Guirao argues that exclusion from the new European institutions was never a worst-case scenario for Spain. Discrimination was the worst-case scenario, and this did not happen.[13]

Daniel Thomas looks at how an increasingly integrating Western Europe dealt with membership bids of other states, in particular in the case of the European Economic Community (EEC) between 1957 and 1961. Even though this is just outside of the timeframe of this thesis, Thomas' work is useful because it analyses to what extent Western European countries took ideology and political structure into account in its dealings with other countries in the region that were not (yet) part of the integration process. He argues that on the one hand the initial six countries that started the integration process, which included The Netherlands, were not as open to new members as the 1957 Treaty of Rome made it seem like. On the other hand, while in their rhetoric these six countries made it seem like only democracies were eligible to be part of an integrated Europe, in practice this was not followed through. Rather, the focus seemed to have been on ideology, with an informal understanding among the initial six countries that only non-communist countries would have the possibility to join. Looking at Spain in particular, Thomas points out that objections to Spanish rapprochement with Europe were quite rare by the late 1950s, although socialist circles in Europe remained strongly opposed to Franco and tried to hinder closer cooperation with Spain.[14]

[13] Fernando Guirao, *The European Rescue of the Franco Regime, 1950-1975* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 3-6.
[14] Daniel Thomas, *The Limits of Europe: Membership Norms and the Contestation of Regional Integration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 133-136.

Methodology

Research for this thesis was primarily conducted by means of inductive, qualitative analysis of archival sources, supported by secondary source material. The vast majority of primary source material was gathered at the Dutch National Archive in The Hague. The archives provide a wealth of useful information such as communications between the ministry of foreign affairs and the Dutch representation in Madrid or notes from discussions at international conferences, to give some examples.. Additional, supportive primary source material was gathered at the General Archive of the Administration in Alcalá de Henarez, Spain. The Spanish archives provide the same kinds of documents, but from the viewpoint of the Spanish government. Some other primary sources, such as the trade agreement between The Netherlands and Spain, were available online.

Concepts: idealism versus interests in foreign policy

In the field of International Relations (IR), the concept of idealism seeks to overcome the anarchic nature of the international sphere. In talking about international affairs, it "is a term applied to any idea, goal, or practice considered to be impractical."[15] Idealists believe that people share a "basic harmony of interests" and that progress can be attained through reason.[16] As a concept in IR, idealism looks beyond the realities of the moment in international affairs and instead looks to the possibility, or even inevitability, of change towards a better world. This of course implies that embedded in idealism is a clear sense of good and bad, or in other words what constitutes progress versus what constitutes decline.[17]

The concept of interests assumes that an entity, such as a person, a group or a state, acts in accordance with what leads to the best outcome for itself. This can be objective but also subjective; it is not always known what the best outcome will be, and even when this is known it may not be certain that a decision or policy will lead to the best outcome. It can also

[15] Peter Wilson, "Idealism in International Relations," in *Encyclopedia of Power*, ed. K. Dowding (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2011), 331.
[16] David Long, "J.A. Hobson and idealism in international relations," *Review of International Studies* Vol. 17, No. 3 (1991): 286.
[17] Ibid; 286-287.

be the case that decisions are made or policies pursued that satisfy wants but not needs, and this connects to the subjective notion of interests. The objective notion of interests assumes that an entity will make decisions or develop policies that suit its needs.[18]

Throughout this thesis, the concepts of idealism and interests will be used to describe differing motivations behind decisions or policies. Idealistic considerations in foreign policy are primarily concerned with how progress can be achieved in the world, while interests-based considerations in foreign policy are primarily concerned with how optimal outcomes can be achieved for one's own country.

[18] Keith Dowding, "Interests," in *Encyclopedia of Power*, ed. K. Dowding (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2011), 349-350.

Chapter 1: The Netherlands, Spain and the United Nations

The end of the Second World War marked the dawn of a new world order, which would be guided by rules and norms. The principal embodiment of this new world order was the establishment of the United Nations (UN), as a forum through which countries from around the world would be working together in pursuit of international peace and security. The Netherlands stood at the heart of this new development, and was among the 51 founding members of the new organisation.

The new world order, however, did not truly encompass the whole world. There were countries that did not fit in, and Spain under Franco's leadership was one of those countries. The UN was born out of the wartime alliance against the Axis powers. Franco's regime in Spain, on the other hand, had been established with the help of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. The threat of international fascism seemed defeated, but Spain remained a fascist stronghold. Spain therefore became a problem to the UN, and it was not clear how the organisation should approach this problem. This became known as the 'Spanish question.'

The 'Spanish question' was addressed through a couple of important UN resolutions in 1945, 1946 and 1950. These would affect the UN's approach to Spain and the latter's ability to interact with UN member states and its associated organisations. Changing global relations and priorities would over time diminish the potency of the 'Spanish question,' leading eventually to Spanish membership of the organisation in December 1955.

This first chapter of this thesis will look at how the Dutch government approached these UN resolutions about Spain, most notably the ones of 1946 and 1950. It will aim to answer the following sub-question: *What were the main concerns for the Dutch government in determining its position regarding the UN resolutions about Spain?* This is an important first step towards answering the central research question of how Dutch foreign policy evolved between 1945 and 1955. It provides a picture of how important the 'Spanish question' was to the Dutch government, and it already shows a changing attitude during the first half of the timeframe of the thesis.

1.1: Spanish exclusion from the UN and the lead up to the 1946 resolution

It had been no secret that Franco's Spain had leaned towards the side of the Axis powers during the Second World War. Hitler's Nazi Germany and fascist Italy under Mussolini had been important allies of Franco's Nationalists during the Spanish civil war. Without their support, and not unimportantly the policy of nonintervention by the Western powers, Franco might never have been able to take power in Spain.[19] Even though the West seemingly turned a blind eye to Franco's rise to power, the experience of the Second World War had made it impossible to ignore the regime's fascist credentials. When the United Nations convened in San Francisco between April and June 1945, during which time the war in Europe came to an end with the Battle of Berlin, it was the Mexican delegation that took the initiative to take action against Franco's regime. The Mexicans argued that no country whose regime had been established with military help of the Axis powers should be allowed to join the UN or any of its associated organisations. The proposal was unanimously accepted, including by the Dutch delegation.[20]

Formal exclusion of Francoist Spain from the United Nations, however, did not fully put the 'Spanish question' to rest. There was a sentiment both in the Communist East and the Democratic West that pressure on the Franco regime should be increased even more. The regime was well aware of this, and kept track of the anti-Franco sentiment through its diplomatic missions. Spanish archives are therefore actually quite useful for assessing what the Dutch government had to deal with in determining its Spain-policy during this time.

On February 21, 1946, Franco's security forces executed ten Spanish resistance fighters. One of them was Cristino Garcíca, who was famous for having served in the French resistance against the Nazis in World War Two. This created a strong anti-Francoist backlash in The Netherlands, even among circles that previously had not taken a strong

[19] For more information about the Spanish civil war, support for Franco by Hitler and Mussolini and nonintervention by the Western powers, see Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution and Revenge* (London: William Collins, 2016). Douglas Little argues that the Western powers in their passivity towards the Spanish Second Republic had already sealed its fate even before the civil war. See Douglas Little, *Malevolent Neutrality: The United States, Great Britain, and the origins of the Spanish Civil War* (Ithaka, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985).
[20] Carlos Sola Ayape, "América Latina ante la *Spanish Question*: el régimen franquista como eje de la discordia en la ONU (1945-1950)," *Política y Sociedad* Vol. 61 (2015): 66-67.

position regarding the Spanish political structure. The major news outlets strongly condemned the execution, and dock workers in the port of Rotterdam refused to load and unload ships with merchandise that came from or was destined for Spain. 1500 of them signed a telegram to prime minister Wim Schermerhorn, demanding that the Dutch government cut diplomatic and commercial ties with Spain.[21]

The Spanish representative in The Hague, Don José Ruiz de Arana y Bauer,* expressed his worry to his superior in Madrid that the action by Franco's regime would undermine the Dutch government's efforts to slowly normalise diplomatic and commercial relations between the two countries. Although this was already a difficult task for the Dutch government, it was something that, as he saw it, it was certainly working on. Now, he noted, even liberal democrats in The Netherlands joined in to show solidarity with the protests, which was something that before only the communists did.[22]

The execution of members of the resistance against Franco's dictatorial regime fitted into a larger pattern that showed that the authorities in Madrid were not liberalising, and this was observed internationally. There had been a hope that the regime could be pressured into liberalising, thereby making itself more acceptable to the Western democracies. This way, the 'Spanish question' would effectively resolve itself. The only thing the Western powers could point to by this stage, however, was a rather vague promise by Franco that he would reinstate the monarchy.[23]

The British government, after some internal disagreements, had opted to push for reforms within Franco's regime,[24] but this increasingly seemed like something they were not going to be able to achieve. The execution of a member of the French resistance naturally caused outrage in France, and this was amplified by the fact that the French ministry of

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[21] General Archive of the Administration, Alcalá de Henarez, Spain, Archive No. 3508 - 32, box 82 / 9539 (Campaña antiespañola en los Países Bajos, 1946-1947): Letter from San Lucar in The Hague to minister of foreign affairs Artajo in Madrid, February 26, 1946. Title: Informa sobre fuertes reacciones opinión pública en Holanda con motivo noticia ejecución Cristino García.
[22] Ibid.
**n.b.: De Arana y Bauer is referred to in the Spanish archives by his title of nobility, San Lucar. This title is also used in the footnotes here.*
[23] Florentino Portero, "Spain, Britain and the Cold War," in *Spain and the Great Powers in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Sebastian Balfour and Paul Preston (London: Routledge, 1999), 210-217.
[24] Ibid; 210-212.

foreign affairs had asked the Spanish regime to show mercy for García only days before he met his fate. The Dutch newspaper *Nationale Rotterdamsche Courant* reported that democratic countries around the world were outraged. It argued that this had been a grave tactical misstep on the part of the Spanish regime, if only because it had made improving relations with France now impossible. In The Netherlands, the newspaper predicted, socialists would join the communists in pressuring the government to cut relations with Spain.[25]

In April 1946, Poland took the initiative to do something about the 'Spanish question' at the UN. The Polish delegation argued that Franco's fascist regime was a threat to international peace and security and that the UN therefore, in accordance with its founding principles, had an obligation to do something about it. A draft resolution was submitted by the Polish representative on April 17, which would have the UNSC call upon UN member states to cut diplomatic ties with the Franco regime.[26]

Following this Polish initiative, the Spanish delegation in The Hague was eager to find out what the Dutch position on the subject would be. The Spanish representative De Arana y Bauer met with the Dutch Secretary General of the ministry of foreign affairs, Aarnout Marinus Snouck Hurgronje, to ask him what instructions the Dutch government had given to its representative at the UN, Eelco van Kleffens.[27] Van Kleffens himself was against the resolution. Although he felt no sympathy for Franco, he did not agree with Poland's reasoning and was of the opinion that maintaining diplomatic relations was the better choice in order to keep at least some influence over the regime.[28]

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[25] General Archive of the Administration, Alcalá de Henarez, No. 3508 - 32, box 82 / 9539: Letter from San Lucar in The Hague to minister of foreign affairs Artajo in Madrid, February 26, 1946. Title: Informa sobre fuertes reacciones opinión pública en Holanda con motivo noticia ejecución Cristino García.

[26] United Nations, "The Spanish Question," at un.org > sites > files > repertoire. Page 306. https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil/files/en/sc/repertoire/46-51/Chapter%208/46-51_08-7-The%20Spanish%20question.pdf

[27] General Archive of the Administration, Alcalá de Henarez, No. 3508 - 32 box 82 / 9539: Letter from San Lucar in The Hague to minister of foreign affairs Artajo in Madrid, April 17, 1946.

[28] National Archive, "Inventaris van het archief van het Nederlandse Gezantschap in Spanje (Madrid), (1888) 1939-1954," *Nummer Toegang: 2.05.286.* Page 9.

Snouck Hurgronje's answer to De Arana y Bauer was rather technical, but not dissatisfactory to the Spanish delegation. Snouck Hurgronje argued that from an international legal point of view no case could be made against Spain, and that the basic principle of sovereignty of states did not allow for any meddling in a country's internal affairs, which he considered the ongoing issue to be. He also refuted the Polish claim that the Franco regime was a threat to international peace and security. He assured De Arana y Bauer that The Netherlands would not vote in favour of the Polish resolution, and that The Netherlands would defend national sovereignty. He did not say explicitly, however, whether the Dutch delegation would vote against the resolution or abstain from voting instead.[29]

The Dutch government did not at all have a favourable opinion about Franco's regime, De Arana y Bauer went on to write to the Spanish minister of foreign affairs Artajo, but saw it as the lesser of two evils.[30] The Polish proposal to the Dutch government looked like it could set a dangerous precedent for the UN to infringe on states' national sovereignty. The Netherlands being a small state in a postwar world with very powerful states calling the shots, the Dutch political elite seemed to have somewhat of an obsession with the principle of national sovereignty. This had also been apparent during the establishment of the UN, when the Dutch delegation had pushed for international law to be at the heart of the UN's quest for international peace and safety, thereby limiting great power hegemony. (And this was something they had been successful at, as the centrality of international law was incorporated into the UN Charter.)[31] It is also very important to point out that the Dutch government considered the Kingdom of The Netherlands to have full sovereignty over its colony, the Dutch East Indies. This made the principle of sovereignty all the more potent, especially among increasing international pressure for decolonisation.

In November 1946, just weeks before the resolution would be taken before the UN General Assembly, Rafael Sánchez Guerra came to The Netherlands. He was a member of

[29] General Archive of the Administration, Alcalá de Henarez, No. 3508 - 32, box 82 / 9539: Letter from San Lucar in The Hague to minister of foreign affairs Artajo in Madrid, April 17, 1946.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Malcontent and Baudet, "The Dutchman's burden?," 78-79.

the Republican government in exile, which had lost the civil war to Franco's Nationalists but still considered itself to be the legitimate government of Spain. The Dutch government had rather reluctantly let him visit, but prohibited him from talking about politics or protesting against Spain's current regime.[32] A possible explanation for this is that the Dutch government did not want a wave of popular unrest regarding the Franco regime as had happened earlier that year, so close before the vote at the UN. By this time it looked quite plausible that the UK and the US would vote against the resolution, which also might have been a factor.

In any case, on December 12 the resolution made it through the vote and the UN officially recommended its members to cut diplomatic relations with Franco's regime. The Dutch delegation had abstained from voting, but the recommendation was followed and representative Petrus Ephrem Teppema was withdrawn from Madrid before the new year. He was replaced by chargé d'affaires baron Van Voorst tot Voorst as lower-level representation.[33]

The Dutch government had not been a fan of the 1946 resolution from the beginning. There was a sentiment that severing diplomatic ties would embolden Franco, which was quite the opposite of what the UN intended to achieve. Perhaps more important, however, was that the Dutch government saw a dangerous precedent in allowing the UN to interfere in what the Dutch government considered to be another country's domestic affairs. The Dutch government was a strong advocate for the centrality of international law and the notion of national sovereignty, because the stronger these principles were, the better powerful states and organisations could be kept in check. Allowing the UN to interfere in domestic affairs was undesirable because the Dutch government knew this could spell trouble for The Netherlands as a colonial power in the future. Voting against the 1946 resolution, however, was a step too far. The Dutch government did not want to create the impression that it supported the Franco regime, and it also did not want to deviate too much from what its

[32] General Archive of the Administration, Alcalá de Henarez, Spain. Archive 3513, box 82 / 9552 (Actividades del gobierno rojo en los Países Bajos, 1946).
[33] National Archive, "Inventaris van het archief van het Nederlandse Gezantschap in Spanje," 10.

Western allies were doing, many of whom voted in favour of the resolution. For these reasons the Dutch delegation abstained from voting.

The Dutch government's reasoning was based almost entirely on interests-based considerations. Had it determined its decision making in more idealistic terms the outcome might not have been different - Dutch government did not think the resolution would bring about the desired change in Spain in the first place - but it is nonetheless the case that the government was mainly concerned with how the resolution and Dutch voting behaviour would affect The Netherlands itself, not how it would affect Spain.

1.2: Reopening of the 'Spanish Question' and lead up to the 1950 resolution

The 1946 UN resolution against Spain became less popular as time went by. When in November 1947 there was a vote whether or not to reaffirm the resolution 16 countries voted against it, including the US. In spring 1949 Latin American countries, led by Peru, took the initiative to revisit the 'Spanish question.'[34] This reopened the discussion. Archives show that by this time, because The Netherlands itself had been having troubles with the UN regarding the Dutch East Indies, it was more sympathetic with the Spanish cause. Spain was sympathetic with The Netherlands when it came to the colony, and this created some goodwill in The Hague. On top of that, as by this point nobody really considered Spain a threat to peace in Western Europe, the Dutch government considered the 1946 resolution obsolete.[35]

With a new General Assembly coming up, the Spanish government was trying to get countries to support its cause. It had expelled a Danish trade mission from Madrid after it had become clear that Denmark would vote against the upcoming resolution that would restore Spain's official diplomatic relations with the outside world. Franco's brother Nicolás, who served as Spanish ambassador in Lisbon, spoke to the Dutch delegation there and

[34] Young, "Spain and the Early Cold War," 64.
[35] National Archive, The Hague, Archive No. 2.05.286, Inventory No. 683 (Verhouding tussen Nederland en Spanje, 1940-1951): No. 5940: Paraphrase coded telegram, December 29, 1948.

stressed the importance for Spain that The Netherlands would vote in favour of the upcoming resolution.[36] It had already become clear to the Dutch government that the Spanish government would be most pleased to see The Netherlands send an ambassador to Madrid even before the upcoming General Assembly would take place.[37]

However, notwithstanding a degree of understanding for the Spanish cause among some individuals in the Dutch government, it was deemed very important not to act prematurely. A coded telegram from the ministry of foreign affairs to the Dutch delegation in Madrid stresses that the Dutch stance regarding the issue should first and foremost be based on the Dutch position within Western Europe[38] Minister of foreign affairs Dirk Stikker had informed the representative in Lisbon that The Netherlands, just like other Western European countries, would abstain from voting and take a neutral stance.[39] Sending an ambassador even before the General Assembly convened, as was wished by Spain, was already out of the question. This could be explained to the Spanish minister of foreign affairs Artajo by stressing that The Netherlands already had enough issues with the UNSC (regarding its colonies) and could not afford to undermine the UN here.[40] The Dutch delegations in the Iberian peninsula could reassure their Spanish counterparts, however, that The Netherlands would quickly appoint an ambassador to Madrid in case the UN resolution would make it through after all.[41]

By the summer of 1950 the 'Spanish question' had gained momentum on the international stage. The American embassy in The Hague had informed the Dutch government that they considered it very likely that a group of Latin American countries would present a draft resolution during the coming Fifth General Assembly of the UN, with the

[36] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.286 - 683: Letter from representative P. A. van Buttingha Wichers in Lisbon to chargé d'affaires W. J. G. Gevers in Madrid, May 14, 1949.
[37] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.286 - 683: No. 5940: Paraphrase coded telegram, December 29, 1948.
[38] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.286 - 683: No. 1909: Paraphrase coded telegram, May 13, 1949.
[39] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.286 - 683: Letter from representative P. A. van Buttingha Wichers in Lisbon to chargé d'affaires W. J. G. Gevers in Madrid, May 14, 1949.
[40] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.286 - 683 No. 5940: Paraphrase coded telegram, December 29, 1948.
[41] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.286 - 683: No. 1927 and 1928: Paraphrase coded telegrams, received on May 14, 1949, by the representative in Lisbon.

objective of revoking the 1946 resolution and also lifting the ban on Spanish membership of UN-associated international organisations. The Americans also expressed their government's intention to vote in favour of such a resolution.[42] On October 13, the Peruvian minister of foreign affairs confirmed what had been expected.[43]

A draft resolution had already been submitted by eight former Spanish colonies on October 7 at an Ad Hoc Political Committee of the UN, and became known as the eight-powers resolution. On October 25, the Dutch permanent representation at the UN in New York, just before the Fifth General Assembly, received word from the Dutch government that it would not object to normalisation of diplomatic relations with Spain and Spanish accession to international organisations, but only if Belgium would also not express any objections. Rumours that the Belgian government would indeed not have any objections and vote in favour of the eight-powers resolution were confirmed two days later when the heads of the delegations of both countries met. Thus it was clear that the Dutch government would officially depart from its passive stance in 1946, when it abstained from voting, and would now actively support a resolution intended to normalise relations between Spain and the outside world.[44]

It must be stressed here that the decision to support the resolution had not been made without difficulty. The Labour Party (*Partij van de Arbeid*, PvdA), which was the second largest at this point, was naturally very much opposed to the regime in Spain. As a socialist party it held much more historical grudges against Franco than did for example their counterparts of the Catholic People's Party (*Katholieke Volkspartij*, KVP), which was the largest party. Although the decision to support the resolution was ultimately accepted by the PvdA, they wished for a stronger condemnation of the Franco regime. The draft resolution

[42] National Archive, The Hague, Archive No. 2.05.286, Inventory No. 690 (Stukken betreffende boycot van Spanje door VN): Records, paragraph 16: Stappen van de Amerikaanse Regering en de instructie aan de Nederlandse Delegatie naar de Vijfde Algemene Vergadering.
[43] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.286 - 690: Note from the Dutch representative in Lima, Peru, to the minister of foreign affairs in The Hague, October 13, 1950.
[44] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.286 - 690: Records, file XXXVII, notes of the 23rd delegation meeting at the Fifth General Assembly, October 25, 1950, and notes of the 25th delegation meeting at the Fifth General Assembly, October 27, 1950.

only stated that it did not “imply any judgement upon the domestic policy of the [Spanish] government.”[45]

It was agreed that a stronger condemnation of the regime and a slight shift in the emphasis of the resolution could make it more acceptable to the more left leaning part of the Dutch population. In the face of normalised diplomatic relations and even possible Spanish membership of international organisations, emphasis should be less on the benefit for Spain, and more on the benefit for the UN and its sub-organisations themselves. The head of the Dutch delegation raised this point before the General Assembly, and this was successfully adopted into the text of the resolution.[46] There was also some discussion about the wording of the official statement of the Dutch delegation. Too strong of a condemnation of the Franco regime might hurt Dutch economic interests in Spain, but too much emphasis on the benefit for Dutch economic interests as an argument to vote in favour of the resolution could lead to an accusation of opportunism. Eventually it was opted to strongly condemn the regime but at the same time emphasise international, not just Dutch, economic benefits of reengagement with Spain.[47]

On November 4, 1950, the resolution passed with 38 votes in favour, 10 votes against, and 12 abstentions. Just like The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg also voted in favour, preserving Benelux unity. France and the UK were among the countries that abstained. Just like for the 1946 resolution, the Dutch government mainly based its approach to the 1950 resolution mainly on interests-based considerations. Ultimately the Dutch government was supportive of Spain being an equal member of the international community, but that was mostly because this would benefit The Netherlands. In 1946 the Dutch government felt that supporting Spain, although theoretically desirable, would negatively

[45] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.286 - 690: Records, file XXXVII, notes of the 25th delegation meeting at the Fifth General Assembly, October 27, 1950. For the draft resolution, or eight-powers resolution, see file XXXV in this archive.
[46] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.286 - 690: Records, file XXXVII, notes of the 25th delegation meeting at the Fifth General Assembly, October 27, 1950, and notes of the 28th delegation meeting at the Fifth General Assembly, November 1, 1950.
[47] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.286 - 690: Records, file XXXVII, notes of the 25th delegation meeting at the Fifth General Assembly, October 27, 1950, and notes of the 26th delegation meeting at the Fifth General Assembly, October 30, 1950. For the official statement of the Dutch delegation, see file XXXVI in this archive.

affect Dutch interests. In 1950, however, the Dutch government found itself in a better position to actively vote in accordance with what it thought to be in the national and international interest. Not only the United States intended to support the 1950 resolution, which basically had the objective to undo the 1945 and 1946 resolutions, but also Belgium and Luxembourg would vote in accordance. It was very important to the Dutch government not to take an isolated position. It was clear that the 1945 and 1946 resolutions had failed to foster reform in Spain. Another important argument that the Dutch delegation used for supporting the 1950 resolution, was that it was in the international economic interest.

Chapter 2: The Marshall Plan negotiations

On June 5, 1947, US Secretary of State George Marshall gave a speech at Harvard University. He spoke about the devastation that had ravaged Europe and the dire state in which the continent still found itself. He stressed the need for the United States to generously assist the rehabilitation effort of the old continent, in order to forestall a complete collapse of 'the modern system of division of labour,' which he considered the likely outcome if nothing was done. The purpose of any plan therefore "should be the revival of working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist."[48] Importantly, he argued that European countries should take the initiative and jointly come up with a plan, which the United States could then support financially. On April 3, 1948, the European Recovery Programme or Economic Recovery Act, names by which the Marshall Plan was also known, was officially signed by president Harry Truman.[49]

It is significant that it was left to the European countries to come up with a plan. This gave them, including The Netherlands, agency over what the details of the programme looked like and which countries could participate. The question of Spanish participation in the Marshall Plan was also raised, and this was discussed during a number of conferences in 1947 and 1948. The process can serve as a case study which helps to answer the central question of how Dutch foreign policy with regard to Francoist Spain evolved between 1945 and 1955. The Marshall Plan discussions can be considered part of the early years of this timeframe, although this was after the discussions about the 1946 resolution on Spain. This chapter aims to answer the following question: *Where did the Dutch government position itself in the debate about Spanish participation in the Marshall plan, and to what extent was the Dutch position influenced by Spanish behaviour?*

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[48] National Archives, "Milestone Documents," *Marshall Plan (1948).* Transcript: Secretary of State George Marshall's Speech (June 5, 1947). Accessed October 10, 2023. https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/marshall-plan#:~:text=For%20the%20United%20States%2C%20the,II%20into%20the%20postwar%20years

[49] Ibid. (National Archives: Marshall Plan (1948).

2.1: Domestic setting

During the period of negotiations about the Marshall Plan, The Netherlands was led by its first democratically elected government since the war. The cabinet consisted of a coalition between the Catholic People's Party (*Katholieke Volkspartij*, KVP) and the Labour Party (*Partij van de Arbeid*, PvdA). Cooperation between the KVP and PvdA was known as 'the new pact.' It laid the basis for a moderately progressive policy and took the first steps towards the creation of a welfare state. This cooperation would hold out until 1958, during which time KVP and PvdA would lead consecutive governing coalitions, sometimes supported by other parties. The period became known as 'Roman-Red,' which refers to the combination of Roman Catholicism and (democratic) socialism.[50]

In December 1945 prime minister Wim Schermerhorn had praised before the Spanish representative the fact that the Dutch democracy had been revived without many problems after the war. He told the representative that the current postwar circumstances required even more to show unity through democracy.[51] While these comments undoubtedly hinted at disapproval of the authoritarian regime in Spain, a year or two later, at the time of the Marshall Plan negotiations, democracy and authoritarianism did not seem to be talked about a whole lot. 1948 was an election year in The Netherlands, and the struggle against communism was one of the most important themes. The catholic KVP was most strongly against communism, but even the socialists of the PvdA were afraid of it, as was most of society.[52] Catholicism remained a strong force, with the KVP turning out as the largest party once again. Even bishops and a cardinal had openly spoken out in favour of the KVP to promote catholic unity; something that had been unheard of before the war.[53]

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[50] "Kabinet Beel-I (1946-1948)," *Parlement.com:* Kabinetten 1945-heden. Accessed October 7, 2023. https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhronvwk/kabinet_beel_i_1946_1948

[51] General Archive of the Administration, Alcalá de Henares, Spain, Archive No. 2154 - 27, box 82 / 6334 (Españoles en el extranjero, trato Países Bajos. Incidencias con nuestras Representaciones diplomáticas y consulares in los Países Bajos. 1945): Letter from San Lucar, in The Hague, to minister of foreign affairs Artajo in Madrid. December 12, 1945.

[52] J.A. Bornewasser, *Katholieke Volkspartij 1945-1980: Band I: Herkomst en groei (tot 1963)* (Nijmegen, Valkhof Press, 1995), 199-201.

[53] Ibid; 202-205.

The importance in mentioning the above is that it establishes that there were geopolitical currents that were very important in the debate about Spain, and that this did not only revolve around its authoritarian and fascist nature or its sympathies with the Axis powers during the Second World War. The anticommunist credentials of the regime was something that gained in importance as the Cold War intensified. Another thing was that Franco's regime often linked its moral legitimacy to its catholic roots, and there indeed seems to have been a degree of sympathy for the dictator in catholic circles in The Netherlands.[54]

There was also another important shift taking place during the late 1940s, which would affect Dutch foreign policy: mounting international pressure against Dutch colonial control over the Dutch East Indies, which would eventually lead to Indonesian independence. Although Indonesia had already been granted greater autonomy, its independence struggle continued. Between July and August 1947 the Dutch government sent troops, calling it a police force. This first 'police' action came to an end largely because of international pressure, but in December 1948 (hence, *after* the Marshall plan negotiations) a second 'police' action was unleashed in the archipelago. This was condemned by the UNSC and the US actually threatened to stop its Marshall aid to The Netherlands. By this time, a new cabinet had already amended the constitution during the summer of 1948 with the objective of at least creating the possibility of Indonesian independence. In December 1949 Indonesia gained its independence.[55]

Mentioning the issues regarding Indonesia is important, even when considering the Dutch government's approach to Spain, because it had a profound effect on Dutch foreign policy. It changed foreign policy priorities: as we have seen in the first chapter, fear of potentially losing the Dutch East Indies was a strong motivation behind the Dutch government's decision making regarding the 1946 UN resolution on Spain, and the

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[54] National Archive, The Hague, Archive No. 2.05.117, Inventory No. 23315, dossier 332 (Besprekingen over een eventuele toelating van Spanje tot de Marshallhulp. 1948): note from the government commissioner to the minister of foreign affairs, February 16, 1948.
[55] "Soevereiniteitsoverdracht aan Indonesië in 1949," *Parlement.com*, accessed November 30, 2023. https://www.parlement.com/id/vhm0l02igvut/soevereiniteitsoverdracht_aan_indonesie

government was worried about international institutions such as the UN gaining the power to interfere in the domestic affairs of individual states. From around 1948, however, the inevitability of eventual Indonesian independence became increasingly apparent and other priorities started to take centre stage, such as European integration. With Indonesian independence The Netherlands found itself in a more favourable position with powerful allies such as the United States, and the country had been positioned more in line with the general anti-colonial sentiment of the age. With a big obstacle out of the way, The Netherlands was now emboldened to more actively pursue its interests, alongside its Western allies, through international institutions such as the UN. During the time of the Marshall plan negotiations, which will be discussed in the next two sections of this chapter, the process described above was underway yet still unresolved.

2.2: Third country influence on the Dutch stance

As mentioned, the Dutch government had a say in whether Francoist Spain would be allowed to participate in the Marshall Plan or not. The United States had left it to the initial 16 participants of the programme to decide for any other country that wanted to join, but there had to be a consensus about it.[56] The Dutch government, before taking any sides, kept a close eye on the positions that other countries were taking. On March 9, 1948, Dutch chargé d'affaires in Madrid Willem Gevers sent a letter to foreign minister Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, informing him about positions other countries seemed to be taking at the time. The American chargé d'affaires in Madrid, he noted, had had a very optimistic conversation with members of the Spanish ministry of foreign affairs about how the Spanish regime could make itself more acceptable to Western countries. A possibility would be, for example, to

[56] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.117 - 23315 - 332: letter from Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout to Gevers, April 6, 1948.

take up more monarchists into the government, thereby reducing the influence of the fascist *Falange*, which was Franco's political party.[57]

By early 1948, the Dutch government had been observing for at least a few months that the general international attitude towards the Franco regime had been becoming somewhat more positive. This was still far from an endorsement, but constituted an upward trend nonetheless. While the Dutch government had not officially determined yet what position it would take in the question of Spanish participation in the Marshall Plan, it became clear that it should know its position by the next Paris Conference. Archives of the ministry of foreign affairs show that it was deemed important to discuss this issue first with Belgium and Luxembourg, and that there was a strong preference for the Benelux to take up a common position. A note to Boetzelaer van Oosterhout in February says that in the event that Britain and France let go of their current objections to Spanish participation, it would be wise for The Netherlands to do the same. "The Netherlands does not have to take the initiative in the case at hand, but does have to know its stance once another country does do that."[58]

As the Dutch government deemed it important to take up a common position with the Benelux countries, it is important to point out here that Belgian prime minister Paul-Henri Spaak was one of the most outspoken critics of Franco during this era. *Arriba*, the propaganda paper of Franco's *Falange* party, called him the most bitter enemy of Spain.[59] More than ten years after the Marshall Plan negotiations, by which time Spaak was Belgium's foreign minister, he would still be an obstacle in Spanish association with European multilateral organisations, even though this topic was not as controversial anymore by that time.[60]

Notwithstanding a gradual loosening of international objections against the Franco regime, it was actually quite apparent that there was not going to be a consensus among the

[57] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.117 - 23315 - 332: letter from Gevers to Van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, March 9, 1948.
[58] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.117 - 23315 - 332: note from the government commissioner to the minister of foreign affairs, February 16, 1948.
[59] National Archive, The Hague, Archive No. 2.05.286, Inventory No. 696 (Stukken betreffende de Spaanse 'opening' in het Amerikaanse "Marshall" plan): Note titled "Persartikel tegen de Heer Spaak," April 4, 1948.
[60] Thomas, *The Limits of Europe*, 133.

16 European countries that could allow Spain to take part in the Marshall plan. The Dutch government's objection to Spanish participation might for a small part have been motivated by idealistic considerations in the sense that it disapproved of Franco's dictatorial regime, but there seems to have been little discussion in terms of if and how Spanish exclusion would lead to a positive change in Spanish domestic politics. The Dutch government was, again, predominantly motivated by what either supporting or objecting to Spanish participation might mean for its own national interest. Most important was to not deviate from whatever position The Netherlands' main allies were taking, regardless of what this position was. The Dutch relationship with the UN was rather tense because of the Indonesian question during this time, and this was one reason to stay on good terms with its Western allies on other matters.

2.3: Influence of Spanish behaviour on the Dutch stance

Hopes of reforms within Franco's regime had not really come to fruition. By the time of the Marshall Plan negotiations, Franco had only made a couple of superficial changes which looked like they were intended to please the Western democracies. Legislation was introduced that was supposed to grant Spaniards some constitutional rights. Minister of foreign affairs José Félix de Lequerica Erquiza, who had been quite pro-Axis, was replaced by Alberto Martín-Artajo Álvarez, a devout catholic. Franco had also declared Spain to still be a monarchy, but the royal family remained in exile in Portugal.[61] Concern about the long-term prospect of a fascist dictatorship in Europe had even led the British Foreign Office to attempt forging a moderate Spanish government comprised of monarchists and Republicans tasked with overthrowing Franco (the British considered the Spanish government in exile too left-wing), although according to some they knew this was bound to fail.[62]

[61] David J. Dunthorn, "The Prieto-Gil-Robles meeting of October 1947: Britain and the Failure of the Spanish anti-Franco Coalition, 1945-1950," *European History Quarterly* Vol. 30, No. 1 (2000): 50.
[62] Ibid; 49-75.

The Dutch government, anti-Franco rhetoric and debates about the Dutch 'international-idealistic' tradition aside, can hardly be credited with any attempts to advocate for reforms that would lead to a less repressive regime in Spain. A deliberate search for this in Dutch archives did not yield any results. Spanish archives show an obvious awareness of the Dutch government's ideological disapproval of the Franco regime, but tend to emphasise, at least during the early years after the Second World War, that this was not really addressed. As it seems, the Dutch government in its day to day interaction with Spanish officials was concerned with making the relationship with the existing regime workable, rather than trying to convince the Spanish regime to make reforms.

There were some actions by the Franco regime which could not allow any support for Spain by the Dutch government, such as the treatment of political opponents in Spain as we have seen in the previous chapter. Reversely, other issues such as Spanish support for the Dutch maintenance of colonial control over Indonesia, might have created more reluctance to be too hard on the regime. What seems to be the case is that During the Marshall Plan negotiations, Spanish behaviour did not have much influence on the Dutch government in determining whether it would or would not support Spain's inclusion in the programme. The main factor which was of interest to the Dutch government, was the position of its allies regarding this subject. In short, to answer the sub-question of this chapter, the Dutch government opposed Spanish participation in the Marshall plan. Although generally the Dutch government disapproved of Franco's regime, the main reason for its opposition was to not fall out of line with other countries. Behaviour by the Spanish government had very little effect on this.

Chapter 3: European integration and Dutch-Spanish bilateral relations

The Netherlands was not only among the founding members of the United Nations in 1945, it was also among the six countries that pioneered European integration in the wake of the Second World War. In the context of the Marshall Plan it joined the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) in 1948, and was among the founding members of the Council of Europe in 1949 and the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951. Spain was excluded from all of these organisations. This chapter, in order to support the main question of how Dutch foreign policy with regard to the Franco regime evolved between 1945 and 1955, will look at how increasing European integration in which The Netherlands took part influenced bilateral relations between the two countries. It will aim to answer the following sub-question: *How did Spain's formal exclusion from European integration projects impact Dutch-Spanish relations?*

3.1: Spain and the 'Isolation Paradigm'

As mentioned earlier, recently scholars have started to debate the traditional view that Spain became isolated in the years following World War Two. This does mean that Spain was not actively denied access to numerous organisations, nor is it a denial of the fact that many countries officially severed diplomatic relations, which was of course the case. The debate, however, prompts us to consider how Franco's Spain - or even countries at the other end of the spectrum, such as The Netherlands - tried to find ways around this formal exclusion. This is important in considering how European integration might have affected Dutch-Spanish bilateral relations, because if we do not view Spain exclusively as *the ostracised one* but take this a bit more flexibly, then exclusion from European integration projects might have actually been an incentive for countries like The Netherlands to deal with Spain bilaterally when this could not be done multilaterally.

Despite the difficulties that were imposed, Spain did make a strong effort to remain active in international affairs. Alberto Martín-Artajo Álvarez was appointed as minister of foreign affairs in 1945. He was a catholic (some say a catholic fundamentalist[63]) and did not belong to the *Falange*, Franco's fascist political party, which made him more acceptable internationally.[64] By 1950, even before the UN revoked its 1946 resolution in November 1950, Spain was operating semi-official diplomatic missions and had representatives in 24 countries. There also were some communications with the UN.[65] Spain tried to stay connected with the outside world to the best of its abilities.

Spain had returned a diplomatic mission to The Netherlands in 1945, after its representatives had left the country in 1941 due to the war. Spanish officials were very much aware that their country's sympathy with the Axis powers during the war meant that they had some work to do to rebuild the relations. However, Spanish archives from this diplomatic mission from 1945 on multiple occasions explicitly state that the Dutch officials did not say anything about that. In September 1945, Artajo was informed by a Spanish representative in Brussels that the Dutch government actually had quite a favourable view of Spain, and that it was pleased about the renewal of the Spanish delegation in the country. Queen Wilhelmina was especially pleased with the appointment of Don José Ruiz de Arana y Bauer as Spanish representative.[66] De Arana, too, seems to express surprise that when he had a meeting with Dutch prime minister Wim Schermerhorn in December, the latter did not raise any points that "might have" driven Spain and The Netherlands apart.[67]

Not only did Spain make an effort to keep in contact with the outside world, in many cases this also happened the other way around. The Netherlands kept lower level representation in Madrid, and so did the US, the UK and others.[68] As we have seen before,

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[63] Enrique Moradiellos, "Franco's Spain and the European Integration process (1945-1975)," *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies* Vol. 41, No. 1 (2016): 71.
[64] Young, "Spain and the Early Cold War," 54.
[65] Ibid; 64-65.
[66] General Archive of the Administration, Alcalá de Henares, No, 2154 - 27, box 82 / 6334: letter from Antonio Gullón, in Brussels, to minister of foreign affairs Artajo, in Madrid. September 26, 1945. Subject: The delegation in The Hague.
[67] General Archive of the Administration, Alcalá de Henares, No. 2154 - 27, box 82 / 6334: letter from San Lucar, in The Hague, to minister of foreign affairs Artajo in Madrid. December 12, 1945.
[68] Young, "Spain and the Early Cold War," 65.

when The Netherlands did not have an ambassador in Madrid, the country maintained a chargé d'affaires there.

Zooming out, of course, Spain was still a pariah and was still excluded from participating in many international integration projects, and this did not end when the UN revoked its 1946 resolution at the end of 1950. While The Netherlands turned much of its attention to European integration during the late 1940s and early 1950s, Spain still had to operate on the fringes of the international system. However, it seems that the treatment of the Franco regime as an outcast was by and large a collective effort that did not automatically translate into the bilateral sphere. On a bilateral basis, and this can be said about all six countries pioneering European integration as well as the United States, there was little discrimination towards Spain. Many countries signed bilateral trade agreements with Spain, effectively expanding trade liberalisation beyond the OEEC.[69] In 1950, even before the 1946 UN resolution was revoked, the US Congress approved a $62.5 million loan to be granted to Spain. The Dutch chargé d'affaires in Washington, DC, considered this a win especially by the Spain-lobby in the United States.[70] The loan contained little political strings.[71]

3.2: Case study: European agricultural integration

The Dutch government was especially in favour of agricultural integration. It came to see supranational institutions as a way to forestall negative consequences of the domestic overproduction of dairy products in particular. Since 1947 the government had supported farmers by guaranteeing set prices for their produce, in order to maintain food security and save hard currency that would otherwise be needed for imports. However, this had led to

[69] Fernando Guirao, *Spain and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-57: Challenge and Response* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998), 131-161.
[70] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.286 - 696: note from the Dutch chargé d'affaires in Washington, DC, to the minister of foreign affairs in The Hague, September 1, 1950.
[71] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.286 - 696: note from J.G. de Beus to the minister of foreign affairs, November 16, 1950.

overproduction that was increasingly costly for the state. Ending government price setting would result in a drop in prices for dairy products and a loss of income for farmers. The Dutch government therefore wished for the expansion of a European market for agricultural products in order to facilitate the export of surplus products. To the Dutch government, Spain looked like an attractive large outlet for its dairy products.[72]

The Spanish Government also took much interest in the negotiations for European agricultural cooperation. Spain had a large agricultural sector, and trade in its products presented the main source of foreign currencies for the country. Most of this trade was with Western Europe, and so agricultural integration in that area could have unforeseeable consequences for Spain. Some 33% of Spanish agricultural imports came from OEEC countries between 1949 and 1953, and 61% of its agricultural exports went there.[73] The Dutch government brought forward the Mansholt Plan in late 1950, named after minister of agriculture Sicco Mansholt. It advocated for agricultural integration outside of the framework of the OEEC. That organisation had not been effective in the liberalisation of agricultural trade among its members, which had been a blow to the Dutch well-organised and export-oriented agricultural sector but a blessing to Spain as a non-member.[74]

The Mansholt Plan did not come to fruition, at least not during the timeframe of this thesis. (In 1958 Mansholt became Commissioner for Agriculture in the first European Commission and his plans were adopted in the agricultural policy of the European Economic Community.[75]) It does however provide an example in which pragmatism and economic opportunism seemed to trump political considerations for the Dutch government. In other words, again interests-based considerations, as opposed to idealistic considerations, were at the heart of the Dutch government's foreign policy. With regard to Spain, in the context of agricultural integration, this meant that the Dutch government was mostly concerned with the

[72] Guirao, *The European Rescue of the Franco Regime*, 52.
[73] Ibid; 55-56.
[74] Ibid; 57.
[75] European Union, "Sicco Mansholt: farmer, resistance fighter and true European," accessed October 23, 2023. https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu/eu-pioneers/sicco-mansholt_en

economic benefits that might have been the result of including Spain in the integration project. Of little concern was what effect inclusion of Spain might have on its regime or what message the inclusion of a repressive dictatorship might send to the outside world.

By 1952 it had become apparent that another conference regarding agricultural integration was going to be organised in Paris, and it was clear that Spain had the desire to participate. Initial confusion about the Dutch government's opinion on Spanish participation in the discussions was taken away by foreign minister Dirk Stikker, when he told a Spanish representative in The Hague that the Dutch government would not object to Spanish participation.[76] The Dutch delegation in Madrid was instructed to explicitly make this clear.[77]

A Spanish delegation did indeed attend the conference, held early 1953 in Paris. Don Rafael Cavestany, Spanish minister of agriculture and head of the country's delegation in Paris, praised the conference as a step towards normal relations with the outside world. He did emphasise that the Spanish government favoured an intergovernmental body to regulate a future common agricultural market, but that this should not be a supranational authority. This position was in between that of those who did favour a supranational authority, which included The Netherlands, and those who wanted the agricultural market to be regulated within the framework of the OEEC.[78] He also emphasised that differences in the domestic political structures of the participating countries should not be an obstacle in the common work towards a 'new Europe.' As often done by Spanish officials during this time, he referred to 'the christian civilisation' as the common basis uniting all of Europe.[79]

When taking the quest for European agricultural integration as a case study to look at how European integration affected bilateral relations between The Netherlands and Spain, it becomes clear that the Dutch government primarily viewed Spain as a potential trading

[76] National Archive, The Hague, Archive No. 2.05.286, Inventory No. 750 (Stukken betreffende de Spaanse deelname aan de internationale landbouw conferentie te Parijs): Coded telegram from Dirk Stikker to the Dutch delegation in Madrid, March 27, 1952.
[77] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.286 - 750: coded telegram from Dirk Stikker to the Dutch delegation in Madrid, May 14, 1952.
[78] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.286 - 750: letter from W. van Rechteren Limpurg in Madrid to minister of foreign affairs Jan Willem Beyen in The Hague, March 28, 1953. Title: "Spanje en de Internationale Landbouwconferentie te Parijs."
[79] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.286 - 750: Informacion Confidencial, March 23, 1953.

partner that could benefit the Dutch economy, more than viewing it as a dictatorship that ought to be quarantined. This feature was of course applauded by the Spanish government, and must have been a positive factor in Dutch-Spanish relations. Admittedly, however, we must be cautious here not to overstate this conclusion. (The next chapter will provide an example where Dutch integration into the Benelux customs union actually caused difficulties between Spain and The Netherlands.) Spanish exclusion from European integration projects, although on the one hand perhaps an incentive to engage in bilateral deals, on the other hand also meant that Spain was much lower on the list of priorities than for example the countries that were in fact part of this first wave of European integration. Spanish exclusion from European integration projects also meant, even after the 1946 resolution was revoked in late 1950, that Spain was still an outsider. As we have seen in previous chapters, the Dutch government was reluctant to deviate too much from policies its Western allies were pursuing with regards to Spain. As long as Spain was still viewed as a pariah, therefore, it is unlikely that the Dutch government would have allowed itself to be seen as being too friendly with Spain, for fear of being accused of appeasing Franco's regime.

Chapter 4: Improving relations of the 1950s and the 1953 trade agreement

The Netherlands has historically been a country of merchants. As a small but highly developed economy it has much to gain from trade with few restrictions. Had the first half of the 20th century been characterised by protectionism in Europe, this started to change in 1948 with the establishment of the OEEC and Marshall money that started flowing into European economies. After the war one of the main economic objectives for the Dutch government was to improve the country's competitiveness. This was to be achieved by keeping wages low, made acceptable by a relatively solid social system. To this end the guilder was devalued in 1944 and 1949, rents were frozen and the price of food and coal were kept low.[80] Increasing production, however, also called for more exportation possibilities.

A trade agreement with Spain was signed in December 1953. The signing of the trade agreement can serve as the final case study which helps to answer the central research question of how Dutch foreign policy with regard to Francoist Spain evolved between 1945 and 1955. The event is part of the later years of the timeframe of the thesis, and trade agreements are usually seen as quite significant in bilateral relations. In this light, chapter three will aim to answer the following sub-question: *Can the signing of the trade agreement be considered political reconciliation?*

In order to answer this question, the chapter will not only look at the trade agreement and its leadup itself, but also at the international context in which it played out. Dutch-Spanish relations in this late period of the timeframe, in this case highlighted by the trade agreement, cannot be seen separately from events unfolding on the international stage regarding Spain. As mentioned earlier, debates about Spanish international isolation aside, it

[80] Hein A.M. Klemann, "Een handelsnatie in de twintigste eeuw," in *De Nederlandse buitenlandse politiek in de twintigste eeuw*, ed. Bob de Graaff, Duco Hellema and Bert van der Zwan (Amsterdam: Boom, 2003), 121-126.

is generally accepted that Spain's international standing underwent significant changes in the 1950s. Its interaction with the outside world increased and formalised on multiple levels.

4.1: The international rapprochement with Spain of the 1950s

On November 4, 1950, the UN revoked its 1946 resolution. This meant that there was no longer a recommendation to not engage with Spain diplomatically, nor a recommendation to exclude Spain from international agencies associated with the UN.[81] Ambassadors indeed started to return to Madrid *en masse*. The Netherlands too returned an ambassador.

As Cold War tensions had steadily increased in the world, it had become increasingly important to strategically choose friends. Spain had been moving into the orbit of the Western bloc. As mentioned earlier, in late 1950 the US provided a boost for the Spanish economy by granting a bilateral loan. In 1951 the Kem-amendment was approved in the United States, which meant that the US would no longer provide economic aid to countries that traded in strategic materials with the communist bloc. Spain then swiftly curbed its trade with Czechoslovakia, which was the only country on the other side of the iron curtain that Spain had significant trade relations with.[82]

Due to its location and geography, Spain was also strategically very valuable. Not unimportantly, of course, Franco's Spain also had very strong anti-communist credentials. The growing desire by the United States to incorporate Spain into its defence structure, led to a series of negotiations between the two countries in 1952 and 1953. This culminated in the Pact of Madrid, signed in 1953, which granted the US permission to establish three air bases and one naval base in Spain. In return the US would assist Spain in the event of a foreign invasion. The US would have to ask permission to use the bases, except in case of a

[81] Young, "Spain and the Early Cold War," 64.
[82] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.05.286 - 696: note from chargé d'affaires E.L.G. Schiff in Madrid to the minister of foreign affairs in The Hague, September 25, 1951.

Soviet attack on Europe. As a result of the agreement, foreign investment into Spain also increased and its economy grew.[83]

4.2: The 1953 trade agreement between The Netherlands and Spain

The most recent trade agreement between The Netherlands and Spain before a new one was signed in December 1953, stemmed from 1934. (It had been renewed from year to year with minor modifications.) That was before the Second World War and the Spanish Civil War, and it was an agreement between The Netherlands and the democratically elected Republican government of the Second Spanish Republic. In the postwar era and with a very different regime in Spain, this trade agreement was rather outdated. Both parties had started applying different regulations for a number of products than was initially agreed upon.[84]

In 1948 the Dutch government decided to bring tariffs on the import of citrus fruits back to 13%, in line with the 1934 agreement. This upset the Belgians, however, because in recent years both countries had agreed on a common tariff on citrus fruits of 20%, in the context of the Benelux customs union.[85] When in 1952 the Dutch government wanted to provide preferential status to oranges from Surinam, which was still a Dutch colony at this point, the Belgian government would only accept this if the Dutch government would undo the lowered tariff on Spanish citrus fruits.[86]

This led to an agreement with the Benelux Permanent Commission that the Dutch government would start tariff negotiations with Spain. The hope was that the Spanish government would accept the tariff of 20% without much difficulty and without the need to cancel the 1934 agreement, although there was a possibility that it would ask concessions

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[83] Liedtke, "Spain and the United States," 234-238.
[84] National Archive, The Hague. Archive No. 2.06.087, Inventory No. 1827 (Stukken betreffende tariefonderhandelingen met Spanje): note from Chr. M. Pool, director of Foreign Agrarian Trade Issues, to Van Kleffens, September 4, 1951.
[85] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.06.087 - 1827: note from the director of Foreign Economic Relations to the ministry of foreign affairs, January 29, 1948.
[86] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.06.087 - 1827: note from the board of directors of Foreign Economic Relations to W.P.H. van Oorschot, director of the Permanent Commission for Coordination of Trade of The Netherlands and the BLEU, August 4, 1952.

from the Dutch side in return.[87] The expectation was that the Spanish position on this would be known within a few weeks or a couple of months at most, allowing the Dutch government to decide before January 28, 1953, whether or not to cancel the 1934 agreement. If the trade agreement was not cancelled by that date - three months before its expiration - it would automatically be renewed for another year, until April 1954.[88]

It took a long time for the Spanish government to provide a definite answer, however. Over a period of six months Dutch representatives were regularly told that the issue was not of much importance to Spain (the Dutch delegation made the case that the increased tariff would not actually affect Spanish exports of citrus fruits to The Netherlands in a significant way), only to be told at other meetings that Spain considered the issue to be quite serious and that they needed to study it more to be able to provide an answer.[89] The Dutch delegation had the impression that the Spanish government wanted to take its time to resolve the issue, in order to be able to ask for more concessions from the Dutch government as Belgian pressure on the Dutch government to increase the tariff increased.[90] On March 31, 1953, Spain finally confirmed that the Dutch government should compensate Spain if it were to increase the tariff.[91] The 1934 trade agreement had by now already been renewed for another year.

These issues did however lead to the realisation that a new trade agreement was needed. The negotiations that followed seemed to have been strictly concerned with actual trade issues, without much spillover into political issues. These things did happen: when Belgium and Luxembourg jointly negotiated a trade agreement with Spain in late 1952 they refused to grant Spain the same preferential status for agricultural products that they had

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[87] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.06.087 - 1827: letter from W.P.H. van Oorschot to W.H. van den Berge, finance minister, August 8, 1952.
[88] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.06.087 - 1827: letter from A. Fetter to C.W. Insinger, August 9, 1952.
[89] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.06.087 - 1827: multiple letters from J.G. de Thouars, first Trade Secretary in Madrid, to the Director-General for Foreign Economic Relations in The Hague, September 1952 - March 1953.
[90] National Archive, No. 2.06.087 - 1827: note from J.G. de Thouars, first Trade Secretary in Madrid, to the Director-General for Foreign Economic Relations in The Hague, March 24, 1953.
[91] National Archive, The Hague, No. 2.06.087 - 1827: note from J.G. de Thouars, first Trade Secretary in Madrid, to the Director-General for Foreign Economic Relations in The Hague, March 31, 1953.

granted Italy, because Italy was a liberal democracy and Spain was not.[92] On June 11, 1953, a draft version of the new trade agreement was initialled by the heads of the Dutch and Spanish delegations. This was also sent to the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community, which did not object to the export of some strategic materials to Spain.[93] On December 8, 1953, the trade agreement was officially signed by both parties.

4.3: Reconciliation?

On March 4, 1954, royal decree officially authorised the Dutch mission in Madrid to be upgraded to the rank of embassy. The Spanish mission in The Hague would simultaneously also become an embassy. Dutch representative Willem van Rechteren Limpurg was promoted to the rank of ambassador. He was due to offer his letters of credence to Spanish minister of foreign affairs Artajo on March 18. The Spanish government made sure to turn the event into a big ceremony, marking the date as a new beginning in Dutch-Spanish relations.[94]

Van Rechteren described how he and two other Dutch representatives were picked up by an escort of the Moorish Guard; Franco's own ceremonial escort made up of recruits from Spanish-controlled Morocco. They were ridden around Madrid in coaches, accompanied by colourfully dressed footmen and cheered on by large crowds. Even the hoofs of the horses, he noted, were decorated with gold and silver. American ambassador Griffis had assured the Spanish organisers that "Hollywood could not do it better." Van Rechteren reckoned that this comment must have been most pleasing to the Spaniards. Upon arriving at the palace he describes being in awe about the fervour with which the

[92] National Archive, The Hague. Archive No. 2.06.107, Inventory No. 435 (Stukken betreffende het voeren van handelsbesprekingen tussen de BLEU en Spanje): letter from the Dutch ambassador in Brussels to W.P.H. van Oorschot in The Hague, October 31, 1952.
[93] Tractatenblad van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, "Handelsovereenkomst tussen het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden en de Spaanse Staat, met bijlagen; 's-Gravenhage, 8 December 1953," *(No. 134)*: 11. https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/trb-1953-134.pdf
[94] National Archive, The Hague, Archive No. 2.05.286, Inventory No. 722 (Stukken betreffende de verheffing van het gezantschap te Madrid tot ambassade. Met bijlagen): letter from W. van Rechteren, ambassador in Madrid, to the minister of foreign affairs in The Hague, March 24, 1954. Title: "presentation letters of credence."

Dutch anthem was played, before being led into the palace to meet Franco and minister of foreign affairs Artajo to officially present the letters of credence.[95]

It is tempting to mark this event as the moment of reconciliation in Dutch-Spanish relations, where the two countries found harmony and lived happily ever after. But of course, things are rarely so simple. Throughout this thesis we have seen that the Dutch government almost exclusively pursued pragmatic, self-interested policies when it came to Spain. Ultimately, the Dutch government considered it to be in the Dutch national interest, especially economically, to seek reconciliation with Spain rather than to distance itself from that country because of its regime. On a global scale, especially as the Cold War and its opposing ideologies became more and more hostile, ironically, *realpolitik* overtook ideological considerations when it came to Spain. This facilitated the Dutch government's ability to cultivate a better relationship with the Iberian country.

However, the fact that the Dutch government pursued mostly self-interested policies did not mean that idealistic currents in The Netherlands played no role. A general disapproval of the Franco regime remained, be it more intense among the left than among the right of the political spectrum. The answer to the question whether the signing of a new trade agreement can be considered political reconciliation, therefore, depends on how you look at it. When taking it at face value the trade agreement led to, if not exactly reconciliation, at least an improvement in relations. When taking a closer look and realising that the motivations behind smoothening trade relations with Spain were self-interested, then it says very little about how the Dutch government judged the regime in power in Spain.

[95] Ibid.

Conclusion

This thesis has looked at Dutch foreign policy insofar it related to Francoist Spain between 1945 and 1955. This was a critical time period during which a new world order took shape, based on rules and norms. The Netherlands was at the forefront of this new world and fully embraced it, albeit more cautiously during the early years in an attempt to - against the currents of history - hold on to colonial control over the Indonesian archipelago. Spain, on the other hand, did not move along with this changing world. In a way it seemed stuck in the past, remaining a fascist dictatorship when international fascism was defeated. Spain under Franco's leadership rejected both the liberal democratic values of the West and the Marxist-Leninist conviction of the East. Reversely both of those blocs, even as tensions among them increased, naturally shared a fierce disgust of any regime that had associated with Hitler and Mussolini.

In 1946 a resolution was brought before the UN General Assembly which had the objective to have countries cut diplomatic relations with Spain, in order to put pressure on Franco's regime. Spain had already been prohibited to join the UN or any of its sub-organisations by a UN resolution that had been unanimously accepted in 1945. The Dutch government's position on the 1946 resolution was not a straightforward choice. The government very much disapproved of the Franco regime, and Franco's brutal treatment of dissidents sparked protests in The Netherlands which demanded that the government cut diplomatic as well as commercial ties with Spain. However, the government had some important reservations about the resolution. First of all, Dutch government officials expressed doubt whether cutting diplomatic ties with Spain would achieve the objective of encouraging reform in Spain and they also did not agree with the reasoning that Spain was a threat to international peace and security. More importantly, however, the resolution was seen as a potential precedent that could come back to bite Dutch interests. If the resolution passed, it meant that the UN would interfere in what Dutch politicians considered to be Spanish domestic affairs. The fear was that the UN might decisively turn against the Dutch

efforts to hold on to the Dutch East Indies, where a struggle for independence was unfolding, next. Voting against the resolution, however, was a step too far. The Dutch government was anxious not to be seen as supporting Franco. Furthermore, it was deemed very important not to step too far out of line with the Western allies, most of which supported the resolution, not least because that might create even more friction in a situation that was already uncomfortable due to the colonial issue. For these reasons, the Dutch delegation at the UN abstained from voting. This decision was quite clearly based on interests-based considerations, and not idealistic ones. The main concern was what the resolution might mean for The Netherlands; what it might achieve for the Spanish people was only very minimally touched upon.

A similar pattern can be observed in the Dutch government's decision making process during the Marshall Plan negotiations and the question of Spanish participation in the programme, in late 1947 and early 1948. The Dutch government in general did not seem to have a very strong opinion either in favour or against the extension of the reconstruction programme to Spain. (Although Spain had not formally participated in World War Two, the country still lay in ruins from the civil war which had ended just months before the outbreak of the Second World War and which had elevated Franco to power.) The Dutch government kept a close eye on what the other 15 initial European countries that were included in the Marshall Plan thought about the possibility of including Spain. By this point in time the Cold War really started to take centre stage in global politics, and hostility towards Franco's regime in the Western world started to lose some of its earlier intensity. With fear of communism increasing, also in The Netherlands, Franco's strong anticommunist credentials worked in his favour. It took some of the attention away from his fascist legacy. Some Dutch government officials reckoned that if this trend would lead to Britain and France dropping their objections to Spanish participation in the Marshall Plan, The Netherlands should follow suit, provided it could do so as a united front with Belgium and Luxembourg as well. This did not happen, however, and the Dutch government objected to Spanish participation, in accordance with the other countries. The Marshall Plan negotiations again highlight a case

in which Dutch foreign policy considerations were based on pursuit of the national self-interest. Idealistic considerations played almost no role. Whereas an American representative spoke with Spanish officials about possible ways in which Franco's regime could make itself more acceptable to the West, and the British Foreign Office brought together some prominent members of Franco's exiled opposition, no evidence was found which shows that the Dutch government made any attempt to change the status quo in Spain. To the contrary, about a year earlier when a member of the Spanish Republican government in exile visited The Netherlands in late 1946, he was barred from speaking about politics.

In late 1950 the UN General Assembly was once again presented with a resolution about Spain. This one was of a different nature; instead of tightening the screws on Spain, the eight former Spanish colonies that presented the draft resolution aimed to undo the restrictions imposed upon Spain by the 1945 and 1946 resolutions. When rumours about this possible new resolution emerged in spring 1949, Dutch foreign minister Dirk Stikker initially informed the Dutch delegations in Madrid and Lisbon (where Nicolás Franco, the dictator's brother, served as ambassador), upon questions by their Spanish counterparts, that The Netherlands would once again abstain from voting. However, the Dutch government did consider the 1946 resolution obsolete because by now no country really still saw Spain as a threat to international peace and security, and on top of that it had not led to any change in Spain. There was now also a degree of goodwill for Spain in Dutch government circles because Spain had been in support of The Netherlands in the struggle to hold on to the Indonesian archipelago, whereas the UN and the United States had been applying pressure on The Netherlands to get out of there. By the summer of 1950 it became clear that many countries might vote in favour of the resolution, including the United States. This created favourable conditions for The Netherlands to also vote in favour. In any case, Indonesia had by now officially gained independence and for this reason the Dutch government did not have to be as cautious in its foreign policy. Although The Netherlands had lost control over Indonesia against its will, this did actually create some breathing space in its foreign policy.

Eventually it was decided that The Netherlands would vote in favour, provided the Belgians would do the same, which they did. The Dutch delegation at the UN did manage to have the wording of the resolution changed a bit: instead of emphasising the benefit for Spain, the resolution now emphasised the benefit for the UN and its associated organisations of enabling them to extend their reach into Spain. The Dutch delegation in its statement also strongly condemned the Franco regime, as especially for the political left, normalising relations with Franco's Spain was still a difficult pill to swallow. The Dutch delegation also added an economic component to their justification to vote in favour of the resolution, as they emphasised that reengagement with Spain could have great international economic benefits. They made sure not to just focus on the benefits for The Netherlands, in order not to be seen as opportunistic. In the end, once again, these were interests-based considerations. The political left inside The Netherlands, notably the PvdA, might have had a more idealistic view on the situation, as they were ideologically more strongly opposed to Franco's regime. While this had some influence on the wording of the resolution and the official Dutch statement, ultimately the PvdA did go along with the KVP, as voting in favour of the resolution ultimately was favourable to Dutch interests.

What European integration and Spain's exclusion from it meant for Dutch-Spanish bilateral relations is not entirely straightforward. Even though Spain was excluded, the country received no specific discriminatory treatment. There were ways around the exclusion, such as bilateral trade deals, which many countries signed with Spain and which indirectly extended some trade liberalisation measures - initiated by the OEEC - to Spain. When looking at the discussions for European agricultural integration, it becomes apparent that the Dutch government was actually quite in favour of Spain being a part of it. Idealistic arguments here could have revolved around for example Western European unity, but again these were not the types of considerations the Dutch government engaged with. What was important was the potential economic benefit for the Dutch economy which might come with Spanish participation in any agricultural integration project. Dutch receptiveness to the Spanish desire to take part in agricultural discussions in Paris in early 1953 must have been

received well in Madrid. On the other hand, one-sided integration could also lead to friction, as showcased by the Dutch integration into the Benelux customs union. As part of the Benelux The Netherlands now had to comply with a new tariff agreement concerning oranges, which was not compatible with an earlier tariff agreement between The Netherlands and Spain.

The 1950s saw a great improvement in Spain's relations with the outside world. Not only had the 1946 UN resolution been revoked, the United States had also incorporated Spain into its defence structure against the Soviet Union with the Pact of Madrid in 1953. This was a strong signal and foreign investment into Spain grew, leading to much needed economic growth. For the Dutch government the time was ripe to negotiate a new trade agreement with Spain. The previous one stemmed from 1934 and was rather outdated, and was out of line with the current situation in multiple aspects. The improving international standing of Spain was therefore not the only reason for the two countries to renegotiate a trade deal, but it did make it much more favourable to sign a trade agreement with Spain than for example the mid 1940s, when some groups in The Netherlands even called for cutting commercial relations with Spain. The Dutch government again acted out of the Dutch national self-interest, rather than idealistic considerations. Politics were not discussed during the trade agreement negotiations; the economic interest was the determining factor. Although this sounds logical for a trade agreement, Belgium and Luxembourg did actually deny Spain the same preferential agricultural status as Italy, simply because Spain was a repressive dictatorship. This is an example where Belgium and Luxembourg did take idealistic considerations into account and kept some pressure on Franco's regime, but this is something that the Dutch government rarely ever did. By the mid 1950s, Dutch-Spanish seemed almost normalised, and especially after both countries upgraded their respective representations to the rank of embassy in 1954 this was the case in many aspects. This did not mean that the Dutch government by now did not have any reservations about Franco and his regime anymore. Especially many on the political left held on to their disgust of Franco, and many did so until the day he died in 1975.

Between 1945 and 1955 Dutch foreign policy regarding Francoist Spain evolved in the sense that over time the Dutch government became more emboldened to pursue a Spain-policy that best suited the Dutch interest. The reason for this was because theoretically it was in the Dutch interest to have Spain be a normal member of the international community that The Netherlands could do business with, but during the early years of the timeframe the Dutch government had to go along with its allies' anti-Spain policies, in the face of world- and domestic opinion. What remained constant was the pursuit of an interests-based Spain policy that had little regard for idealistic considerations. Although Dutch-Spanish relations in the postwar decade are only a small piece of the history of Dutch foreign policy, this is an important finding which contributes to the academic debate about the extent to which The Netherlands has an 'international-idealistic' tradition in its foreign policy.

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