

**DEFENCE AND
SECURITY**

143 DSCTC 07 E
Original: English



NATO Parliamentary Assembly

**SUB-COMMITTEE ON
TRANSATLANTIC DEFENCE AND SECURITY
CO-OPERATION**

VISIT TO THE NETHERLANDS

SECRETARIAT REPORT

18-19 JUNE 2007

International Secretariat

25 June 2007

* This Secretariat Report is presented for information only and does not necessarily represent the official view of the Assembly.

Assembly documents are available on its website, <http://www.nato-pa.int>

1. The Defence and Security Committee Subcommittee on Transatlantic Security and Defence Cooperation visited the Netherlands from 18-19 June 2007. Led by Sub-Committee Chair Sven Mikser (Estonia), the delegation of members of parliament from seven member and associate countries met with Officials from the Defence and Foreign Ministries and independent analysts. The delegation also toured the various strategic lift coordination initiatives located at the Royal Netherlands Air Force base at Eindhoven.
2. The tone for the visit was set by the front page of a local newspaper (“Trouw”), whose headline read “Lack of helicopters endangers the Afghanistan mission.” The article went on to report on a potential redeployment to Iraq of a large number of U.S. transport helicopters from southern Afghanistan, which had the potential to adversely affect NATO’s operations in the country and could have serious consequences for the Netherlands in particular.
3. This issue framed the central themes of our visit, which focused on three related themes: ongoing gaps in Alliance and member nations’ capabilities, NATO’s operation in Afghanistan, and NATO-EU cooperation.

I. DUTCH SECURITY POLICY

4. **Rob de Wijk**, Professor at the Hague Center for Strategic Studies, listed the deficiencies that hampered the Alliance: deployable ground forces, air and sealift, a backbone of operations in the form of Command and Control (C4ISR), and precision strike. Mr de Wijk enumerated the principal security challenges facing the Netherlands and the Alliance: energy security, the rise of China, the depth of EU integration, the undermining of international institutions and legal frameworks, and the existence of wide ungoverned zones like the Horn of Africa. In such a climate, defending Dutch interests abroad was the only strategic choice available, Mr. de Wijk stated, and for that reason competent expeditionary armed forces were crucial.
5. NATO, Mr de Wijk suggested, must make a number of fundamental strategic changes including greater doctrinal emphasis on stability and reconstruction and reinterpreting Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty to include the defence of interests (including economic) rather than simply territory. A new Alliance Strategic Concept would be necessary. Members were interested in whether energy security would fall under such a re-defined Article V. A European member argued that European states should further develop their capabilities in order prevent complete dependence on the United States. Mr de Wijk suggested that the debate over developing European forces should be de-coupled from discussions of being pro or anti-American.
6. The Netherlands placed great importance on EU-NATO cooperation, the Delegation was told by deputy Director-General **Wim Geerts** of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Unnecessary duplication should be avoided, and NATO and the EU need to supplement and strengthen each other, not only in the area of security and stability but also in the area of political, social and defence reform in a host of countries inside and outside of Europe. Ideally this principle of non-duplication should work both ways, for instance in ensuring that NATO does not unnecessarily duplicate the civilian capabilities available from the EU. Mr Geerts cited Kosovo and Afghanistan as opportunities to get it right, and argued that successful EU-NATO cooperation at the field level could and should bring about improved coordination at the political level. Mr Geerts specifically cited and underlined the conclusions of this Sub-Committee’s draft report – that pragmatism was necessary rather than dogmatism in ensuring the two organizations work in a mutually reinforcing manner.

7. Members also heard from a concerned **Robert de Groot**, Director, Security Policy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who stated that current disputes endangered progress on coordination for EUPOL in Afghanistan on the ground, which would be entirely reliant on ISAF. The same was true for the EU mission in Kosovo, which required a clear mandate especially vis-à-vis KFOR in order to ensure appropriate coordination and response to crisis situations.

II. NATO OPERATIONS

8. The current Dutch deployment to Afghanistan currently expires on August 1 of next year, with a decision on any extension expected later this summer. While our interlocutors were not able to shed light on those internal discussions, Afghanistan remained a central theme of the Sub-Committee's meetings throughout.

9. The Netherlands was concerned about the credibility of the Karzai government, which appears to provide few services outside of Kabul; the training and equipping of the Afghan national security services, especially the police which had been somewhat neglected; and the continued absence of NGOs and international organizations which were necessary to build governance throughout Afghanistan. Mr de Groot, also insisted that the best approach would entail decentralization and relying on traditional Afghan power structures.

10. The Delegation inquired about the Dutch view of Pakistan's role, as well as the continuing problems of opium and of corruption. Mr de Groot responded that the Dutch are not believers in crop eradication programs, which was considered a bottom-up approach that only punishes small farmers, whose hearts and minds the Alliance should be working to win. Rather, an approach that combines hitting the 'big fish' of the drug trade, as well as introducing alternatives through programs such as microcredits and increased market access, would be more effective. Corruption continues to be a problem for Afghanistan, and one tool used by the Dutch was to be very tough when it came to public appointments; the Dutch insisted that those nominated to key governmental posts have a record of good work behind them. Mr de Groot made clear that the Dutch do not consider counter-terrorism as a part of their mission, and that they are not participating in such activities.

11. **Lo Casteleijn**, Director, Department of General Policy Affairs, Ministry of Defence, suggested that the Dutch military was taking seriously the lessons they were learning in Afghanistan, in particular on the importance of good intelligence, of logistics when deploying in such a distant and challenging environment, and of specialized capabilities such as counter-IED technologies. The Dutch government had also had to learn to develop and carry out an integrated security policy on Afghanistan; cooperation between various agencies was at an all-time high.

12. The basic trends of the ongoing transformation of the Dutch armed forces were unlikely to be dramatically changed by the new Dutch government, the Sub-Committee learned from **Frans Princen**, Head of the Operational Policy Branch at the Ministry of Defence. The Dutch defence budget, at \$7.7 billion, represents close to 1.4 % of the national GDP – well below the informal NATO 2% guideline. Pressed on this issue by Members, Mr Princen pointed out that defence spending had actually increased this year by 500 million euro, but that with the growth of the economy, this percentage of GDP spending on defence actually decreased. Mr Princen also saw the 2% informal guideline as an input-oriented approach that was much less useful than an output-oriented, effects-based approach.

13. Mr Princen also presented the NATO assessment of the Dutch defence plans and forces. NATO commended the active participation in operations and the NRF by the Netherlands, and considered the Dutch forces to be among the most capable and deployable. They had achieved

NATO's usability targets and were considered to be making defence investments in accordance with NATO priorities.

14. Since 2003, the Dutch defence re-organization has been based on an Essential Operational Capability approach, in which eight elements are emphasized: timely force availability, effective intelligence, deployability, mobility, effective engagement, effective command, control, and communications, logistics sustainability, and survivability and force protection. Any missing part of these seven would impair overall capability. The Dutch defence ministry had moved from input-oriented transformation to output oriented effects; the driving imperative was not what each service 'had' in terms of platforms and numbers, but rather what the service could achieve. Mr Princen also emphasized the importance of achieving a better balance between main weapon systems and enablers.

15. The Netherlands, a member of both the EU and NATO with substantial defence commitments and capabilities, nevertheless only had one set of forces to devote to national defence, the NATO Response Force, and the EU Battlegroups program, Mr Princen asserted. There was no choice but to balance these commitments against each other through careful planning. Mr Princen argued against developing another set of integrated military planning structures that would duplicate the capabilities and structures already existing under NATO.

16. The group next met with **Bert Koenders**, Minister for Development Cooperation, and the previous President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. Mr Koenders described the development efforts of the Netherlands in countries all over the world and emphasized the importance of a concerted approach between defence, development, and diplomacy. On Afghanistan, he underscored the importance of working through Afghan authorities, and investing in quick-impact projects. The Netherlands was increasingly concerned about high civilian casualties, and suggested a balance was necessary between the use of force and the persuasion of the public.

17. Mr Koenders also strongly argued for a more equitable sharing of the burden of the dangerous but necessary work in Afghanistan, and lamented the possibility that military and reconstruction efforts could fall behind for lack of resources. He also suggested that greater unity was necessary when signalling political messages to Pakistan in particular. While he described himself as still optimistic, particular given Afghanistan's difficult history, he suggested that greater involvement from other international organizations was critical. Finally, Mr Koenders asserted that it was important for countries such as the Netherlands to publicly state deadlines for their involvement in operations such as Afghanistan; this would ensure that NATO is looking for others to replace them and that other Allies who might be impacted by a Dutch decision would be well informed.

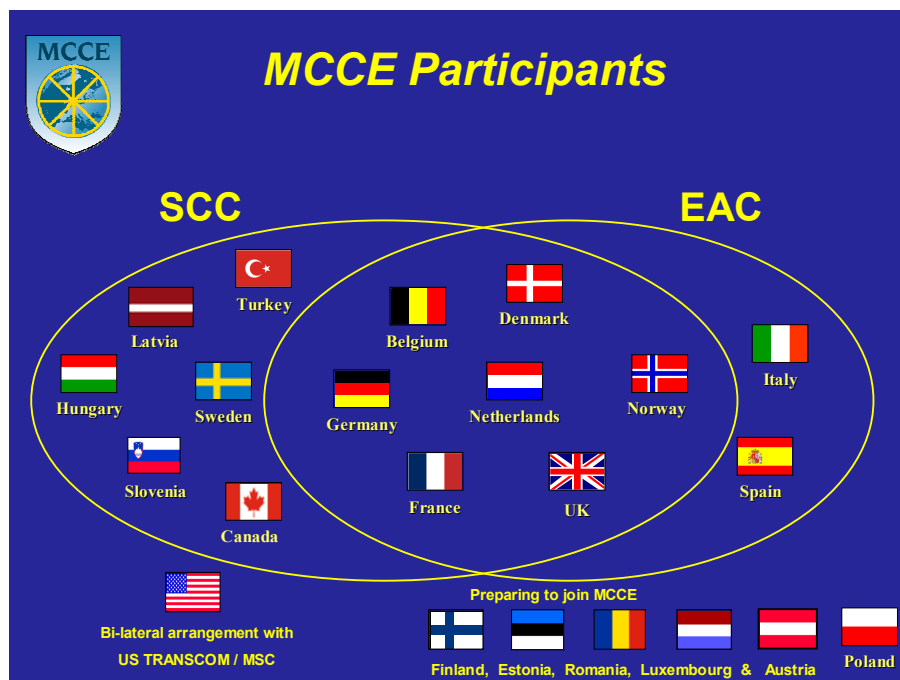
III. MOVEMENT COORDINATION CENTER EUROPE (MCCE) -- EINDHOVEN BASE VISIT

18. In order to gain a better understanding of intersection points between NATO and the EU, as well as looking at possibilities for pooling resources critical to both organizations and all of their member states such as strategic lift, the Sub-Committee visited the Royal Netherlands Air Force base Eindhoven. This Dutch facility houses several logistics coordination efforts, which played major roles in the EU's mission to the Congo and in re-supplying NATO's ISAF mission.

19. Several of these efforts were in full transition, as the European Airlift Centre (EAC) and the Sealift Coordination Centre (SCC) were on July 1 going to be integrated into a *Movement Coordination Centre Europe (MCCE)*. The MCCE will coordinate strategic air transport and

Air-to-Air Refuelling for 21 NATO, PfP, and non-NATO members. Its services are available to support operations by the UN, the EU, NATO, as well as individual nations.

20. **Captain Gunnar Borch** explained to the Sub-Committee that MCCE is the product of initiatives launched by NATO (beginning at the Washington Summit of 1999) and the EU (at the Helsinki Summit of 1999). Both organizations at that time undertook major capability initiatives, an aspect of which was airlift and sealift. The MCCE's basic mission is to coordinate Participants' lift and Air-to-Air Refuelling (AAR) capabilities in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness optimising synergies. The MCCE coordinates Participants' requests to support operational and training deployments and routine movements, and to coordinate Participants' unilateral, multilateral and multinational movements in support of operations, including Crisis Management Operations and Disaster Relief Operations. It also will provide coordination support to EU or NATO operations; identify and highlight any potential to optimise Participants' use of Air Transport (AT), AAR and Surface Transport (ST). This includes the provision of advice for the common usage of commercial charter capabilities in order to avoid unnecessary competition for the same resources, which would result in increased charter costs.



21. The activities of the organizations that will make up the MCCE undertaken in 2006 are significant. Beyond regular Air Transport and Air-to-Air Refuelling coordination, they supported NATO in Cargo Booking for ISAF; supported the EU's mission in Sudan and the EUFOR deployment to the Congo; and finally, they supported the UN mission in Lebanon. The system operates as an exchange of military services under an exchange of C-130 flying hours equivalents. The coordination of lift assets has tremendous potential for increased efficiency and savings. In sealift alone, in 2006 over 14 million euros were saved by coordination activities through the SCC.

22. The Sub-Committee also learned from **Lieutenant Colonel Hans Coomans** about a deeper form of coordination between a smaller number of nations – the *European Air Transport Center (EATC)*, which for the moment includes only the Netherlands, France, Germany, and Belgium. Here the overall objective is to gradually transfer and integrate within one single multinational

command all relevant national responsibilities and personnel, whose responsibility would be to direct the force generation and the mission execution of combined air transport capabilities.

23. Finally, the group was briefed by **Major Deware**, Deputy Co-ordinator SALCC, on the SALIS initiative – the Strategic Airlift Interim Solution – so named because it is designed as a gap-filler until new A400M tactical airlift planes or other options can be deployed. SALIS is also a product of the discussions emanating from the Prague Capability Commitment and the European Capability Action Plan. SALIS provides for its 17 member nations two chartered strategic airlift-capable aircraft (An-124-100's) under full time charter, available for national and multinational operations within three days. An additional four AN-124-100's are also available within six days. SALIS can be used for NATO or EU operations, or for national uses. In 2006, SALIS coordinated 127 missions, moving 133,000 tons, including playing a major part in the EUFOR Congo mission. One of the principal challenges remaining for the SALIS initiative in particular is ensuring that the relevant planners, be they national or at NATO or the EU, are aware of the existence and utility of the SALIS contracts and take appropriate advantage of them.
