

THE HAGUE NEWSPAPER OF PEACE AND JUSTICE

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Robert Gates (R) and U.S. NATO ambassador Ivo H. Daalder 2010 (GettyImages)

An ordinary Hague boy. Or was he? Ivo Daalder was able to closely follow and also direct world events over the past decades. A meeting with a man in the side wings of power.

By Willem van der Ham

Whether you're watching CNN or the BBC that day, the background is the same everywhere. A window, an intriguing artwork and a view of Lake Michigan. Ivo Daalder comments. It's May 10. 'Putin offers direct talks with Ukraine,' is the headline. His words enter the living rooms of the world calmly and clearly. Other media also consult him, such as Fox News and the New York Times. His appearances in podcasts are well listened to. On May 10 and the days before and after. Daalder's vision matters.

I remember him from when he was in elementary school. He was one class down. Our parents were close friends. I speak to Ivo as he waits at Vancouver International Airport. He is in transit from Alaska to Chicago.

First, just reminiscing.

"We lived on Zilverschoon Street, my parents, brother, sister and me. That is also where my first memories are, because I was two and a half when we moved there. I lived in The Hague until I was sixteen, until we moved to Italy for the work of my father, the political scientist Hans Daalder. I am and feel quite a Montessorian, because from kindergarten I was at the

Montessori school Laan van Poot and then I was a student at the Hague Montessori Lyceum. It was a beautiful childhood. Like my brother, I played soccer at Quick. Unfortunately, I have little or no contact with people from those schools anymore, but I experienced The Hague as a great city."

"I can't say that The Hague as an international city or politics concerned me then or that thanks to the Peace Palace, for example, I felt a calling to become a political scientist. I wasn't among the best students, I preferred to play soccer and so on. But also because I later came home quite often to my parents, who had moved to the Bezuidenhout area, I still feel like a real Hageenaar and I still see the Netherlands as my own country. I follow the Dutch soccer team and the Dutch skaters at the Olympics. I love Dutch cheese, Dutch licorice."

TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS

After Italy, Ivo moved to England, where he studied at the University of Kent and at Oxford, before emigrating to the United States. At Massachusetts University of Technology, he received his doctorate in 1990 on the topic "The Nature and Practice of Flexible Response: NATO Strategy and Tactical Nuclear Weapons".

Ivo: "I became an American citizen in 1994 and then had to give up my Dutch citizenship. I would have preferred not to do that. But on the other hand: America did lure. At the table at our house we talked a lot about politics and about the war and the importance of a strong role for the United States to maintain our peace and security. But that I got all these special positions... Really, I didn't really plan my career. You basically just roll into it."

That career is, in a word, impressive. Ivo was in direct contact with numerous world leaders. He was also involved in events that are among the great traumas of the Netherlands in the recent past, the deportation of 7,500 to 8,000 Muslim men and boys, almost all of whom were later murdered by Serbian forces in the Bosnian town of Srebrenica (in the summer of 1995), and the downing of the Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777-200ER, MH17 (2014). During the Srebrenica events, Ivo was a member of the National Security Council, executive office of the president, and just before the MH17 disaster, he was the U.S. ambassador to NATO.

"The second day I was working in the White House at the National Security Council (NSC), August 2, 1995, I was leafing through The National Intelligence Daily, a kind of daily briefing for the president, but less detailed and certainly not with all the very sensitive information that was available. It contained pictures of the mass graves in Srebrenica. Those photos were supposed to give an idea of what had happened. They were then distributed by the U.S. ambassador to the UN and the Security Council, Madeleine Albright. So my career in government began with this massacre. To an even greater extent, it influenced what I would do for a year and a half, when I worked at the National Security Council as part of the Bosnia team and was very involved in the conversations about how not only to respond to Srebrenica, but also how to bring a definitive end to the conflict. Shortly thereafter, on August 19, 1995, came the sad news and then the burial of the three Americans who were killed on Mount Igman Road while trying to enter Sarajevo. That was the beginning of a riveting process that eventually led to the peace agreement, in which I was very directly involved as coordinator of the peace treaty implementation at the NSC. With the Netherlands and the Dutch role, I didn't have much to do. We were focused on finding a way to end the conflict. And once that conflict ended, we had to make sure that the peace treaty was implemented. So that's where I spent most of my time during that period."

DAUGHTER

"I cannot say whether the U.S. learned any lessons from Srebrenica. The U.S. was not directly involved in this conflict. We had not participated in the UN operation. Madeleine Albright was annoyed that the war could not be ended. She favored US intervention. Al Gore, vice president, supported her. He reportedly went to the president to say, 'We have to do something, I can't accept this. My daughter asked me why we are letting this happen.' It did influence the decision-making in 1999 regarding Kosovo."

"One of the lessons learned from Srebrenica and Bosnia as a whole is that early intervention is more likely to succeed and is more important than acting too late. In that sense, it led to a more proactive intervention policy, probably with the most proactive version of that in the war in Kosovo. Shortly thereafter, George Bush became president who campaigned precisely against this kind of humanitarian intervention. And then came 9/11, Afghanistan, Iraq and a whole lot more. That made Srebrenica a minor issue in the eyes of Americans anyway." Ivo then worked at the authoritative Brookings Institution and received an appointment as professor of International Relations at the University of Maryland. When Barack Obama succeeded Georg W. Bush Jr. as president in January 2009, Ivo was appointed ambassador to NATO on behalf of the United States.

HILLARY CLINTON

Ivo: "As an ambassador, I mainly dealt with the Minister of Defense. In my time, there were three of them: Robert Gates, Leon Panetta and Chuck Hagel. And of course with Hillary Clinton, who was Secretary of State. Contacts with them were intense. Five times a year either the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of State, and sometimes both, came to Brussels, and there were two summits: one in Lisbon and one in Chicago that included the president, the foreign and defense ministers, and the national security adviser. All of them, whether it was Clinton, Gates or whoever, they were open to advice and to new suggestions. They looked to you as the expert. They were very engaged. They were very open to ambassadors and others participating in the decision-making process, in which I played a special role because of my background and my views on NATO and nuclear weapons. Even though they didn't always agree with me, they listened to my ideas and suggestions."

DOWNHILL

"Regarding Russia, I had a very close working relationship with Russian Ambassador Dimitri Rogozin, with whom I was in frequent contact, especially in 2010 and 2011, mainly to work on the possibility of a missile defense system. When I left, very little had been accomplished. It was clear by then that the relationship between Russia and NATO was getting worse. Things were going reasonably well when Dmitri Medvedev was president. He was at the NATO summit in 2010, and we met him in Sochi in 2011. But when Putin returned in 2012, things went "downhill" with the relationship. Putin did not come to the 2012 NATO summit in Chicago. Certainly after the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008, the question of whether Putin would also invade Ukraine was not yet under discussion, but it was already an issue many people were thinking about. Europe repeatedly warned that Russia was on a revenge course to change the European security order. Therefore, it was not so surprising when it happened. There was no consensus within NATO beforehand on how to deal with this issue, and there is no consensus now on how to deal with it."

UKRAINE

Ivo is not coming to The Hague when the NATO summit takes place. His youngest son is getting married in Chicago then. But follow it, of course, he does. "The issue of defense spending has been a real American problem with respect to the Europeans, going back to 1952, when Harry Truman demanded that Europe establish 60 of 90 divisions to defend NATO against a Soviet attack. So the idea that Europe should spend more is something that every ambassador has insisted on. So have I. What finally changed was not Trump, but Putin in 2014. Putin annexed part of Ukraine (Crimea) and orchestrated an uprising in Donbass in Ukraine. The question of spending more on defense became one on which most allies agreed in 2014. Two years before Donald Trump was elected, NATO agreed to spend two percent of GDP on defense by the end of the decade. The increases in defense spending since 2014 have been significant and have been realized at times when tension with Russia was greatest, particularly after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022."

TRUMP

"What is very different since Trump, however, is the position of the United States in the international arena. Donald Trump is the first president since the 1920s to move away from the traditional view that the United States should play a positive role in international affairs, that it should engage in international affairs and that it should do so through strong alliances, an open economic system and the defense and promotion of democracy and human rights. Democratic and Republican presidents for eighty years operated a system based on these fundamental principles, established under Roosevelt and continued under Truman, and has been the way the United States has engaged ever since."

"Trump doesn't believe in that. He doesn't believe in alliances. He doesn't believe in free trade and economic systems. He doesn't really believe in defense, promotion of democracy and human rights. All of that has taken a back seat. He believes that the international system as it was created and maintained, has used weapons against the United States, that others have benefited from the United States. He wants the system to be reformed at the expense of those others and better serve America's interests. He falls back on a more nineteenth-century view of international politics and its use. However unfortunate for the world, it is the reality of today."

UNIQUE RESPONSIBILITY

"Regarding the United Nations and global organizations in general, there has always been a fundamental gap between the vision that sovereign states are equal and a reality in which they are not. This manifests itself primarily in the ability to influence what happens both within and, more importantly, beyond their borders. Therefore, less powerful states place greater emphasis on the need for an international system based on mutual equality, while stronger states rely on their own power and strength independent of international institutions. The latter position influenced the U.S. view of the UN and the Security Council, which allowed the U.S. to ignore universal principles and institutions. This is true not only for Donald Trump, but for most presidents and governments in the past and hence the attitude toward the International Criminal Court and other bodies. It is based on the sense that the United States has a unique responsibility that cannot and should not be limited by others."

FINAL INTERVIEW?

After 12 years working for the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing knowledge and engagement on global issues, Ivo

Daalder is retiring at the end of June. Does this mean that he is retiring from his work altogether? Is this perhaps his last interview? Or will he continue to comment for TV and elsewhere?

Ivo: "I stop running organizations. But real retirement, that's not in the cards. I am returning in the fall to Harvard's Kennedy School where I met my wife forty years ago and I will be a senior fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. I will write more - I have ideas for several books. And continue to comment, on television, through my podcast 'World Review with Ivo Daalder' and on my substack 'America Abroad.'"



Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta (4th R) and U.S. Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Ivo Daalder (Getty Images)



Opening NATO conference in the Ridderzaal in The Hague, from left to right honorary chairman Dean Rusk (U.S. Secretary of State), Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Luns, and Dirk Stikker, Secretary General of NATO, May 12, 1964. Photo: Joop van Bilsen/Anefo (National Archives)

On June 24 and 25, all the world will be watching The Hague. Then the NATO summit will take place, where presumably all heads of government of NATO countries will be present. On its eve, skepticism reigns. The summit is said to have already been shortened by a day, and for a long time the question was even whether the U.S. president would come or drop out. Will there be unity or division? As global tensions and threats increase, NATO member states are quarreling. What will play out in The Hague and what are the challenges? Sabine Mengelberg, associate professor of international security studies at the Netherlands Defense Academy, explains the background.

In 1949, the Treaty of Washington established the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Its purpose was to guarantee military protection of its member states and provide mutual solidarity. World War II was still reverberating at the time. Communism was booming, because after the Soviet Union - one of the victors in 1945 that did not want to relinquish its sphere of influence in Eastern Europe - a communist regime had come to power in China. A new war threatened, while the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had proven that such a war could mean the destruction of the entire world.

Article 51 of the 1945 UN Charter provided the possibility for states to unite to face dangers. It established the so-called inherent right of individual or collective self-defense, the right of a state or group of states to defend themselves against a threat or armed attack. The Warsaw Pact, the military alliance of seven communist countries in Europe with the Soviet Union as the binding force, followed in 1955 based on that same article. The Warsaw Pact was dissolved two years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. NATO remained in existence. In addition

to collective defense, NATO's traditional core mission, NATO was given other tasks. NATO sought cooperation with former Warsaw Pact countries, the alliance expanded and NSATO focused on crisis management, for example in the Balkans and Afghanistan. Putin brutally kissed the somewhat dozed off giant awake. With Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the war in Ukraine in 2022, NATO's main task is back to deterrence and defense.

AGENDA

The upcoming NATO summit in The Hague is an important summit not only for the Netherlands as an organizer, but also for the NATO alliance as a whole. After all, there has been quite a bit of friction recently and the threat of war is high. So what's on the agenda? First, of course, the many threats that surround NATO's territory and especially the war in Ukraine. Also on the agenda will be the overall increase in conflicts worldwide, the alliance's relationship with China, refugee flows, climate issues and terrorism. In addition, member states are under greater threat from non-state actors who are more likely to cooperate among themselves, such as Iran with terrorist groups like Hezbollah. The palette of threats has broadened. It has long since moved beyond traditional military threats to cyber-attacks on infrastructure, destabilizing elections or migrants deployed at the borders of the Baltic states to destabilize or even attack society.

INTERNAL THREAT

Certainly since Donald Trump took office, tension has also been simmering internally. This was not uncommon, for example when France left NATO under Charles de Gaulle a decade later after the Suez crisis of 1956 and in 2003 after the U.S. invasion of Iraq to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime. So NATO does need to exude a degree of unity to maintain the alliance's credibility and resolve. It is precisely these internal tensions among the allies on many levels that make the upcoming summit a special one. So far, US President Trump's second term is an even bigger shock than his first for the alliance, especially for transatlantic-oriented European states like Poland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For example, because the United States (U.S.) is threatening to annex Greenland and wants to annex Canada as its 52nd state. The U.S. attitude toward Greenland and thus ally Denmark threatens internal solidarity.

Officially, NATO has no mandate regarding conflicts between member states. The mandate literally lies only in collective defense against external attacks. Moreover, there is division within the alliance regarding its relationship with both Russia and China. Whereas the U.S. wants to start a dialogue with Russia, for some allies, including the Baltic states, Poland and Finland, this is as yet unmentionable. At the same time, most European allies view the relationship with China differently than the US. And then there is another dilemma: The Trump administration does not appear to be a supporter of the European Union (EU); at the same time, the demand is on the table for European NATO allies to strengthen their military capabilities by up to possibly as much as 5 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is only possible for European member states through further European integration in the area of defense.

WORLD VIEWS

So it will be a complicated summit where two world views are diametrically opposed and the balance of power is shifting. All the conflicts in the world are pushing many countries together and the call for cooperation is getting stronger. This can also be seen in practice. Consider the accession to NATO of Finland and Sweden, the possible further expansion of the European Union, the rapprochement of the European Union and the United Kingdom. Moreover, more cooperation is also taking place outside NATO and the European Union. The so-called BRICS organization, the group of countries that includes India, China and Brazil, the fastest growing economies in the world, is expanding and trying to gain more influence. On the other hand, several states are increasingly fostering an inward-looking policy, a renaissance of the nation-state as a solution to the evil world outside. As a result of all these dilemmas, it is unclear what the upcoming NATO summit, and thus the future European security order, will look like. With all this in mind, experts will watch with suspicion how the member states will operate during and also after the summit. What power arrangement will prevail within the transatlantic relationship and Europe? In a world of increasing geopolitical tensions, mutual solidarity is of great importance. The Hague will show what will be the lay of the land.

Sabine Mengelberg is associate professor of international security studies at the Netherlands Defense Academy.

Column

'Othering'

By Caecilia Johanna van Peski

"Othering"-being "different"-is a psychological mechanism that creates divisions and categorizes individuals or groups as "different" or "not one of us. Its consequences fuel prejudice, discrimination and violence. *Othering* can lead to war. For this reason, it is critical to recognize and understand this concept.

Othering is in fact the opposite of belonging; where belonging implies acceptance and inclusion of all, *othering* suggests intolerance and exclusion.

"Other" can be based on a wide range of characteristics, including age, disability, ethnicity, nationality and race, gender identity, sex, language, occupation, political affiliation, religion, sexual orientation, skin color, socioeconomic status and also how a person behaves.

Countering those harmful processes requires the opposite of *othering*: sameness.

People "*other*" people they don't actually know at all. Lack of personal knowledge and contact with people can thus lead to all sorts of assumptions about them. This makes it easier to see them as strangers, enemies or even less human.

Belonging to a social group brings many benefits. On the positive side, being part of a social group can provide support, care, connection, protection and identity. On the negative side, however, it can contribute to exclusion, prejudice and conflict with people outside the group. In this regard, exclusion can have a dramatic impact on people. Exclusion can mark them for life. People who belong to a minority group may face disadvantage in economic areas, housing or careers, or in criminal justice, education and health care because of *othering*.

Othering is also present in current American politics - as well as ours - on both sides of the political spectrum. It has contributed to conspiracy theories, the spread of disinformation, culture wars, the construction of enemy images and real-life violence. Authoritarian leaders, for example, stoke fear and resentment toward "others" to gain support for their political goals. Strategic *othering* can be used by leaders or political parties to justify certain actions or to gain public support from people who respond to those fears and concerns.

In my own work - in the Netherlands and internationally, within the armed forces, within multilateral organizations, within communities of which I myself am a part and within communities with which I work in war zones - I try to be alert to manifestations of *othering*. I know that for me this cannot be merely an academic exercise, but that I have a moral obligation to call myself to action. I have been traveling that journey for many years now and it has been challenging. I have also certainly not yet arrived at my final destination. It required from me vigilance and a willingness to face uncomfortable truths, even within myself. But in this struggle there also turned out to be the promise that, together with others, I can contribute to a future where "different" is not only tolerated but celebrated, where each individual feels valued and connected, and where the fabric of human experience is woven with threads of compassion, acceptance and understanding.

In the year we reflect on eighty years of peace and eighty years of the United Nations, let us work together to unravel step by step the structure of "otherness" to create a more inclusive, more compassionate, and more resilient world for all.

Caecilia Johanna van Peski holds the rank of commander in the Royal Navy.

Beware of disinformation

By Han Bouwmeester



NCIA Communications. Photo: PR

'Peace is the continuation of war by other means,' was a recent utterance by Putin's former spin doctor Vladislav Soerkov. In doing so, he bastardized the famous statement by Prussian general and philosopher Carl von Clausewitz: 'War is the continuation of politics by other means.' Soerkov's words do not come out of the blue; they are illustrative of current attitudes in the Kremlin. Soerkov leaves open what those other means are, but it seems that the Russian authorities will allow themselves anything to realize this view of peace as a continuation of war by other means. The West has different views on this. Peace gives us a great deal of freedom. We can do whatever we want, as long as we stay within the rules. Indeed, we cherish that freedom, especially here in the Netherlands. That flexible way of living and dealing with each other is very dear to us. But peace and freedom are fragile, and therefore they need to be well protected. The feeling of peace and freedom can only be fully appreciated in a secure environment.

RUSSIAN THREAT

Is security always guaranteed? There are currently all kinds of developments ongoing on the world stage, such as the war in Ukraine, the conflict in the Middle East, the changing attitude of the United States and the rise of the global South. Within NATO, to which the Netherlands also belongs, the attitude and activities of the Russian Federation are considered the greatest threat. After all, NATO's territory borders Russian territory. The Russian threat is felt not only physically, with a chance of an armed encounter, but also in other areas, something Soerkov already hinted at.

One such other area Russian authorities are focusing on is undermining society with the help of disinformation. Ever since Russia annexed the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea in 2014, Western experts have been conducting more research into the use of disinformation by Russian politicians,

diplomats, military, security services and media. Back then, Russian authorities and media were already spreading reports about repression of Russian minorities in Crimea and about Ukraine being in the grip of fascists who wanted Ukraine to join the decadent West. According to Putin, he therefore had no other choice than to annex Crimea.

INFORMATION DISORDER

After the annexation, Western intelligence agencies increasingly warned of Russian interference in Western countries. For example, the Russians used disinformation to try to influence the 2016 and 2020 elections in the United States, as well as the 2016 Brexit referendum in Britain. The Council of Europe commissioned research on disinformation in 2018 and concluded that it has become an umbrella term for information that allows you to influence or even harm others. As a result, the Council no longer refers to "disinformation," but rather "information disorder," which consists of three types of information. First, misinformation, where people share non-factual information with no intention of harming others by doing so. Second, the "pure" disinformation, being non-factual information that is deliberately shared to harm others. Third is malinformation, which is factual information taken out of context or details magnified to hurt others.

The Russian disinformation, which the Russian authorities mostly have others spread so that they can deny any involvement, is mainly the pure disinformation and malinformation. The Russian authorities mainly try to use manipulated perceptions of political issues and their lies to erode trust in government organizations. People then begin to doubt the legal authority of their country with the result that these people become less and less compliant with laws and regulations. This erodes internal security. People draw their own plan, no longer trust each other and also no longer feel responsible for society. Society becomes seriously divided.

ALERT

Open societies, pursuing a high degree of individual freedom as in the Netherlands, must therefore be alert to this kind of subversion campaigns. Precisely because in our country we value this freedom so highly, it is very sensitive to take appropriate measures against disinformation. After all, the government in the Netherlands does not want to prescribe what information one should or should not believe or prohibit media from spreading certain information. However, disinformation awareness and media literacy are beginning to increase in the Netherlands. Schools are paying attention to this, teaching students not to immediately believe everything that is said on television, radio, in newspapers, on websites or social media. No, on the contrary, they learn to look critically at new information and to use different sources each time instead of basing their opinions on just one source. And this wise lesson applies not only to students but to every citizen.

Han Bouwmeester holds the rank of brigadier general as professor of military operations studies at the Netherlands Defense Academy.

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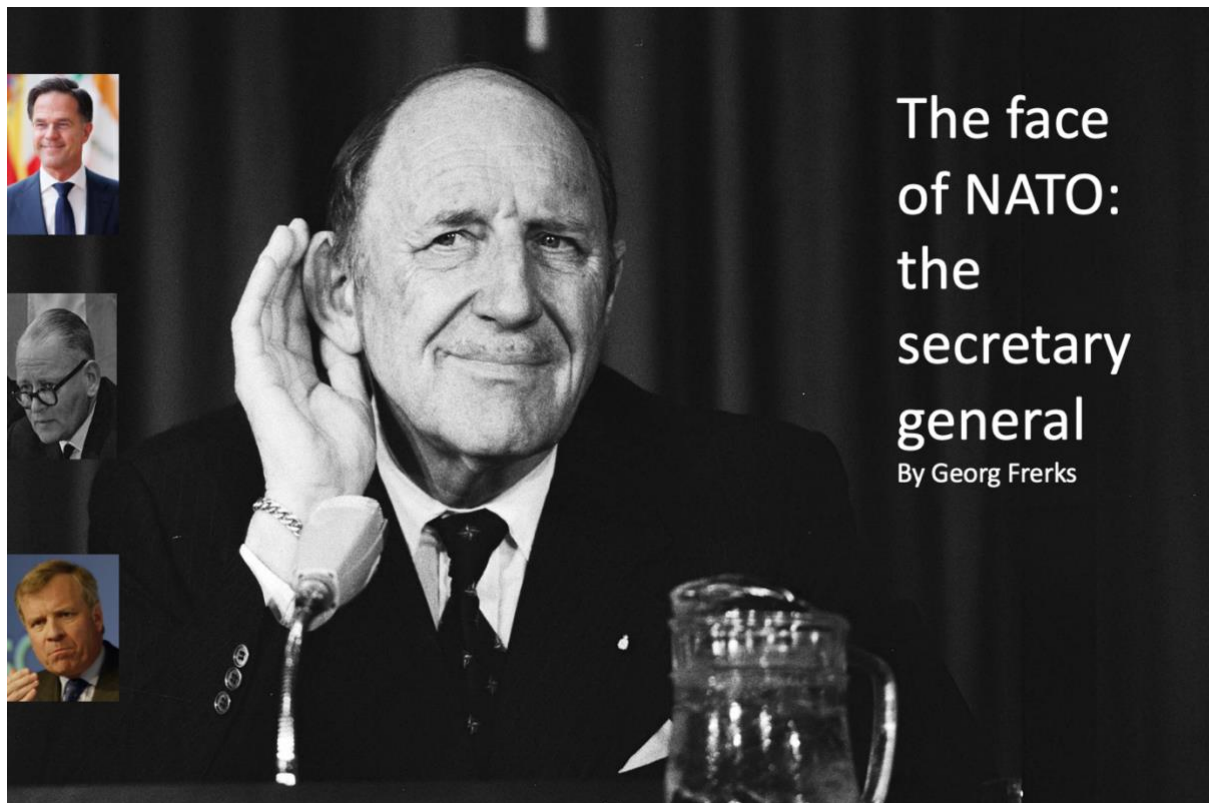
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NCIA Communications. Photo: PR



Press conference on the occasion of the NATO meeting, May 29, 1979: NATO Secretary General Luns, Photo: Rob C. Croes/Anefo (National Archives)

Mark Rutte is not the only Dutchman elected secretary general. Three persons preceded him. This makes the Netherlands a major supplier of NATO secretaries generals: no country delivered more. NATO is a political and military alliance governed by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in which the permanent representatives of the member states meet. In addition, ministers or heads of state meet periodically, such as at the upcoming NATO summit in The Hague. The secretary general (SG) chairs the council. The SG sets agendas, facilitates discussions and decision-making, coordinates day-to-day business and is in charge of implementing decisions. The SG maintains contacts with government leaders and represents NATO to the outside world. He is literally and figuratively the face of NATO.

Dirk Uipko Stikker (April 21, 1961 - August 1, 1964)

Main topics: Cyprus issue that led to serious tensions between NATO members Turkey and Greece, France's independent stance under President Charles de Gaulle, Cuba crisis.

VVD member Dirk Stikker (1897-1979) was a strong advocate of European cooperation. After the 1948 elections, he became Minister of Foreign Affairs and was, among other things, chairman of the Council of Ministers of the new Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEES) and one of the founders of the European Payments Union. After a dispute with party leader Oud over the issue of New Guinea, he offered his resignation as minister and left the VVD in 1952. He became Dutch ambassador to London and permanent representative to NATO in 1958. In his country house on Lake Como, he received



Dirk Stikker, Photo: Rob C. Croes/Anefo (National Archives)

influential politicians such as Konrad Adenauer, Paul-Henri Spaak and Dean Acheson. When Spaak left early as SG at NATO, Stikker was unanimously requested by the North Atlantic Council as his successor. On April 21, 1961, he took office as the first Dutch SG. Stikker was on good terms with President Kennedy, who had him picked up by Air Force One when Stikker was seriously ill. He was admitted to the Walter Reed military hospital in Washington. After his initial recovery, the SG position nevertheless became too much of a physical burden and he retired early in 1964. Stikker's final sentences in his readable memoirs are characteristic of him: "The passing pomp of power puts no weight in the scale of history. In it only the fate of all counts, not the power of a few Real greatness [lies] hidden in the permanent search for unity and the maintenance of freedom, peace and justice.'

Joseph Marie Antoine Hubert Luns (October 1, 1971 - June 25, 1984)

Main topics: the Yom Kippur War (military conflict between Israel and a coalition formed by Egypt and Syria in 1973), tensions between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus, NATO "dual track" decision (to deploy nuclear-capable Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles in Western Europe while continuing negotiations with the Soviets), NATO expansion to include Spain.



Press conference during the NATO Conference in The Hague by Secretary General Dirk Stikker, 11 May 1964. Photo: Eric Koch/ Anefo (National Archives)

Joseph Luns (1911-2002) served in eight Dutch cabinets between 1952 and 1971. Until 1956 as minister without portfolio and then as foreign minister. Luns was a striking figure and an ardent atlanticist. He advocated a robust defense policy and was seen as a *realpolitiker* and a good negotiator. This suited the Cold War era and helped him get the position of SG at NATO in 1971. Luns championed the expansion of NATO to include Spain and achieved the NATO double-track decision on the placement of nuclear-laden cruise missiles on European soil. He was also committed to modernizing NATO and keeping its armaments up to standard. He also managed to join forces after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Luns had himself driven around Brussels in a green Rolls-Royce, although he also had a very informal side with his jokes that he could recite in various languages while he occasionally presided over meetings in his slippers. He is considered the most unconventional SG ever. When he stepped down in 1984, President Reagan awarded him the *Presidential Medal of Freedom*. Luns continued to live in Brussels until his death; he felt that the Netherlands had become too progressive.

Jakob Gijsbert (Jaap) de Hoop Scheffer (January 1, 2004 - August 1, 2009)

Main topics: Kosovo, 9/11, "war on terror," Afghanistan, Iraq.



US President George W. Bush and Laura Bush stand with NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and his wife Jeannine de Hoop Scheffer Monday, May 21, 2007, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, Texas. "The Secretary General of NATO has been a strong advocate of fighting terror, spreading freedom, helping the oppressed and modernizing this important alliance," said the President in his remarks to the press.

Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. "I don't have to give Mark Rutte any advice."

When De Hoop Scheffer was still foreign minister, British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw told his wife at a dinner that they were thinking in NATO circles about De Hoop Scheffer's candidacy as SG. He himself knew nothing at the time. De Hoop Scheffer: "It was a foggy process of several months to gauge support among allies and reach consensus. In 2004, I took office as SG. The SG is often sought from medium-sized countries that themselves do

not have too pronounced interests or agendas and are therefore less inclined to interfere with the work of 'their' SG."

He already knew NATO well. As a "young fellow," De Hoop Scheffer worked at the Dutch Permanent Representation to NATO. "That was still in the time of the Cold War, so at the time of the 'classic NATO.' The discussions were about the placement of nuclear missiles and there was a substantial military presence in Germany in view of a possible attack from the Soviet Union. Many Dutch soldiers were stationed in Germany at the time. But above all, NATO was a political-military alliance. It was not only about weapons and troops, but certainly also about shared values such as freedom and democracy. Interestingly, within NATO at that time there was already the Eurogroup, where common European consultations took place with the knowledge and consent of the United States. Given contemporary discussions about Europe's role and contribution to NATO, that fact is not without significance."

WHITE WINE

In 2004, he found a totally different NATO. He defined it as an "expeditionary NATO". NATO was in Afghanistan with 100,000 troops, there was a peacekeeping mission in Kosovo and NATO provided humanitarian aid after the massive earthquake in Kashmir. De Hoop Scheffer: "NATO became a bit too much of a toolbox from which everyone thought they could get what they wanted. Economizing on defense was at the order of the day. The Western European democracies had settled into a beach chair, as it were, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the implosion of the Soviet Union and poured themselves a proverbial glass of white wine. They counted on the United States for their security, on Russia for their energy and on China for cheap products. Moreover, the problem with Western democracies is their limited horizons due to regular elections, which makes long-term political and parliamentary support for deployment difficult. Take the Afghanistan fatigue that occurred. If we are not careful, the same will happen again with Ukraine! Actually, no serious operation could be undertaken anymore without a leading role of the United States, because Europe's own defense budgets had been drastically cut under the guise of peace dividends."

TABOE

During his time as SG, of course, 9/11 and the subsequent "war on terror" - the military campaign launched by U.S. President George Bush Jr. to drive out terrorism worldwide - were major issues. For him, this meant quite a bit of balancing between two camps. Within NATO, there was a big divide between the United States on one side and France and Germany on the other over the invasion of Iraq. By still accepting the American request to supply troops and thus join the mission in Afghanistan, this dispute could be stripped of its sharp edges and a gesture toward President Bush could be made. But also in Afghanistan the real issues were circumvented. De Hoop Scheffer: "The word 'war' was out of the question in the Netherlands and in Germany the word 'Krieg' was taboo. In the Netherlands there was talk of a reconstruction mission. The realization that this was far too rosy a picture only broke through when Dutch soldiers also paid the highest price."

NORM

All US presidents raised the issue of the allies' defense budget. That was an ongoing theme. De Hoop Scheffer: "Eventually the two-percent norm was set at the 2014 summit in Wales, but many countries could not or would not keep up with that, until very recently. That norm will go somewhere toward three and a half percent of Gross Domestic Product for pure defense expenditures and one and a half percent for related infrastructure and cybersecurity) at the upcoming summit, I suspect. What is new is that failure to meet agreements made on the spending norm is now directly linked to America's guaranteed protection of those countries. Ultimately, a strong, unified NATO is also an American interest, and Putin must remain convinced that NATO's deterrent is and remains credible."

HATCHET

Then Putin's Russia. "When Russian nationalist and hardliner Dmitry Rogozin was appointed NATO ambassador in 2008, as a welcome gift he brought me a big box that contained a huge hatchet. Rogozin said the hatchet was now buried, but everything showed the opposite. Back in 2005, Putin called the collapse of the Soviet Union the greatest geopolitical disaster of the 20th century! At the Munich Security Conference two years later, Putin was adamant and his speech contained essentially all the same language he uses today. A year later he invaded Georgia and since then the threat has only increased. Unfortunately, it has taken a long time for this realization to sink in everywhere. Take the Nordstream project that was seen as something purely economic without looking at the geopolitical security aspects." The same applies to Ukraine, according to De Hoop Scheffer. "Ukraine has been a headache for NATO allies since 2008; there was and is simply no consensus on the issue. For example, at the NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008, Ukraine was actually sent off empty-handed with the sentence: 'The question is not if, but when Ukraine will become a NATO member.' And even after the annexation of Crimea, only a weak response followed. However, it was maneuvering between Bush and Merkel. As SG, I could not but defend that somewhat half-hearted formula that the parties finally agreed upon. Only now are we seeing a real strengthening of the eastern flank, also because Sweden and Finland have recently joined." Hasn't NATO been too intrusive? Wasn't the expansion going too fast? Putting yourself in Putin's shoes, didn't it come across as threatening?

De Hoop Scheffer: "The rapid pace of expansion has indeed been criticized. But what would the situation be if it had not happened? The people of the Baltic States had already suffered under the tsars, the revolutionaries, the Nazis and the Soviet regime. Without NATO membership, they would now be under Putin's thumb!"

SOFT POWER

Emotional were the ceremonies at the 2004 accession of new NATO members. "Numerous attendees had tears in their eyes as their flags were raised and they felt protected from the oppression they had experienced firsthand."

With Putin, vigilance remains necessary. De Hoop Scheffer: "With Putin, you never know. Some experts expect Russia to be strong enough by 2030 to test NATO militarily. In essence, they are already doing that through so-called hybrid warfare, or fighting by other means through, for example, subversion, fake information and destruction of (data) infrastructure."

At least as bad, he says, is another problem. "Under Trump, it seems that the United States is deliberately letting its 'soft power' slip out of its hands. Trump doesn't seem to realize how important soft power is, for example, in relations with emerging powers and developing countries. Through aid, all kinds of UN organizations and the like, you can not only do a lot of good, but also build good political relations. The demolition of USAID (aid in the broadest sense through, for example, HIV medication and vaccines) is now causing an outright disaster with perhaps hundreds of thousands of victims. Europe must somehow take over some of these projects. We cannot abandon these people to their fate and, in a political sense, not let Africa fall into the hands of the Russians and Chinese!"

De Hoop Scheffer does not envy Rutte. "All in all, we are at a difficult moment with all the tensions internally and externally. I don't have to give Mark Rutte any advice. His main task is to keep things together so that NATO can move forward. He can do that like no other and that responsibility is in good hands with him. We can and should wish him much success."



Jaap de Hoop Scheffer (seen from the back) at the table on April 3, 2008 in Bucharest on the sidelines of the NATO summit. Also at the table: UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, Norwegian Defense Minister Anne-Grete Stroem-Erichsen, Russian President Vladimir Putin, translator, Romanian President's wife Maria Basescu, translator, U.S. President George W. Bush, Romanian President Traian Basescu, U.S. President's wife Laura Bush, German Bundeskanzler Angela Merkel. Photo: Sorin Lupsa (AFP)

From peace ship to NATO summit

The Hague has been the city of major international congresses and conferences for more than a century. World history is regularly written here.

By Benjamin Duerr

The Hague had almost gone down in history as the place where a world war was ended. Who was the dove of peace? The famous American entrepreneur Henry Ford! Besides being a successful car manufacturer, Ford was a pacifist - but a lot less successful. In 1915, when World War I was raging, Ford hired the ocean liner Oscar II to bring peace activists from around the world to The Hague. There he wanted to bring the warring parties together. The journey began in New York. At stopovers in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, more and more activists boarded, but his peace mission failed. He himself fell ill and left the ship; participants accused each other of being spies of the superpowers and argued about how negotiations would be conducted. Still, Ford's "peace ship" attracted worldwide attention - including its destination, The Hague.



‘The Tug of Peace’, gepubliceerd in Punch, 15 december 1915.

Wise lesson

That Ford wanted to sail to The Hague was no accident: the city was known worldwide as the place where peace and justice could be achieved. For years, major international congresses and conferences have been held here, where world history is regularly written. The 2025 NATO Summit is the latest meeting in a whole series.

Not only because of its long history and strong reputation, international conferences regularly take place in The Hague. The city has now built a lot of infrastructure and gained practical experience in organizing large gatherings. Institutions such as the municipality, the police, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the World Forum employ teams with knowledge of aspects such as protocol and security.

During the Hague Peace Conference in 1899, the first major international meeting, there were already sentries in front of Paleis Huis ten Bosch to ensure security. Nevertheless, an Armenian activist then managed to enter the meeting venue without much difficulty with counterfeit business cards as an "official" participant. A wise lesson. At the NATO summit more than 125 years later, the police will deploy 27,000 personnel.

War and peace

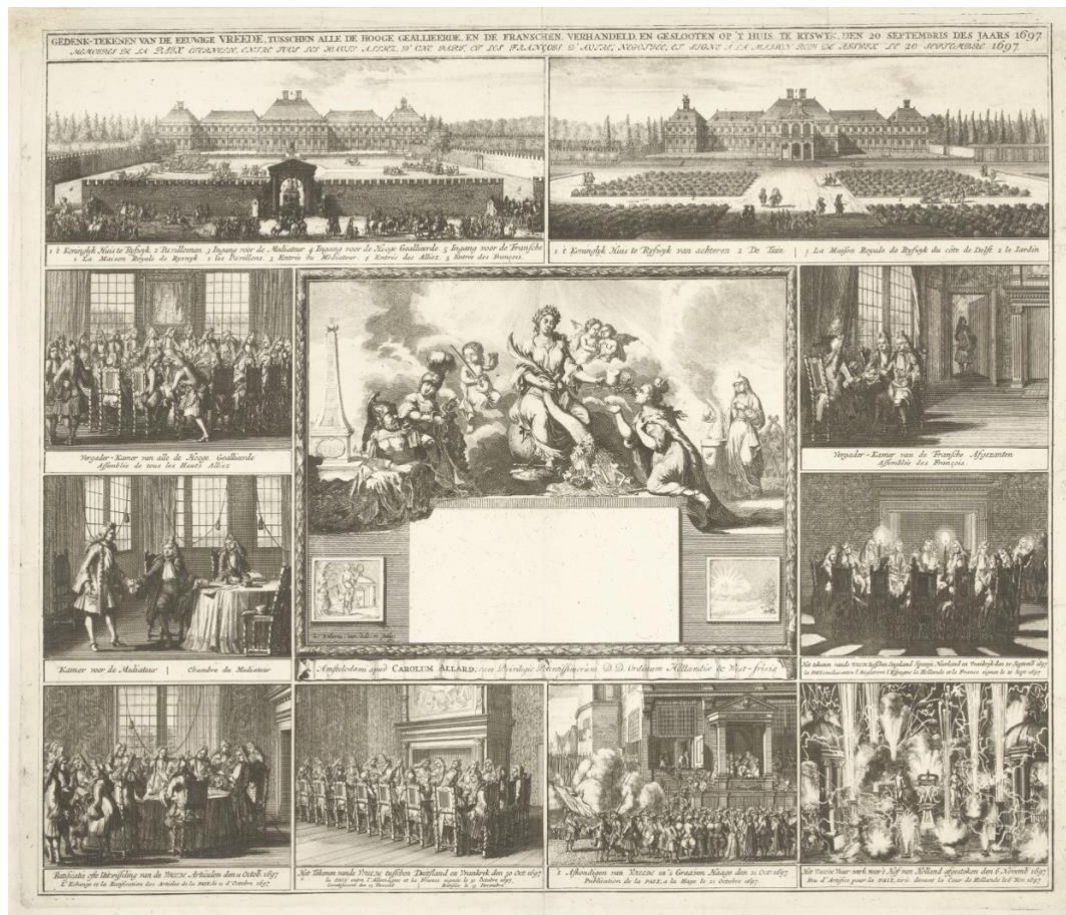
This tradition can be traced back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Holland was a place of refuge for the oppressed and, because of its enormous prosperity, it was also attractive. It was the country of philosopher Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), whose effigy stands in the garden of the Peace Palace for good reason. He described war as immoral and disastrous. In his work "Querela Pacis" (The Complaint of Peace), he depicts an angel of peace speaking out against nationalism. 'The Miracle of Holland' Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) followed in his footsteps a few decades later. One of his most famous works is "De iure belli ac pacis" (On the Law of War and Peace) from 1625 that laid the foundation for modern international law. Nor can you ignore philosopher of peace and law Benedictus de Spinoza (1632-1677), who lived in The Hague for seven years; he died in his attic room on Paviljoensgracht and is buried in the Nieuwe Kerk.

The Hague Peace and the Hague Treaties

Along with prosperity, the time of the Republic of the United Netherlands certainly brought strife and war, including the Eighty Years' War. And that also meant making peace again and again. For example, on August 6, 1661, Portugal and the Republic of the United Netherlands agreed to cede New Holland (Dutch Brazil) to Portugal, an event that became known as the Peace of The Hague. In 1697, The Hague - or rather Rijswijk - hosted its first major international conference. In that year, numerous diplomats met at Huis ter Nieuburch. This Peace of Rijswijk brought the Nine Years' War between France and the Grand Alliance of, among others, the Holy Roman Empire, Spain and the Dutch Republic to an end.

On Feb. 17, 1720, Philip V of Spain and an alliance of England, France, Austria and the Republic concluded the Treaty of The Hague. It ended the War of the Quadruple Alliance, a conflict between Philip V of Spain and an alliance of England, France, Austria and the Republic.

Three centuries later, major conferences would again take place. Among lawyers, The Hague gained prominence at the end of the nineteenth century through the sessions of the Hague Conference on Private International Law. Delegates from different countries then began to better align rules and legal systems to make trade and communication between states easier, for example.



In 1697, The Hague hosted its first major international conference, Peace of Rijswijk. Numerous diplomats met at Huis ter Nieuwburg. Print: Jan van Vianen. (Rijksmuseum Amsterdam)

A few years later, with the Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907, the worldwide rise of The Hague as a city of peace and justice also took hold in international politics. Delegations made agreements on arms control, the law of war and the peaceful settlement of conflicts. At the Second Hague Peace Conference, the foundation stone for the Peace Palace was laid, the first international court of justice was established, and the law that still applies today in times of war. 'Its memory will forever be a bright spot in the annals of our country,' Dutch Foreign Minister Willem Hendrik de Beaufort said at the conference's conclusion. 'For this meeting opened a new era in the history of international relations.'

Voice of Europe

A new era indeed began not only for law and international politics - also for The Hague. In the years that followed, the city continued to attract new groups. The Hague became the place for congresses organized by social movements and for diplomatic conferences where delegates from governments met.

In 1907, for example, a Zionist Congress took place where hundreds of participants worked to establish a Jewish state and, for example, established Hebrew as the future language - still the official language of the State of Israel. In 1915, more than a thousand people came to the International Congress of Women to advocate, among other things, suffrage and other women's rights.

After World War II, plans for European cooperation were made at the Congress of Europe. In early May 1948, influential politicians such as British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and

later German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, philosophers Bertrand Russel and Raymond Aron, and economist Jean Monnet gathered in the Knights' Hall at the Binnenhof.

This congress, Churchill said in his opening address, can rightly claim to be the voice of Europe and came together to create a new Europe. The participants proposed, among other things, the abolition of trade barriers, a European parliament and a human rights treaty. Many of these ideas have since been realized, such as the creation of the European Union's internal market, the European Parliament and the European Convention on Human Rights. Once again, a congress in The Hague proved to be the cradle for pioneering international cooperation.

Coat of arms

When congresses and conferences end with a final document, it is customary to name it after the place where the meeting was held. Thanks to the many conferences on diverse topics, dozens of treaties and declarations therefore bear the name of The Hague: from the 1899 Hague Conventions on the Law of War and the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in Armed Conflict, to the 1993 Hague Adoption Convention to protect children in intercountry adoptions. The name of The Hague is thus firmly established in international law. They are written witnesses to The Hague's rich history as a place of congresses and conferences and as a city of peace and justice, as has been the city's motto under its coat of arms since May 9, 2012.

'Vote for a Woman': from clever voting tip to systemic change

The personal need to be represented, both for herself and for all women, transformed Devika Partiman (b. 1988) into founding "Vote for a Woman". With her organization, she has been working tirelessly for more inclusive and representative politics in the Netherlands since 2017. In a world where democracy does not always mean inclusive representation, Partiman is an example of how to make your voice heard despite inequality and resistance.



'What if men were mistreated and abused so much? Then more would be done about it'

Leading up to the Just Peace Festival, we are highlighting the themes of the festival. You are the perfect person to talk about the theme of democracy! Can you tell us a little more about your organization Vote for a Woman?

"Vote for a Woman" began as a campaign to vote smartly for women. Only about 30 percent of Dutch politicians are women, and among those women there is very little diversity. We have since grown into a foundation that works broadly for gender equality in politics - from the water board to the House of Representatives, from municipalities to the European Parliament. Among other things, Vote for a Woman offers mentoring programs, lobbies for better leave arrangements and fights against online hatred and intimidation toward female politicians."

Why are you doing this work?

"When push comes to shove, you see that classic women's rights, such as abortion, are not safe in the hands of the majority of men. The inequality of women and girls is so normalized. What if men were mistreated and abused so much? Then more would be done about it. For example, look at Sunny Bergman's recent documentary "Blue Balls and Other Rape Myths" about sexual abuse. So many things are still seriously wrong.

'The biggest challenge is to get political parties to really move. Many administrators express support but take no action'

What challenges do you face in achieving gender equality?

"The biggest challenge is to get political parties to really move. Many administrators express support but take no action. I get around the laconic 'yes, of course everyone must be safe in politics and representation is important' and then make no commitments, by finding ways to force change through public pressure and strategic communication. For example, we successfully contributed to 'gender mainstreaming' in Amsterdam's policy, which means that from now on every policy choice is considered in terms of its impact on women and girls. And more and more political parties are putting more women on their electoral lists."

'95 percent in politics are college-educated, while college-educated people make up only 36 percent of society'

How do you make politics accessible and democracy inclusive for all?

"There are still quite a few barriers that prevent many women and other citizens from being politically active. For women specifically, you can think of traditional gender patterns that thwart their ambition, the fact that we unconsciously accept leadership by (white) men more readily, but also practical thresholds such as that meeting times often do not match the needs of women and that leave arrangements for politicians are poorly regulated. But there are also barriers that transcend gender and affect more people. Consider prejudices about education level: there is a strong idea that you have to have an academic background to participate in politics. Some 95 percent of our politicians are college-educated, while college-educated people make up only 36 percent of society. Second, people of color unfortunately often experience discrimination - including in politics - and have fewer role models who came before them. There are large immigrant communities in the Netherlands, such as Somali, Eritrean, Moluccan, Indonesian, Vietnamese and Chinese Dutch, that you hardly see back. In addition, the experiences of role models, such as Sylvana Simons, show how much you can be judged on the color of your skin. This has a discouraging effect. You also see people with a migration background being pitted against each other: 'We already have one in the top 10!' We must continue to question the white norm and work toward a politics where everyone feels welcome."

'Representation is about increasing the chances of being heard'

How do you experience the current political shifts to the right?

"The growing influence of the extreme right and conservative forces in the Netherlands worries me. Especially because of the undermining of women's rights, the rule of law and democratic institutions. You see in right-wing parties that women are deliberately put prominently forward to give the appearance of being inclusive. But racist women also exist. Homophobic women also exist. As a result, you might think: it won't help if more women become politically active. But research clearly shows that that is not true. The mistake people sometimes make is that they confuse representation of a group with the actions of an individual. Representation is about increasing the chances of being heard: the more women there are in politics, the more likely the interests of women and girls will be on the agenda and heard. Focusing on the individual is distracting from the core; we need to focus on the group!"

'We need to be more creative, old means no longer work'

How do you keep going despite everything that is happening in the world?

"I see the building blocks of democracy crumbling. Petitions with 40,000 signatures, State Council opinions, official investigations, debate requests and demonstrations are being ignored. Traditional avenues of democratic influence and debate are being undermined. We need to be more creative, old means no longer work. Civil society must adapt to a political arena that increasingly seems to have deaf ears."

From smart voting campaign to systemic change, you know how to inspire us with Vote for a Woman. What can you do yourself?

"Become a member of a political party, you can do so from the age of 14! This way you get an insight into how things work behind the scenes and you can have an influence. Once you are a member, you receive newsletters on programs, see how the list is made, and you can go to local meetings where you get to know other members and politicians. Change must come from the outside, but also from the inside."

Read the full interview at www.justpeacethehague.org

Devika Partiman's mission remains clear: until women have an equal voice in decision-making, her work remains essential. In this regard, voting for women is not an end in itself, but a powerful tool for structural change.

Watch/listen/read tip for readers: Podcast Damn Honey!

Eight generations over eight decades United Nations



Olivia



Emile Lambrinos



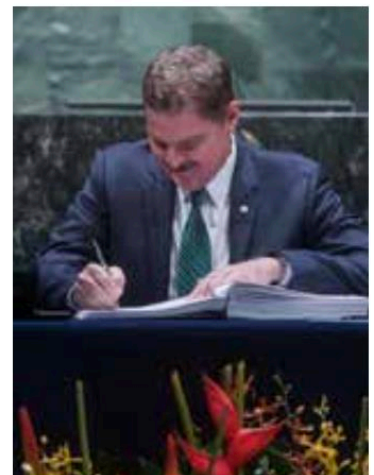
Iris de Leede



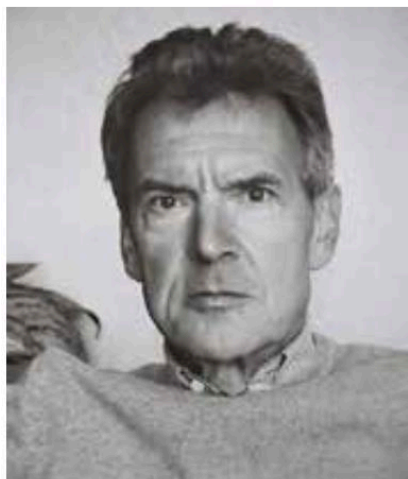
Dan Petrică



Caecilia Johanna van Peski



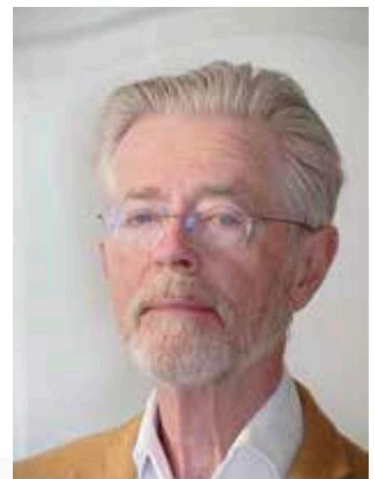
Mike Eman



Vincent van den Bergen



Paul Meerts



Joris Voorhoeve

Eighty years ago, in June 1945, the United Nations (UN) was founded. In each decade, the organization had to face new challenges. How do different generations view the UN and its pursuit of peace, justice and development?

Olivia (2011), high school student

"When countries cooperate better, there is less room for war - and more opportunity for a fair world for all. The United Nations plays an important role in this. But if young people are the future, we also need to be heard today. After all, you can't make a future without involving young people, can you?"

Emile Lambrinos (2003), law student and president Leiden Caribbean Community

"Peace is more than silence after a war. For my generation, peace means being heard, having equal opportunities and being safe. As an island child, peace is also cultural belonging. True peace requires justice, participation and respect for everyone, regardless of origin. 'Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of justice,' said Martin Luther King Jr."

Iris de Leede (1995), diplomat at the Dutch Permanent Representation to the UN in New York

"Only at the UN do all countries have a voice and engage with each other. I learned there to really listen to others - as difficult as that can sometimes be - and to focus on what we have in common. Successful cooperation in the UN is only possible if it remains a place where everyone is adequately represented, including future generations. That means that the pie must be shared with more and so some will have to give up a piece."

Dan Petrică (b. 1989), associate professor and international relations researcher

"The UN is imperfect - hampered by vetoes and outdated structures - but is still the most representative platform for global dialogue and coordination. Although its carry-through power is limited, its international role remains unmatched. With real reform - more inclusive, agile and willing to be more accountable - it can adapt to current crises and play a crucial role in addressing the challenges of the future."

Caecilia Johanna van Peski (1970), commander in the Royal Navy

"The 1973 oil crisis constitutes one of my earliest childhood memories. My mother bought thick duvets for the whole family in case there was no more heating. The oil crisis prompted the UN to call for a New International Economic Order with fair trade and financial structures. When I entered the job market in the 1990s, the pursuit of fair distribution and sustainability became my personal commitment."

Mike Eman (1961), prime minister of Aruba

"When I signed the Paris Climate Agreement, on behalf of the Kingdom, in the solemn UN plenary hall, I felt a silent promise in the air. A small island was given a big voice. That moment embodied what the UN is: a place where every nation counts, and where hope remains a common language."

Vincent van den Bergen (1950), former head of global environmental policy at the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM)

"I was born in January 1950 in The Hague. As a toddler, I walked by Grandpa's hand from the Bezuidenhout neighborhood, on my way to the bakery, past the rubble of the March 1944 bombing. Meanwhile, institutions had been created to promote peace and order. Later, I

worked on UN treaties myself. Criticism is possible, but demolishing UN institutions without putting something better in their place leads to chaos. And chaos we must prevent."

Paul Meerts (1946), negotiation expert

"At the Clingendael Institute in The Hague, the United Nations has always been a rewarding subject for role-plays. Security Council simulations in particular were a great success, because the Security Council has quite an influence on the behavior of countries. We usually made up a crisis that could flare up years later. Unfortunately, our predictions often proved correct."

Joris Voorhoeve (1945), former professor of international organizations

"The UN was able to play a positive role in the 1950s. True, the Security Council was unable to fulfill the UN's primary task of maintaining peace due to the veto power of the so-called Big Five, but in other areas the UN did advance world consultation and cooperation to some extent. The wars that have raged and continue to rage, and the painfully wide disparities in wealth and well-being, show that the UN needs major reform. But thorough reform is blocked by the veto powers and by so-called "national interests... So it is imperative that the rule of law democracies work well together to help address those issues and better enforce international law."



Peace demonstration The Hague, 550,000 people demonstrate against placement of cruise missiles among other things, October 29, 1983. Photo: Rob C. Croes/Anefo (Nationaal Archief)

THE CHOICE IS OURS

International law is flouted. Peacekeeping missions fail. Humanitarian aid is discontinued for lack of funds or due to situations that are too threatening. The war machine is running at full speed. Defense budgets go up sharply. Many billions are pumped into the arms industry. Peace and justice organizations, on the other hand, are facing cuts that are shaking their very existence.

May 18, 2025. More than 100,000 people called on the government to draw a red line regarding Israel's actions in Gaza. Is this loud call for peace a trend reversal? What needs to happen to avert all these threats and give humanity a new perspective? Before another world war breaks out, the third one?

PACT FOR THE FUTURE

In September 2024, the heads of state and government "representing the peoples of the world" met "to protect the needs and interests of present and future generations". Together, as the United Nations (UN), they concluded a new treaty, the Pact for the Future, an endorsement and renewal of the now 80-year-old United Nations Charter. They decided to take actions to promote sustainable development and international peace and security. 'Global transformation is an opportunity for renewal and progress based on our common humanity. Advances in knowledge, science, technology and innovation can provide a breakthrough to a better and more sustainable future for all. The choice is ours. THE CHOICE IS OURS.'

Does this reassure given the unruly reality of all those wars and conflicts worldwide? Shouldn't the people make themselves heard much louder and more often, as they did in the 1960s through the 1980s, the decades before the fall of the Berlin Wall, when the Cold War came to an end?



Charter of the United Nations is signed by Dr. Alexander Loudon, Dutch ambassador to the United States. Behind him the Dutch delegation (including representatives of overseas territories) (Nationaal Archief)

Wessel Toonen on behalf of the Netherlands Association for the United Nations 'Consensus must be reached again'

"The Charter of the United Nations laid the groundwork for the founding of the United Nations on Oct. 24, 1945, setting forth the ground rules of international relations as a kind of Constitution for the world. A ban on the use of force, respect for universal human rights and recognition of sovereign member states were to ensure peace and justice worldwide.

Opening the conference on April 25, 1945 - World War II was still in full swing - U.S. President Truman spoke to the three hundred envoys from fifty countries, "You, participants in this conference, are the architects of a better world. Our future is in your hands. Your efforts at this conference will determine whether a suffering humanity can achieve a just and lasting peace.' On June 26, 1945, the Charter was signed. The Secretary General of the Conference Alger Hiss himself brought the Charter to the White House; the only parachute in the military plane was attached not to him but to the Charter, so carefully did he handle it."

"Eighty years later, the world looks completely different. For example, the end of the Cold War and the emergence of newly independent countries have fundamentally changed the composition and priorities of the organization. The United Nations now has 193 member states with widely varying achievements in democracy, prosperity and respect for human rights. In San Francisco, only four women sat at the negotiating table. African countries - located on the now fastest growing continent in the world - were not heard or even invited. The word 'climate' is completely missing from the text."

"The UN Charter was always intended to be a living document. Although the Charter makes no mention of terrorism, the United Nations did take urgent steps on counterterrorism after 9/11. The

recently expressed desire of member states to expand the Security Council for better representativeness and reflection of contemporary realities requires an amendment to Article 23 of the UN Charter that determines the membership of the Security Council. Thus, in order to future-proof the United Nations, consensus must again be reached."

PAX, the largest peace organization in the Netherlands

'Netherlands should act as their ally'

"The Dutch government must make every effort to maintain and strengthen the multilateral system of which the UN is the linchpin. The system is far from perfect, but it is the only thing there is to prevent the world from being at the mercy of a struggle between different power blocs, where power and violence prevail, and not peace and justice. The Pact for the Future is a watered-down version of what we envisioned. But no Pact for the Future would have become an unmitigated disaster for the entire multilateral system."

"PAX is deeply concerned about the credibility of the Netherlands as the host of the main institutions of international law. With allies, the Netherlands rightly invokes international law as justification for providing armed support to Ukraine to defend itself against Russia's war of aggression. At the same time, the Netherlands and other European countries continue to support Israel and look away from the genocide in Gaza. The criticism now voiced by the Dutch government toward Israel is still far too cautious and weak, and still does not lead to concrete steps to put more pressure on Israel. By this attitude of double standards, European countries, and the Netherlands as host of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court in the first place, are rendering themselves untrustworthy. On the contrary, led by South Africa, countries of the Global South are appealing to the institutions of international law to stop Israel's genocide in Gaza. The Netherlands should act as their ally."



United4Peace: a more proactive peace movement

Photographer Dolph Kessler's work took him to many places around the world, including Ukraine, where he created the photo book "Lviv, city of paradoxes" (2014). He finds the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 terrible, but he does not like the one-sided narrative that placed all the blame on Putin. So he wrote the book "War or Peace, Want to Win or Draw" (June 2024). His conclusion? In geopolitical conflicts, the stakes should not be increasing power but maintaining peace. He calls this the "peace-oriented preventive dialogue".

Dolph: "The renewed pursuit of a peaceful world requires clear choices. The United Nations must return to the center of power. There must also be a new, active, broad and international peace movement that can make an impact. The peace movement is enormously fragmented and may also become more proactive. George Kennan, the former U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, proclaimed back in 1997 that further expansion of NATO would be a "fatal error". Now we often lag

behind events. This is happening again now with the conflict between China and the U.S. that could have even more terrible consequences than the Ukraine conflict. Why is no one addressing that?"

"Such a new peace movement - I call it United4Peace - I think could learn a lot from Greenpeace, which is completely self-supporting and has over 3 million donors worldwide. Since most people want peace and not war, there should be enough support for it."

First of all, there needs to be a proper framework. "I am thinking, for example, of independent think tanks that monitor and analyze conflicts, focusing on the role of dominant countries and blocs in the escalation of conflicts. I also think of 'logic of peace teams' that can be deployed in conflict areas, where they work with local peace organizations.

In addition, United4Peace facilitates independent journalism to counterbalance the mostly deterrence and "logic of war" based reporting of established media. In short, the ambitions are big and require an entrepreneurial approach, with clear goals and financial independence. Perhaps Bill Gates' organization could be interested in this. War always creates new poverty, and his organization wants to spend nearly \$10 billion a year on poverty alleviation."

The QR code takes you to the first outline of Dolph's organization in formation.



Marije Lieuwens distributes poster 'Peace Now'

Everywhere in the Netherlands you see the 'Peace Now' poster behind windows. Marije Lieuwens, creator of the poster: "They are now hanging all over the Netherlands, including at sports clubs and at the hairdresser's. The poster now even goes all over the world, even in the shelters of Kharkiv and in Sudan."

Marije started the poster campaign in November 2023 in response to what was happening in Gaza and Israel. "I thought: the whole world is on fire, I have to do something," she said. The poster was designed by artist Max Kisman. "People use the posters to show that they are concerned about the horrific events in the world and signal that they want to see things differently."

The poster is not attached to an organization with branding around it. It costs Marije money and a lot



of time. You can support her action, see QR code.

Officials protest Israel policy government

It's an unusual sight: officials protesting their own government and minister every week, for more than 75 weeks now. It started with Foreign Affairs officials themselves. They could not stomach the government's failure to take any serious action against the Israeli government when it was demonstrably committing crimes against humanity and violating human rights. Soon others joined in. Every week there are now some 450 of them. "How can you take the oath of office to the Constitution that enshrined in Article 90 the promotion of international law and at the same time cooperate in the implementation of a policy that ignores this article?" said Angélique Eijpe, one of the initiators. The limit of normal loyalty had been reached. So the group christened itself "Officials and the Constitution" and is standing up for consistent compliance with international law and a permanent cease-fire and full humanitarian access to Gaza. The protests are causing visible discomfort among the political and official leadership of the ministry. There is also a lot of publicity surrounding them. Eijpe: "Of course, you can't expect the protest to make the news every week, but the coverage on social media with thousands of followers continues tirelessly."

'The UN was not created to take us to heaven, but to avoid hell'
(former UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld)

'The world is over-armed, but peace is under-funded'
(former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon)

The United Nations braces for dramatic cuts and massive restructuring *



The UN building in New York, photo: private collection

The United Nations is preparing for its most sweeping restructuring in decades as it grapples with a spiraling financial crisis and waning support from key contributors. Under Secretary-General António Guterres' so-called "UN80" initiative, the UN Secretariat could see a 20% budget cut and the elimination of nearly 7,000 jobs by 2026.

According to a memo by the UN's controller seen by Colum Lynch at Devex, the cuts target mid- to high-level posts across the Secretariat's 35,000-strong workforce. Internal memos, confirmed by Reuters' John Shiffman, instruct department heads to identify the necessary reductions by June 13, ahead of the next budget cycle beginning in January.

A funding collapse driven by politics

The financial shortfall making drastic cuts necessary is driven in large part by the United States. US President Donald Trump's administration has proposed eliminating nearly 90% of funding for international organizations, including the UN. An internal memo reviewed by Adam Taylor and John Hudson of The Washington Post outlined intentions to discontinue US funding for the UN, NATO and twenty other organizations. In the meantime, the plan was approved by a vote of the US House of Representatives earlier in May. If confirmed by the Senate, this would mean the UN losing its main contributor accounting for 13 billion US dollars of funding or more than a quarter of its collective budget.

In addition, US arrears at the UN currently top 1.5 billion US dollar, and the liquidity crisis is worsened by delayed payments from China, the second-largest contributor. There appears to be no hope that other UN member states will step in to make up for the expected funding gaps. According to Richard Gowan of the International Crisis Group, diplomats and UN staff talk about the need of doing "less with less" but no one "seems to know exactly what it will mean".

While Guterres has framed the UN80 reforms as a proactive modernization effort, observers see them as a direct response to this funding retreat. As pointed out by Damian Lilly in The Global Observatory, the Secretary-General's rhetoric of "fit for purpose multilateralism" masks the urgency of keeping the UN solvent amid collapsing financial contributions.

Critics have decried the rushed nature of the reforms. The Devex report cites UN staff union leader Ian Richards, who warned that "managers still have no idea how to implement this." Former UN relief chief Martin Griffiths called it a "plan about cuts, not reform." While the proposed downsizing appears to exempt top-paid Under-Secretary-Generals, it threatens departments including peacekeeping, disarmament, development, and human rights. Insiders according to a PassBlue report warn that core functions and mandates will be affected.

Structural reform or bureaucratic reshuffle?

UN80 envisions consolidating overlapping mandates, merging functions, and streamlining field operations. Lilly details in his report reform ideas such as merging the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs with the Development Coordination Office, and possibly folding UNAIDS into WHO.

Other suggestions include combining the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization – both cash-strapped and increasingly duplicative – or enhancing collaboration between UN agencies such as those working on migration, IOM and UNHCR. A central UN Executive Secretariat is also being considered to replace fragmented governance structures.

But structural change, reform veterans warn, won't be enough. Jordan Ryan, former UN Assistant Secretary-General, argues in The Global Observatory that successful integration requires leadership, not just new organizational charts. Drawing on the 2021 UN Integration Review, he advocates for a system-wide business case protocol, behavioral reforms, and decentralized decision-making to ensure reforms are responsive to field realities.

Rethinking and opening up the UN

According to Andreas Bummel, Executive Director of Democracy Without Borders, a strong UN was needed, in particular to advance multilateral cooperation, sustainable development, human rights and humanitarian work. Efforts to modernize and streamline the UN should be welcomed and supported in principle. But pursuing them under dramatic financial pressure to implement deep cuts was concerning and difficult.

"What the UN needs is a rethink. A rethink of how it is funded, how it functions, and how it connects with the people it is meant to serve", he said. "This crisis should be a wake-up call," he added. "It's long overdue to bring citizens into the conversation about the UN's future. Strengthening democratic participation and representation could help restore legitimacy and, in turn, increase support for a strong and well-funded United Nations."

Recently, Democracy Without Borders, together with Democracy International, presented a report recommending that the UN begin using Global Citizens' Assemblies to gather public

input on key global issues, pointing out this would be “money well invested”. The organization also advocates for the establishment of a UN Parliamentary Assembly to include elected representatives, as well as the introduction of a UN World Citizens’ Initiative to allow citizens to propose matters for consideration by the General Assembly.

These proposals are also endorsed in the People’s Pact published by the Coalition for the UN We Need as a civil society alternative to the UN’s official Pact for the Future in September 2024. The People’s Pact also calls for “new and innovative forms of global taxation and financial reallocation” to support sustainable UN funding, among other things.

* Published with permission of Democracy without borders

Successes and achievements of eight decades of the United Nations

(with contributions from Caecilia J. van Peski)

The United Nations (UN), founded in 1945, has had a significant impact on peacekeeping, human rights, development and humanitarian efforts over the past 80 years.

Conflicts have been resolved in countries such as Namibia, Cambodia, Colombia and El Salvador. In the field of global security, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which provides for the control of nuclear programmes and the promotion of nuclear disarmament, was established in part through the efforts of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna. The United Nations works with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague to destroy chemical weapons and prevent their use.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) is an important milestone in the field of human rights. The Human Rights Council (UNHRC, 2006) investigates human rights violations and holds states accountable for failing to comply with the UDHR. Without these UN legal institutions and international tribunals (Rwanda, former Yugoslavia, Kosovo) and the International Criminal Court, horrific atrocities would have gone largely unpunished.

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1994) helped to establish legal rules for the use of natural resources and the prevention of environmental pollution worldwide, as well as to maintain peace on the high seas. Hugo Grotius' book *Mare Liberum* shows how international law was first described in the Netherlands, serving as the basis for the rule of law at the UN more than three hundred years later.

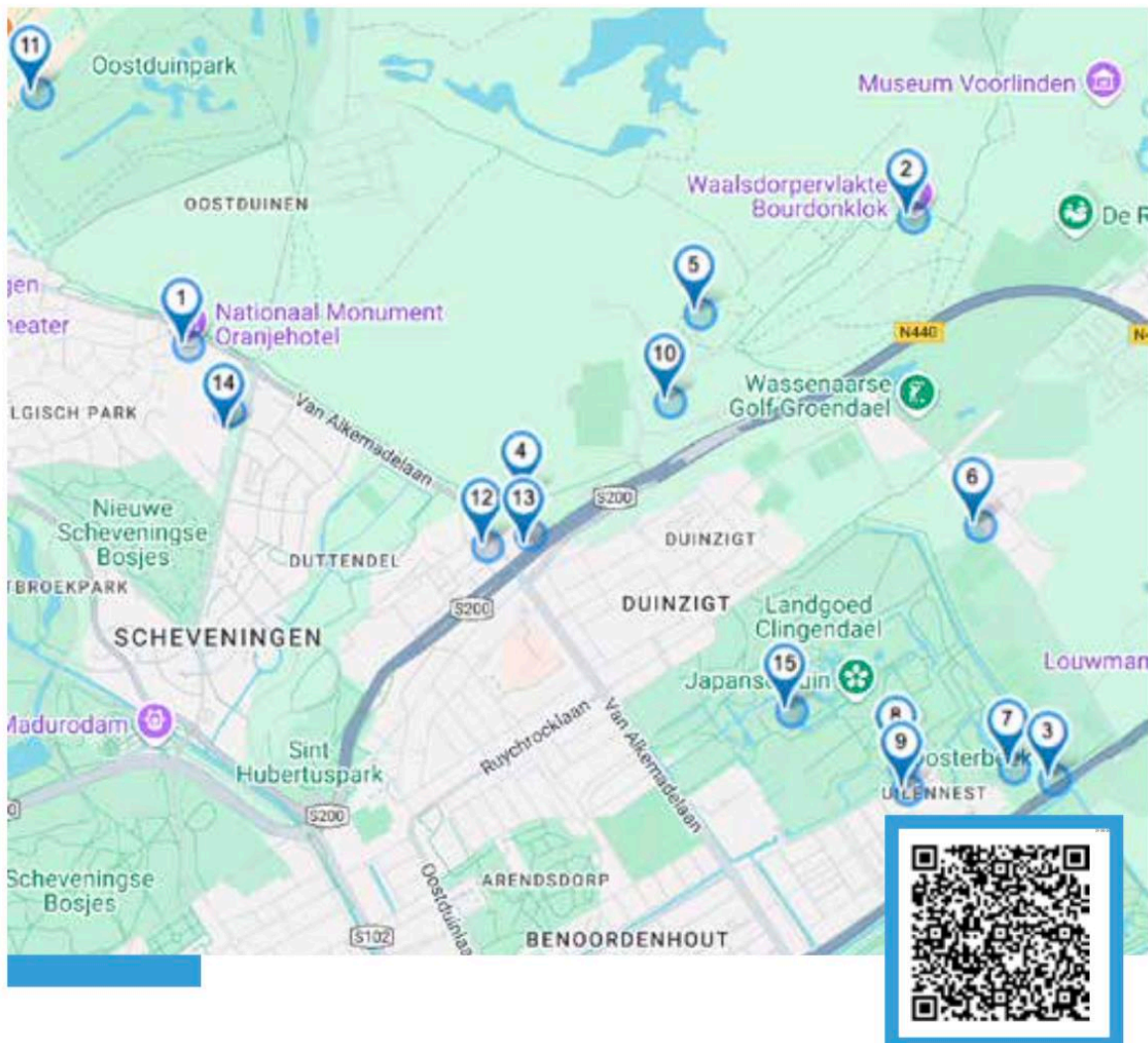
Another well-known UN organisation is the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which works to promote the welfare of children, including through the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The World Bank is the world's largest institution for development cooperation. UNESCO (known for its World Heritage Sites, among other things) has a mission to contribute to peace-building, poverty reduction, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, science, culture and communication. The World Health Organisation (WHO) plays a guiding and coordinating role in the field of health and well-being.

The UN was one of the first organisations to warn of the dangers of global warming and climate change. Since then, various UN organisations have been working to protect endangered plant and animal species.

In 2000, at the turn of the decade, the UN member states adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000–2015). In 2015, the MDGs were followed by the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2015–2030).

The backyard of the International Criminal Court

By Willem van der Ham



>> Scan the QR-code and make a tour by foot or bike. >>

The backyard of the International Criminal Court

By Willem van der Ham

In the early twentieth century, two entrepreneurs from The Hague planned to build a World Peace City in the Oostduinen. Things turned out differently. On the highest peak in the imposing dune landscape - the Oostduinen - where they wanted to see the Peace Palace rise, the International Criminal Court has been located since 2002. The area around it is by no means a peace paradise. It is a guilty landscape where the history of World War II has left deep traces. There are also reminders of the Cold War and buildings that today play a prominent role in maintaining peace and international law.

World War II

1. National Monument Oranjehotel

More than 25,000 people were imprisoned in Scheveningen prison during World War II for acts that the German occupiers saw as offenses. Since 2019, it has been a memorial center as well as a museum.

2. Waalsdorpervlakte

The monument on the Waalsdorpervlakte in The Hague was erected in memory of the civilians, including many resistance fighters, who were executed by the occupying forces in the dunes on the outskirts of the city during World War II. A commemoration is organized annually on May 4 at the monument by the Honor Platoon Waalsdorp.

3. Atlantic Wall

The approximately 2,685 kilometers long Atlantic Wall, erected by the Germans as a line of defense against attack from the sea, is still clearly visible in the Oostduinen. It consisted there of nearly one hundred bunkers, searchlight installations and other objects, and across the dunes ran tank walls and steel beams cast in concrete.

4. Maurice Kiepad

From the Oranjehotel and the Waalsdorpervlakte runs the Maurits Kiepad. Kiek knew all about radio technology and, as a spy, managed to find out military data from the Germans and transmit it to England, first in Belgium and later in the Netherlands.

5. Monument Camp Waalsdorp

The Oostduinen have been used as a military training ground for centuries. In 1940, the camp was set up as a prisoner of war camp for about 2,000 internees, but it was never used as such. During the bombardment by the German Air Force on May 10, 1940, 58 soldiers of the 1st Depot Infantry were killed in their sleep.

6. Monument food drops Duindigt

In early April 1945, the Allies and the occupying forces negotiated in the deepest secrecy about how to deliver aid to the starving population. Four places in the vicinity of the major cities in the western part of the Netherlands were designated as drop sites, including racecourse Duindigt. At noon on Sunday, April 29, 1945, about thirty British bombers dropped the first food parcels with great precision. The monument at racecourse Duindigt, unveiled on April 30, 1995, commemorates the food drops that took place here between April 29 and May 10, 1945.

7. Filmstad/land estate Oosterbeek V2

In 1935, Jewish film entrepreneur Loet C. Barnstijn opened Filmstad on the old Oosterbeek estate. The film studio complex was confiscated by the German occupiers during the war. At the end of the war, the Germans used the halls for the assembly of V2 rockets. Thus it came about that the world's first functional rockets were launched from Wassenaar territory.

Cold War

8. Seyss-Inquart bunker

Reich Commissioner of the Netherlands Seyss-Inquart took up residence in Clingendael country estate. Near his residence, a large camouflage bunker was constructed in which he could retreat in case of a foreign attack. After the Cold War, the bunker became a Command and Communications Center. At the end of the last century, the bunker fell out of use.

9. Juliana Barracks

In this originally German barracks for the Ordnungspolizei, built in 1943, the Royal Army had its headquarters from 1948-2010. In 2021, the Juliana Barracks were transformed into Julia's Park, an open living area with high-end residential units and a monumental garden that matches its surroundings and upscale residential environment.

10. NATO

In 2012, several pre-existing NATO research institutes merged into the NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCIA), an information and communications technology research center. The NCIA is the front line against cyber threats and protects NATO's networks.

11. Air Watchtower

During the Cold War, 279 air watchtowers were built in the Netherlands. Only two of them were brick buildings: Air Guard Tower 5C1 in Scheveningen and Air Guard Tower 5D1 in Oude Wetering. From 1953 to 1964, the Scheveningen tower was in use by the Air Guard Corps.

12. Frederik Barracks

Frederik Barracks was built shortly before World War II. The Admiralty building, occupied by Naval Headquarters in 1983, housed the Defense Materiel Organization (now called the Materiel and IT Command) until 2018. An approximately 10-story office building houses the headquarters of the Military Intelligence and Security Service (MIVD).

Institutions of peace and international law

13. International Criminal Court

The International Criminal Court (ICC) investigates and tries individuals accused of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression. The Court participates in a global struggle to end impunity. Currently, 124 countries are members of the ICC.

14. Scheveningen Prison

The United Nations Detention Unit (UNDU) is located in Scheveningen prison. The unit has an autonomous management structure, but uses a number of facilities available at the Dutch prison. Suspects and convicts of the ICTY and the International Criminal Court reside there in pre-trial detention under the responsibility of the United Nations.

15. Clingendael Institute

Clingendael Estate was the residence of Reich Commissioner Arthur Seyss-Inquart during World War II. In 1982, the Netherlands Institute for International Relations moved into the mansion. The institute works for the public and private sectors, including policymakers, business leaders, the Dutch armed forces, law enforcement agencies, diplomats, politicians and NGOs.

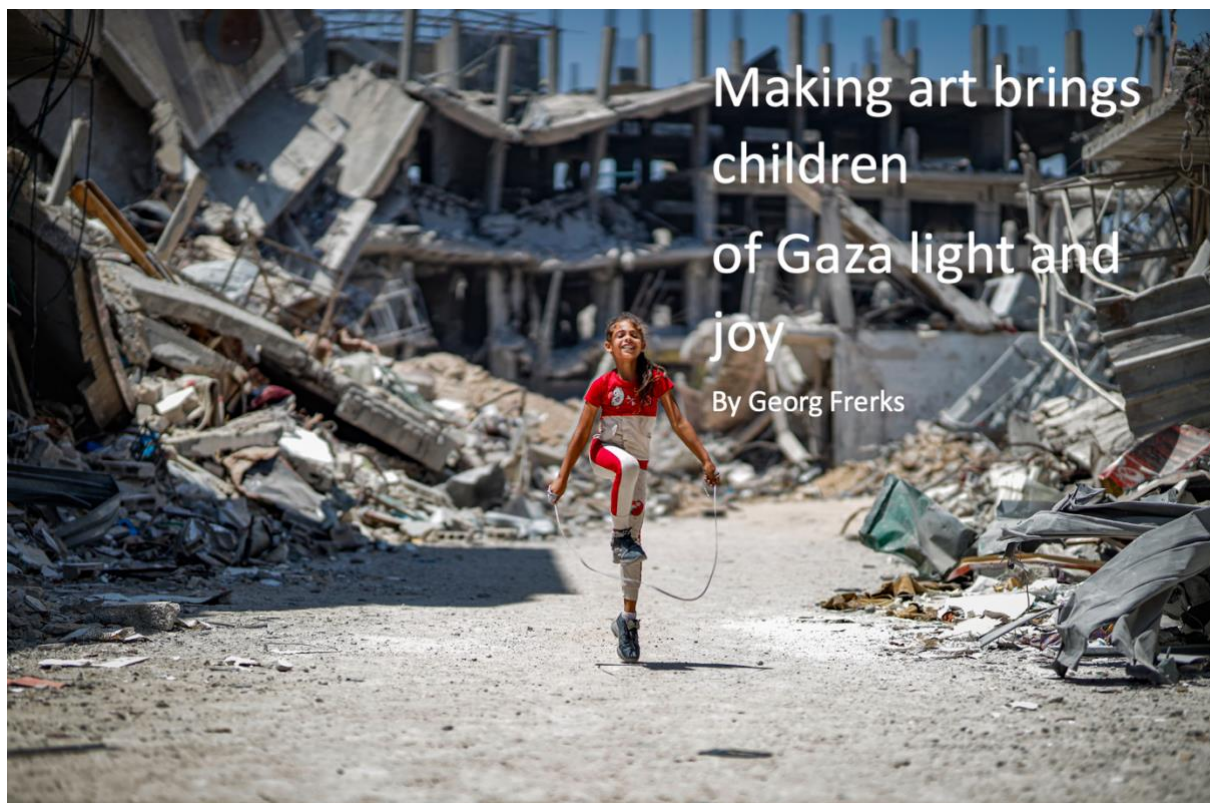


Photo: Mohammed Shurrab

HOPE FOUNDATION DOES NOT GIVE UP

Making art brings children of Gaza light and joy

The work of the HOPE Foundation in Gaza is becoming increasingly dangerous, "there are no words for that". But they continue anyway.

By Georg Frerks

Gaza, daily news. Everyone has an image of the horrors taking place there. The Hague-based sculptor Ingrid Rollema and her colleague Suzanne Groothuis keep in daily contact with the people they know so well through the app. Through the HOPE Foundation, Rollema has supported artistic projects for children in Gaza for more than 30 years.

"Earlier, then, there were occasional laughs. That's over now. Hunger is the culprit. You see people slack off, voices become weaker, the brain works less, thinking becomes more difficult. You literally feel them slowly disappearing. Children are falling out of school desks. A father in search of food for his family dropped dead. Hunger is being used as a weapon. Israel wants to make people dumb and drive them out. Everything that keeps people alive and on their feet is being destroyed. It started with bakeries, then hospitals and medical personnel followed. Food and medicine are stopped and journalists who report on this are killed. Now Israel is targeting the fabric of society and community workers like us are also being targeted. My body is walking around here, but my head is constantly in Gaza. Compared to what is going on there, the daily things from here feel so banal. I should

actually be making sculptures, but I can't. I can't detach myself from what is happening in Gaza. There are no more words for that. So the title of our 2024 annual report is 'No words'."

ART HEALS

Her cozy, cluttered studio in downtown The Hague is full of sculptures and materials. She tells how she came in contact with Palestinian pediatrician Fathi Arafat. "Fathi had a sense of the healing aspect of art to complement his medical work. On my first visit to Gaza, I had brought four pencils. A girl who had not spoken for two years carefully spoke a few words after a week of drawing. That has always stayed with me." Gaza's population is young: 65 percent of residents are under the age of 25. Many children are traumatized as a result of the conditions. Rollema: "The arts encourage imagination and thus help build self-respect and self-confidence."

The HOPE Foundation works with local artists and organizations. An Art Academy has been established and a breakdance school. The Open Studio in Khan Younis includes an Art Lab, a visual arts studio, a computer room and a library. All these activities so far reach about a thousand children a day. "One of the staff members, Mustafa, philosophizes with the children about all kinds of questions that come up, such as 'can you love someone you don't know?' He also creates poems with the children to occupy their minds. Collapsed buildings and car wrecks are painted. Rollema: "In this way their broken world is turned into something beautiful. The children watch a puppet show among the ruins. That's how you bring back a little humanity and a positive attitude and don't lose sight of human dignity."



Photo: Mohammed Shurrab

BULLDOZED

The situation makes it increasingly dangerous and difficult to continue the work. A number of buildings in which the foundation and its partners worked have been bombed to the ground. Just recently, two employees were killed: Dorgham and Ahmed. Dorgham made countless children in the refugee camps happy with his theater, traveling cinema and the

inflatable pools in which they could play. Ahmed co-founded the breakdance academy. "Yet it remains important to be able to bring another glimmer of light to this terrible tragedy," she said.

Rollema experiences that in the Netherlands there is increasing sympathy for the people of Gaza. The foundation is getting a lot of support at the moment. That is heartwarming. There are also exchanges between school classes in Gaza and the Netherlands. A correspondence was started through drawings. A new project is in the pipeline where the children will share their diaries. The idea is that in the future they will exchange recipes of their favorite foods. So that Arabic food will be made in Dutch schools. Due to the famine, this project is of course at a standstill.

The solidarity is very encouraging and keeps Rollema going. "The financial support the foundation receives is badly needed to rebuild everything. It may sound strange, but even then making art will restore some light and joy among the traumatized children of Gaza."

Those who dare to speak out will grow

On the eve of the Second World War, Charlie Chaplin addressed the world on the silver screen in one of the best speeches on peace and justice ever made. Who can write the best speech inspired by this scene from “The Great Dictator”? From the many excellent entries, we chose the speech by Peter den Hollander. He will receive the book “De droom van Den Haag” (The Dream of The Hague) by Benjamin Duerr. The winners of the second and third prizes, Bram van Dijk and Tom Nathans, will also receive this book.



Dare to be human in the safety of freedom

By Peter den Hollander

Let's be honest: we live in a time when everything seems to have to happen quickly.

We have to perform, react, meet standards whose essence we barely understand. And amid all those deadlines and opinions, I want to ask one existential question. Something big, perhaps. But also something very simple.

We have to perform, react, and meet standards whose essence we barely understand.

And amid all those deadlines and opinions, I want to ask one existential question. Something big, perhaps.

But also something very human.

What does it mean to be free?

Not freedom as “doing what you want”, but as “really daring to choose”. Spinoza said: you are only free when you understand why you do what you do. Freedom comes from insight. Not from impulse, but from awareness. It takes courage. Courage to pause, to doubt, to not follow the crowd because you think that's the right thing to do. And that is exactly what is needed to experience freedom: people who make conscious choices, not only for themselves, but also for others. But true freedom cannot exist without security. Not the security of rules and cameras, but that of trust. Of seeing and being seen. Of being given the

space to fall and get back up again. I see it in education: those who feel safe dare to speak out – and will grow. So let's create a space for each other in which safety serves freedom, rather than limiting freedom. Let's stop judging each other for our opinions, of pigeonholing. And let's listen to each other sincerely and without cynicism. That is what gives us both freedom and security.

It is not for nothing that The Hague is the city of peace and justice. The Peace Palace, built with money from Carnegie, is a symbol of something we ourselves must embody: a society in which difference is not feared but respected.

And humanity? That means respecting the freedom and security of yourself and others.

It is in the moment when you decide not to cancel someone because of a different opinion – but instead to engage in conversation. Hugo de Groot believed that reason is stronger than rhetorical violence.

We need that belief today more than ever.

So my appeal is simple: be curious. About yourself. About others.

Ask yourself what freedom really means when you look at it critically.

Dare to be human – in freedom and safety, not only when you are strong.