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Foreword

On 30 January 2006 the Dutch government asked the Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV) to produce an advisory report on the issue of 'Society and the Armed Forces', particularly on the issue of maintaining public support for the armed forces (see annexe I). The AIV was requested to expedite its report to enable the Minister of Defence to incorporate it into the update of the 2003 Budget Day Letter, which is to be sent to the House of Representatives around May 2006. In view of the urgency of the request, the AIV has limited itself to producing a short report.

The report is arranged as follows. Chapter I considers the theme of society and the armed forces. Against this background chapter II answers in turn each of the specific questions asked by the government in its request for advice. Finally, chapter III sets out the conclusions and recommendations.

The report was prepared by the AIV's Peace and Security Committee (CVV), which consists of A.L. ter Beek (CVV chair), Professor G. van Benthem van den Bergh (CVV vice-chair), Dr A. Bloed, Dr P.P. Everts, Professor F.J.M. Feldbrugge, Lieutenant General G.J. Folmer (retd), Ms B.T. van Ginkel, J.S.L. Gualtherie van Weezel, Dr P. van Ham, Professor K. Koch, Rear Admiral R.M. Lutje Schipholt (retd), Ms Dr C.M. Megens, J. Ramaker, Lieutenant General H.W.M. Satter (retd), Professor B.A.G.M. Tromp, General A.K. van der Vlis (retd) and E.P. Wellenstein. In preparing the report the CVV was assisted by J.L. Sandee and B.W. Bargerbos as liaison officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence respectively. The executive secretary was J.M.D. van Leeuwe, who was assisted by Ms S. Looijenga, trainee.

The other permanent committees of the AIV, namely the European Integration Committee (CEI), the Human Rights Committee (CMR) and the Development Cooperation Committee (COS), were also involved in preparing this report. Briefings were given by Dr J. van der Meulen, senior lecturer at the Netherlands Military Academy and former director of the Society and Armed Forces Institute, Dr R.M.W. van Gelooven, director of the Behavioural Sciences Division of the Ministry of Defence, and J. Schoeman, staff member of the knowledge and research centre of the Dutch Veterans Institute.

The AIV is grateful to those consulted for their contribution.

The AIV adopted this report during its meeting on 7 April 2006.

I Public support and the armed forces

The relationship between society and the armed forces is an important issue. In its request for advice of 30 January 2006 the government asked seven questions on this subject, in particular about maintaining and increasing public support for the armed forces. These questions are answered in chapter II. Chapter I deals first with the question considered by the AIV as forming the core of the report, namely what factors determine the level of public support for specific operations of the armed forces and what the government can do to mobilise support.

I.1 Empirical research on society and the armed forces

Opinion polls of a sample of the mass public are a good way of measuring the existence of public support, but while they are most the commonly used method they are not the only one.[1] However, it has been assumed for the purpose of this report that there is no better way of researching public opinion than through opinion polls of representative samples of the population, although undue reliance should never be placed on one question in one survey. The weak point of opinion polling is not so much the sampling technique as how questions are couched and what value judgement is attached to the answers. Moreover, an opinion poll is by definition a snapshot, whereas public opinion is in a constant state of flux. In assessing the results of opinion polls, it is therefore necessary to allow for a margin of error.

The AIV has not conducted any opinion polls itself for this report, and has instead used existing research. It was able to make use of a survey of opinion polls of society and the armed forces in the past fifteen years compiled by Dr P.P. Everts, member of the AIV/CVV and author of a large number of publications on this subject.[2]

I.2 The meaning of public support

It is often unclear just what is meant by public support or sufficient public support. Does it require a large majority in parliament or just a bare majority, or a majority of mass public opinion, or some combination of the two? The AIV believes that public support can only be said to exist if there is not only parliamentary support, but also the support of an absolute majority in society.[3]

1 Other methods include focus groups and media analyses.

2 P.P. Everts, *'Het draagvlak voor militair optreden. De krijgsmacht in het oog van de publieke opinie. Ontwikkelingen na het einde van de Koude Oorlog'* (Public support for military action. The armed forces from the perspective of public opinion. Developments since the end of the Second World War), manuscript, Department of Political Science Department Leiden University 2006, 100 pages. This report examines 15 years of opinion research in the Netherlands into the necessity and tasks of the armed forces, the deployment of military personnel in general and in specific operations.

3 Governments and parliaments also take account of the views of representatives / intermediaries such as, in this case, the military trade unions, the families of military personnel and service personnel themselves. However, such views are beyond the scope of the present report.

I.3 Different categories of public support

Public support for the armed forces can be divided into different categories. This report distinguishes between the following three categories:

1. Public support for the armed forces in general, i.e. the necessity and desirability of having armed forces.
2. Public support for the various tasks of the armed forces, such as national defence and contributions to international peace and security.
3. Public support for specific military operations. A further distinction can be made in this case between the degree of support before, during and after an operation.

1. Public support for the armed forces in general

Public support for the armed forces in general is defined in this report as the view that the armed forces are necessary or indispensable.[4] As this definition has been in use in opinion surveys among the Dutch public since 1963, a long-term trend can be traced.[5]

By whatever criterion public support for the armed forces is measured, it is present in abundance in the Netherlands. Although the results of the various opinion polls differ slightly and the figures fluctuate occasionally, public support has on the whole been strong since the Second World War: on average over three-quarters of the Dutch population regard the armed forces as either necessary or indispensable.

Year	'65	'70	'75	'80	'85	'90	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05
% necessary/ indispensable	83	84	87	84	82	80	75	68	71	74	75	81	78	72	81	78

Table 1: the armed forces are necessary or a necessary evil.[6]

Even far-reaching changes such as the end of the Cold War, the switch from conscript to volunteer forces, and the transformation of the role of the armed forces away from a focus primarily on defence of national and NATO territory towards a more expeditionary role, have not had any significant impact on the level of public support.

4 This report is confined to public support in the Netherlands for the present all-volunteer force.

5 The views of the Dutch population on the necessity of the armed forces have been polled annually since 1963, with only a few breaks.

6 Sources: the Society and Armed Forces Institute up to and including 2003; thereafter *Veteranenmonitor* 2004 and 2005 (no data available for 2000). The same four possible answers were always offered: necessary, a necessary evil, barely necessary, unnecessary. The categories 'necessary' and 'necessary evil' were combined. Until the end of 2003 this question was included in the opinion poll conducted by the now defunct Society and Armed Services Institute (see also section II.7). In 2004 and 2005 this question was asked in the *Veteranenmonitor* of the Veterans Institute (Vi). This definition is also used by the Behavioural Sciences Division of the Ministry of Defence in its monthly survey. The division's report entitled *Monitor Steun en Draagvlak Krijgsmacht* for autumn 2005 reveals that public support for the armed forces in September, October and December 2005 was 87% (for more information about this publication, see section II.7).

Similarly, two-thirds of the Dutch have confidence in the way the armed forces carry out their duties, according to a survey by the Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP) in 2005.[7] Compared with other organisations such as the police, the armed forces have always scored higher than average on this point in the surveys carried out by the SCP since 1997. Recognition of the necessity of the armed forces, combined with confidence in the way they carry out their duties, gives them a degree of legitimacy that is fairly broad and strong.[8]

2. Public support for the three principal tasks of the armed forces
The second category is public support for the three main tasks of the armed forces, namely: 1) defending Dutch territory, 2) promoting the international legal order and stability, and 3) supporting the civil authorities. The available research results do not warrant the conclusion that there is significantly more (or less) support for certain military tasks than for others.[9] See also section II.3 on the principal tasks of the armed forces.

3. Public support for specific military operations
Although public support for the armed forces and their three principal tasks is fairly steady, support for specific operations varies and may sometimes be much lower. Whereas there had been broad public support for previous military operations, certainly at the outset, this has not been the case with the deployments in Iraq (2003) and the various operations in Afghanistan (since 2005).[10] Sometimes the opponents of an operation may even outnumber the supporters, as happened, for example, in early 2006 prior to the decision on participation in the NATO mission ISAF (*International Security Assistance Force*) in Uruzgan, Afghanistan.[11]

The AIV therefore considers that the most interesting angle from which to approach this issue is not public support for the armed forces generally or for the principal tasks of the armed forces, but support for specific operations, since this is never certain in advance. Section I.4 deals with the factors that play a role here.

Naturally, the three categories of public support for the armed forces are interconnected. For example, if the armed forces are never used (and there is no potential enemy to be permanently deterred) people may start to wonder why the expenditure is necessary. Conversely, if people think that the armed forces are involved in operations too often, they may start asking why it should always be the Netherlands that has to 'do the dirty work'.

7 Social and Cultural Planning Office, *De sociale staat van Nederland 2005* (The Social State of the Netherlands in 2005), The Hague, September 2005. See also, for example, *Eurobarometer*, 54.1, 2000.

8 J. van der Meulen, *Draagvlak voor Defensie: een vierluik* (Public support for the Armed Forces), report prepared for the Central Staff of the Ministry of Defence, February 2006.

9 See footnote 2.

10 Ibid.

11 At the start of 2006 only 33% of Dutch people supported the mission to Afghanistan and 45% were strongly opposed, according to a survey by TNS NIPO for *de Volkskrant*, 13 January 2006.

I.4 Factors affecting public support for specific operations

It is relatively easy to draw up a list of factors that influence public support, but it is harder to make general pronouncements about the relative weight of these factors.[12] The reasons are as follows:

- No two operations are alike: their characteristics and the interaction between them always play a unique role in forming public opinion on operations such as Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq and the fight against terrorism. But there can also be a difference between public support for a specific mission and the support for and appreciation of the work done by 'our boys and girls' in the field: people may oppose a mission but still support the troops involved.
- Differences may exist internationally because individual countries make their own assessments or have different interests. Naturally, these factors can in turn influence one another.
- The passage of time during a conflict must also be taken into account, as the influence of various factors is not constant and can vary before, during and after deployment. Often support increases immediately after a government decision, but this effect can be short-lived, for example if successes fail to materialise.

On the basis of the academic literature and the results of empirical research, the AIV concludes that, leaving aside factors that work at the individual level, the following political and social factors are mainly responsible for determining levels of public support for the international deployment of military personnel:[13]

Legitimacy

Military operations undertaken by or with a mandate of the United Nations are likely to command more public (and political) support, than those undertaken without such a mandate. For many people, the test of whether military operations are legitimate is the existence of a resolution at the highest international level that collective coercive measures are necessary in the interests of maintaining peace and security. The absence of an unchallenged mandate has a directly adverse effect on the level of support, as was evident in the case of the action taken by the United States, the United Kingdom and some other countries against the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq in the spring of 2003. Agreement with the political and legal basis for military interventions is therefore an important, if not the single most important, factor determining the level of public support.

Legitimacy exists if and in so far as the political acts of those in authority are perceived by the public as being 'justified' and 'correct'. The term legality refers to compliance with written and unwritten rules of law. Legitimacy is therefore a broader concept than legality and may also be based on more general ethical principles. However, legality is an important source of legitimacy. Indeed, it is hard to separate

12 Conventional opinion research is of little help to us in this respect as it seldom explicitly mentions more than one or two factors. However, an analyses is presently being made to ascertain the relative influence of the various factors (including military and civilian casualties) when they are studied simultaneously. To this end all questions (over 3,000) asked in recent international surveys of four cases (Kosovo 1999, terrorism, Afghanistan 2001 and Iraq 2003) have been coded for the presence of certain considerations in the questions (Everts and Isernia, 2006, forthcoming).

13 On the basis of literature study and empirical research by P.P. Everts, see section I.1.

these two aspects in relation to the justification of international military operations. Only the UN Security Council has the power to authorise the use of military force. It follows that only military operations sanctioned by the Security Council fulfil the requirement of legality under international law. The only exception to this rule is the right of individual or collective self-defence. Humanitarian interventions carried out other than under the aegis of the Security Council are also tolerated up to a point, provided that various conditions are fulfilled.[14]

Interests and values
Whether a military operation is seen as legitimate is closely bound up with the interests and values that it is intended to defend or, in other words, with the objectives of the operation. Each operation has its own specific mix of interests and values. The more the values and objectives are generally shared, for example enforcement of human rights[15] or more immediate interests as national self-defence (and to a slightly lesser extent defence under the terms of an alliance) are perceived to be under threat, the greater will be the level of public support. This explains the high level of support for the military action in Kosovo in 1999, which was viewed by many people as a justified form of humanitarian intervention despite doubts about its legality.

Success
Another factor is the success or anticipated success of a military operation, or the absence of such success. For example, the removal of the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq led some critics of the action taken by the United States to set aside their objections. But the absence of lasting success is steadily eroding the level of public support in the United States and United Kingdom for military involvement in Iraq. The success of previous military operations also boosts support for future operations. Conversely, failures tend to diminish support for future operations. The success factor is in fact not always easy to measure. In the case of peace enforcement missions, success is often something that can take time to achieve. The operation in Uruzgan is an example of a mission whose results will become clear only in the long term.

Leadership
The next factor is convincing political leadership in the course of the decision-making process, especially in clearly demonstrating why military action is (or, as the case may be, is not) necessary. The information provided should be as clear as possible. Public support does not materialise or last of its own accord, but must be mobilised and maintained. A clear decision by the government can sway public opinion, overcoming initial hesitation and rallying people around the flag. However, such an effect can be short-lived, particularly if it is not backed by other factors.

Costs, especially the risk of casualties
The possibility of casualties adversely affects public support for military action. The assumption that the public is highly sensitive to the possibility of casualties among military personnel (and among the civilian population) is often accorded an important or even decisive role in the political debate, particularly regarding the question of whether or not public support exists. This is sometimes described as the ‘casualty

14 See the AIV/CAVV report *Humanitarian intervention*, report No. 13, The Hague, April 2000.

15 Particularly human rights as formulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, i.e. civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights.

hypothesis' or, more graphically, the 'bodybag syndrome'. According to this hypothesis the public would support military action, but only if it would be a 'war without bloodshed'. Support would evaporate once casualties started to occur.[16] Despite the popularity of this assumption there is no real proof of its validity, no matter how it is measured.[17] Particularly when other factors such as legitimacy, national interests or success are included in the equation, this may offset the – admittedly not negligible – negative impact of casualties. See also section II.2 on this subject.

Costs in monetary and material terms also erode public support for a mission, albeit to a much lesser extent than the possibility of casualties. However, support for military action by the Dutch armed forces is expected to be greater if there is a clear sharing of the international burden and there is less scope for the perception that the Netherlands is making a disproportionately large contribution.[18]

The five factors described above do not operate independently of one another. In combination, their positive or negative impact may be amplified. For example, the negative effect of casualties on the level of support can be offset by the success of a military operation or by the perception that it is legitimate.

I.5 The case of the Uruzgan mission

How quickly public opinion can change in certain circumstances became apparent recently from the opinion polls on the government's 'intention' to make a military contribution to the NATO ISAF operation in the Afghan province of Uruzgan. A series of polls were conducted among the Dutch population in quick succession.

16 For a review of the literature on this theme see P.P. Everts, *Democracy and Military Force*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan (2002).

17 R.C. Eichenberg, *Victory Has Many Friends. U.S. Public Opinion and the Use of Military Force, 1981–2005*, International Security, 2005, 30 (1): 140–177; P.P. Everts and P. Isernia, eds, *Public Opinion and the International Use of Force*, London, Routledge, 2001; Everts (2002); P.D. Feaver and C. Gelpi, *Choosing Your Battles. American Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2004; S. Kull and I.M. Destler, *Misreading the Public*. *The Myth of a New Isolationism*, Washington D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 1999; S. Kull and C. Ramsay, *The myth of the reactive public: American public attitudes on military fatalities in the post-Cold War period*, in P.P. Everts and P. Isernia (eds), 2001, pp. 229–259; E. Larson Casualties and Consensus, *The historical role of casualties in domestic support for U.S. military operations*, Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1996; E.V. Larson and Bogdan Savych, *American Public Support for U.S. Military Operations from Mogadishu to Baghdad*, Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2005.

18 The question often asked about the financial and material costs is 'who is going to pay?' At the national level, crisis management operations are generally funded from the budget of the HGIS (Homogeneous Budget for International Cooperation) and not from the Defence budget, but the costs of replacing the two crashed transport helicopters in Afghanistan are being met from general public funds. At the international level it is customary for the country supplying the troops to bear the cost in accordance with the principle that 'costs lie where they fall', but the Netherlands has long advocated a system of burden-sharing under which the costs would be apportioned among NATO or EU partners.

According to an opinion poll on 21 December 2005 only 26% were in favour and a large majority (68%) was against the mission to Uruzgan.[19] Another poll conducted on the same day by a different agency produced a comparable result; 27% for and 41% against.[20] On 13 January 2006 the figures had shifted to 33% for and 45% against.[21] On 30 January, two days before the parliamentary debate on the subject, the figures were almost evenly balanced: 45% for and 47% against.[22]

After weeks of confusion and uncertainty, the House of Representatives approved the Uruzgan mission by a large majority (126 votes) following the final debate between the government and the leaders of the parliamentary parties on 2 February 2006. An opinion poll conducted the day after this clear parliamentary majority showed that the percentage of the public in favour of the mission exceeded the number of opponents for the first time: 49% for and 43% against.[23] However, this is still not a majority of public opinion and even farther away from a large majority which the AIV considers desirable in principle for high-risk operations such as the Uruzgan mission (see section I.6).

What is striking is that neither the government nor the House of Representatives referred even once during the final debate to the importance of public support for this mission – which was absent at that time – nor to the need to give extra consideration to this in the period ahead. The sole focus of the debate was parliamentary support.[24] This differed markedly from a previous statement of the government in March 2003 about military action in Iraq. At the time the Netherlands gave political but not military support. In a speech broadcast on radio and TV the prime minister said, 'Dutch men and women could be deployed on the spot [in Iraq] in this war situation only if there were broad support for this in parliament *and society at large*' [AIV's italics].[25] The AIV believes that this underlines how much each mission should be assessed in its own political context.

I.6 Mobilising public support for specific military operations

The present Frame of Reference (dating from 2001) for the exchange of ideas between government and parliament about military missions makes no reference to public

19 De Hond, 21 December 2005 <www.peil.nl>.

20 TNS NIPO / *RTL Nieuws*, 21 December 2005.

21 TNS NIPO / *de Volkskrant*, 13 January 2006.

22 De Hond, 3 February 2006.

23 De Hond, 3 February 2006.

24 The debate about Dutch participation in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in southern Afghanistan (Proceedings of the House of Representatives 45, 2 February 2006). Although support is referred to 75 times in these proceedings, there is not a single reference to public support.

25 Address by the Prime Minister, Jan Peter Balkenende, on 20 March 2003, <www.regering.nl/actueel/nieuwsarchief/>.

support,[26] unlike the previous version (1995) which included it as a point for attention.[27] In the final sentences of the 1995 document, however, the government observed that the points for attention had been included 'simply as an aid' in arriving at a political and military decision. This was also in fact the opinion of the Advisory Council on Peace and Security, which published a report on the 1995 Frame of Reference in October 1995.[28]

The AIV is still of the same opinion: public support is desirable but not always decisive when the decision on a mission is taken. However, it is by no means inconceivable that if a military mission fails to attract the support of a majority of the public, this will in due course adversely affect the perceived legitimacy of the mission and even support for the armed forces generally.[29]

Public opinion is in any event a factor of significance, particularly in democratic societies.[30] This includes views in society on military action, the factors that influence this and the manner in which democratic societies deal with the particular issues associated with the use of military force. One of these issues is that the armed forces must be able to demand the supreme sacrifice from its personnel. Although governments have some leeway in this area, it is not unlimited. Public opinion cannot be ignored indefinitely without paying a political price.[31]

The AIV therefore advises the government to make every effort to mobilise the greatest possible public support for each military operation. To this end the government must clearly and openly express its views on the five factors mentioned above, namely legitimacy, interests and values, success, leadership and costs, in relation to its decisions on military operations.

The AIV notes that four of the five factors – legitimacy, interests and values, success and costs – are indeed dealt with in the government's letter (which covers the points for attention in the 2001 Frame of Reference) to parliament about the Uruzgan mission written in compliance with its notification obligation under article 100 of the

26 The frame of reference for operations coming within the ambit of article 100 of the Constitution. Letter to parliament from the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence about the 2001 Frame of Reference (*Parliamentary Papers* 23 591 and 26 454, no. 7, 13 July 2001).

27 Letter from the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence concerning the involvement of parliament in the deployment of military units (*Parliamentary Paper* 23 591 no. 5, 28 June 1995).

28 Advisory Council on Peace and Security (AVV), *Commentaar op het toetsingskader voor uitzending van militaire eenheden* (Commentary on the frame of reference for the deployment of military units), 27 October 1995. The AVV was the predecessor of what is now the AIV's Peace and Security Committee.

29 L. Wecke, *De legitimiteit van de krijgsmacht in gevaar?* (The legitimacy of the armed forces in jeopardy?), Carré 7/8 - 2005.

30 Everts, 2002.

31 P.P. Everts, *Democratie en vrede, dat wringt (soms)* (Democracy and peace, sometimes a bad fit), *Civis Mundi* 45 (2006), 1.

Constitution.[32] Nonetheless these aspects could be given even greater emphasis in future cases, for example by summarising the position on each of these factors in a few sentences at the outset. These should then be given a prominent position in the communication plan and in the communications generally about the operation. By giving more explicit emphasis to these four factors, the government automatically starts to address the fifth factor – leadership. This is an element that the AIV believes was insufficiently dealt with in the build-up to the decision on the Uruzgan mission on 2 February 2006.

It is also important to try to mobilise public support not only at the time when the decision is made, but also throughout the mission. When the House of Representatives approved the mission to Uruzgan, the opinion polls showed that there was no public support. As stated above, the AIV considers that this need not always be decisive in such a decision, but support is desirable in the longer term for such high-risk operations as the Uruzgan mission.

Recently there are growing fears that too close identification with the present policies and military actions of the US could have a negative effect on public support for military operations.[33] A recent debate between the government and the House of Representatives focused on human rights. 'The fight against international terrorism should not be lost in the court of public opinion,' said a member of parliament, Hans van Baalen, when introducing a motion on 24 November 2005 requesting the government to expressly examine – both when extending current and embarking on new military operations – whether the mission can be conducted in accordance with international law.[34] He referred specifically to the United States' treatment of prisoners in violation of the Geneva Convention and the trend in the United States to relativise the concept of torture.[35] This motion was passed by the House of Representatives on 29 November 2005. Enforcement of human rights is an aspect of 'interests and values', one of the five factors believed by the AIV to be the main explanation for levels of public support for the international deployment of the armed forces.

Nonetheless, broad public support for a specific mission does not imply that it is bound to be a success too.

32 Letter to parliament from the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Cooperation concerning the Dutch contribution to ISAF in southern Afghanistan (Article 100 letter) (*Parliamentary Paper 27 925,* no. 193, 22 December 2005).

33 In May 2005, for example, 71% of the Dutch population agreed with the statement that 'The United States exaggerates the threat of terrorism in its own interests', 28% disagreed and 1% did not know. 79% of the population also considered that 'The Bush administration puts undue pressure on other countries to become and remain allies of the US'. 17% disagreed with this statement and 3% did not know. Source: TNS NIPO / *RTL Nieuws*, 6 May 2005.

34 Quotation of H. van Baalen taken from *Proceedings of the House of Representatives* 26, 24 November 2005. Motion of Van Baalen et al. (*Parliamentary Paper* 30 300 V no. 55, 24 November 2005).

35 See *Proceedings of the House of Representatives* 26. The AIV too has advised the Dutch government to state forcefully and publicly its view that the prohibition of torture is of an absolute nature. AIV advisory report, *Counterterrorism in a European and international perspective: interim report on the prohibition of torture;* AIV advisory letter no. 11, The Hague, December 2005.

I.7 The request for advice

Public support for the armed forces is of undeniable importance. However, the AIV would note in respect of the wording of the request for advice that questions 3, 4 and 5 appear to suggest (perhaps unintentionally) that emphases and priorities concerning military tasks could (or even should) be chosen with a view to boosting public support for the armed forces. The AIV does not endorse such an approach. It considers that such choices should not be made exclusively – or even primarily – from the perspective of their impact on public support. Other issues are more relevant, such as the international need for the mission, Dutch operational strengths in the military field, the Netherlands' international role, the international division of responsibilities, the effectiveness of the mission and so forth. Considerations about the necessity and desirability of certain types of task or specific military action or of their effectiveness in a given situation should not be subordinated in advance to the presumed impact on public support, which can never be determined with any certainty beforehand.

II The seven questions

The previous chapter dealt generally with the subject of society and the armed forces. Chapter II answers the seven questions asked in the request for advice, tot the extent that this has not already been done in chapter I.

II.1 Public support for the armed forces

(Question 1. How important do you consider public support for the armed forces to be, and what factors determine this support?)

This question has already been largely answered in chapter I. Public support for the armed forces is undoubtedly of great importance.

As noted above, this report distinguishes between three categories of public support, namely public support for the armed forces in general, public support for the various tasks of the armed forces such as national defence and contributions to international peace and security, and public support for participation in specific operations. The available research on public support for the armed forces in general shows that there is no reason for undue concern about this category of support (see section I.3, table 1).

One aspect of public support for the armed forces in general is the willingness to bear the attendant costs. It should be noted that military expenditure is not particularly popular in most countries, including the United States. It is relatively easy in the Netherlands to cut government spending on the armed forces. Public opinion is more likely to accept cuts in spending on the armed forces than on, say, health care or education.[36] These priorities were borne out again in the survey by the Social and Cultural Planning Office in September 2005.[37]

The AIV notes also that public support for the armed forces in general as well as for specific military operations can be adversely affected if international peacekeeping forces are associated with human rights violations. When this happens the Dutch government should try to be as open as possible, mount a thorough investigation and punish any offenders. In this way it can show that it is not willing to tolerate such behaviour by members of the armed forces. This will also avoid creating the impression that the armed forces tend to condone and are anxious to cover up behaviour of this kind. Moreover, abuses of this kind tarnish the image of the armed forces. This cannot and must not be tolerated by the Ministry of Defence, partly in view of its responsibilities as employer.

36 Dutch defence expenditure is about 1.6% of Gross National Product (GNP), which is about average in NATO and the EU.

37 SCP, 2005.

II.2 The casualty hypothesis

(Question 2. To what extent are Dutch elected office holders, civil society organisations and individual citizens prepared to accept casualties on military missions?)

The bodybag syndrome – otherwise known as the casualty hypothesis – originated in the Vietnam War. The rising number of casualties among conscripts constituted an increasingly powerful argument against the war. This specific course of events has since been elevated by some to the status of a general law. For example, it is argued that the withdrawal of the United States from Somalia in 1994 was mainly prompted by the American administration's fear that public opinion would turn against this mission after the first casualties. However, opinion polls among the American population at that time suggest otherwise.

Although casualties (or the possibility of casualties) certainly play a role in public support for military operations, the AIV believes that their effect is overestimated. Without going so far as to say it is a myth, the AIV notes that there is a large degree of agreement in the literature that there is no convincing evidence to support the casualty hypothesis.[38] The Minister of Defence and the State Secretary for Defence have both stated in the past that there is not, in their view, any evidence of a bodybag syndrome.[39]

The AIV would add the rider that a distinction should be made here between wars of necessity and wars of choice, the latter of which includes most crisis management operations. If the public believes that direct national interests are at stake, they will in principle be much more willing to accept casualties than in the case of a crisis where the perceived interest is less great (although this says nothing about the actual interests involved in the crisis).

The extent to which the public will tolerate casualties depends on other factors, such as legitimacy, interests and values, success and leadership (see also section I.4). These factors can offset the negative effect of casualties. Indeed, casualties can even increase the resolve to fight ('they didn't die in vain'). The problem of the risks is often viewed in isolation from these other factors. Nor do the Dutch data provide support for the hypothesis that public opinion would not tolerate casualties. Although hitherto the situations have fortunately almost always been hypothetical, there is no really valid reason for assuming that the public would not be steadfast in practice.[40]

38 See footnote 17.

39 Speech of the Minister of Defence to the Royal Netherlands Society for Military Art and Science (KVBK), 1 March 2004, and speech of the State Secretary for Defence, *Het juiste antwoord* (The right answer) to the Netherlands Defence Manufacturers Association (NIID), 28 October 2004.

40 Numerous results of opinion research are available. See for example Feaver and Gelpi, 2004. This has been seen most recently in the case of Iraq ('No collapse of support after death of Dutch soldier', see P.P. Everts, *Ontwikkelingen in de publieke opinie* (Developments in public opinion), *Jaarboek Vrede en Veiligheid* 2006) and also for example from the following survey question: 'Participation in peace missions could conceivably result in casualties. Do you consider this to be a reason for not taking part in such missions? Yes (could be a reason) 41%, no 58%, don't know 7% (survey by TNS NIPO 21

Footnote 40 cont. on p. 19 >>

The AIV has previously indicated that it feels that 'the public is prepared to accept the consequences of the deployment of military units in these circumstances' (i.e. a high risk of casualties).[41] The AIV cannot avoid the impression that fear of the risks of operations is felt more keenly in the House of Representatives than in society as a whole. The position taken by the media can also play a role in the assumption that the public would not accept casualties since the media are too inclined to focus on this hypothesis and do not view it sufficiently in conjunction with other relevant factors.[42] The Minister of Defence, Henk Kamp, observed after yet another question on this subject, 'The ease, indeed the apparent eagerness, with which the subject of bodybags is raised, strikes me as repugnant.'[43]

The casualty hypothesis is probably popular with politicians and journalists, despite the lack of corroborating evidence, because it serves as an alibi. Decisions on military missions in which soldiers are sent into dangerous surroundings place a heavy responsibility on politicians. There is therefore a great temptation to shift this responsibility on to the public and thereby escape from their own perfectly understandable hesitations and uncertainties.

However, the AIV considers that, the greater the risks, the broader must be the support in parliament and in society at large (see sections I.5 and I.6), if only as backing for the military personnel involved. Against this background, it is important that the House of Representatives approved the mission to Uruzgan by a large majority in February 2006, although the decision was not supported by the majority of the population at that time. Whatever the case, the resolve of the Netherlands – government, parliament and people alike – will be tested in the event of casualties.[44]

Finally, it should be noted that references to casualties are usually only to fatalities and not to invalids or the wounded. Moreover, a large group of military personnel and reservists who have seen active service, experience health problems after completion of the mission. Several thousand Dutch military personnel are sent on peace missions each year. Dutch and foreign research shows that about one in five of the troops sent on missions develops medical complaints, especially unexplained physical symptoms

>> *cont. from p. 18*

December 2005). And on the subject of Afghanistan: 'The Netherlands has stated its wish to play a role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and is therefore planning to send troops there. Such missions can result in casualties. Do you believe this to be reason for not taking part of such missions?' Yes 37%, no 62%, don't know 6% (NIPO survey for *de Volkskrant*, 12 January 2006).

41 AIV advisory report, *The Netherlands and crisis management: three issues of current interest,* advisory report no. 34, The Hague, March 2004.

42 Comments of a similar nature, although not about bodybags, were made by the editor-in-chief of *Het Parool,* Van Gruijthuijsen, who said during a meeting in Amsterdam on 20 February 2006 that 'journalists should do more explaining' and 'not just go after that one quotation'. *NRC Handelsblad*, 21 February 2006.

43 Interview with Minister of Defence Henk Kamp, *NRC Handelsblad*, 11 February 2006.

44 J.L. Heldring, *Op de proef gesteld* (Put to the test), *NRC Handelsblad*, 9 February 2006.

or post-traumatic stress disorder (4-5% of all troops deployed).[45] Their families too suffer as a result.

The State Secretary for Defence therefore rightly noted in his letter presenting the 2005 Veterans Report that 'the military profession is no ordinary profession'.[46]
Dr B.P.R. Gersons, Professor of Psychiatry, has described it as 'a high-risk profession'. He states that where treatment is impossible or ineffective, lasting 'support and respect' should be offered.[47] The provision of sufficient welfare facilities and aftercare is of great importance, as the Ministry of Defence confirms in its letter of 30 March 2006.[48]

The AIV recommends that consideration must be given to the welfare and aftercare of the personnel as a matter of course in decisions on missions.

II.3 The three principal tasks of the armed forces

(Question 3. Given their increasing interwovenness, do you believe that defence activities should still be divided into three principal tasks? If so, what relative importance should be attached to the performance of each of these tasks?)

As stated in section I.7, the AIV does not regard public support as the primary criterion for assessing the tasks of the armed forces.

The three principal tasks of the armed forces are recorded in their present form in the 2000 Defence White Paper:[49]

1. to defend Dutch and NATO territory (including the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba);
2. to maintain the international legal order and stability;
3. to assist the civil authorities in maintaining law and order and in providing disaster relief and humanitarian aid both nationally and internationally.

45 B.P.R. Gersons, *Bijzondere missie: Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg voor militairen en veteranen* (Special mission: mental health care for military personnel and veterans), annexe to the Veterans Report of the Ministry of Defence, 1 June 2005.

46 Letter from the State Secretary for Defence accompanying the 2005 Veterans Report, 1 June 2005.

47 Gersons, 2005.

48 Letter from the State Secretary for Defence to parliament about 'welfare and training commitments in conjunction with Afghanistan mission', 30 March 2006. The Ministry of Defence refers in this context to an 'integral duty of care'.

49 2000 Defence White Paper. It should be noted that the first two principal tasks in fact correspond with the duty referred to in article 97 (1) of the Constitution. This provision was incorporated in the Constitution at the time of the amendments to the Constitution in 2000. Article 97 (1) reads: 'There shall be armed forces for the defence and protection of the interests of the Kingdom, and in order to maintain and promote the international legal order.' Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 294, 18 July 2000.

The AIV agrees with the assumption in this question that the three principal tasks are increasingly interwoven.[50] Fairly soon after the publication of the 2000 Defence White Paper these three tasks became the subject of debate for the first time as a result of the attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001. The question arose whether counterterrorism should be a separate task of the armed forces. The Ministry of Defence concluded at that time that counterterrorism was a task for the armed forces that resulted from the three principal tasks and that it should not be made a separate principal task.[51] The Ministry took the view that this would also be at odds with the existing division of counterterrorism responsibilities in the Netherlands. However, it did note that the distinction between internal and external security had become blurred. Accordingly, the boundaries between the traditional defence role and promotion of the international legal order can no longer be sharply drawn. For example, stabilising a failed state could be in the interests of Dutch national security, as the 2004 AIV/CAVV advisory report on failing states concluded.[52] This is also one of the arguments advanced by the government for Dutch participation in the NATO mission in Uruzgan.[53] As such, it is probably one of the factors having a positive effect on public support for the mission (interests and values).

The Budget Day Letter sent in September 2003 focused mainly on expeditionary operations, in other words military operations carried out at a relatively long distance from the home base by a military force that is largely independent logistically.[54] The third principal task is also gaining in importance again, as the 'safety net' role evolves into the provision of more far-reaching assistance to the civil authorities in the form of specific defence capabilities (see also section II.6).[55] In practice, therefore, the priorities are already shifting between the principal tasks.[56]

50 See for example the AIV advisory report on crisis management (see footnote 41), which describes the extent to which the first two principal tasks are becoming interwoven and how this affects the government's duty to inform parliament in advance if the armed forces are to be deployed in order to maintain the international legal order (Constitution, article 100 (1)).

51 Final report of the Defence and Terrorism Task Group, January 2002 (*Parliamentary Paper* 27 925, no. 40 of 18 January 2002).

52 AIV advisory report *Failing states: a global responsibility*, report no. 35, The Hague, May 2004.

53 Letter in compliance with article 100 of the Constitution, 22 December 2005.

54 Letter from the Minister of Defence to parliament on a new equilibrium (the Budget Day Letter), 16 September 2003.

55 See the letter to parliament about civilian-military agreements of 22 April 2005. A new letter to parliament on this subject is being prepared and will probably be ready by the time of the 2006 spring budget report; source *Defensiekrant*, 2 March 2006.

56 For example, the AIV and the General Energy Council (AER) advised the government in December 2005 that in the context of energy security it should be prepared to assist in the military protection of international energy transport routes. AIV/AER advisory report *Energetic foreign policy: security of energy supply as the new key objective*, report no. 46, The Hague, December 2005.

Table 2 below shows the priority accorded in opinion polls to the various tasks of the armed forces since 1993. A separate question about counterterrorism has been asked since 11 September 2001 (although it could be argued that this task derives from the three principal tasks).

'What do you believe to be the main task of the Dutch armed forces?'

	1993	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2005
Defence of territory	40	30	26	30	33	27	29
Crisis management and maintaining peace	21	44	46	47	41	46	22
Humanitarian assistance-	35	16	22	20	14	21	26
Counterterrorism	–	–	–	–	9	–	23

Table 2: order of priority (in percentages) accorded in opinion polls to the tasks of the armed forces.[57]

A number of observations can be made about this table. For example, the category definitions differ slightly from the three principal tasks of the armed forces. Moreover, the significance of the addition of the terrorism category is debatable. Although this category scores highly, the addition of 'disaster relief in the Netherlands' as a fifth separate task might equally well have produced a high score (at the expense of the three principal tasks).

However, it is important to note – and it is this above all that gives the table its importance – that support for the principal tasks of the armed forces, in so far as the category definitions cover them, has remained at a constant and relatively high level over the years. But the research results do not provide clear indications that certain tasks are more popular than others or that the armed forces could gain extra public support and understanding by changing or redefining their tasks.

In view of the above, the AIV sees no reason to abandon the division into three principal tasks. This is partly in the knowledge that the limits between them are fluid and that it is never possible to define exactly how the division will be in practice.

II.4 The armed forces and emergency aid and reconstruction

(Question 4. In terms of their usefulness and necessity in society's eyes, should the armed forces play a greater role in providing national and international emergency aid as well as political, administrative and socioeconomic reconstruction, especially in countries affected by armed conflicts?)

57 Sources: Society and Armed Forces Institute (until 2003) and *Veteranenmonitor* (2005). 'Defence of territory' is referred to in full as: 'defence of national and allied territory'. Instead of the 'crisis management and maintaining peace' category, the question in 1993 was about 'worldwide crisis management'. This also occurred in the intervening years not included in this table. The increase in the percentage of people since 1998 who regard 'crisis management and maintaining peace' as the main task is probably connected with the changed wording of the question. Note taken from J. van der Meulen, February 2006.

As stated in section I.7, the AIV does not regard public support as the primary criterion for assessing action of this kind.

The question distinguishes between two categories, emergency aid and reconstruction. This distinction can be confusing. What is meant, after all, by emergency aid: emergency aid after a natural disaster or emergency aid after a war when humanitarian aid should be provided? In the former case, the military aid will often be limited to logistical help and support, whereas in the latter case the armed forces would be primarily deployed in their traditional role in order to restore security and stability. In addition, the armed forces would generally be present for longer in the latter case in order to maintain security during the subsequent reconstruction stage. It is therefore clearer to distinguish between assistance involving the provision of military resources after a major disaster (deployment of specific military capabilities lacked by the civil authorities) on the one hand, and military deployment to establish or maintain peace and security on the other.

As regards the military contribution to reconstruction, the government issued a policy memorandum in 2005 describing this role.[58] It states that sustainable reconstruction requires an integrated approach to security and stability, governance and socioeconomic development. In an integrated approach to peacebuilding and reconstruction, security and development are inextricably linked as a precondition for sustainable development.[59] There is also much support for this approach at the international level. It is expected to be precisely in this field that the newly instituted UN Peacebuilding Commission will play an important role. As a result, the armed forces will have more frequent and more direct dealings with the aid organisations, and vice versa.[60]

However, from the perspective of both effectiveness and security it would be wrong for the roles of the armed forces and the aid agencies to become blurred and mixed.[61] The personnel of these institutions and agencies must do what they are trained to do and what they are good at. It is also important for aid workers' safety that they should be regarded by the local population as impartial and independent. There are exceptions, such as the situation in Iraq when the Dutch military unit helped to improve the living conditions of the local population in the absence of sufficient aid agencies, besides engaging in the usual local civil-military cooperation (CIMIC). Only in special circumstances, however, may humanitarian aid be provided under the banner of military operations.[62]

58 Ministries of Foreign Affairs, of Defence and of Economic Affairs, policy memorandum entitled *'Wederopbouw na gewapend conflict'* (Reconstruction after armed conflict), June 2005. See also the AIV advisory report *Reforming the United Nations: a closer look at the Annan Report*, report no. 41, The Hague, May 2005.

59 UN General Assembly Resolution 60/1, 16 September 2005.

60 C. Homan, *De krijgsman als ontwikkelingswerker?* (The warrior as development worker?), *Atlantisch Perspectief*, 2005, no. 6.

61 Ibid.

62 Steering Committee on Humanitarian Response (SCHR), *Position paper on Humanitarian-Military Relations in the Provision of Humanitarian Assistance*, 18 October 2004.

II.5 The armed forces and risks

(Question 5. The government favours the deployment of the armed forces anywhere on the spectrum of force. In its advisory report no. 34 of March 2004, entitled 'The Netherlands and Crisis Management', the AIV supported this approach. In the AIV's view, how can the Government best continue to ensure public support for activities including stabilisation, reconstruction and deployment at the high end of the spectrum of force?)

In the past the AIV has indeed advocated deployment anywhere along the spectrum of force, particularly in its advisory report no. 34 on the Netherlands and crisis management.[63] The Netherlands has the professional and modern armed forces required for this purpose. In addition, escalation capabilities are often essential and even a precondition for participation in peace operations.

The words 'high end of the spectrum of force' are a reference to combat missions such as the bombing flights by Dutch F-16s over Kosovo in 1999. But such missions are not necessarily the most dangerous, particularly if they are carried out from a relatively safe altitude. A foot patrol during a peace-keeping mission can be more dangerous. Especially in situations where there is a heightened security threat, there is always a chance that the patrol may be fired upon or that an improvised explosive device (IED) may be detonated in its vicinity. American casualties in Iraq since President Bush declared on board the aircraft carrier USS Lincoln on 1 May 2003 that the battle for Iraq was over have largely exceeded those before that date.

Whether military operations enjoy public support is therefore more likely to depend on the extent of the risk involved rather than on whether or not they are at the high end of the spectrum of force. As noted in section I.7, the AIV does not regard public support as the primary criterion for assessing the deployment of the armed forces.

The AIV repeats its conclusion from its advisory report on crisis management that the public can in principle understand the need for military deployment in high-risk situations (see also the answer to question 2, section II.2). The determining factor in this connection is to what extent the public can identify with a policy based on the five factors – legitimacy, interests and values, success, leadership and costs – connected with the specific mission (see section I.6).

It is in fact noteworthy that despite the high-risk nature of the missions of the armed services the number of applications to the Ministry of Defence has never been so high. In 2005 the Ministry received 25,000 applications for fixed-term posts in the regular armed forces and was able to recruit 7,000 young people. In previous years it had had great difficulty in attracting 3,500 recruits and was forced to repeatedly lower the target figures.[64]

II.6 The armed forces and national security

(Question 6. Would a greater role for the armed forces in national security – such as in combating terrorism and dealing with major disasters – be compatible with the public sense of security and its perception of the role of the armed forces?)

63 See footnote 41.

64 *Met al die missies word je bijna zeker uitgezonden* (With all those missions you're almost bound to be posted), *NRC Handelsblad*, 25 January 2006.

The decisive factor should not be whether a greater role for the armed forces in national security has a favourable impact on public perceptions but whether this is a good and effective way of achieving the intended goal. From this perspective it is relevant that the Brinkman Committee concluded in its report in September 2005 that cooperation between the various services (police, fire service, medical service and the armed forces) should be improved precisely in order to combat terrorism and to manage the consequences of major disasters.[65]

It would certainly be logical for the armed forces to play a greater role to the extent that the civil authorities lack sufficient specialist capabilities or the scale of the event exceeds their capabilities. For example, the AIV recommended in its advisory report on non-proliferation in January 2006 that the cooperation between the services involved in dealing with NBC contamination should be quickly expanded. In the same advisory report the AIV also recommended that all the authorities concerned, both civil and military, should regularly hold joint exercises.[66] This recommendation can be extended to other relevant policy fields such as the sharing of intelligence, the coastguard, explosives ordnance disposal, surveillance drones, etc. However, collaboration does not mean that the individual responsibilities of the organisations concerned should merge.[67]

It goes without saying what effect it would have on public confidence in politicians if it were to transpire, after a major disaster, that the consequences would have been less bad, or could even have been prevented altogether, if the authorities concerned had better worked together.

II.7 Information about the armed forces

(Question 7. Do you think that Dutch citizens know enough about the armed forces? To what extent, if at all, would more public information about the armed forces increase the public sense of security? How might the public become more closely involved with the armed forces, especially in the case of military missions?)

This advisory report distinguishes between three categories of public support for the armed forces: public support for the armed forces in general, public support for the three principal tasks and public support for specific military operations. For the first category there is ample support (see table 1, section I.3). Similarly, there is no reason to suppose that there is not sufficient support for the three principal tasks, as shown in table 2 (section II.3). The category that receives most consideration in this advisory report is public support for specific operations. It has been found that public support for this category can vary and can sometimes be lower than for the armed forces in general (see section I.5).

65 *Veiligheid: Meer samenhang en slagkracht, betere informatie, minder beleidsdrukte* (Security: more coherence and effectiveness, better intelligence, less policy pressure). Interim report of the combined committee on security and the legal order, The Hague, 6 September 2005.

66 AIV advisory report T*he nuclear non-proliferation regime: the importance of an integrated, multilateral approach*, advisory report no. 47, The Hague, January 2006.

67 Community, Safety and the Police Association (SMVP), *Politie en krijgsmacht, hun verhouding in de toekomst* (Police and the armed forces: their relationship in the future), 2003.

The same distinction is made in answering the question of whether Dutch citizens know enough about the armed forces. This too focuses primarily on the information about specific operations. As explained in section I.6, the public must be able to assess military missions as effectively as possible primarily by reference to the five factors: legitimacy, interests and values, success, leadership and costs.

In addition to the attention paid to specific missions, the armed forces must as a matter of course continue to communicate with the public by providing information and holding parades and open days. This category includes, for example, the majority of the proposals contained in the 10-point plan of the Christian Democratic Alliance in July 2005 to embed the armed forces more firmly in society.[68] But this is basically preaching to the converted. Such activities are of more help in 'maintaining' people's knowledge of the armed forces rather than in increasing public support for them. One should specifically recognize the role that veterans have played in carrying out past military operations. Not only is this an aspect of good aftercare (see section II.2), but every veteran who feels appreciated will serve as an ambassador for the armed forces. And each year thousands join the ranks of the veterans.

As regards the subsidiary question about the public's sense of security: this could perhaps be increased but it is debatable whether more public information about the armed forces would be the most appropriate method. Since confidence in how the military perform their duties is already higher than average (approximately 67% of the population have confidence)[69], it seems likely that there is not much more that can be achieved in this area.

Finally, the AIV notes that the Ministry of Defence had its own in-house consultancy – the Society and Armed Forces Institute (SMK) – until 1 January 2005.[70] But the Ministry decided in 2003 to disband the SMK or in any event to cancel its subsidy. Responsibility for research into public support for the armed forces has now passed to the Behavioural Sciences Division of the Ministry of Defence, which is primarily interested in the recruitment issue. But the public role of the independent SMK, which consisted of promoting public debate about the armed forces, has vanished. The AIV believes that the Ministry of Defence may have possibly missed an opportunity in the long term.

68 Christian Democratic Alliance, *Het 10 puntenplan: De krijgsmacht midden in de samenleving* (The 10-point plan: the armed forces at the heart of society) 6 July 2005. The ten points are as follows: 1) military and ex-military personnel to tour schools; learning packages for schools; 2) careers guidance packages and information evenings about 'working for the armed forces'; 3) non-profit placements and compulsory work and study; 4) collaboration with civil training institutes / recognition of civil diplomas; 5) leadership training courses; 6) job rotation; civil versus military employment, horizontal intake; 7) 'Show yourself to be at the heart of society!'; 8) work together to develop; 9) hold parades on Veterans Day; 10) allow group visits to military locations. The government responded to this plan in a letter to parliament stating that a large number of these proposals were already being implemented. Letter from the State Secretary for Defence to parliament about the armed forces being at the heart of society: a reaction to the 10-point plan of the Christian Democractic Alliance (*Parliamentary Paper* 30 300 X, no. 46, 11 November 2005).

69 SCP, 2005.

70 See, for example, the speech of the Minister of Defence on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Society and Armed Forces Institute on 14 November 2002, <www.mindef.nl>.

The AIV advises the government to ensure that the function of initiator of dialogue about society and the armed forces, as reflected in articles in the media, educational activities and conferences, is reinstated, either at the Ministry of Defence or elsewhere.

The AIV also recommends that the existing contacts between civil authorities such as universities and military authorities such as the Netherlands Military Academy (NLDA) and the Behavioural Sciences Division be expanded and put on a permanent footing. This could contribute to the necessary normative debate on public support for the armed forces.

In this context the AIV also recommends that *Monitor Steun en Draagvlak* (Public Support Monitor) of the Behavioural Sciences Division should be made public from now on. This publication is a quarterly report of the results of the monthly opinion polls conducted on the instructions of the Ministry of Defence to assess levels of public support for the armed forces. Hitherto this has been an internal document.

III Conclusions and recommendations

Mobilising public support for specific military operations (see chapter I)
Public support for the armed forces is defined in this advisory report as the view of the Dutch population (or a majority of them) that the armed forces are necessary or indispensable. Public support for the armed forces is divided into three categories in this report:
1. Public support for the armed forces in general, i.e. the necessity and desirability of having armed forces.
2. Public support for the various tasks of the armed forces such as national defence and contributions to international peace and security.
3. Public support for specific military operations. A further distinction can be made in this case between the degree of support before, during and after an operation.

Research shows that there is ample public support in the first two categories. The problem mainly concerns the third category – support for specific operations. Here public support is not always certain in advance. In its general consideration of the subject of society and the armed forces in chapter I, the AIV therefore deals primarily with the question of what factors determine public support for specific operations of the armed forces and how this support can be mobilised.

The AIV concludes that five political and social factors are mainly responsible for determining the level of public support for the international deployment of the armed forces, namely:
1. *legitimacy:* the extent to which political acts of those in authority are perceived as justified and correct;
2. *interests and values:* the objectives to be achieved by the military operation;
3. *success:* the result or expected result of a military operation;
4. *leadership:* the display of convincing political leadership in the course of the decision-making process, especially in clearly demonstrating why military action is necessary; and
5. *costs:* the risk of casualties in particular can undermine public support for military operations.

The AIV believes that the negative effect of possible casualties should not be overestimated. Its effect may, for example, be offset if the other four factors are perceived as positive. The AIV therefore abides by its previous position, namely that the public can in principle understand the need for military deployment in high-risk situations. Available research does not provide convincing evidence of the existence of a 'bodybag syndrome'.

The case of the mission to Uruzgan – which was approved by a large majority of the House of Representatives in a vote on 2 February 2006 at a time when there was no majority of public opinion in favour – is one of the considerations leading the AIV to conclude that although public support for a political decision to embark on a mission is admittedly not essential, it is certainly desirable (particularly for high-risk operations). Although governments have some leeway in this area, it is nonetheless limited. Public opinion cannot be ignored indefinitely without paying a political price.

The AIV therefore advises the government to make every effort to mobilise the greatest possible public support for each military operation. To this end the government must clearly and openly express its views on the five factors mentioned above, namely legitimacy, interests and values, success, leadership and costs, in relation to its decisions on military operations.

By explicitly dealing with the four factors – legitimacy, interests and values, success and costs – in its communication to the public and parliament on a military operation, the government will at the same time better address the fifth factor – leadership. Public support does not materialise or last spontaneously, but requires leadership.

Other relevant aspects of the report

- The provision of good care and aftercare to casualties is of great importance. The AIV therefore recommends that consideration should be given to this as a matter of course in decisions on missions (see section II.2).

- The AIV sees no reason to abandon the division into the three principal tasks of the armed forces – 1) defending Dutch territory; 2) promoting the international legal order and stability; 3) assisting the civil authorities – or to include counterterrorism as a separate task (see section II.3).

- As regards the role of the armed forces in the political, administrative and socio-economic reconstruction of states, the AIV endorses the position taken by the government in its 2005 policy memorandum on reconstruction, but notes that the tasks of the armed forces and aid agencies should not be confused (see section II.4).

- As regards the subject of the armed forces and national security, the AIV notes that it would certainly be logical for the armed forces to play a greater role tot the extent that civil authorities lack sufficient specialist capabilities or the scale of the event exceeds their capabilities. This could involve, for example, action to deal with the consequences of NBC attacks or accidents, as well as in other fields such as the sharing of intelligence, the coastguard, explosives ordnance disposal, use of surveillance drones, et cetera (see section II.6).

- In view of the importance of the public debate on the armed forces, the AIV recommends that the function of initiator of the dialogue about society and the armed forces, as reflected in articles in the media, educational activities and conferences, should be reinstated, either at the Ministry of Defence or elsewhere (see section II.7).

- To promote the debate on public support for the armed forces the AIV recommends that the existing contacts between civil bodies, such as universities, and military bodies, such as the Netherlands Military Academy (NLDA) and the Behavioural Sciences Division, be expanded and put on a permanent footing (see section II.7).

- In this connection the AIV also recommends that the Behavioural Sciences Division's *Monitor Steun en Draagvlak* (Public Support Monitor) should be made public from now on. This publication is a quarterly report of the results of the monthly opinion polls conducted for the Ministry of Defence to assess levels of public support for the armed forces. Hitherto this has been an internal document (see section II.7).

Annexe I

Request for advice dated 30 January 2006

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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Ministry of Defence
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Mr F. Korthals Altes
Chairman of the Advisory Council on International Affairs
Postbus 20061
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Re: Request for advice on "Society and the Armed Forces"

Dear Mr Korthals Altes,

On 22 November 2005, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister for Development Cooperation, the Minister for European Affairs and the Minister of Defence together submitted the AIV's work programme for 2006 to the President of the House of Representatives. A theme of the 2006 work programme is "Society and the Armed Forces", which focuses especially on public support for defence activities.

Public support for the armed forces is connected with how society perceives the armed forces and rates their usefulness and performance of their principal tasks. Such tasks include crisis management in remote regions, including those at the upper end of the spectrum of force, counterterrorism and national security, plus emergency assistance (at home and abroad) and reconstruction.

Public support is also connected with the necessity to deploy military personnel in dangerous conditions and the willingness of society and politicians to do so. In addition, it is linked to the suspension of compulsory military service and the accompanying development of all-professional armed services – plus the restraint which, for security reasons, is always exercised in providing information.

The Government considers it useful to receive advice on how to maintain public support for defence activities. In this light, it seeks the AIV's opinion on the following:

1. How important do you consider public support for the armed forces to be, and what factors determine this support?

2. To what extent are Dutch elected office holders, civil society organisations, and individual citizens prepared to accept casualties on military missions?

3. Given their increasing interwovenness, do you believe that defence activities should still be divided into three principal tasks? If so, what relative importance should be attached to the performance of each of these tasks?

4. In terms of their usefulness and necessity in society's eyes, should the armed forces play a greater role in providing national and international emergency aid as well as political, administrative, and socioeconomic reconstruction, especially in countries affected by armed conflicts?

5. The Government favours the deployment of the armed forces anywhere on the spectrum of force. In its advisory report no. 34 of March 2004, entitled "The Netherlands and Crisis Management", the AIV supported this approach. In the AIV's view, how can the Government best continue to ensure public support for activities including stabilisation, reconstruction, and deployment at the high end of the spectrum of force?

6. Would a greater role for the armed forces in national security – such as in combating terrorism and dealing with major disasters – be compatible with the public sense of security and its perception of the role of the armed forces?

7. Do your think that Dutch citizens know enough about the armed forces? To what extent, if at all, would more public information about the armed forces increase the public sense of security? How might the public become more closely involved with the armed forces, especially in the case of military missions?

As the Government promised the House of Representatives during the debate on the Ministry of Defence's 2006 budget, the 2003 Budget Day letter is being updated. The update will be carried out in the first half of the year. Since public support for the armed forces plays an important part in shaping the Government's approach to the armed forces, the Government intends to incorporate the AIV's advisory report on Society and the Armed Forces into the update. To be able to use the advice effectively, we would like to see it by mid-April 2006 at the latest. If this relatively short timespan makes it necessary, the Council may give priority to this request for advice over other requests or indicate priorities in the questions. Further consultations may take place, as the need arises, with the Ministry of Defence.

Yours sincerely,

/signed/

Bernard Bot
Minister of Foreign Affairs

/signed/

Henk Kamp
Minister of Defence

List of abbreviations

AER	General Energy Council
AIV	Advisory Council on International Affairs
AVV	Advisory Council on Peace and Security
GNP	Gross National Product
CAVV	Advisory Committee on Issues of Public International Law
CEI	European Integration Committee
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation
CMR	Human Rights Committee
COS	Development Cooperation Committee
CVV	Peace and Security Committee
EU	European Union
HGIS	Homogeneous Budget for International Cooperation
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KVBK	Royal Netherlands Society for Military Art and Science
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NBC	Nuclear, Biological and Chemical
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIID	Netherlands Defence Manufacturers Association
NLDA	Netherlands Military Academy
SCHR	Steering Committee on Humanitarian Response
SCP	Social and Cultural Planning Office
SMK	Society and Armed Forces Institute
SMVP	Community, Safety and the Police Association
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
Vi	Veterans Institute

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