



Ministry of Defence

Netherlands Defence Doctrine



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Preface

I am proud to present the updated Netherlands Defence Doctrine (NDD), the foundation guiding our armed forces' thinking and actions. The NDD describes the fundamental principles of the military instrument of power. It is based on lessons from the past, translated into the spirit of today. It is not a static document, but a guideline that will evolve with time. It provides direction, but also allows for flexibility and the development of new ways of operating. After all, our armed forces operate in a dynamic environment, in which new threats, geopolitical shifts, technological developments and other global challenges occur in rapid succession. It is essential to anticipate these changes and strengthen our ability to protect the Netherlands and our allies.

The NDD serves as a compass for everyone within our organisation, from policy advisers and commanders to the servicemen and women in the field. It provides a clear framework for military operations and emphasises the importance of cooperation with international partners and civilian organisations. This doctrine focuses on generating fighting power, as well as on the integration of military capabilities with diplomatic, economic and information efforts. It is a guide on how to think, not what to think.

After decades of stability in Europe, peace and security are once again under pressure. Defence returns to its core priorities. We remain ready to promote stability abroad and to assist during disasters, but our main focus shifts to safeguarding Dutch and NATO territory, our first duty. In times of crisis, we must be able to defend our territory and that of our allies. We must be able to fight.

Rapid technological progress and hybrid threats demand constant adaptation and sharper striking power. Yet our decisive edge remains the human factor: the military and civilian professionals who choose to stand up for the Netherlands and work for our safety. They apply doctrine, using their professional judgement, giving it strength and context that is appropriate to the current situation.

The safety of our nation, Kingdom partners and allies requires vigilance and readiness. I ask everyone in our armed forces to use the NDD not merely as a reference document, but above all as a source of inspiration to give it your all in these challenging times.

**Netherlands Chief of Defence
General Onno Eichelsheim**



We cannot eliminate uncertainty, friction or human fallibility in competition. We can minimize its impact with rigorous training and adaptive doctrine to overcome our own friction and uncertainty, as well as maintaining our humanity.

(AJP-01 p/ 10)

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Introduction

Background

The direct reason for updating the 2019 Netherlands Defence Doctrine (NDD 2019) is the ratification by the Netherlands of the NATO Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01(F) publication. AJP-01 is NATO's capstone doctrine publication for allied joint operations and activities. It explains the strategic context of such operations and focuses on the basic principles for NATO operations. The revised version introduces and describes the continuum of competition and the behaviour-centric approach and updates the comprehensive approach in relation to multi-domain operations. Furthermore, the updated version provides a detailed description of fighting power and the supporting concepts that affect the definition of the domains, which has led to significant changes to Chapter 4 of the NDD.

An indirect reason for updating the NDD is the changed spirit of the times, and with it, the further development of the Netherlands armed forces since 2019. In previous versions of the NDD, the emphasis was on the second core task of the Netherlands armed forces. However, due to geopolitical shifts, and in particular because of the outbreak of war on the European continent, the strategic orientation of both NATO and the Netherlands armed forces has evolved since 2014, with a greater focus on the first core task and the threat of a large-scale conflict. This development has resulted in updates to this doctrine publication, ensuring that it accurately reflects the current zeitgeist.

Doctrine in a historical context

In Europe, the Age of Enlightenment brought growing confidence in science and logic. It was believed that phenomena such as war and warfare, too, could be understood through study and analysis. This led to a surge in publications throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, in which renowned military thinkers put their perspectives on military operations into writing and laid the groundwork for establishing the “rules of war”.

The French Revolution marked the beginning of a trend towards mass warfare, which was accompanied by the further professionalisation of the military. This forced armed forces to codify their operations in doctrine. Doctrine described the roles of the Services, weapons and branches of the armed forces and how they could achieve objectives in war. This codification in doctrine aimed to create unity of opinion across the different levels of operations. Military history provided important building blocks for doctrine formation.

The first doctrine publications exhibited an element of layering from the outset. Certain publications addressed the operations of large formations at a strategic level, others the tactical actions of weapons and branches. Furthermore, there were handbooks for operations at a technical level. However, there was little cohesion between these publications.

Throughout the 20th century, the Netherlands armed forces published several doctrines publications, primarily concerning land and air operations. The post-war reconstruction of the Netherlands armed forces focused on a defensive role in a NATO context. Partly due to the introduction of tactical nuclear weapons, NATO doctrine changed in the 1960s. Operations were now being based on forward defence, in which NATO forces first delayed and then stopped the opponent. A major counter-attack, possibly supported by the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons, would subsequently restore the status quo. At the end of the 1960s, NATO introduced a new concept of defence, non-nuclear in nature: the flexible response, focusing on the attrition of the enemy and the execution of a decisive counter-attack. Joint operations were still underdeveloped, and the Services of the armed forces acted in separate theatres of operations.

To counteract the conventional superiority of the Warsaw Pact, the Americans developed the AirLand Battle doctrine in the 1980s, which NATO partially adopted as Follow-on Forces Attack (FOFA). NATO was counting on using its technological superiority, which would also make it possible to attack the enemy in the depth. The revision of NATO doctrine was still ongoing when the Berlin Wall fell at the end of 1989 and the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union disappeared in the following years. With this, NATO lost its long-standing opponent and battlefield. The focus on a large-scale conventional conflict became less relevant, and attention shifted to other forms of military operations.

In line with the changing geopolitical context, the Services of the armed forces produced new doctrine. The first edition of the Netherlands Defence Doctrine, intended for all Services of the Netherlands armed forces, was released in 2005 and has undergone several revisions since then. The growing number and increasing quality of doctrine publications fulfilled an important role in training, doctrinal formation and exercises and thus contributed to the formation of esprit de corps, especially as recent experiences could be included in these publications.

Purpose and importance of Netherlands Defence Doctrine (NDD)

Unity of opinion. The armed forces must be able to execute and control complex activities to achieve their objectives. Military personnel must face complex situations and act responsibly in extreme conditions, across a wide variety of fields and disciplines. The ability to adapt rapidly to changing circumstances and to continue to function effectively in chaotic and life-threatening situations is paramount. They have to be able to operate independently, possibly in isolation from each other and in accordance with the ethical and moral principles to which the Defence organisation adheres, as well as the set operational guidelines. For this, unity of opinion within the organisation is crucial. At the tactical as well as the operational level, unity of opinion results in action in the spirit of the military organisation. Unity of opinion also means that tactical actions are performed in the spirit of the commanding officer.

National context. The NDD places doctrine in the Dutch context. Although NATO doctrine forms the basis for Dutch thinking with regard to the employment of the military instrument of power, the NDD intends to underline specific national accents and principles. This means the emphasis of the NDD may differ from what is expressed in NATO doctrine. The NDD provides the common framework that enables the joint deployment of the Services of the Netherlands armed forces and of the armed forces as a whole in conjunction with other instruments of power. The growing interconnectedness in the operations of units across different Services of the armed forces, as well as cooperation with other ministries, government bodies and other organisations necessitates a unified approach to executing military operations. The NDD guides this thinking about the operations of the armed forces and of the individual Services in collaboration with each other, which makes cooperation more effective and ensures better mutual understanding.

Means of control for the Chief of Defence. The Netherlands Chief of Defence (CHOD) plays a key role in the organisation and direction of the Services (operational commands) and missions carried out by the Netherlands armed forces. The NDD supports the CHOD by guiding the way in which the armed forces are deployed in the context of Dutch security policy. The NDD also guides the work in and of the staff directorates. Above all, doctrine paves the way for the preparation of military operations.

Definition of military doctrine

NATO defines doctrine as: *'the fundamental principles by which military forces guide their actions in support of objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgement in application'*.

Doctrine describes in general terms how to think, not what to think. It reflects the common perception of operational deployment. Together with its skilled application by professionals, doctrine provides a foundation for the planning, preparation and execution of military operations. Doctrine thus guarantees unity of opinion and the effective achievement of military objectives. It is part of the conceptual component of fighting power and provides an up-to-date framework of thinking that ensures unity of opinion. Doctrine thus strengthens interoperability. Doctrine promotes reflection on the application of the military instrument of power. Its practical value depends on its skilled application by professionals.



Doctrine is an operational standard. In the Netherlands armed forces, in principle, we follow NATO doctrine (the ‘NATO, unless’ principle). This means adopting and establishing NATO doctrine as national doctrine where possible. Only when there is a need for a specific doctrine publication, for which it is not possible to adopt NATO doctrine or providing national additions will not suffice, do we develop separate national doctrine.

“When armies prepare, be it for a war against another state or counterinsurgency operations, they almost always need to work with a larger factor of uncertainty. Armed forces are hardly ever able to predict exactly where, how and against whom or what the battle will take place. This is why doctrines have been created and numerous handbooks exist for tactical activities and procedures that facilitate a unity of understanding about what troops ought to do. These are essentially models built on reference frames. Armed forces often have only one or two chances during a fight, which is too little and too costly to build a decent reference frame. This is why it is important to train extensively. It also explains why military history is immensely important for upgrading reference frames with experiences from previous battles and exercises.”¹

Defence has three levels of doctrine:

- Level 1 doctrine includes capstone and keystone publications. These provide a common framework of understanding, thinking and vision. They provide guidance. NATO’s capstone doctrine, Allied Joint Publication (AJP) 01, describes the joint strategy of NATO. Alongside AJP-01, this NDD is a capstone publication for the Netherlands. Keystone doctrine documents provide fundamental guidance for various aspects of military action. They are central to the Dutch Defence Joint Doctrine Architecture and underlie AJP-01 and the NDD. Keystone publications include NATO AJP-2, -3, -4, -5, -6, -10, as well as the keystone Netherlands Joint Doctrine Publications (JDP).
- Level 2 doctrine includes supporting joint doctrine for specific aspects at the operational level. These offer a framework of thinking for integrating possibilities and capabilities and deploying them in a combined manner. These publications do not contain detailed procedures, but describe operational principles. They thus form a common basis for operations. Level 2 doctrine includes the remaining AJP’s and JDP’s.

¹ Mulder, Lt Col R.E. (2024) ‘How to think and act faster than the enemy. Reinterpreting the OODA loop through the lens of neuroscience’, *Military Spectator* (193) no 10, The Hague, pp. 560-571

- Level 3 doctrine includes tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) that support and enhance the implementation of the philosophy of the AJP and JDPs. They provide a common framework of action, in order to carry out specific actions and procedures. Typically, level 3 doctrine publications are associated with specific joint and other knowledge areas. Level 3 doctrine includes doctrine publications, handbooks, manuals and other Allied Publications.

Target audiences

The NDD is intended to guide the way of thinking of all military and non-military personnel within the Ministry of Defence. The primary target audience, however, consists of commanders and staffs at the military-strategic, operational and higher tactical levels. The NDD is a reference work. In addition, the NDD serves as a tool for communication with national and international allies. It also forms the starting point for the further development of derivative doctrine publications, as well as for the Dutch contribution to allied doctrine development. In this context, the target audience consists of researchers and doctrine developers. The NDD also provides a foundation for military education, the military training environment and for the further study of doctrine-related subjects. The target audience in this case is not only the military student or course participant, but also the teacher. Finally, the NDD aims to promote mutual understanding among personnel from other ministries and non-military organisations.



Link to policy and concepts

Ideally, doctrine, policy and concepts form a consistent whole. Policy with regard to the use of the military instrument of power is developed primarily as a result of changes to the strategic environment, political instructions, practical lessons learned and new technology. Through the development of concepts, policy guides the formation of doctrine, whereby the fundamental character of doctrine ensures that it is not excessively subject to short-term policy changes. Concepts are elaborations of strategic visions with regard to (future) operations and/or, in a more practical sense, possible solutions to shortcomings in operations. Doctrine then encompasses the common view on operations, based on validated concepts. Increasingly, the development horizons of policy, concepts and doctrine are facing compression as a result of geopolitical strategic competition. In practice, the development of policy and doctrine must therefore be co-evolutionary with concept development (see Figure 1). The inclusion of a brief description of the concept of multi-domain operations in this NDD is an example of that.

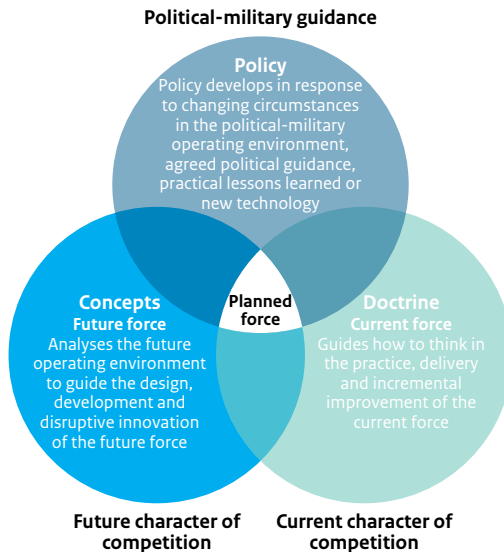


Figure 1 | The co-evolutionary process of developing doctrine, policies and concepts (Source: AJP-01(F))²

² The term 'planned force' is not used in the Dutch strategy and armed forces development (*Strategie- en krijgsmachtontwikkeling*, SKMO) process. Here, it refers to the organisation in transition, driven by an approved concept and mirrored by current doctrine.

Transparency

Transparency regarding the NDD is essential to everyone who is in any way involved with armed forces operations. This includes specific actors, but also, certainly in the context of a whole-of-society approach, society as a whole. Successful cooperation requires a clear definition of the principles that form the basis for the deployment of the armed forces and of the way in which operations are to be conducted. To maximise transparency towards these actors, a significant number of stakeholders were actively involved in the creation of this document through a focus group. This transparency will benefit anyone who wishes to familiarise themselves with Dutch military doctrine.

Changes relative to the previous version

War on the European continent and the intensification of strategic competition on the world stage have led to a renewed focus on the first core task and the corresponding deployment scenarios. This is part of the transformation that the Netherlands armed forces have undertaken since 2014. This has led to a shift in emphasis with regard to the interpretation of fighting power and its moral component. This edition of the NDD underlines this shift in emphasis as an expression of the transformation process.

Modern-day operations increasingly require an approach that transcends domains. This has been incorporated into the text of the revised NDD. For example, the terminology of multi-domain operations (MDO) has been included and the sections on cooperation between units and Services of the armed forces have been supplemented with an emphasis on the relationship between activities and effects, primarily among military personnel, but also with civilian agencies. Furthermore, the policy documents related to Dutch security policy in Chapter 2 have been replaced with more recent versions and the terminology from AJP-01 relating to the continuum of competition and force multipliers has been adopted. Following the revision of AJP-01, we have also introduced the behaviour-centric approach.

Finally, the structure of the NDD has been updated. To this end, the basis for military strategy was used, in which ends, ways and means are aligned.

Structure of the NDD

Chapter 1 describes the context in which the Netherlands armed forces operate. The chapter starts with a description of the general context of deployment. It then goes on to first describe aspects of the international legal framework, followed by aspects of the national legal framework. The next section describes the fundamental principles of the armed forces as a state's military instrument of power, and explores key doctrinal principles guiding its use.

Chapter 2 highlights the strategic objectives (ends) of the armed forces on the basis of Dutch security policy and how it translates to the Netherlands armed forces.

Chapter 3 focuses on the armed forces as an instrument of the Dutch government. It explores decision making with regard to deployment, a number of frameworks for establishing rules of engagement, the levels of command and the way in which the military instrument of power is directed during operations (ways).

Chapter 4 describes the fighting power of the Netherlands (means). Among other things, it discusses how the Netherlands generates fighting power. Then, it describes the domain model and the effect dimensions, how the Netherlands develops and readies its fighting power, how it organises and orchestrates the employment of its fighting power and how it sustains and improves its fighting power.

Each chapter contains a brief description of the military historical context. The text also contains text boxes, in which important principles are highlighted.



1 The armed forces as an instrument of national power

1.1 Introduction

To understand military doctrine, it is necessary to understand the general national and international context and security context for the employment of instruments of national power, as well as the position of the military instrument of power within them. For example, states have an interest in upholding the principle of sovereignty and promoting the prosperity of their population. A state may also have higher ideological goals. The promotion of the international rule of law and the prevention of human rights violations are examples of such ideological aims. These kinds of national interests may be frustrated by other actors, such as states, organisations and groups. It may seem that way, at least. A state can use instruments of power to serve its interests and thus influence others, nationally and internationally. The armed forces play a role in this exchange. This chapter therefore explores which actors and factors shape the strategic security environment and thus determine the general context of employment of the armed forces, the international and national legal frameworks within which the armed forces must operate and the instruments of power available to a state. The chapter concludes with the consideration of a number of fundamental principles for the application of the military instrument of power in particular.

The military instrument of power in a historical context

The period from the 17th century onwards is considered the era of the modern, sovereign nation state. To ensure their safety, constantly changing coalitions of states sought to maintain a balance of power, while attempting to correct disruptions through warfare. The first political entity on Dutch territory was the Republic of the Seven United Provinces, which grew into a geographically small but economically powerful global superpower in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Republic was constantly engaged in armed competition with great rival states, such as Spain, Portugal, France and England, both on the European continent and on the world's oceans. After a 'golden age' as a world power, the Republic was slowly but surely overshadowed by other major powers. After the secession of Belgium (1830), the Netherlands – a unified state and kingdom since 1815 – withdrew into the political isolation of armed neutrality and attempted to navigate between the great European powers. Gradually, the Netherlands developed into a democratic constitutional state, taking shape as a liberal parliamentary democracy.

After the great upheavals of the First World War and the Russian Revolution, threats and security issues were increasingly seen not just as matters between individual states or solely as issues of war and peace. The idealistic concept of a universal, supranational legal order became increasingly prevalent, at the expense of the sovereignty of states. This led to the formation of intergovernmental organisations such as the League of Nations (1919-1946) and the United Nations (1945), which are dedicated to preventing and ending conflicts between states.

Meanwhile, the Industrial Revolution and European imperialism had given rise to a global economy in which societal, financial and economic processes increasingly impacted global security issues and international stability. Technological developments also led to the production of weapons of mass destruction.

At the same time, non-state actors began to influence international relations. Some of these actors placed threats and security issues, such as human rights violations or man-made damage to the environment, on the agenda of the international community. Other actors, such as terrorist organisations, posed a threat in their own right in the name of an ideology or injustice, be it perceived or otherwise.

In the meantime, however, states continued to be the key players on the world stage and to be each other's greatest threats. After the Second World War, the Soviet Union soon became the greatest danger. The Netherlands considered the threat posed by this communist dictatorship to be so great that it did not return to its pre-war policy of armed neutrality. The Netherlands formally joined the coalition of Western democracies, which in 1949 resulted in the establishment of a defensive military alliance: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). During the Cold War period (1945-1991), there was a state of armed peace between the capitalist world and the communist countries.

Driven by the ideal of eradicating devastating world wars once and for all, Western European states developed extensive – and in some areas even supranational – cooperation frameworks after the Second World War, such as the European Atomic Energy Community and the European Economic Community. The Council of Europe aimed to promote cooperation in the areas of human rights and the protection of the democratic rule of law. After the end of the Cold War, these institutions expanded to include Central and Eastern European countries. Under the banner of the European Union (EU), they developed into truly pan-European institutions. However, the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU in 2020, known as Brexit, made it clear that European cooperation was no longer self-evident nor irreversible.



Phenomena such as exponential population growth, energy and food scarcity, environmental pollution, resource depletion, famine and climate change not only affected liveability in certain parts of the world, with migration flows as a result; they also formed a substantial part of the security problem. The same applied to human rights and questions of (humanitarian) intervention. Human activities increasingly became intertwined across borders. In this process of globalisation, mass media such as radio and television had their own role to play. After the Cold War, an acceleration occurred of ever-faster technological developments such as automation and digitisation, the internet, mobile communications and social media. These developments did not fail to have an impact on military operations; they are now an inextricable and integral part of them.

1.2 General operating environment

The strategic security environment, which encompasses the national and international balance of power, gives direction to what is considered the general operating environment of the armed forces. A thorough understanding of this environment is fundamental to the successful deployment of instruments of power, defined as a deployment that contributes to the desired end state. Power relations are determined by environmental factors and actors.

1.2.1 Factors

Environmental factors that are relevant to the national and international contexts include the availability of energy sources and raw materials, environmental and climate change, cultural and historic aspects, religion and ethnicity, politically driven events, demographic developments, the presence of international media and access to the internet, and many others.

1.2.2 Actors

Examples of relevant actors are states, but also non-state actors such as (international) organisations, interest groups, religious institutions, multinationals, and influential individuals (such as heads of state and government, warlords, leaders of criminal and terrorist organisations, but also local administrators and entrepreneurs). Actors have specific interests and are led in thought and deed by how they think their interests will best be served. They may act consciously and deliberately, but may often also act unconsciously and more impulsively. Moreover, not all actors explicitly state their strategic objectives and how they pursue their interests.

Actors such as states and organisations often set out their national and international interests and objectives in strategic documents (e.g. ‘Grand Strategy’, ‘White Paper’). A state’s national strategy has a significant overlap with its national and international security policy, with particular attention being paid to how this policy is implemented and by which instruments of power and methods. The Netherlands does not have a specific grand strategy, but its Constitution does contain a number of grand strategic elements. For example, the Dutch Constitution contains several articles setting out national interests, such as promoting the provision of employment (Article 19), securing the means of subsistence and the distribution of wealth (Article 20) and promoting the health of the population (Article 22). The Constitution also contains a strategic objective, namely the promotion of the international rule of law (Article 90).

States are often members of intergovernmental organisation such as the UN, the EU and NATO. Such organisations represent the common interests of their member states and promote the rules-based international order. Membership of these organisations and actively contributing to their objectives are thus in the national interest. At the same time, such organisations can be regarded as independent actors, each pursuing their own objectives and interests. After all, state and non-state actors act according to their own interests and objectives. Each of them will therefore use instruments of power to influence others in order to achieve their own objectives.

1.2.3 The continuum of competition

NATO uses the continuum of competition to illustrate the power relations between actors and shifts therein on the international stage (see Figure 1-1). The continuum illustrates that actors on this stage are always related to each other in terms of competition, that the degree of competition between actors may vary and thus shift across the continuum.

The continuum distinguishes four types of relationships: cooperation, rivalry, confrontation and armed conflict. There are no clear boundaries between these four stages. The transition from one relationship to another can therefore take place unnoticed, or, to the contrary, may be accompanied by a great deal of uncertainty and friction.

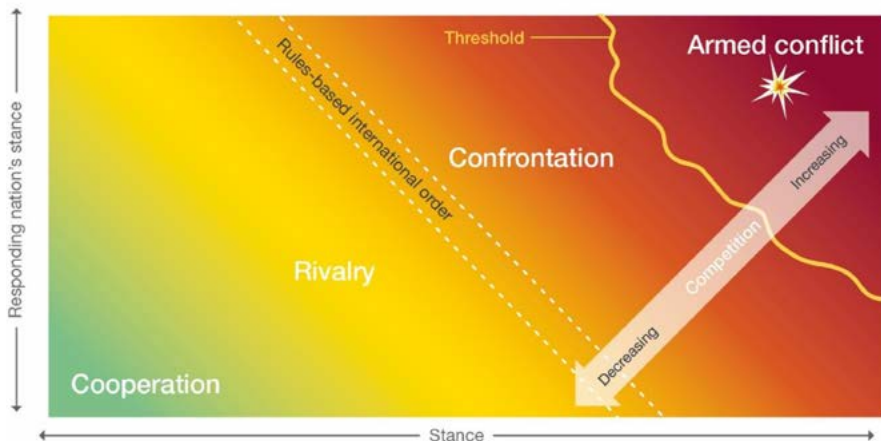


Figure 1.1 | The continuum of competition



1.3 The international legal framework

International law consists of written and unwritten rules that govern relations between states and intergovernmental organisations. The employment of the military instrument outside national borders must have a legal basis in international law. The rule of thumb is that the Netherlands may not operate in another country without that country's consent or without the consent of the United Nations Security Council. There are essentially two universal, legal principles underpinning this rule: the principle of sovereignty and the prohibition of the use of force, as expressed in the UN Charter. After looking at these two principles, this chapter will discuss several other legal principles as well as the laws and jurisdictions that apply during military operations.

1.3.1 *The principle of sovereignty*

According to this principle, the authority of a state does not depend on another, higher authority for actions within its own country. Under the non-intervention principle, as an extension of the principle of sovereignty, no state may intervene in the internal or external affairs of another.

1.3.2 *The prohibition of the use of force*

Article 2, paragraph 4, of the UN Charter prohibits the use or the threat of military force in international relations. This stipulation is intended to prevent states from taking military action in the territory of or against another state, either on their own initiative or on the basis of national legislation.

1.3.3 *The use of force and the right of self-defence*

There are three generally accepted exceptions to the prohibition of the use of force. The first legal basis is the right of individual or collective self-defence, recognised in Article 51 of the UN Charter. The right of self-defence applies in the event of an imminent or actual armed attack on a country by another state or by an organised armed group. Leading on from that, it is also the case that states may, under strict conditions, protect their citizens and, if necessary, deploy military personnel in an evacuation operation abroad. One of the conditions that apply here is that the host nation is no longer willing or able to offer those citizens the necessary protection. The second legal basis is authorisation of the UN Security Council for the use of force on the basis of Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The third legal basis is an invitation from the host nation. This third legal basis focuses primarily but not exclusively on the stationing of troops and training, or preparing for activities in the context of the collective self-defence of the state in question (e.g. the enhanced Forward Presence in Lithuania).

There is also some discussion about other exceptions to the prohibition of force, in particular about allowing humanitarian intervention. The Netherlands' position is that military intervention in a humanitarian emergency can be justified on moral and political grounds. This means that humanitarian intervention is permissible as a last resort in exceptional cases and under strict conditions. This does not mean that humanitarian intervention is a legal basis. As a consequence of the different legal bases, the responsibilities and powers of military personnel can differ widely in each operation.

1.3.4 Laws and jurisdictions

The international law that governs whether a state may use force should be seen separately from the laws and jurisdictions that govern the actual use of force. The legal framework that applies during deployment outside the Netherlands is different for each operation, and even sometimes for different areas or phases of the same operation. For example, counter-drug and counter-piracy operations (law enforcement) could thus also be subject to the Dutch Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure. In all cases, the way in which the assigned tasks are performed and the powers exercised must, at minimum, be in accordance with the protective provisions of international humanitarian law and, where applicable, human rights.

1.3.5 International humanitarian law

International humanitarian law (IHL), *jus in bello*, as defined in the Geneva Conventions with the associated supplementary protocols, determines the laws and jurisdiction during military operations. The purpose of IHL is to find a balance between military necessity (the reality of the use of force) and humanity (the prevention of unnecessary suffering). IHL grants powers and imposes restrictions to this effect. The powers consist mainly of the right of combatants to take part in hostilities, while the restrictions mainly encompass rules for the methods and means of warfare and rules which govern the protection of people and goods.

IHL only applies officially if there is a situation of ‘armed conflict’; whether the situation is one of armed conflict depends on actual events and not on declarations or political views of warring parties. Even if IHL does not apply, Dutch and NATO policy is to use IHL restrictions as a safety margin for operations by the Netherlands armed forces. This prevents any confusion that might arise in respect of the powers of an intervention force as a result of its changing status in a conflict area. This status can after all range from armed enforcement of peace or enforcement of the rule of law and stability to assistance in rebuilding and alleviation of human suffering.



1.3.6 Human rights

In principle, the provisions of human rights treaties apply during the employment of the Netherlands armed forces. The most important human rights treaties are the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). These treaties have an extraterritorial effect. This means that they apply to military operations abroad insofar as jurisdiction is exercised within the scope of these treaties. Given the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, this will apply in most cases.

Human rights remain applicable in armed conflicts, subject to exceptions recognised under international law. The decision to derogate from human rights obligations can only be made by the government. If there are conflicting provisions between applicable rules under human rights treaties and IHL during an armed conflict, the latter shall in principle prevail. This means that where IHL does not provide specific rules or such rules are not sufficiently clear, human rights will be leading.

1.4 The national legal framework

As well as being subject to international law, the employment of Dutch forces is also subject to national legislation. This legislation includes, for example, stipulations about the existence of the armed forces, defines the circumstances in which the armed forces can be deployed and sets rules for their deployment and actions.

1.4.1 *The Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands*

The Charter deals with the legal order in the Kingdom and distinguishes between the affairs of the Kingdom and those of its constituent countries: the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten. With regard to the armed forces, the Charter stipulates that preservation of the independence and the defence of the Kingdom is a Kingdom responsibility (Article 3, paragraph 1.a). The armed forces perform this task for all countries of the Kingdom.



1.4.2 The Constitution

The existence, direction and deployment of the armed forces are embedded in the Dutch Constitution, mainly in Articles 97 and 100.

Article 97

1. 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 rule of law.
2. The Government shall have supreme authority over the armed forces.

Article 100

1. The government shall inform the States General in advance if the armed forces are to be deployed or made available to maintain or promote the international rule of law (the second core task). This shall include providing advance information on the provision of humanitarian aid in the event of armed conflict.
2. The provisions of paragraph 1 shall not apply if compelling reasons exist to prevent the provision of information in advance. In this event, information shall be supplied as soon as possible.

Paragraph 2 of Article 97 stipulates that supreme authority over the armed forces rests exclusively with the government: the primacy of politics. That also means that the government bears political responsibility in respect of parliament, and ultimately that the government does not relinquish that supreme authority, even when it makes troops available to international organisations.

Article 100 states that the government must inform parliament in advance of deployment or provision of military forces to maintain or promote the international rule of law, unless the exception in paragraph 2 of the Article applies. In this event, parliament must be informed as quickly as possible after the start of deployment or the provision of troops.

This duty of information does not apply to the defence task, which involves individual or collective self-defence as defined in Article 51 of the UN Charter. Deployment for collective self-defence may occur on the basis of the international obligation to assist in Article 5 of the NATO treaty and Article 42 of the Treaty on European Union.

1.5 Instruments of power

To achieve their objectives and safeguard their interests in their operating environments, actors can use a range of instruments of power. These instruments of power are designed to influence and induce another party to act in a manner favoured by the actor using the instrument of power. Six fundamental bases of power can be distinguished, namely reward, coercive, legitimate, expert, informational and referent. These can be linked to someone's position or person. This is important, as the aforementioned description of the general context of deployment also identifies influential persons as relevant. Moreover, all institutional theories on bases of power can always be reduced to these six fundamental bases of power. Another common categorisation of instruments of power used in AJP-01, is the distinction between hard and soft power. Hard power relies on the active and targeted application of penalties and rewards, deterrence and compulsion. Soft power is based on persuasion and encouragement. Although soft power can be extremely potent, its outcome is uncertain. Moreover, it is more difficult to employ in a targeted way.

1.5.1 *The instruments of power of the state*

The Dutch government has instruments of power at its disposal to fulfil its responsibilities at the national level. For example, the government has legislative and regulatory powers, can use financial resources such as subsidies and taxes and can make arrangements with other organisations or domestic governments. States exert influence (i.e. power) internationally through political, diplomatic, economic, socio-cultural, humanitarian and military activities. This explicitly includes the military instrument of power. States employ these resources to attempt to achieve their national aims in the international security environment and shape their own security policy. The state's instruments of power on the international stage are also called instruments of national power, and can be divided into the following categories (DIME):

The diplomatic instrument (D) is the means used by a state to establish and maintain relations with foreign powers and other actors on the international stage and to protect its interests and achieve its objectives. Diplomacy is used to try to influence other actors. Diplomatic pressure can also be applied, with or without the overt threat of the use of other instruments of power. International fora are an important stage upon which actors use their diplomatic might. A state wields its diplomatic power through political leaders and ambassadors. Other means of diplomatic power include the use of special envoys, negotiations, participation in or boycott of alliances or coalitions or the signing of treaties.

The information instrument (I) Actors may use information as an instrument of power. For reasons of national and international security and privacy, a state's information must be protected, and access to important or secret information must be denied. The controlled and targeted release of correct or incorrect information is an important instrument for influencing public opinion and perceptions held by other actors. Traditional and social media play an important role in this. Apart from the release of information, the information instrument aims to influence the availability, reliability and integrity of information. It also aims to disrupt the information systems of opponents, while protecting the state's own information and information systems. An increasingly important role in this respect is played by digital attacks and hacks. As information manipulation techniques have become more widespread and reliance on information has grown, information is becoming an increasingly important part of the general context of deployment.

The military instrument (M) is distinct from the other instruments of national power as it involves the threat and actual use of force. This is typically protective, preventive or deterrent in nature. The emphasis may be on the presence of military forces without the actual use of force. When the military instrument is employed, credibility is key. The aim is to show all parties that the government or coalition is willing and able to use force to achieve the desired effect.

The monopoly on the use of force does not necessarily lie with armed forces or police forces. The military instrument in a broad sense encompasses all forms of violence used by an actor. A terrorist attack, the use of militias or the poisoning of a specific person are also examples of the use of the military instrument.

The economic instrument (E) provides a range of options to improve a state's prosperity and to support or combat other actors. This instrument of power includes economic aid, and measures such as embargoes or boycotts. In a general sense, the economic instrument is used by adopting a particular trade policy and implementing fiscal and monetary policy. Where economic instruments are used against an international actor, the effect will usually only be felt in the long term. In practice, the desired effects are not always achieved because the economic instrument is not used consistently, for example in the event of a change of government, or if there are parties who do not consent to the imposed measures. In addition, governments of Western democracies do not have absolute control over the economic instrument. Multinational companies can therefore evade local laws and regulations.

These instruments of power are the traditional instruments of national power. It is clear that the military instrument exists alongside other instruments of power. The state may use instruments of power in a coordinated and/or synchronised way (see “Applying the military instrument of power”).

Recent publications have suggested that there is a need to expand the DIME categorisation to DIMEFIL. This would extend the list to include the financial instrument (F), the intelligence instrument (I) and law enforcement or ‘lawfare’ (L). An argument in favour of this expansion is that, for example, the freezing of financial assets of specific actors is an effective instrument of power that cannot be classed under any of the DIME categories. The same applies to ‘lawfare’, the use of legislation and international treaties to achieve objectives. Especially in the rivalry phase and the confrontation phase, where actors often consciously operate below the threshold of armed conflict, sometimes for extended periods of time, these kinds of alternative instruments are increasingly employed. However, there is no unanimous agreement on the exact scope of these instruments. The expansion of DIME to DIMEFIL is therefore not included in this doctrine.

1.5.2 Instruments of power of non-state actors

In addition to non-state actors with a certain intention, which is not discussed further here, there are non-state actors operating from states that are not in principle opposed to those states. This includes international organisations, such as the UN, NATO and the EU, but also actors such as NGOs and large commercial parties. They sometimes have comparable instruments of power to state actors. The difference is that, when it comes to the use of their instruments of power, while they are subject to international law and agreements, they are not under the control of national authorities. As a result, they may, intentionally or not, influence the working of instruments of national power, either positively or negatively, and they may thus play a significant role in the operating environment (for example, commercial capabilities in the space domain).



1.6 Applying the military instrument of power

A number of doctrinal principles apply to the development and deployment of fighting. These are described in the sections below.

1.6.1 *The manoeuvrist approach*

The ability to generate sufficient fighting power is no guarantee of success. An approach in which fighting power is mainly used to exploit identified weaknesses in the moral component of other actors is known as the manoeuvrist approach. This is an approach to operations that is designed to defeat an opponent by breaking his morale and physical cohesion – his ability to fight as an effective and cohesive whole – instead of physically neutralising him step by step. The aim of this approach is to influence other actors' perception, their behaviour and their actions. Important aspects here are momentum, tempo and mental agility, which in combination produce a shock effect and the element of surprise on other actors. The manoeuvrist approach requires a mentality that centres on creativity and perseverance, as well as requiring a specific mindset, practical knowledge and mission command.

1.6.2 *The behaviour-centric approach*

People are at the heart of competition between societies and groups. The ability to influence the behaviour of actors in an operating environment is therefore often the key to success. Today, information is communicated to audiences globally by a multitude of entities. Commanders must therefore take account of a broad audience, which extends beyond known actors. Through narratives, we can create a multitude of effects, but others can also threaten our audiences. The behaviour-centric approach focuses on planning and execution of activities from all levels of operations to influence the attitudes and behaviour of specific audiences. Identifying those specific audiences and the desired behavioural changes provides commanders with guidance in selecting and achieving their wider objectives.

1.6.3 Mission command

Mission command is the primary command philosophy of the Netherlands armed forces. Central to mission command is the establishment and clear communication of the commander's intent. This gives the maximum freedom of action to the subordinate levels. The focus is on the context in which the task must be performed and on the desired results and effects, and not on the way in which they are achieved. Executive authority is thus decentralised. In other words, authority is delegated to the lowest appropriate level for the most effective and efficient deployment of equipment and capabilities. NATO doctrine publication AJP-01 discusses mission command in more detail, along with the conditions needed to use it successfully.

1.6.4 The comprehensive approach

The current context of deployment and its dynamics are often complex. The comprehensive application of instruments of power is therefore the leading approach for a state to resolve conflict and confrontations in a sustainable manner. In the comprehensive approach, states seek the optimal combination of different instruments of power. This is particularly important when pursuing a lasting solution to a conflict or confrontation. It is not always necessary to deploy all instruments at the same time; depending on the interests to be protected or the objective to be realised, and on the prevailing situation (based on the continuum of conflict), one instrument or combination of instruments may be more suitable than another.

The comprehensive approach endeavours to ensure that all instruments of power available to a state can be used in a coordinated and integrated manner, if necessary together with those of other countries and international and non-governmental organisations. On the basis of a common analysis, the relevant actors develop a collective strategy in which mutual coordination, synchronisation, tasks, roles and responsibilities are established. This does not mean that all actors must have the same strategy, or the same views in respect of the desired end state, but they should recognise the value of a joint approach.

An important principle of the comprehensive approach is the idea that the use of the military instrument is particularly effective when combined with other instruments. This does not detract from the fact that the threat or use of force can be a deciding factor in the creation of conditions, such as a safe environment, for a lasting solution. The military instrument must be employed so that it reinforces the deployment and efforts of other instruments while keeping any adverse effects to a minimum.



By taking preventive action, in which there is usually no question of the use of force or intervention in an impending conflict, a state's political leaders preserve the greatest freedom of choice for the deployment of its instruments of power. By contributing to the successful use of other instruments of power, the military instrument provides support and creates the required conditions.

1.6.5 Multi-domain operations

Employing the military instrument in conjunction with other instruments of power requires a comprehensive operational concept. The concept of multi-domain operations (MDO) meets this need. While joint and combined refer to cooperation between Services of the armed forces, MDO is about achieving converging effects.

MDO focuses on thinking in terms of creating effects in an integrated manner across different operational domains. By creating effects (whether from various instruments of power or not) across different domains and integrating them, they can reinforce each other to attain a more powerful overall effect. They can also overload the opponent with dilemmas by simultaneously confronting them with a multitude of effects in various environments.

Organising this coordination within military operations is called orchestrating. Synchronisation is the term used for multi-domain operations that employ the military instrument of power across domains in conjunction with non-military instruments of power. Synchronising the military instrument with the other instruments of national power is part of a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. Thinking and working in terms of MDO guides this process further.



2 Dutch security policy

2.1 Introduction

Dutch military doctrine defines military thinking as it is applied in the Netherlands armed forces. Because the use of the military instrument is derived from Dutch security policy, it is first necessary to define that security policy, thus providing an insight into the higher framework in which the armed forces apply their doctrine.

This chapter addresses security policy from both an international and Dutch perspective. After a look at the historical context, it provides an explanation of how Dutch security policy is embedded within the international system and our Constitution. Next, it describes the current policy documents. Finally, the chapter will set out what this means for national security organisations and for the armed forces in particular.

Dutch security policy in a historical context

Since the establishment of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1815, the armed forces had two primary tasks. The first was to defend the Kingdom in Europe, and the second to maintain peace and order in the colonies. The first task was the responsibility of the land and naval forces: the army and the fleet. The second task was carried out in the Dutch East Indies by the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army and the Colonial Navy, later named the East Indies Military Navy. In the Caribbean, the Netherlands Forces in Curaçao and the Netherlands Forces in Surinam were tasked with the defence of the colonies, while the navy ensured a maritime presence.

In political-strategic terms, the Netherlands maintained a policy of armed neutrality until the Second World War. The armed forces in Europe concentrated mainly on the ability to engage in a major conflict in the event of a violation of that neutrality. After the conquests of the 19th century, the colonial troops focused primarily on maintaining domestic peace and public order. After the liberation from German occupation in 1944-1945, Dutch defence and security policy focused on allied defence against the communist threat from the east. To protect its vital interests, the Netherlands chose international cooperation and embedding in multinational organisations and security structures. The United Nations (UN), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and (precursors to) the European Union (EU) were the main institutions.

During the Cold War, the Netherlands' primary security concern was the territorial defence of Western Europe as part of NATO against a military attack by the Warsaw Pact, led by the Soviet Union. The end of the Cold War caused geostrategic upheaval and caused a shift in Dutch security policy. The Netherlands transformed its defence forces into a smaller and more flexible armed forces focused on international crisis management and intervention. Deployment under the UN increased, partly because the UN Security Council wanted to play a more prominent role in conflict resolution. As a result there was frequent participation in international operations in a UN or NATO context, as part of ad hoc coalitions or EU military structures.

In terms of security, NATO remained the most important pillar for the Netherlands. In 1991, the alliance developed a new Strategic Concept, which provided for a broader, less territorially focused, flexible security strategy. Furthermore, NATO chose to enter into partnerships with non-member states and to extend an olive branch to the former member states of the Warsaw Pact. NATO expanded significantly with the phased accession of many Central and Eastern European countries, including several former Soviet Union countries. In 1999 and again in 2010, NATO updated its Strategic Concept, in which the member states acknowledged the global security situation and its associated challenges.

In parallel, the Netherlands Ministry of Defence shifted its focus towards domains that had long not been considered part of the core of military assistance. For example, the armed forces were given tasks in the area of overseas counter-drugs and counter-piracy operations. After 9/11 and other terrorist attacks in European cities, specialist units strengthened their counter-terrorism capabilities. Furthermore, military personnel began to participate in border surveillance on land and at sea along the external borders of Europe, and they provided more frequent support in civil disaster response, both at home and abroad.

The increased assertiveness of state actors such as China and Russia led to a strategic shift by NATO, which was formalised during the Wales Summit in 2014. For the Netherlands armed forces, this turning point brought a renewed focus on the first core task. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 underlined the importance of this strategic reorientation and gave a strong impulse to greater investment in the capabilities of the armed forces.

2.2 International embedding

For its prosperity and security, the Kingdom depends on a stable and secure world with a functioning rule of law, including the promotion of human rights and an inclusive and effective multilateral system. The pursuit of collective security and stability is central to Dutch foreign and defence policy. Multilateral cooperation is at the heart of this policy, and international organisations such as NATO, the EU and the UN play a prominent role. The strategic choices of the Netherlands armed forces are heavily dependent on international obligations and partnerships.

An important principle of Dutch security policy is the obligation of collective defence of NATO territory, laid down in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949. Article 5 obliges each NATO member, in the event of an armed attack on a NATO member state in Europe or North America to take forthwith, individually and in concert with the other parties, such action as it deems necessary – including the use of armed force – to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic region. The 2009 Treaty of Lisbon on European Union also contains an obligation of mutual assistance between the member states of the EU. It sets out, for those EU member states that are also members of NATO, that NATO is the basis for the collective defence of its members and the instrument for conducting this collective defence. The Treaty also states that the European Union has a common security and defence policy (CSDP). Article 42(7) of the Treaty contains a similar provision to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. This article, too, stipulates that an attack on one member state is regarded by the other member states as an attack on all member states. Both Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty and Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union refer to the right of individual and collective self-defence as recognised in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

In addition to NATO and the EU, the Netherlands works closely with international organisations such as the UN and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). These organisations provide a platform for diplomatic cooperation, conflict prevention and conflict management. The Netherlands actively contributes to these structures in order to promote international stability using a wide range of instruments, ranging from diplomacy and development cooperation to military action.

2.3 National embedding: Core tasks

The core tasks of the armed forces were formulated in 1999. These core tasks follow from the Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Police Act and the Security Regions Act. Three core tasks can be distinguished:

1. Protecting national and allied territory, including the Caribbean part of the Kingdom;
2. Enforcement and promotion of the international rule of law and stability;
3. Supporting civil authorities in upholding the law and providing disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, both nationally and internationally.

This list is not hierarchical: the tasks are equal and must be executable at all times. The likelihood that a certain task will need to be executed may vary considerably over time.

2.3.1 First core task

The general defence task manifests itself in various forms, such as the intensification of NATO deployment. Because this explicitly benefits the security of the population in NATO member states, NATO forces are now deployed outside the treaty area as well. Allied military capabilities still, however, guarantee the territorial integrity of the member states. The Netherlands Ministry of Defence also remains responsible for the territorial integrity of the Kingdom's Caribbean countries (Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten) and the Caribbean Netherlands (Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba).

On national territory, the general defence task is shaped by the collaboration between military and civil defence. Civil defence (footnote Article 61 of AP) is the supplementary task of civil authorities and organisation to support the armed forces in the protection of territorial security. The military authority to be established has a coordinating role, on behalf of the government, to take all measures necessary for internal and external security.

2.3.2 Second core task

Maintenance and promotion of the international rule of law and stability requires the execution of expeditionary, usually multinational, operations. Over the years, the accent of the missions has shifted from deployment under Chapter VI of the UN Charter in which peacekeeping efforts are performed with the consent of the warring parties, to missions based on Chapter VII, in which force may be used if necessary for peace-enforcement. Operations which aim to limit or resolve intrastate conflicts also require robust action. These operations are characterised by an intense but relatively short intervention phase at the high end of the spectrum of force, followed by a lengthy stabilisation phase. Long-

term stabilisation operations are costly and carry high risks. It is for this reason, and because prevention is better than cure, that there is a growing preference for participation in preventive operations. A military presence, the support of diplomatic missions and the education and training of - and exercising with - other armed forces can also have a preventive effect. This second core task also includes deployment for international law enforcement, such as the protection of merchant shipping against piracy and the prevention of arms and drugs smuggling by sea. The deployment of the Netherlands armed forces for the second core task occurs wherever possible in an allied or coalition context, ideally with countries which are members of the same security organisations as the Netherlands.

2.3.3 *Third core task*

The Netherlands armed forces have developed into a permanent security partner within the Kingdom. With their highly developed specialist and unique capabilities, the armed forces can now offer a broader range of support. They often serve as a partner in activities such as emergency relief, investigation, intelligence, security and enforcement of public order and the rule of law. In principle, the whole armed forces are available for the third core task. However, the core task includes a number of structural activities, such as explosive ordnance disposal, airspace control and deployment in the context of coastguard operations in the North Sea and the Caribbean. For the purpose of civil-military cooperation, the availability of certain specialist capabilities is linked to response times. Military capabilities are deployed under the responsibility of the civil authorities. The third core task also has an international component. The armed forces can also operate internationally as a security partner in the event of deployment for disaster relief and the provision of humanitarian aid. Examples include the deployment of military personnel after the earthquake in Haiti in 2010 and emergency relief after various hurricanes in the Caribbean, such as Irma (2017), which struck several islands including St. Maarten, and various Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations such as in August 2021 in Kabul and in October 2024 in Beirut.



2.4 Vesting of Dutch security policy

The main objective of Dutch security policy is based on the Constitution and is to ensure the country's independence, integrity, stability and prosperity. Security policy focuses on protecting Dutch interests and safeguarding national security in a dynamic global environment. The main principles of Dutch security policy are a combination of national and international cooperation, risk management and strategic preparedness. The policy is shaped by strategic documents. Following an overview of the main geopolitical trends, this section will briefly explain the National Risk Assessment (*Rijksbrede Risicoanalyse*), the Security Strategy for the Kingdom of the Netherlands (*Veiligheidsstrategie voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*) and the 2024 Defence White Paper.

2.4.1 Trends

The most important trends currently affecting our international security situation are:

1. **Shifts in the balance of power:** The rise of countries such as China and India is changing the balance of power, making the US less dominant. This leads to new partnerships and tensions.
2. **Regional conflicts:** Conflicts in areas such as the Middle East, Eastern Europe and the Indo-Pacific are ongoing and may have broader implications for global stability.
3. **Technological competition:** The race for technological dominance, particularly in artificial intelligence and cyber technology, is becoming increasingly important and influences national security strategies.
4. **Populism and nationalism:** In many countries, we see a rise of populist and nationalist movements, leading to a shift away from multilateral cooperation and international institutions.
5. **Climate change:** The impact of climate change on security and migration is becoming clearer, leading to new geopolitical tensions and challenges.
6. **Sustainability and energy security:** The transition to renewable energy is affecting geopolitical alliances and dependencies, particularly with regard to oil and gas producing countries.
7. **Changes in trade relations:** Increasing protectionist measures and trade conflicts, such as between the US and China, are affecting global economic relations.
8. **Supraregional cooperation:** Initiatives such as the EU, ASEAN and other regional cooperation frameworks strengthen regional integration and influence global political dynamics.
9. **Pressing and structural economic challenges** such as labour market shortages and wider scarcity. As a result, choices need to be made between competing security interests, including the provision of public and semi-public services such as healthcare, education, and defence, but also ensuring access to clean water and essential resources.

The trends demonstrate the complexity and interconnectedness of the world stage. One aspect of this is that the various trends mentioned above are not only changing independently of one another, but also interact with each other and create a cumulative effect, which calls for an integrated perspective.

2.4.2 National Risk Assessment of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

The National Risk Assessment (NRA) is an instrument of Dutch security policy that is used to provide a systematic overview of the most important risks to national security. The NRA provides a basis from which to anticipate threats and formulate policy measures. A range of threats may simultaneously damage our national security. The war in Ukraine has shown us this: military and hybrid threats, rising geopolitical tension, threats to vital processes (power supply) and cyber and economic threats converge within this conflict. As a result of technological developments, threats are becoming more interconnected.

The NRA identifies a large number of threats and their associated risks, from cyber and economic threats to climate disasters and infectious diseases. The threat analysis in the NRA is based on the national security interests. If one or more of the six national security interests are affected, society faces disruption and there is potential for a threat to have a detrimental effect on the national security of the Kingdom. Scenarios are used to consider the probability and impact of threats on the six national security interests: territorial security, physical safety, economic security, ecological security, social and political stability, and international rule of law and stability. These interests may be affected by a variety of threats. For this reason, the NRA uses an all hazard approach, considering both intentional (*security*) and non-intentional (*safety*) threats that may originate both domestically and abroad.

The NRA and current developments in the threat landscape demonstrate the importance of increasing our resilience. We need to increase the resilience and robustness of our society. Therefore, the outcomes of the NRA are an important basis for the development of the security strategy in order to set priorities and make proactive changes to policy.

2.4.3 The Security Strategy for the Kingdom of the Netherlands

The Security Strategy for the Kingdom of the Netherlands (2023-2029) builds on the NRA and extends the scope of security policy to broader, cross-border risks. Where the NRA identifies risks, the Security Strategy aims to provide an integrated and comprehensive vision on national security. The Security Strategy places a strong emphasis on cooperation between national and international partners to ensure a comprehensive response to threats. The strategy focuses on resilience and prevention, and includes non-traditional security challenges such as pandemics and economic dependencies.

The three main objectives of the strategy are:

1. a secure Kingdom in a multipolar world,
2. a resilient democratic legal order, and
3. a ready and resilient society.

The strategic course for national security can only be achieved through more integrated control and direction of the implementation process and execution. This requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, including clear risk communication, in order to safeguard the relationship between threats and the approach taken.

Examples that underline the importance of a comprehensive Dutch security policy

COVID-19 pandemic: the pandemic has shown that a non-military threat, such as a health crisis, can have an enormous impact on national security and social stability. Security policy is therefore aimed at increasing the resilience of critical sectors.

Cyberattacks on the public and private sector: incidents such as cyberattacks on Dutch hospitals and government institutions illustrate society's vulnerability to digital threats. Security policy is therefore aimed at strengthening cyber resilience and the integration of cyber capabilities.

2.4.4 Defence White Paper

The 2024 Defence White Paper forms the operational framework for how the Netherlands armed forces are deployed to address the identified risks from the NRA and the Security Strategy. The Defence White Paper translates strategic directions into practical measures for the armed forces.

The Defence White Paper is strongly committed to strengthening the armed forces in order to address the wide range of threats. The paper stresses the importance of interoperability with NATO allies and cooperation within the EU in order to quickly and competently respond to crises. This is supported by investments in innovative technologies and by increasing military readiness to comply with treaty obligations. The Netherlands armed forces are preparing for a security environment in which innovation, agility and hybrid threats take centre stage. This enables the Kingdom to not only protect Dutch interests through effective deterrence, but also to actively contribute to international stability and security.

2.5 Consequences of security policy for the armed forces

In the current security environment, the use of the military instrument alone will not be enough to fully achieve the national objectives. In a world where conflicts continue to be driven by ethnic, religious, ideological and material motives, the ability of nations and coalitions to employ all their instruments of power in a coordinated, integrated manner will be essential to achieving effective results. This also applies to the ability to take on board and, where possible, put to good use the opinions and responses of the public - both domestically and internationally - as well as those of the media as operations develop further.

The Dutch government recognises the need for such a comprehensive approach to operations. This requires greater ability on the part of the Dutch armed forces to cooperate with joint, interagency and multinational partners. It also requires the armed forces to adopt a coordinated approach to operations that recognises the public and the media as crucial to the success of operations. Outward-looking, integrated and multidisciplinary approaches should be the norm for addressing the complex problems and challenges posed by a multidimensional security environment.

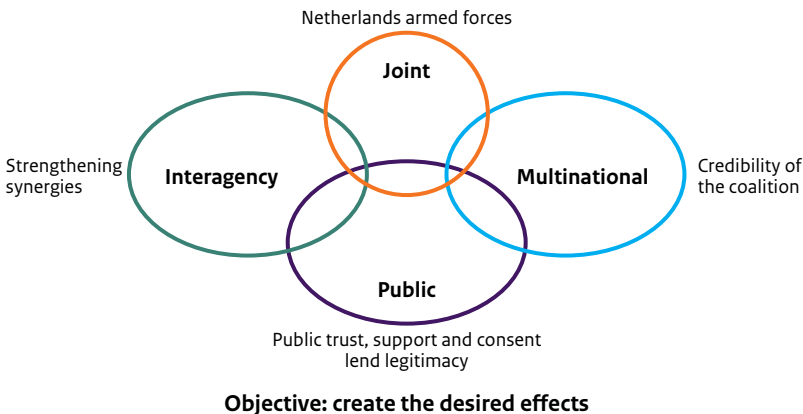
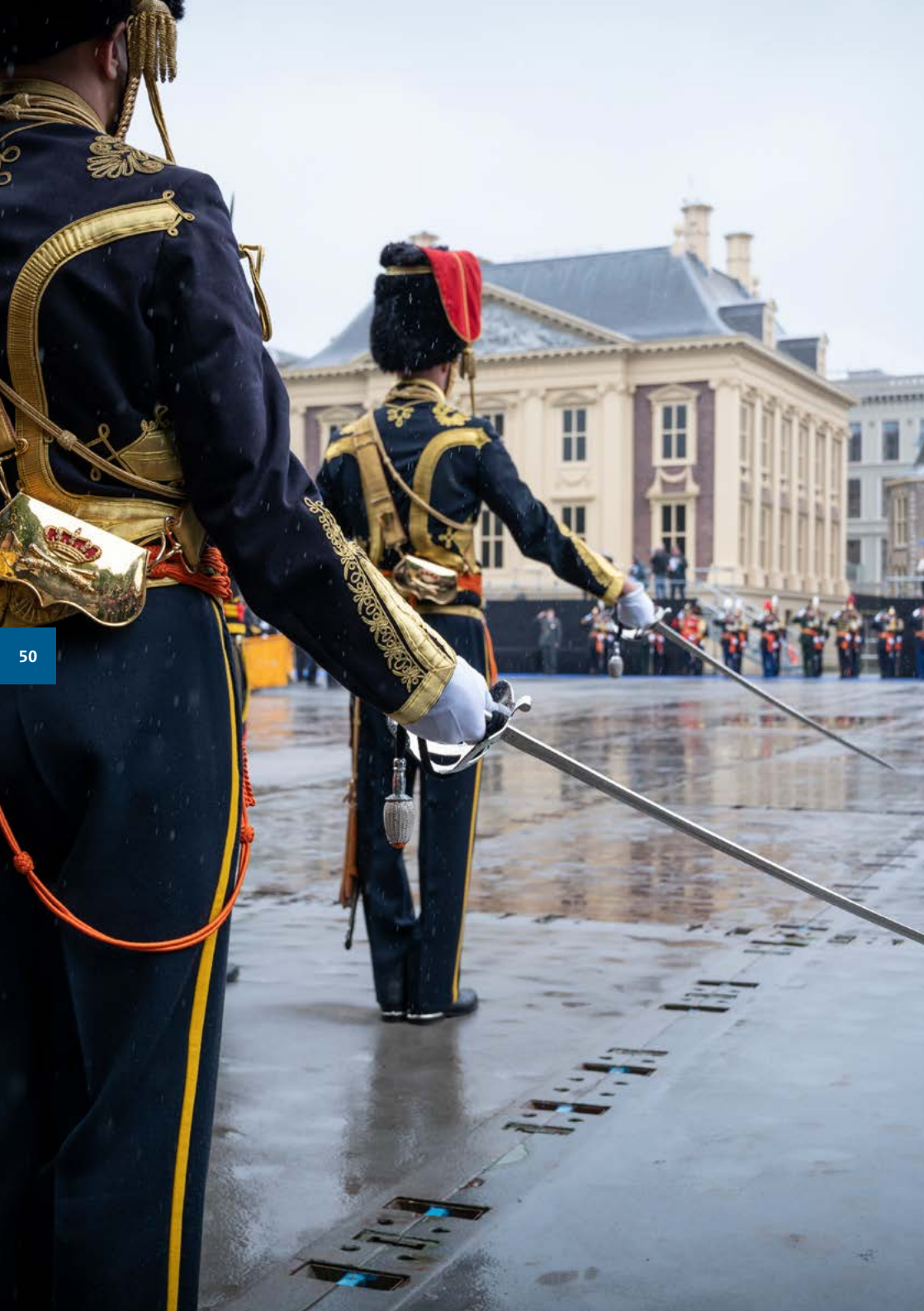


Figure 2.1 | Joint, Interagency Multinational and Public (JIMP)

Military operations should be viewed in a JIMP context, in which the Netherlands armed forces cooperate with multinational and interagency partners in order to create the desired effects through unity of purpose and effort. At the same time, account should be taken of the requirements of public trust and public support, both at home and abroad, as public consent lends legitimacy to a military operation.

Security policy, comprising national, international and foreign policy, results in the adoption of a number of principles for the operations of the Netherlands armed forces: joint, multinational, interagency and public. Such a comprehensive approach can be achieved by applying a framework in which effective collaboration and joint efforts of key officials in the following four areas are the norm:

- **Joint operations**, defined as operations involving at least two Services with capabilities that complement each other working together. Integrated deployment of these complementary capabilities of multiple Services will ensure optimum effectiveness for achieving the operational objectives.
- **Multinational (combined) operations**, because we have chosen to be a member of NATO, to operate as part of the EU or as part of another multinational security organisation or coalition. The Netherlands armed forces will, therefore, almost always be deployed under an umbrella strategy that is formulated by an alliance or coalition. This does not preclude the exclusive deployment of Dutch forces for small-scale operations, a situation which generally arises in national operations.
- **Interagency operations**, because, under the comprehensive approach, fighting power is always deployed in conjunction with other instruments of power. This is based on the accepted fact that fighting power alone cannot resolve a conflict of interests, confrontation, crisis or conflict.
- **Public operations**, consisting of various elements, including the national and international public, NGOs, volunteer organisations and media and commercial organisations (both domestic and foreign), because the armed forces derive provide trust, support and legitimacy from these elements.



3 The armed forces as an instrument of the government

3.1 Introduction

One of the principles on which the Dutch state system is based is that the armed forces are an instrument of national power applied by the government. To understand the thinking behind the operational deployment of the armed forces, a thorough understanding of the methods of their deployment is required. To this end, this chapter explains the decision-making process for deployment at home and abroad, the rules of engagement, the levels of command and the direction of forces on deployment. This philosophy on the direction of the armed forces affects deployment, and thus military doctrine itself.

The armed forces as an instrument of the government in a historical context

Since the establishment of the Kingdom in 1815, the power to take decisions on war and peace were constitutionally vested in the government, formed by the head of state and the cabinet. Initially, the king alone held political and military leadership; he had “supreme command over the fleets and armies”. After the state reforms of 1848 and the introduction of ministerial responsibility, the cabinet – specifically the Ministers of War, the Navy and the Colonies – was put in charge of directing the armed forces and formulating military policy.

On the subject of the authority to declare war, the 1815, 1848 and 1887 versions of the Constitution stated: “war is declared by the King, who will immediately notify both chambers of the States General accordingly”. When the Constitution was revised in 1922, this clause was amended; it was now stipulated that the King could not declare war “without prior approval of the States General”. Since the constitutional amendment of 1983, it was no longer the head of state but the government, and the cabinet, that could declare war. Meanwhile, declarations of war between states had fallen into disuse internationally. Provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the post-war allied embedding of the Netherlands armed forces influenced the national sovereign domain. The power to decide to participate in a war with military units and resources, however, remained with the national government.

After the end of the Cold War, the armed forces were transformed into a smaller, more flexible and expeditionary force. Deployment for international crisis management operations and interventions became an equal second core task, in addition to the defence of national and allied territory. The ongoing internationalisation of the deployment of the Netherlands armed forces led to an expansion of the tasks of the Defence Staff, the ministerial policy directorate for operations, and the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), the most senior officer of the armed forces as of 1976. The Defence Staff became fully responsible for the planning, preparation, execution and evaluation of international operations. Gradually, the responsibilities of the CDS grew into a fully-fledged overall command. In 2005, the armed forces were definitively placed under the single command of the CDS, who from then on became the Chief of Defence (CHOD), the highest national military-strategic authority.

This new expeditionary period was characterised by growing social and political scrutiny for military operations within the framework of the second core task. The cabinet and parliament wished to exercise more control. By applying deployment criteria, the decision-making process surrounding the armed forces became easier to monitor and more concrete. In 1993, the cabinet drew up a list of evaluation elements, which was formalised in 1995 in what became known as the *Toetsingskader*, a frame of reference for decision making for the deployment of military units abroad. The 2009 *Toetsingskader* still serves as the starting point for decision making and supplying information to parliament.

In 2000, an active duty of information for the government on the deployment of military personnel to maintain or promote the international rule of law was laid down in Article 100 of the Constitution. Although Parliament does not formally have a right of consent, an operation without the support of a majority in parliament has become unthinkable.

While the government took into account public opinion, there has been no significant societal influence on decision making through the years. Government and parliament do take note of the signals from society, however, the *Toetsingskader* has not included the criterion of 'public support' since 2001, unlike the original version. In the Netherlands, support for international peacekeeping and peace supporting operations has been traditionally high since the Cold War, and has for a long time remained consistent. Over the past decades, the Dutch population has, however, become more critical of participation in stabilisation and combat operations in ad hoc coalitions, according to opinion polls.

3.2 Decision making for deployment

Article 97 of the Constitution stipulates that the government has supreme authority over the armed forces. Any decision to deploy the armed forces will, therefore, always be made by the government. The form of the decision to deploy and the way in which it is made depends on the reason for deployment. There is a distinction between decision making in respect of the armed forces' permanent tasks and decision making for incidental deployment. In the case of the latter, decision making for deployment within the Kingdom also differs from that outside it.

3.2.1 Decision making for permanent deployment of the armed forces within the Kingdom

Deployment of the armed forces is regarded as permanent if military personnel are performing a recurring task without a particular end state. Such tasks normally take place in a national context and are performed in the Netherlands and in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. Examples of permanent deployment are territorial defence and the military presence in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom.

Decisions about this permanent military deployment are made at ministerial level and are set out in structural agreements between the Ministry of Defence and the other ministries or departments involved. These arrangements are usually in the form of an order, a covenant or a user agreement, such as the March 2022 covenant between the Royal Netherlands Navy and the Netherlands Coastguard.

3.2.2 Decision making for incidental deployment of the armed forces within the Kingdom

Incidental deployment of the armed forces within the Kingdom is when public institutions are assisted or supported by military forces. The decision making process for this military deployment depends on the type of assistance or support and where it is needed.

The following forms of military assistance or support exist within the Netherlands.

- **Military assistance under the Police Act.** Under this act, the armed forces may be asked to assist the police in upholding public order and in criminal law enforcement. Deployment of special forces occurs after a consultative procedure agreed between the ministries.
- **Military assistance under the Security Regions Act.** In the event of a disaster or a crisis, or if there is a serious risk that one is about to unfold, military assistance can be requested by the chairman of the Security Region.

- **Military support in the public interest.** If there is an urgent need for goods or services that Defence can provide to support a public task of a government authority, such an authority may submit a request.

In the case of military assistance in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom, a distinction needs to be made between the Kingdom's Caribbean countries (Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten) and the Caribbean Netherlands (Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba – the BES islands).

- For Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten, the legal basis for the provision of military assistance is the Royal Decree on instructions pertaining to the deployment of the armed forces (1987). This decree enables the governor of these countries to make sections of the armed forces available to the governments of Aruba, Curaçao or St. Maarten for the purpose of providing military assistance to maintain internal security and public order (also referred to as 'hard'), or in disasters, accidents and disruptions to traffic or communications (known as 'soft').
- As public bodies within the Netherlands, the BES islands fall under the Netherlands. Under the BES Security Act (2010), a request for military assistance for criminal law enforcement or for the performance of tasks in the service of the Ministry of Justice may be submitted at the behest of the public prosecutor. A request for military assistance may also be submitted in the event of an actual or imminent disaster or crisis to maintain public law and order.

3.2.3 Operating in exceptional circumstances in the Netherlands

A situation may arise in the Netherlands where the government's usual powers are no longer sufficient to adequately respond and act. When a vital national interest is also at stake, the situation could be considered exceptional. In such a situation, the government may be granted what are described as special powers, which are also created in a way that deviates from the usual legislation. These powers are extremely far-reaching, and are covered by emergency powers legislation. Examples of these special powers are area clearance/evacuation and the requisition of goods and services from civilians and other government authorities.

To fulfil the coordinating task in service of the overall defence function, the military authority will be given a place in the national crisis structure.

3.2.4 Decision making for the deployment of intelligence and security services

The activities of the two intelligence and security services (the General Intelligence and Security Service and the Defence Intelligence and Security Service) are governed by the 2017 Intelligence and Security Services Act (Wiv 2017). The Wiv 2017 provides an exhaustive set of regulations for the collection and processing of information by both services, with regard to both personal and other data.

3.2.5 Decision making for deployment of the armed forces outside the Kingdom

The decision to deploy the armed forces and to use military force if necessary falls under the primacy of the political leadership. Decision making on how and for what purpose the armed forces are deployed is linked to political objectives and national and international law.

As part of the comprehensive approach, military deployment must be coordinated with the other instruments of power used by the government. The strategic objectives of a military operation are established at ministerial level and in close cooperation with military leadership. In the comprehensive approach, multiple ministries may be involved in the decision-making process with regard to military deployment outside the Kingdom. In NATO operations, the North Atlantic Council will decide on the deployment of NATO forces, while the Dutch government will make the decision on a possible military contribution from the Dutch side. The Dutch government will also be responsible for a similar decision in respect of requests for participation in military operations that come from authorities within the EU (Political and Security Committee), the OSCE or the UN. There are situations in which (sub-)operations are then executed under national command, such as special ops and elements of counter-piracy operations.

Under Article 100 of the Constitution, the government will inform parliament in writing in advance of any decision to participate in an international operation as part of the second core task and the conditions associated with that participation. The same applies to operations in which there are overlapping objectives from the first and second core tasks. Operations that are exclusively concerned with the defence task do not fall under Article 100 of the Constitution. Three instruments are particularly important in the decision-making process:

- the threat analysis by the NLD Defence Intelligence and Security Service;
- for operations under Article 100 of the Constitution: the *Toetsingskader*, with points that need particular attention to ensure a well-considered decision to deploy.

This includes such things as political aspects, the legal basis, other participating nations, feasibility and security risks;

- the CHOD's operational planning process.

Pursuant to paragraph 2 of Article 100 of the Constitution, the government may decide to inform parliament in camera, or not in advance but soon as possible after deployment. This applies, for instance, in the case of special operations, which are distinguished by a high level of political or military risk, unconventional operational and tactical techniques, special circumstances and methods of deployment. These operations contribute to objectives or effects at operational or strategic level. Special operations are usually conducted by personnel specially selected and trained for that purpose and are characterised by a high degree of complexity and a covert nature. These special operations are subject to the same instruments for decision making used for other international operations, the difference being that they are discussed in a separate consultative forum.

Units of the armed forces may also find themselves outside Dutch territory without there being any official deployment as defined above. This is the case, for example, in situations where military forces are training and thus contributing to a country's security sector development. The interests are often more of an economic or diplomatic nature, for example a military presence in support of a trade mission or to support diplomatic negotiations. Decisions about this type of military contribution outside the Kingdom are made by the CHOD in close consultation with the other ministries and Services involved.

At an early stage of the preparatory process for military deployment outside the Kingdom, a decision needs to be made as to whether a civil assessment is necessary. This is an assessment of the situation in a conflict area, in which an analysis is made of such aspects as the causes of the conflict, the civil institutions, infrastructure, activities and attitudes of civil authorities and other leaders, local population, etc. This analysis leads to conclusions about the need for the use of non-military instruments of power and civil capabilities. Ideally, this assessment is performed multinationally.

If a civil assessment is necessary, it should be carried out as early in the process as possible, ideally before the decision making starts, as the results are important for effective military deployment.

3.3 Rules of Engagement

For every decision to engage in international military action, a clear mission, an intent and the rules of engagement (ROE) will need to be drawn up for the military units about to be deployed. ROE are rules for commanders of military operations that contain the official parameters in respect of the nature of and methods for the use of force. ROE for Dutch forces, including any caveats to international agreements, are set by the CHOD. ROE are not a means of assigning specific tasks. Commanders may curtail the relevant ROE for subordinate commanders at any time, but they cannot take it upon themselves to expand them. ROE must at all times remain within the parameters of the applicable legislation, including IHL.

Because the state has the monopoly of force, the legitimacy of the use of force must be evaluable; the ROE are instrumental here. ROE never restrict the right to individual or collective self-defence. In a multinational deployment, ROE are established within the relevant alliance or union, or - in the case of an operation by a coalition of states - in consultation with the states participating in the coalition. On the basis of national policy or national law, a country may deviate from the agreed ROE and issue these deviations to their deployed forces as supplementary instructions.

Such deviations may never result in broader powers than those contained in the ROE. In practice, any limitations to the ROE are designated as caveats and must be communicated to the force commander. When planning the missions for his forces, the force commander must ensure that no missions are assigned that fall outside the ROE or outside the caveats that apply to those units. The Dutch senior national representative acts on behalf of the CHOD in monitoring the mandate, the application of the ROE and the observance of caveats on deployment of Dutch forces. As the red card holder, he can intervene if necessary. The most relevant ROE are summarised for individual service personnel in an 'instruction card for the use of force' and in some cases for officers and NCOs in an aide-mémoire.

3.4 Levels of command

There are three levels of command in military operations:

- the strategic level,
- the operational level,
- the tactical level.

Each of these levels has its own characteristics, which are partly based on the related levels of operations and can be found in AJP-01(F). This distinction between levels has implications for the thinking behind the application of the military instrument. Particular tasks, powers and responsibilities are assigned to each level. The three levels of command are described below.



All military operations are fundamentally carried out in the same way, with a fixed chain of command. To ensure a unified and comprehensive approach with the other instruments of national power, it is important that there is interaction between activities and cooperation at all levels among these instruments of national power. However, the use of other instruments of national power is not governed by the military levels of command, although similar levels of decision making and planning are used.

3.4.1 The strategic level

The strategic level is sub-divided into the political-strategic level and the military-strategic level.

The political-strategic level is responsible for the coordinated, systematic development and use of all instruments of power (grand strategy) of a state, alliance or coalition to promote national, allied or coalition interests. The task of formulating the Dutch grand strategy is the exclusive responsibility of the government, regardless of whether it is acting alone or in collaboration with other governments in international organisations or in an ad-hoc coalition. The political-strategic level decides which instruments of power are necessary to achieve the objectives. Finally, it will draw up additional guidelines for the use of the instruments of power, such as size, duration and mandate, but without describing the mission in detail. The table below shows examples of actors at the political-strategic level.

The political-strategic level for the Netherlands, NATO and EU actors		
NLD	Government	controlled by parliament
NAVO	North Atlantic Council	with ambassadors from member states
EU	Political and Security Committee (PSC)	with ambassadors from member states

The military-strategic level is tasked with the coordinated, systematic development and use of the military means of a state, alliance or coalition, integrated with other instruments of power if possible, with a view to achieving the objectives set by the political-strategic level. The military-strategic level is thus closely involved in the deliberations at the political-strategic level. In consultation with relevant actors from other ministries, the military-strategic authority formulates in its strategic guidance or strategic directives a general mission statement on the basis of the military-strategic objectives of the campaign. Coordination with representatives of other international and non-governmental organisations and departments takes place as early as possible in the preparation phase.

This level then assigns objectives and means to commanders at the operational level of military action and establishes any restrictions on their use, without getting involved in the detail of the execution.

The military-strategic level for the Netherlands, NATO and EU actors		
NLD	Netherlands Chief of Defence	assisted by the Defence Staff, representatives of other ministries and NGOs
NAVO	Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR)	assisted by Allied Command Operations and other representatives and advisers
EU	EU Military Staff	with the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) assisted by the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC)

Defining political and military strategies and subsequent military objectives can never be the result of a one-way process. There needs to be close collaboration between political and military leaders and with all relevant departments. In reality, there is often virtually no clear dividing line between the political-strategic and the military-strategic levels. There is in effect an overlap, whereby top civil servants and military officials collaborate intensively to develop and prepare decisions to deploy the military instrument of power.

At the same time, as explained in Chapter 3, the decision to use military force falls under the primacy of politics. The military strategy used to achieve political objectives must be in accordance with the political strategy and the framework of international law. It must also be aligned with the deployment of the other instruments of power available to the government. It is then the responsibility of the military-strategic authority and the operational commanders to translate the political objectives and guidelines into achievable military objectives down to the tactical level. The military objectives must be specific, measurable, feasible, realistic and timed.

3.4.2 The operational level

The operational level is tasked with planning, directing and executing operations and campaigns aimed at achieving the military objectives set by the military-strategic commander in his strategic directive for the campaign (whether joint, multi-domain or multi-national in nature). The operational level thus provides the link between the military-strategic objectives and the tactical deployment of troops.

The operational commander designs, plans, executes and completes the operations and overarching campaign plans within their assigned operating area. This not only requires extensive knowledge of the doctrine and cohesion of the assigned forces, but also of the political-strategic and military-strategic considerations of all actors involved (for example, all countries in a coalition). The table shows examples of how military command at the operational level could be organised by the Netherlands, NATO and the EU.

operational level translated for the Netherlands, NATO and EU actors		
NLD	Contingent commander	as the most senior Dutch representative in a mission area in expeditionary operations, the NATO joint force commander in Article 5 operations, and the overall commander or operations leader in national operations.
NAVO	Commander, joint force or joint task force	commanders of joint force commands or joint task forces, e.g. ISAF
EU	Force commander	operational commander to be designated per operation (e.g., EUFOR ALTHEA, EU NAVFOR ATALANTA, EUTM Mali)

The commander at the operational level will in principle be found in the mission area and will command his assigned force in the execution of his campaign plan. The execution of the plan is designed to create the effects necessary to realise the operational objectives, and thus contribute to the accomplishment of the assigned strategic objectives. The operations conducted as part of the campaign plan cover all campaign themes (warfighting, security, peace support and peacetime military engagement).



3.4.3 The tactical level

The tactical level directs the method of operation and actions by formations and units in order to conduct military activities with a certain degree of cohesion and in a particular sequence in order to create military effects in support of the objectives of the operational level of warfare. In contrast to the operational level, the tactical level employs forces directly to conduct military activities. Some of the units directed by the tactical level may contribute directly to a military-strategic objective. That applies, for example, to the deployment of special operations forces, the collection of strategic intelligence by submarines or the execution of a strategic air strike.

The tactical level for the Netherlands, NATO and EU actors

NLD	Unit commander	commanders of units assigned to the mission
NAVO	Component commander or commanders of formations	commanders of component commands such as MCC Northwood and 1GNC in Münster; commanders of divisions, brigades and task forces.
EU	Component commander	in line with NATO structure

3.4.4 Interconnectedness of the levels (strategic compression)

New applications within (information) technology are making more information about the battlefield available more rapidly than ever up to the highest level of command. While the timeline for executing tactical actions remains largely unchanged, the widespread availability of real-time or near real-time information significantly shortens the planning horizon of strategic planners. As a result, political interconnectedness with military action can be significant even at the lowest level. This may hinder decision-making processes at the operational and tactical levels.

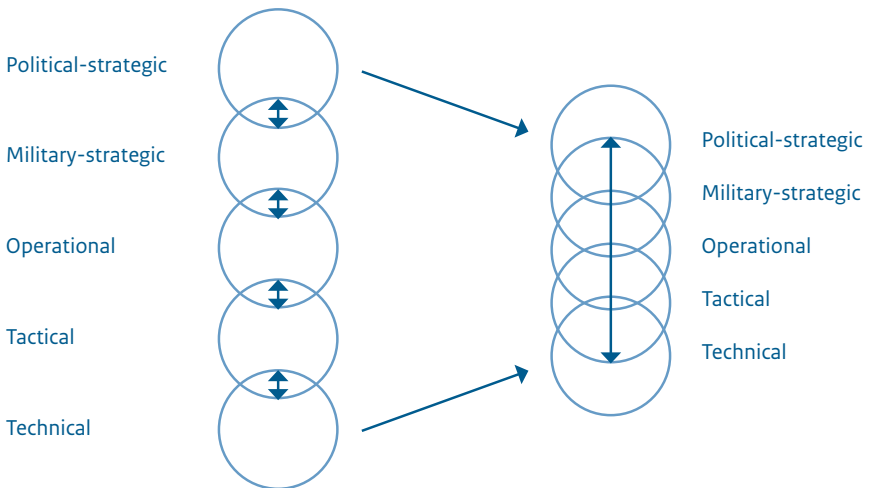


Figure 3.1 | Increasing interconnectedness of the levels of command

The ability of the strategic level to influence or even intervene in the execution of operations carries significant risk, as the strategic level does not have (or at least not to the same extent) insight into the full tactical picture. Intervention by higher commanders must therefore be executed with extreme caution.

3.5 Command during deployment

With the exception of the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee in the execution of its tasks under the Police Act, deployed military units are always under the command authority of the CHOD (full command), regardless of whether these units are deployed within or outside the Kingdom's borders. There is, however, a difference in direction between deployment within the Kingdom (under the third core task) on the one hand, and, on the other, deployment outside the Kingdom (regardless of which core task). Both situations are explained here.



3.5.1 Direction of military assistance and support within the Kingdom

Once a decision has been made to deploy the armed forces under the third core task, units are placed under civil command. The decision to deploy may be accompanied by conditions, restrictions and instructions for the deployment of forces or specific (weapon) systems or the interpretation of rules. These units remain under the command of the CHOD. The CHOD provides a military adviser to support the civil authorities in the planning and execution.

All military operations are in principle directed by the CHOD, with the exception of police tasks assigned to the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee under the Police Act; these are conducted under the competent authority (in accordance with the stipulations of the Police Act).

3.5.2 Direction of deployment of the armed forces outside the Kingdom

Once the government has made the decision to participate in a mission, the CHOD issues an operational directive outlining the national guidelines, missions, tasks and responsibilities, as well as the arrangements that have been made for the transfer of authority (TOA) to the multinational force commander.

The TOA is limited to the operational part of the mission. The Dutch government retains ultimate authority (as stipulated in the Constitution) and the CHOD, the supreme command. The decision for Dutch troops to participate in an operation may be accompanied by national caveats for the deployment of Dutch units or specific (weapon) systems, or for the interpretation of certain rules. One should be aware, however, that national caveats do restrict the multinational force commander's freedom of action.

The CHOD ensures that this commander is mindful of the stated caveats. Even after the TOA, he retains full responsibility for the deployed units, and is responsible for directing them. The CHOD directs units of the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee when they are deployed abroad for non-police tasks.



4 Fighting power

4.1 Introduction

The sum total of capabilities and skills supplied by the armed forces to perform the core tasks assigned to them is known as fighting power. Fighting power represents the potential to use the military instrument of power. It is more than just the availability of capabilities; we must also be willing and able to employ these means. The operating environment places demands on the development of fighting power. This means that fighting power must be brought up to a certain level before it can be effectively deployed.

This chapter describes fighting power and discusses it in relation to the operating environment, as well as the development and readiness, deployment and sustainment of fighting power.

Fighting power in a historical context

The term fighting power emerged as a doctrinal concept in the 1990s. Military capability consists of a conceptual, physical and moral component. These three components were not new in the exercise of military power, but their forms and the relationship between them has changed over time.

From the mid-19th century onwards, there were continuous developments in weapons technology, which increased the effectiveness, mobility and striking power of armed forces. As governments gained more control over society, they were able to mobilise increasing numbers of people and resources. Three phases can be distinguished in the development of fighting power: an increase in the firepower and size of armed forces (19th century); an increase in mobility (first half of the 20th century) and the expansion of command and control capabilities and digitalisation (late 20th century).

The moral component has always played a crucial role in determining fighting power. In the 19th century, emphasis was placed on physical and mental toughness, willingness to sacrifice and the ability to absorb heavy losses, all while maintaining the will to fight and win. Over the course of the 20th century, the emphasis shifted away from physical sacrifice and more attention was paid to aspects such as motivation, team spirit, training, justification and social acceptance and support.

Until the First World War, military thinkers considered the moral component to be decisive. The country with the greatest resilience would ultimately win the war. Through the experiences of 1914-1918, the emphasis shifted towards the conceptual and physical components. After the Cold War, even more emphasis was placed on the conceptual component. In the new world order, armed forces had to contend with numerous threats and were faced with diverse tasks, such as pacification and stabilisation, military authority, peacekeeping and counter-insurgency. Previously developed doctrine and lessons learned regained relevance and were practised again.

Traditionally, a distinction existed between tactics and strategy in military operations. Tactics encompassed activities on the battlefield; strategy included all other aspects, such as preparation for battles and setting up campaigns. Through technological developments and better national organisation, the 19th century saw warfare become more complex and far larger in scale. Increasingly, strategy became the level at which measures and objectives took shape in preparation for war. This created a space for an intermediate operational level during military operations. After the First World War, it was the Russian and German armed forces that first gave the operational level its own place in their doctrine and military operations.

Following the Cold War, the real-time interaction and interconnectedness between the levels of military operations increased during participation in peace operations and international interventions, due to the decreasing size of units deployed and increasing possibilities for command and control. This was partly due to better sensors and faster digital communication. At the same time, the digitalisation of society and armed forces led to the development of a new domain of operations that underscored this interconnectedness: the cyber domain.

Forms of whole-of-society or hybrid warfare also contribute to an increase in the interconnectedness between the levels of military operation. These forms of warfare were developed after the Cold War by countries such as China and Russia, among others. This type of warfare targets all layers of enemy society and involves hybrid forms of regular and irregular action, simultaneously overt and covert, also in the cyber domain.

4.2 The components of fighting power and force multipliers

Fighting power is expressed in a model (see Figure 4-1) consisting of physical, moral and conceptual components. The components are interdependent; each influences the others. The development of fighting power is strengthened by interoperability, responsiveness, and the effective orchestration of fighting power (known as force multipliers). In practice, the three components manifest as combat power, fighting spirit and operational art. The following section provides a brief overview of the components of fighting power and force multipliers. For a more detailed explanation, see AJP-01 (F).

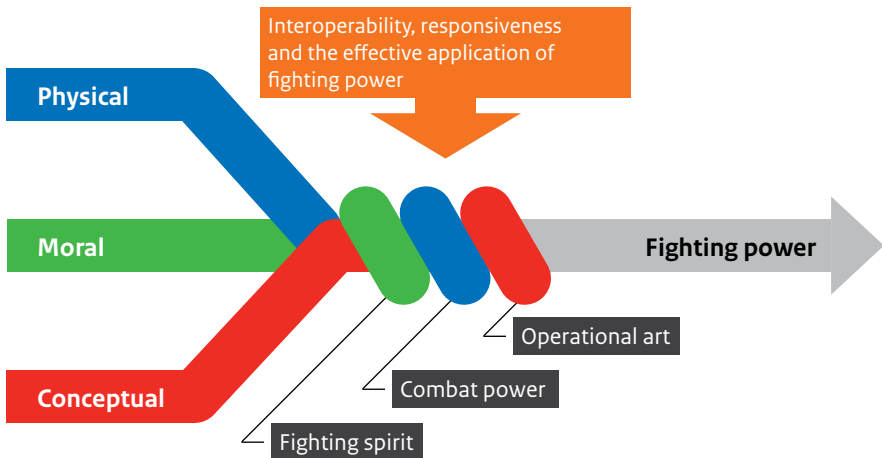


Figure 4.1 | The components of fighting power and force multipliers

4.2.1 The physical component

The physical component generates the means to fight. The people and resources of the armed forces form the physical component of fighting power. This refers to personnel and materiel, and how they are organised for deployment in an operation. The context within which the armed forces are deployed determines the appropriate composition, scale and quality of the physical component. The context also forms the basis for needs assessments and education and training programmes. The terms 'operational readiness' and 'mission readiness' are used for the overall process of planning, preparation and readiness to deploy and sustain personnel and resources.

The physical component consists of the following elements:

- a. The right mix of trained and motivated personnel is essential to successful action. The ability to recruit and retain competent people is vital for the generation of fighting power.
- b. Materiel encompasses the design, construction and supply of military platforms, systems and weapons needed to outfit individuals and units for their task.
- c. Training turns personnel, materiel and the way these are organised into forces that are ready to operate. Training forms a vital part of fighting power.
- d. Readiness is being prepared to perform certain tasks. NATO's culture of readiness must deny potential adversaries the opportunity to achieve their objectives unopposed.
- e. Sustainability involves more than maintaining the stocks and reinforcements that enable deployment and operations. Meeting intangible needs (such as support to family and friends) is also part of sustainability.

4.2.2 *The moral component*

Wars are fought by people. The moral component is the ability to get people to fight. It is about the will to fight, and sustaining the will to fight in the way you have been ordered to. The willingness and ability to engage in combat plays a key role in this. There is a reason why the manoeuvrist approach focuses primarily on defeating the adversary's moral component rather than its physical component.

The moral component of military operations is rooted in a professional military culture. The legitimacy of military action also plays a crucial role, encompassing both legal and moral considerations.

- a. The moral component of military operations is built on the shared values, standards and behaviours that define the military organisation. A professional military culture is founded on core values such as discipline, commitment, camaraderie, pride and resilience, and consists of four elements:
 - 1) Leadership culture: the ability of leaders – and indeed, all personnel – to inspire and motivate others to perform under difficult circumstances and to work together towards a common objective.
 - 2) Warfighting culture, or the warrior mindset: the willingness to engage in combat, which contributes to the mental toughness, courage and resilience needed to operate effectively.

- 3) **Morale:** the will to continue to fight is sustained by thorough training, good equipment and support from both family and friends and political leaders.
 - 4) **Moral cohesion:** the cohesion within the unit, including camaraderie.
- b. **Moral legitimacy:** The belief in fighting for a just cause strengthens motivation and perseverance. Critical reflection on one's own actions must therefore pass the test of moral legitimacy. Professional and lawful military action not only reinforces moral legitimacy, but also protects against legal repercussions.

4.2.3 *The conceptual component*

The conceptual component provides the coherent intellectual basis and theoretical foundation for the deployment of military forces. The main function of the conceptual component is to provide a conceptual framework, or the ideas and thought process, which military personnel (including leaders) can use to shape their own activities and those of their units, both now and in the future. The conceptual component forms a basis from which creativity, ingenuity and initiative can be achieved in complex situations. In addition to that creativity, ingenuity and initiative, the conceptual component includes the following institutional elements.

- a. Policy, concepts and doctrine are closely interlinked but each fulfil fundamentally different roles (see Introduction).
- b. Professional military education is a vital part of the conceptual component as it teaches personnel the intellectual basis and the theoretical foundation, including thinking in terms of concepts and doctrine.

4.2.4 Force multipliers

The development of fighting power is enhanced by three force multipliers, namely interoperability, responsiveness and effective orchestration of fighting power (see Figure 4.1).

4.2.4.1 Interoperability

Interoperability is the ability to act together coherently, effectively and efficiently to achieve tactical, operational and strategic objectives. This takes place in at least one and preferably multiple dimensions of interoperability:

- Technical interoperability concerns systems and equipment, such as communication and information systems, and their ability to operate together.
- Procedural interoperability is based on measures such as common doctrine, procedures and terminology.
- Human interoperability concerns mutual trust and understanding achieved by strengthening relationships in training and during operations.

Interoperability within NATO and with our allies and partners is ensured by using NATO standardisation agreements, which define processes, procedures and terms and conditions for common military or technical procedures and equipment between signatories. Outside the NATO alliance, we also base our interoperability on NATO standards where possible.

Interoperability must be considered from the strategic to the tactical level, and within all the capability frameworks to ensure NATO's ability to conduct operations quickly and effectively. The level of interoperability required for each situation varies according to context. The levels range from not interoperable units that operate completely independently to integrated forces that operate together effectively without technical, procedural or human barriers. The highest level of interoperability is characterised by common networks, capabilities, procedures and language. We are increasing levels of interoperability through: standardisation, education, training, exercises and evaluation, lessons learned, cooperative programmes, trials and tests.

4.2.4.2 Responsiveness

Responsiveness is the ability to react quickly and decisively. Responsiveness is made up of military resilience and adaptability.

Military resilience is the ability to maintain sufficient fighting power to respond competently to a disruptive event (by either deterring, anticipating, mitigating, absorbing, adapting or overcoming) and to perform core tasks. This capability often depends on civilian resources, and therefore on cooperation with civil and commercial sectors. For example, armed forces are often reliant on civilian transport facilities, satellite communication and power supply. This dependency underlines the importance of taking a broad view in evaluating and developing military resilience, by including civil preparedness. Military resilience can be enhanced by building the right partnerships with civil and commercial sectors with regard to doctrine, organisation, training, materiel, leadership development, personnel, facilities and interoperability processes.



Adaptation is the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. This is necessary because opportunities and vulnerabilities change as the operating environment changes. The force that orientates, innovates and adapts to the changed situation more quickly than their adversary is more likely to gain an advantage and achieve its objectives.

4.2.4.3 Effective orchestration of fighting power

In addition to MDO, the behaviour-centric, manoeuvrist and comprehensive approaches form the basis for the application of fighting power (see Chapter 1). These approaches aim to identify the right objectives, methods and means to achieve the desired military results and effects, if necessary in conjunction with non-military instruments of power. The three approaches are supported by mission command and information-driven operations to maintain focus on the desired end state, even in chaotic and demanding operating environments.

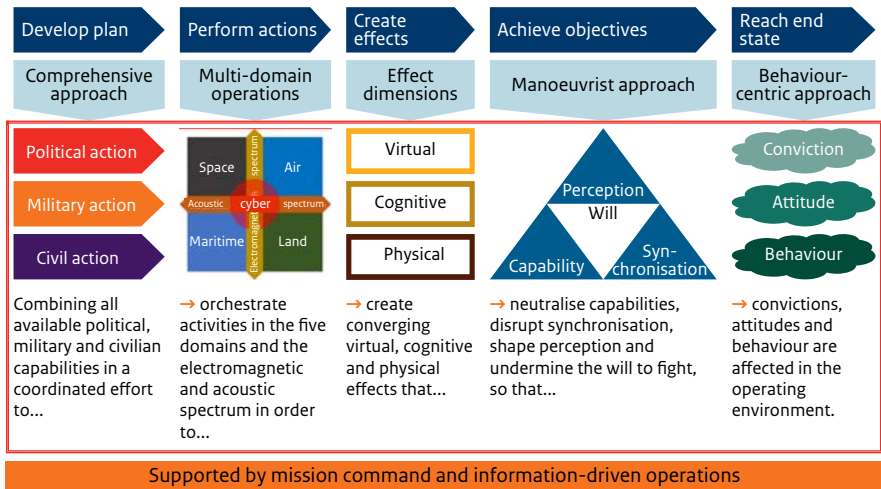


Figure 4.2 | Application of the key tenets of doctrine

4.3 Orchestrating fighting power

In the orchestration of fighting power, the three components of fighting power manifest as operational art, combat power and fighting spirit (see Figure 4.1).

4.3.1 *Operational art*

Operational art is primarily a cognitive activity. It is a term that encompasses the various methods, processes and techniques used in considering the deployment of fighting power. Operational art is the conceptual thought that takes place mainly in the minds of commanders and staff officers and often precedes detailed planning.

War is fought at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. Operational art refers to the use of force by the military commander in order to achieve strategic objectives in the operating area, through the proper application of doctrine and concepts. Operational art is inextricably linked to the planning and execution of military campaigns in specific war zones, which distinguishes it from tactics and strategy. The roots of contemporary operational art date back to the First World War, when it became necessary to carry out operations in three dimensions.

Operational art is targeted and influences specific audiences by using the full range of multi-domain capabilities available to the commander. This enables a force to better integrate its tactical activities at the operational level and align them with the strategic objectives, thereby increasing effectiveness across the entire continuum of competition.

4.3.2 *Combat power*

The measurable capabilities that can be deployed by a unit or formation to combat adversaries or other groups at a given time are known as combat power. Combat power can also be used to direct or influence the course of events (e.g. through a show of force). Combat power is not limited to weapon systems and the associated personnel and logistics. Capabilities relating to, for example, psychological warfare, electronic warfare, civil-military cooperation and cyber operations are also part of the combat power of a unit or formation.

4.3.3 Fighting spirit

The primary function of the armed forces is to prepare for, and, if necessary, to fight and win a war. In activities within the continuum of competition, fighting spirit plays a crucial role in achieving results. Commanders need to be aware that this human element can be decisive. Understanding and promoting fighting spirit is an important element of sustaining fighting power. Fighting spirit is not static, but is formed within units and formations. Leaders play a crucial role in this process. Leaders who understand individual motivations, refine individual competencies and promote a positive organisational culture have armed forces that are more ready to fight. This does not mean that fear plays no role. Armed forces, with their leaders, deliberately cultivate an organisational culture that fosters courage in dealing with fear and encourages initiative and resilience among their personnel. This boosts their fighting spirit.



4.4 Fighting power in the operating environment

The operating environment influences the development and deployment of fighting power and thus the decision-making process of a commander. A good understanding of this environment is necessary for fighting power to be employed in the most efficient and effective manner. To this end, we use the models of operational domains and dimensions. These models can be helpful in planning military operations.

4.4.1 The domain model

The domain model comprises the five recognised operational domains: maritime, land, air, space, and cyber. The operational domains represent five specific spheres of military activity within the operating environment. The domain model provides a framework for developing capabilities and employing fighting power.

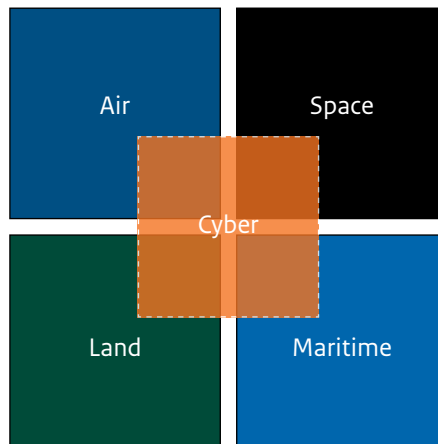


Figure 4.3 | Domains in the operational environment

The operational domains are often associated with the environments of the same name. However, domains are not bound to environments. For example, capabilities in a certain domain often require installations in other environments (such as a land-based port for the maritime domain, an air base or aircraft carrier for the air domain, ground control stations for the space domain and physical server installations for the cyberspace domain). In addition, the deployment of a capability often creates or influences effects in other environments (for example air defence or maritime fire support). This wider use of domain capabilities enables synergy. It also requires planners to look beyond the boundaries of their own domain in the design and planning of military activities.

Although the electromagnetic and acoustic spectra could be considered distinctive spheres of capabilities and activities, they do not constitute an operational domain. Both spectra are strongly interconnected with the five recognised operational domains. The ability to use these spectra is crucial to conducting activities effectively in all operational domains. The factors associated with these spectra should be taken into account when conducting activities in the operating environment.

4.4.2 *Effect dimensions*

Effect dimensions provide a framework for political, military and civilian partners to coordinate their actions and synchronise them over time and space to create converging effects. Effect dimensions can be linked to the various layers in the operating environment. These layers are interdependent. The distinction between physical, virtual and cognitive effects creates a better understanding of the consequences of actions. Physical and virtual effects are first-order effects, which in turn produce second and third-order effects. A better understanding of second and third-order effects helps to exploit opportunities and maintain the initiative. Figure 4.2 illustrates the different layers of the operating environment and the associated effect dimensions.

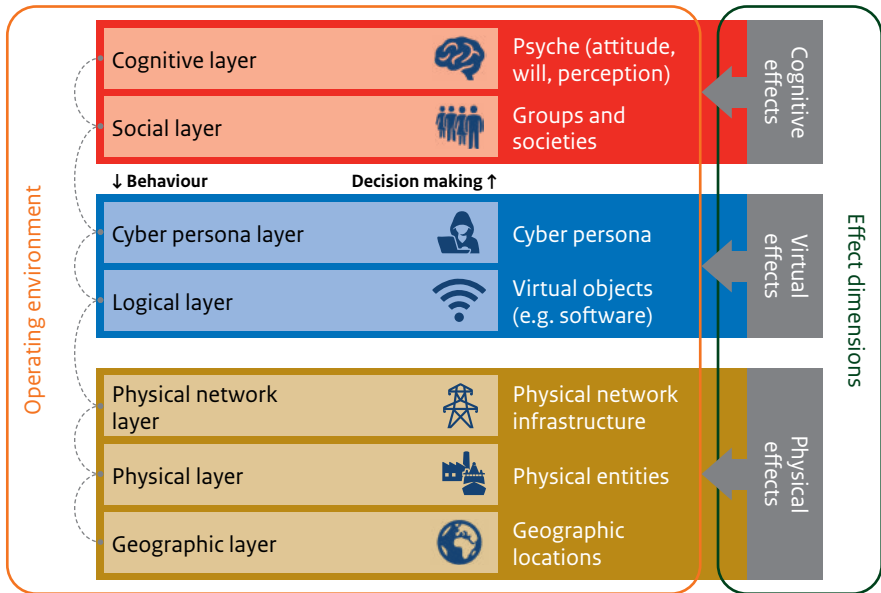


Figure 4.4 | Effect dimensions and the operating environment

- The physical dimension relates to consequences on the audiences and the environment where physical activities take place, including physical objects and infrastructure that supports them.
- The cognitive relation relates to the consequences on the audiences perceptions, beliefs, interests, aims, decisions and behaviour. It encompasses all forms of interaction between them.
- The virtual dimension relates to the consequences of activity on the storage, content and transmission of analogue and digital data and information, and all supporting communication and information systems and processes.

4.5 Generating and readying fighting power

Although the nature of the operating environment is unchanging, its character constantly evolves. Actors continually strive to find new ways to serve their interests and gain the initiative in competition. Developing fighting power is a continual effort. Success in sustaining a fighting power advantage requires fighting power development to focus on the following:

- a. Armed conflict is the final arbiter of competition. It is the ability of the armed forces to win combat operations that determines the influence of the military instrument of power in the operating environment.
- b. The use of military force is fundamentally a human endeavour. It is the professionalism of people and a culture that unlocks talent and potential that has the most exponential effect on fighting power.
- c. Sustained fighting power requires superiority in multiple domains, rather than superiority in a single domain that adversaries can easily neutralise.
- d. The character of the operating environment is changing. As a result, fighting power should evolve accordingly, whilst guarding against the allure of novelty.

The armed forces are an operational and executive organisation whose main objective is to provide fighting power. Fighting power is created by forging together the physical component (the people and the means), the conceptual component and the moral component. We develop fighting power by means of the readiness process. Readiness and deployment are key processes within the Ministry of Defence.

Readiness is made up of three elements:

- Personnel readiness: the extent to which a unit's personnel are available and fit to carry out their organic tasks.
- Materiel readiness: the degree to which a unit's materiel is available and fit for the unit's organic tasks.
- Proficiency: the extent to which a unit has trained the necessary skills and demonstrated a sufficient level of ability to carry out its tasks.

The level of readiness is expressed in terms of:

- Operational readiness: the unit meets the standards for personnel readiness, materiel readiness and proficiency required to be able to carry out its organic tasks. These tasks are based on an analysis of the most likely deployment options for such a unit.
- Mission readiness: the unit is mission ready if it is able to carry out an order for a specific deployment within the set notice-to-move (NTM).

The physical and moral components are brought up to the desired level through activities in relation to personnel readiness, materiel readiness, proficiency and mission-specific preparation, with the conceptual component providing the theoretical framework. The conceptual component also provides the integrating theoretical framework for all activities relating to operational readiness and mission readiness. Observations leading to lessons learned with regard to education, training, exercises and deployment form the basis for innovation of the physical, moral and conceptual components.

Readiness and fighting power are thus closely linked and influence each other constantly.

After a unit has reached operational readiness, there are a number of options:

- The unit is designated for deployment and starts its mission-specific preparations in order to become mission ready.
- The unit is designated to be on standby for a specific deployment or purpose. In that event, mission-specific preparation may also be started in order to be mission ready in the event of actual deployment. Units with this status carry on training in order to maintain the required level.
- The unit maintains operational readiness and is on standby for possible deployment. Units with this status carry on training in order to maintain the required level.

Units cannot keep up a high level of readiness indefinitely, because equipment requires service and maintenance and personnel need time for recuperation and leave. The unit then falls back from mission readiness to operational readiness, or from operational readiness to non-ready status. In that case, the unit must work up again to obtain operational or mission readiness status. This creates an ongoing cycle of maintenance/recuperation, work-up and deployment. By having several identical units relieve one another in consecutive cycles, sustainability is created. That is why the armed forces typically have multiple units of the same type, but only some of them are deployable at any given time.

4.6 Sustaining and enhancing fighting power

Sustainment is an essential element of delivering credible and effective fighting power, which can also affect the moral and physical components. Sustainment is the comprehensive provision of personnel, logistics, medical, military engineering, finance, budget and contracts support necessary to generate and sustain the armed forces throughout all phases of operations.

When deploying armed forces, sustainment is a critical enabler of fighting power. It influences the tempo, duration and intensity of all actions, operations and campaigns. The available sustainment capacity often determines the initial manoeuvre capability. The character of how armed forces sustain themselves is changing, which is reflected in their doctrine³. Efficiencies enable the armed forces to apply constant pressure on adversaries by identifying, creating and exploiting sustainment mismatches that can cause additional dilemmas and lessen an adversary's capability.

Sustainment planning of fighting power includes activities that may not be viewed as part of execution, but are essential to achieving the desired end state. These activities require additional efforts on the part of Dutch society, for example in supporting a war economy. Sustainment planning should have a comprehensive approach and be integrated in the operational planning process.

The rotation of units, host nation support and lessons learned are three examples of areas related to sustainment that are further explained below.

4.6.1 Rotation of units

A rotation plan enables the long-term identification of which capabilities, units and headquarters will be committed for initial deployment or for replacement. A common approach enables preparatory training, building cohesion and maintaining operational effectiveness. The final responsibility for the rotation of troops rests with the countries providing troops.

3 Allied Joint Doctrine for Logistics (2018) NATO, Allied Joint Publication 4 Edition B Version 1

4.6.2 Host Nation Support

Host nation support (HNS) is civilian and military assistance provided, in peacetime, crisis or war, by a host country to NATO and NATO organisations located in, operating in or in transit through the host nation's territory. Since HNS is not limited to military assistance, the designated host nation remains responsible for internal coordination in the host country in order to ensure that HNS agreements are supported at all levels.

4.6.3 Lessons learned

A mature and fully functional lessons learned capability is essential to the success of current and future operations and exercises. In a constantly changing security environment, a learning mentality is an essential component of being credible, competent and adaptive. Some lessons are discovered spontaneously, while others are collected on the basis of a pre-established plan.





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