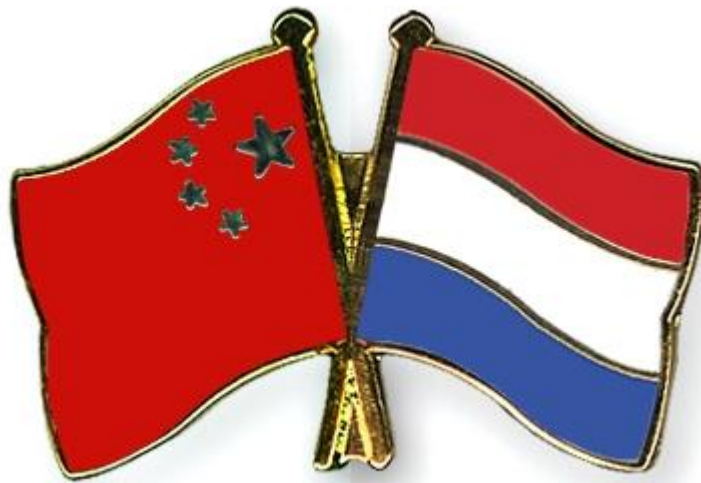


A Parliament of Paper Tigers

The position of the Dutch Parliament on Dutch-Chinese relations 1978-1999



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“De relatie met Beijing raakte in 1980 pas goed verstoord nadat minister van Buitenlandse Zaken Ch.A. van der Klaauw moest zwichten voor door de Tweede Kamer gesteunde argumenten van zijn collega van Economische Zaken G.M.W. van Ardenne waardoor de regering een exportvergunning verleende voor de levering van twee onderzeeboten aan Taiwan.”¹

Title: The term ‘paper tiger’ is a literal English translation from the Mandarin Chinese phrase ‘纸老虎’ (pronounced as zhǐ lǎo hǔ). It means something that seems powerful, like a tiger, but in reality it is harmless, like paper.

¹ D. Schoonoord, ‘Diplomatiek klusjesman, Henry Wijnarendts (1932)’, in; B. van der Zwam, B. de Graaff, D. Hellema (eds.), *In dienst van Buitenlandse Zaken, Achttien portretten van ambtenaren en diplomaten in de twintigste eeuw*, 204-205.

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Abstract

This thesis contributes to the scientific debates about Dutch foreign policy, Dutch-Chinese relations and Dutch parliamentary history. Not much has been written on these subjects combined. The main question is: What role did the Dutch Parliament play in Dutch-Chinese bilateral relations between 1978 and 1999? The Dutch Chinese relations were marked by several political crises in which the Dutch Parliament played a remarkable role. The Dutch Parliament did not use all its legal tools and was not able to influence Dutch foreign policy towards China much. This can be explained by the following factors; Parliament was badly informed, Parliament was divided, European institutions partly took over the decision making process, Parliament had limited time and resources, parliamentarians are not experienced diplomats and Parliament was influenced by public opinion. Because parliamentarians made a lot of public statements without being able to influence foreign policy making much, they can be seen as a Parliament of paper tigers.

Preface

Writing and defending this thesis are the last steps to my graduation. My Dutch student life will come to an end. The Erasmus University offered me more than I could wish for; knowledge, skills, work for the institution and its student associations and friends and colleagues. During all those years, I have learned a lot and I realize now that I know nothing. Graduating is only the first step of my professional career. Where ever the future might lead, I will not regret studying History at the EUR.

The research and writing process of this thesis was a tough job. It started with trips around the Netherlands to collect sources. Most of the work however was the analysis of over 3000 Parliamentary documents. The smallest, usually a Parliamentary resolution, consisted of one page, the largest documents, mostly produced by the government and sent to Parliament, were over 300 pages. Thanks to new technology and working systematically, it was possible to process so many documents for a Master Thesis.

Studying, writing a thesis and graduating is something I could not have done without a lot of help. I therefore would like to thank all staff members, both academic and non-academic, of the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication for their help and support. They gave me the opportunity to develop myself and to guide me in the study of history. Special thanks go to Prof. Dr. H.A.M. Klemann for his teaching, his academic attitude and for stimulating my interest in the history of international relations, as well as Dr. F. de Goei and Dr. G. Oonk. Special thanks to prof. Dr. T.W. Ngo for supervising the thesis writing and research and stimulating my interest in China. Special thanks to Dr. B. van Eekelen for her help in organizing my graduation. Special thanks for Xinyu Li for providing me access to Parliamentary resources during my stay in China. Special thanks for Dr. Sun Xuefeng, my supervisor at Tsinghua University, for his help in understanding the Chinese point of view. Last, but not least, many thanks to my parents for their endless patience and support. Without them this would not be possible.

1. Introduction

Resolution from parlementarian Engwirda: “overwegende, dat bij de Chinese Volksrepubliek de bereidheid bestaat om de economische betrekkingen tussen Nederland en China te intensiveren; verzoekt de regering op korte termijn een handelspolitieke missie naar de Chinese Volksrepubliek te zenden om aan deze intensivering concrete gestalte te geven.”²

In 2007, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Peoples Republic of China Yang Jiechi and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Maxime Verhagen celebrated the 35th birthday of the diplomatic relations between both countries by signing a mutual agreement of understanding and improvement of relations in Beijing. The agreement states that both parties are delighted with the progress and improvements in the relationship over the past 35 years. They stated the desire to keep improving the relationship and cooperate in many fields like; health care, agriculture, culture, education, science and the exchange of technology.³

The Netherlands and China are currently on good terms. Taking the history in consideration, it almost could be called a miracle. This agreement does not go into history and gives the reader the impression that this relationship developed in a calm way to the current level. However, a closer look at the history between the Netherlands and China leads to another conclusion. The current relationship between both states was created with much sweat and pain. The past 35 years of diplomatic relations were not easy. It was a period of turmoil. Different political crises, economic difficulties and blunders occurred which made the relationship weak and difficult. Nevertheless, the Dutch always maintained a certain level of interest in China. As Houweling stated, when he quoted the mayor of Amsterdam and administrator of the Dutch East Indian Company Nicolaes Witsen (1641-1717), the Dutch went to the East only for trade and profits. Nothing much has changed in the Dutch approach

² Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1983-1984, 18 207, no. 9.

³ Gezamenlijke verklaring van de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden en de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken van de Volksrepubliek China inzake de Versterking van Bilaterale Samenwerking, signed on 16-05-2007 in Beijing.

towards the Dutch-Chinese relationship until today.⁴

To summarize, the Dutch-Chinese relationship was marked by many difficulties, but currently they are on good terms. That all difficulties were solved so relatively quickly can only be because of mutual interest in good bilateral relations. This thesis will focus on the history of the Dutch-Chinese relations. Much has already been written about China and about Chinese foreign policy. There also has been written much about the Dutch international relations and Dutch foreign policy. However, the works on both of the mentioned topics do not go deep into the bilateral relationship between the Netherlands and China.

The famous French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) once said, “China is a sleeping giant, let her lie down and sleep, because if she wakes up, the earth will shake”.⁵ Without the intention to give a positive or negative interpretation to Napoleon’s view, it seems that China woke up in 1978 when it started to open up to the world. Since that time, China is an emerging economy. Within the field of international relations and many others, China is more and more a subject of study, due to the rising influence of China in the world.

Many parties are involved in bilateral relations between states. In this thesis, the focus will be on the Dutch Parliament and their (in)ability to influence Dutch foreign policy. For a government of a small state such as the Netherlands that is confronted with international events, it is hard to make effective foreign policy and influence events abroad. For a Parliament, it is even harder to influence foreign policy making. Living in a globalized world, many decisions are made by supranational organizations and institutions, outside the control of national Parliaments.

Nevertheless, the Dutch Parliament is still trying to influence what is happening in the world. In June 2011, Parliament blocked the Dutch minister of Foreign Affairs in his plan to stop promoting human rights in countries with a friendly relationship via a resolution in Parliament.⁶ This happened just before the Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office (CPB) published a report about the Dutch public opinion on Foreign Affairs. The report states that the Dutch population holds the opinion that in times of budget cuts, the Dutch government

⁴ H.W. Houweling, ‘Dutch-Chinese Bilateral Relations Constant Elements in a Changing World System’, *working papers 49, Amsterdam International Studies*, 1997, 18.

⁵ Y. van der Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak, Verleden, heden en toekomst van de Nederlands-Chinese handelsbetrekkingen* (Amsterdam 2008), 124.

⁶ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 2010-2011, no. 21 (32735).

should pay more attention to domestic problems than to events elsewhere in the world.⁷ While Parliament tries to influence situations abroad, the population today asks for a more domestic focus.

In the late 1970s, Dutch academics published a major study on Dutch foreign policy making. One of the major conclusions that is relevant for this thesis is that Parliamentarians wished they had more influence on foreign policy making.⁸ On paper and in theory, Parliament does have much more influence than it has and uses in practice. This thesis also tries to describe and explain why this gap exists. How is it for example possible that Parliament does not use all its rights and tools it has to influence foreign policy making? It is therefore important to conduct a study about the role of the Dutch Parliament in foreign policy making.

A master thesis is usually a modest endeavor. In his oration, professor of History of Culture Joris van Eijnatten stated that historians look too much to history. They should do research on topics which are relevant in current debates.⁹ This master thesis is without a doubt about historical events, but it might contribute in the current debate about the Dutch-Chinese relations and the Dutch Foreign Policy making. Historical relations are usually very important and influence the current relations between countries. The interest in China is growing in the Netherlands. Besides that, the outcome of the research might influence Parliamentarians in the way they deal with international relations in Parliament. Alongside the public relevance is the scientific relevance. This thesis also tries to contribute to the scientific debate about the (history of) Dutch-Chinese relations and the role of Parliament in the political system.

1.1 Research question

The Dutch-Chinese bilateral relation is an interesting field to study, but far too much to cover in a master thesis. The topic for this research is demarcated in time, aspect and point of view

⁷ J. den Ridder, P. Dekker, P. van Houwelingen, *Kwartaalbericht van het Continu Onderzoek Burgerperspectieven* 2011, no. 11.

⁸ P.R. Baehr, 'Communicatie tussen elites als voorwaarde voor democratische controle op het buitenlands beleid', in: Baehr, P.R., Everts, Ph.P., Leurdijk, .H., Roschar, F.M., Standen, A. van, Tempel, C.P. van den, Vermeulen, W.H., Vree, R.M.M. de, *Elite & buitenlandse politiek in Nederland* (Den Haag 1978) 166.

⁹ E.J. Hamel, 'Historici kijken te veel naar de geschiedenis', 17-05-2011 via <http://www.dub.uu.nl/content/%E2%80%98historici-kijken-te-veel-naar-de-geschiedenis%E2%80%99>

of the Dutch-Chinese relations.

The time span of the research is between 1978 and 1999. In 1976 Mao Zedong died. He was succeeded by Deng Xiao Ping after an internal struggle for power. In 1978, Deng Xiao Ping started to shift the autarkic Chinese policy towards a policy of openness. He designated several coastal locations, so called Special Economic Zones, in which local companies can trade with foreign companies under strict control of the Chinese government. Soon after, the Chinese economy started to grow. Political and economic relations with other countries became more strong and complicated after 1978, also with the Netherlands and Dutch companies. After 1978, the political and economic relations between China and the Netherlands are marked by good relations alternated by crises. In 1999, as Queen Beatrix finally visited China after a delay of 10 years, the relations between China and the Netherlands came into more quiet waters.

The Dutch-Chinese relationship has always been difficult and crises in this relationship are well known phenomena. The time span of 1978 to 1999 has been chosen for several reasons. After the re-opening of China for the world economy in 1978, China became interesting for the Netherlands again, due to the Dutch policy of stimulating trade and the interest of Dutch companies in China. In the period of 1978-1999, many crises occurred in a relative short period. Third, as Joris van Eijnatten states, the research of historians should contribute to the current debates. The chosen time span, 1978 to 1999, is of importance for the current public debate and interest in China because it is quite recent. Furthermore, it fits also in the debate about the role of national Parliaments in foreign affairs. Finally, not much has been written on the period between 1978 and 1999. It will therefore also contribute to the scientific debate.

The focus of this research is mainly on political history. This forms the second demarcation. Economic relations play an important role in the Dutch-Chinese relations but they will only be taken in consideration in this research when they play a role in the political relations. Nevertheless, the political relations and the actions of Parliament are the main focus of this thesis. Cultural, educational or other types of relations will not have a position in this research.

The third demarcation is the point of view. Bilateral relations between countries can always be viewed from both perspectives and they should. However, in this thesis, the focus

will not be on both sides, but on one specific actor in the relationship: the Dutch Parliament.

In the Netherlands, Parliament plays a role in both monitoring and adjusting government policy, both in domestic and foreign policy. Not much has been written about the role of Parliaments in foreign policy, probably because the Parliament's role might differ from country to country, due to the different political systems and structures. Also, the behavior of Parliament will differ depending on the topic. However, in general, Parliaments are actively involved in debates and foreign policy making. Due to the hard and complicated relationship between the Netherlands and China in the past 35 years, the Dutch-Chinese relationship is debated much in the Dutch Parliament.

The research question to be answered in this thesis is: *What role did the Dutch Parliament played in the Dutch-Chinese bilateral relations between 1978 and 1999?*

The research question is built on three levels. The first level is about the role of the Dutch Parliament in foreign policy making. The second level is formed by the Dutch-Chinese bilateral relations and the third level focuses on the Dutch foreign policy. Those three levels are closely linked to one and other. They form the three major interests in this thesis.

1.2 Research method

The research method of the historian is usually based on the sources that are available. For historians, it is not always easy to find and collect sources, because they deal with the past. Sources can be destroyed, badly archived or unknown to the historian. The existence of internet makes it much easier to find them, but when they are found, the historian needs to collect them. Both processes might cause problems, as it is in this thesis. Writing about relative recent politics, especially foreign politics and policy, causes the problem that most parties involved in the political game still have their interests in ongoing activities. Many documents and notes, written by employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, both from the Netherlands and China are locked up in archives. The archives of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the period that is being researched in this thesis are not public. Internal reports are put away in the National Archive and the archives of the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs. However, some researches of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been published. Most of them are conducted by a special research department within the Ministry; *Dienst Documentaire Informatievoorziening* (DDI). Publications of DDI are brief overviews on topics mainly to inform others within the Ministry and, after publication, others who might be interested in Dutch foreign relations. Besides that, most official agreements are also open to the public. Nonetheless, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs is not a very open department.

Nevertheless, there are enough other sources. This thesis is based on two types of sources. The primary sources consist of the minutes of Parliament (*handelingen*), from both chambers: Eerste Kamer and Tweede Kamer. These minutes are public and published on the internet. They are not summaries of Parliamentary debates, but an actual written reproduction from what actually has been said in Parliament. Besides the minutes, the letters and reports, written by the involved ministries and signed by the involved ministers will be used. They are public as well and relatively easy accessible, most of the time, via internet.

The secondary sources consist of a variety of sources. The most common sources used for a master thesis are academic books and articles. In this thesis, books from scholars and articles from scientific journals will be used about different topics; the foreign policy of both the Netherlands and China, Dutch-Chinese bilateral relations and about Parliament. Additionally, biographical papers about the Dutch ministers of Foreign affairs and long interviews with Dutch political leaders will be a source of information. The third type of sources is newspaper articles. Because the political relations between the Netherlands and China are closely related with the economic relations, the *NRC Handelsblad* will be the main newspaper that will be used in this thesis.

The internet is also a source of information. For example, the publications of the *Parlementair Documentatie Centrum* on their website *Parlement & Politiek*¹⁰ form an interesting source of information. This website contains much information about the history of the Dutch Parliament, the political system and brief bibliographical material about the actors involved such as ministers and Parliamentarians.

¹⁰ www.parlement.com.

Based on the sources, the research in this thesis is qualitative. The basic and theoretical background is formed by the scientific articles and books while the minutes of Parliament and the publications in the media form the main sources for analysis. The research is conducted in a chronological way, not thematically, as the three levels might suggest, because most events and happenings have a cause – effect relationship. Besides that, it is easier to understand the content for the neutral reader and to draw conclusions for the author when the research is conducted in a chronological way. The research is centralized and periodized around political crisis. The crises form the different case studies within the time span of this research.

The thesis has the following content: in this chapter the topic, research question and research method have been discussed. Chapter two contains a brief literature and theoretical background on the topic of the thesis. Chapter three gives a brief overview on the history of the Dutch-Chinese relations prior to 1978. The following chapters will discuss four major cases. The fourth chapter will focus on the period 1978 to the end of the First Submarine Crisis. The fifth chapter focuses on the Second Submarine Crisis and the improved relations after. Chapter six will deal with the student protest and the incident at Tian'anmen square. Chapter seven will deal with the Third Submarine Crisis and the improving relations till the visit of Queen Beatrix to China in 1999. Chapter eight is will consist of the conclusion of the thesis.

2. Literature review and position of research question

“However, as the subject is still too sensitive for those directly involved to speak out openly, many crucial questions cannot yet be answered. The scope of this paper, therefore, will not exceed the realm of the descriptive, leaving some vital questions for further research.”¹¹

This chapter will explore the current status of the scientific debate, the so called *status quaestionis*. Furthermore, this chapter will elucidate the position of the research question in the scientific debate. The proposed research question that will be answered in this thesis is the following: *What role did the Dutch Parliament play in the Dutch-Chinese bilateral relations between 1978 and 1999?* From this research question, three important elements can be examined.

First, the thesis is about the role of the Dutch Parliament. This role will be examined in a specific field; its role in the international political relations of the Netherlands. This role will not be so much about the formalized role, as clarified in the Dutch law, but about the behavior of the Dutch Parliament within that formalized role. Parliament has, according to the Dutch law, different obligations and rights to influence foreign policy making. In this research, the focus is on the way the Dutch Parliament follows those obligations and uses those rights. The status quaestionis of this element can be found in the first section of this chapter.

The second element in the research is the Dutch-Chinese relations between 1978 and 1999. The focus in the research will be on political relations, such as debates in the Dutch Parliament, political agreements between two countries, the behavior of politicians involved in the Dutch-Chinese relations, the behavior of ministries and visits from Dutch politicians to China and Chinese politicians to the Netherlands. When economic relations play an important role in the political actions and events between China and the Netherlands, they will be incorporated in the research. The same can be said about cultural and academic relations. This will be the focus of the second section in this chapter.

¹¹ I. D’Hooghe, ‘The 1991/1992 Dutch Debate On the Sale of Submarines To Taiwan’, *China Information* 1992 Vol. VI, No. 4, 40.

Studying international bilateral relations, there are two perspectives; in this case, the Dutch and the Chinese perspective. Because the focus of this research is on the behavior of the Dutch Parliament within those relations, it is not necessary to give a clear overview of the Chinese perspective. It plays a minor role in the debate of the behavior of the Dutch Parliament and is therefore not part of the research.

A third element in this research is closely linked to both the research question and the two other elements pointed out earlier: Dutch international relations and Dutch foreign policy making. A lot has been written on the Dutch foreign relations, especially in the Dutch language. In English there is less work conducted. Most of the research on the Dutch foreign relations and policy making is focused on topics and regions other than Asia. The most discussed topics in Dutch foreign policy making are the NATO membership of the Netherlands, the EU integration, Developmental Aid and the role of Human Rights in the Dutch foreign policy. In a broader context, this research contributes to a general debate on the Dutch foreign policy and foreign policy making. Therefore, in this historical overview, the main structures of the scientific debate about the Dutch international relations and Dutch foreign policy making will be discussed. This will be the focus of the third section in this chapter.

2.1 The role of Parliament

This section is about the role of the Dutch Parliament in Dutch international relations and Dutch foreign policy making in the years between 1978 and 1999. Not much has been written about this subject. Only one serious academic study as to the role of the Dutch Parliament has been conducted in the late 1970s. It was published in 1978 in a book and discussed in several academic papers. Therefore, the debate will be taken to a higher level; the role of Parliament in foreign policy making in Western style democracies. In newspapers, publications from political parties such as election programs, on television and elsewhere, the topic was discussed. However, those sources do not use an academic point of view, and thus most of them cannot be used to describe the status quaestionis.

The earliest known debate about the role of a Parliament in foreign policy making and the international relations of a state goes further back than the current Dutch constitutional monarchy. This debate focused not on how Parliament could influence foreign

policy making, but on the question if the Parliament should have the power to influence foreign policy making or not. It is not directly relevant for the main question, but it gives a good insight in how the debate evolved over time. It makes the difficult position of the Parliament in foreign policy making clearer.

Early writers such as Locke and Rousseau took a negative position towards Parliamentary influence on foreign policy making. Locke was against any influence of Parliament in foreign policy at all while Rousseau pointed out that citizens should be satisfied if the government took care of the domestic issues such as the right for property and personal safety. Government should be trusted in foreign policy making and their negotiations with other states.¹² Alexis de Tocqueville points out that secrecy is needed in international relations of a state. The public can therefore not be involved in the international relations of a democratic state.¹³

Also more modern authors who are well known in theorizing on the subject of international relations and foreign policy making such as Hans Morgenthau and Walter Lippmann are negative towards any influence on Parliament. Both state that the public does not have any knowledge about foreign policy making and does not have any accurate information. Policy makers and governments are therefore allowed to formulate their own policy, even if it is against the public opinion.¹⁴ Other more modern authors made a different distinction. They state it is possible for Parliament to influence foreign policy making, but it is something Parliament simply should not do.

At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, when democracy was more established in Western states, more and more authors adopted the opinion that Parliament should be involved in foreign policy making and be able to influence the international relations of the state. In the elections of 1918, the Dutch male population had the opportunity to vote and in 1922, women gained suffrage. In the Dutch Parliament, a permanent committee on foreign policy making was created in 1917. However, it took Parliament till 1919 to install this committee.

¹² P.R. Baehr, 'Communicatie tussen elites als voorwaarde voor democratische controle op het buitenlands beleid', 151.

¹³ A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, (1835, London), Vol. 1, 236-237.

¹⁴ Baehr, 'Communicatie tussen elites als voorwaarde voor democratische controle op het buitenlands beleid', 152.

Parliament gave them the following mission statement:

“Het bevorderen van een geregelde gedachtewisseling over zaken van buitenlandsch beleid tusschen de Regeering en de Kamer. Zij vraagt van de Regeering de inlichtingen, die zij gewenscht acht en overlegt met deze over al dat geen, waaromtrent de Regering haar wenscht te hooren.”¹⁵

It is remarkable that in this mission statement the committee focuses on an exchange of thoughts between government and Parliament. Furthermore, the committee is supposed to ask the government for information and they will discuss the information if the government wishes them to do so. With a mission statement like that, it is therefore expected that this committee will act very cautiously and maybe adopt a wait-and-see attitude.

Teun Struycken, emeritus professor and member of the State Council¹⁶ and one of the advisers to install such a committee, does not focus anymore on the question of whether or not Parliament should influence foreign policy making. He goes much further than the mission statement of the committee. According to Struycken, the new question to be answered is how Parliament should implement its influence. He publishes on a regular basis on this topic.¹⁷ The academic and British politician Lord Bryce stated in 1921 clearly that he believes that Parliament should be involved in the goals of foreign policy making. The way government tries to reach those goals is however something Parliament should not be involved in. Peter Baehr and others criticize this point of view. They state that it is not possible to split the goals and means in foreign policy making because they are closely linked to each other and maybe even conflict with each other.¹⁸

From the beginning of the twentieth century, most academics, some exceptions left out, accept the idea that Parliament should be involved in foreign policy making and focus on the question how Parliament should effectively involve foreign policy making and the international relations of a state. The most important argument for that is that both academics and non academics conclude that domestic issues are more and more connected with international issues. The interest of the public in international affairs will start to

¹⁵ J. Terpstra, *De invloed der Staten-Generaal op het bestuur van de buitenlandse betrekkingen* (Amsterdam 1951) 5.

¹⁶ In Dutch: Raad van State.

¹⁷ Terpstra, *De invloed der Staten-Generaal op het bestuur van de buitenlandse betrekkingen*, 4-5.

¹⁸ Baehr, 'Communicatie tussen elites als voorwaarde voor democratische controle op het buitenlands beleid', 152-153.

increase. Terpstra wrote in 1951 that because national and international issues are more connected with each other, Parliament should also be able to influence the government in foreign policy making. He was concerned that if Parliament does not change their role, their influence on other domestic issues will be reduced because of the linkage between the national and international affairs.¹⁹ About thirty years after the installation of the committee on foreign affairs, Terpstra and Kranenburg were not satisfied with the behavior of this committee. Kranenburg states that the Dutch committee of international affairs is less influential than committees on foreign affairs in large countries. Struyken wrote already in the 1920s that there is a legal basis for Parliament to influence the government's foreign policy making. It's not a matter of being able to, but having the courage to take action.²⁰

A Dutch study

Much has been written on the domestic factors for foreign policy making by the international academic community. Most of the work is concentrated on the United States of America. For the Netherlands, however, not much research has been conducted.²¹ In 1975, a study group was formed by academics from different universities. This group, called 'binnenlandse invloeden op het buitenlands beleid' is the most influential group of academics who wrote about domestic influences on foreign policy making. Besides this group, also others did some research to Parliament before 1978.

Van Schendelen comes to the same conclusion as the study group. So far, not much work has been done on the Dutch Parliament. In 1972, he conducted research on information and decision making in the Dutch Parliament which he published in 1976. He states that about 85% of all the time that is used to discuss and work on a bill in Parliament is done in committees. Decision making however does not take place there, a committee functions more as an information channel.²²

¹⁹ Terpstra, *De invloed der Staten-Generaal op het bestuur van de buitenlandse betrekkingen*, 5.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ P.R. Baehr, 'The Dutch Foreign Policy Elite: A Descriptive Study of Perceptions and Attitudes', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1980), 223-224.

²² M.P.C.M. van Schendelen, 'Information and Decision Making in the Dutch Parliament', *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (may 1976), 235.

“The most important factor with respect to the Parliamentary lawmaking process is specialization among the members of Parliament. Just as the Chamber decentralizes legislative work to the committees, the parties decentralize it to their sector specialists in various committees.”²³

Like the study group, Van Schendelen did research as to what extent Parliament is being influenced and by whom. He came to some important conclusions. He characterizes the way Parliament gathers and ranks its sources as a ‘hierarchical network’, which means that there are favored and disfavored sources. Disfavored sources are pressure groups and mass media, favored sources are experts and hearings. He concludes that all sources have a minimal significance in the decision making process. Furthermore, he characterizes the information network as productive and influential in decision making.²⁴ Van Schendelen found two weak links in Parliamentary decision making. He split the Parliamentarians up in cue-takers and cue-makers. His main point is that because much work is been done in committees, the rest of Parliamentarians make their decision based on what their party members discuss in committees. These party specialists lean very heavily on extra Parliamentary actors, such as acquaintances, Parliamentary staff, national authorities, experts, pressure and action groups.²⁵ His work however does focus on Parliament in general. He did not do research to specific sectors or interests of Parliament.

The main focus of this earlier mentioned study group is the so called elite of foreign policy making. They distinguish two different kinds of elites. The *formal foreign policy elite* are formed by the government, Parliament and the ministries. The *informal foreign policy elite* are composed of individuals and organizations that have no legal rights to influence foreign policy, such as entrepreneurs, churches, political parties, labor unions, academics, media and nonprofit organizations and action groups that try to influence foreign policy making. This research is quite unique because members of those foreign policy elites were actively involved in this research by filling in questionnaires. They were asked about their view on the world and about influencing foreign policy making.²⁶ In Norway and Sweden,

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid, 238-239.

²⁵ Ibid, 247.

²⁶ P.R. Baehr, Ph.P. Everts, H. Leurdijk, F.M. Roschar, A. van Standen, C.P. van den Tempel, W.H. Vermeulen, R.M.M. de Vree, ‘Inleiding’, in: Baehr, P.R., Everts, Ph.P., Leurdijk, .H., Roschar, F.M., Standen, A. van, Tempel, C.P. van den, Vermeulen, W.H., Vree, R.M.M. de, *Elite & buitenlandse politiek in Nederland* (Den Haag 1978) IX-X.

studies like this have been conducted as well.²⁷

Baehr, a member of the Dutch study group, concluded that there is not much communication between the formal and informal elite. It implies, according to Baehr, that good democratic supervision is not possible on foreign policy making; democratic supervision is limited. In his research he states that the most influential factor in policy making, according to the questionnaire that was spread among the foreign policy elite, is first the cabinet, then Parliament followed closely by top officials and diplomats. Political parties take the fourth position. Despite this high position of Parliament in this research, among all elites, including Parliament itself, there is a skeptical view in regards to the way Parliament is able to influence foreign policy making. In the questionnaire, the foreign policy elite was also asked about their political position and their membership of political parties. The view on influencing foreign policy and the way in which actors attempt to influence that policy differs per political party or political background. People related to the PvdA²⁸ try to influence foreign policy making more through media, political parties and other informal policy elite while members of the VVD²⁹ and CDA³⁰ try to influence foreign policy making via a more direct route, such as Parliament and the Cabinet.³¹

Roschar, member of the study group of foreign policy making, did research on contacts between the different groups within the formal and informal foreign policy elite. Roschar reasons that contact is important for influencing foreign policy making. He concludes the same as Baehr, Parliament and cabinet play a central role. Furthermore, top officials also play a central role. Parliament plays a central role as mediator between the informal elite, except the entrepreneurs, and the cabinet. In his research Roschar noticed that there is not much contact between pressure groups and Parliamentarians on topics of foreign policy making. Parliamentarians do have contact with the media, with academics and

²⁷ P.R. Baehr, P.R., 'The Dutch Foreign Policy Elite: A Descriptive Study of Perceptions and Attitudes', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1980), 223.

²⁸ Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA), labor party.

²⁹ Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD), liberal party.

³⁰ Christen-Democratisch Appèl (CDA), Christian party.

³¹ Baehr, 'Communicatie tussen elites als voorwaarde voor democratische controle op het buitenlands beleid', 166-167.

with religious leaders. There is not much contact between Parliamentarians and entrepreneurs and top officials.³²

“67% of the officials said that they had been approached by members of Parliament who wanted to obtain information, while 59% of the Parliament members said that they had been approached by officials who wanted to give them information.”³³

According to Baehr, the officials who filled out the questionnaire are high ranking. It is not clear however, if the officials who approached members of Parliament were high ranking officials. Both Baehr and Roschar agree that top officials play an important role in foreign policy making; it is however not very clear in how and how much (top) officials influence Parliamentarians.

Towards a new century

After the research on foreign policy making in the Netherlands from the study group, not much research has been conducted, especially not in such a comprehensive manner. It is, however, over forty years ago that such a study took place. It could be interesting to repeat this study for comparative reasons, as not only a comparison between two small high developed democratic countries, but also a comparison over time in the Netherlands.

It is not clear why there has been not much follow up study done. One of the reasons might be that researchers believe that not much has changed since the study group presented their results or that they are satisfied with the studies the Dutch government has ordered such as the research on Srebrenica conducted by the NIOD or the political support for the war in Iraq that was conducted by independent academics. Most likely is however the fact that the creation of the European Union gained the attention of many researchers in the field of international relations. The interest of European researchers has partly shifted from national foreign relations towards the European Union and the ongoing European integration process.

³² F.M. Roschar, ‘Een structureel model van de Nederlandse buitenlandse-politieke elite, in: Baehr, P.R., Everts, Ph.P., Leurdijk, .H., Roschar, F.M., Standen, A. van, Tempel, C.P. van den, Vermeulen, W.H., Vree, R.M.M. de, *Elite & buitenlandse politiek in Nederland* (Den Haag 1978) 169-195.

³³ P.R. Baehr, ‘The Dutch Foreign Policy Elite: A Descriptive Study of Perceptions and Attitudes’, 237.

Brouwer, De Jong and Bresselink also contributed to the debate about the role of Parliament and foreign policy making. Their view is mainly from a judicial perspective. They give a comprehensive description about the legal options the Dutch Parliament has and how those options increased and evolved over time. Parliament usually has the option to take all or nothing when they are being asked to ratify an agreement.³⁴ They conclude that while Parliament has numerous options to influence foreign policy making, in reality the influence of Parliament is limited. Nevertheless, Parliament does have more options than it realizes.³⁵

In 1996, the Cabinet asked the Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie³⁶ to do a comprehensive research to the happenings and causes of the fall of Srebrenica, one of the United Nations' enclaves in former Yugoslavia. The NIOD concluded that, due to close cooperation of Parliament and cabinet, the role of Parliament, which was supervision of the cabinet, was not executed well. Parliament was not critical and did not correct the cabinet.³⁷ Parliament itself also did research into the fall of Srebrenica. In 2000, a report from a committee under the presidency of Parliamentarian Bert Bakker concluded that Parliament had deficient information.³⁸ The publication of the study from the NIOD led to the fall of Cabinet Kok II. Shortly after, Parliament installed an extra ordinary Parliamentarian committee³⁹ that did research on the role of the Parliament. This committee came to the same conclusion as the NIOD, although it was less critical about the role of Parliament.⁴⁰ Because of reasons such as human rights promotion and international prestige, Parliament wanted the Netherlands to be involved in international peace keeping operations mandated by the United Nations. It seems here that Parliament wanted to get the Netherlands too much involved in a peace keeping operation that it was not very critical of towards the government.

After the fall of Cabinet Kok II, also Cabinet Balkenende IV fell on the subject of

³⁴ J.G. Brouwer, H.G. de Jong, L.F.M. Besselink, *Parlement en buitenlands beleid* (Zwolle 1993) VI.

³⁵ Ibid, 45.

³⁶ In 1999 the Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie is renamed. It is called 'Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie' (NIOD).

³⁷ Authorized summary of NIOD, *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied, reconstructive, achtergrond en gevolgen en analyses van de val van een safe area* (Amsterdam 2002), via <http://www.srebrenica.nl/Pages/OOR/20/057.bGFuZz1OTA.html> (10-06-2011).

³⁸ Parlementaire enquête Srebrenica (2002-2003) via www.parlement.com (10-06-2011).

³⁹ Parlementaire enquête.

⁴⁰ Tweede Kamer, vergaderjaar 2002-2003, *Enquête Srebrenica*, kamerstuk 28506, 413-465.

international affairs and foreign policy making; the Dutch contribution to the stability of Afghanistan and the continuation of the participation of Dutch forces in a humanitarian operation in the Afghan province of Uruzgan. It seems that international affairs became more and more important for Dutch politics. The question here is if Parliament or the cabinet took the biggest step. In both cases, the cabinet stepped down themselves; they did not lose the necessary support in Parliament openly to stay in power. It is, however, not clear if the pressure from Parliament, public opinion or another reason forced the cabinets to step down.

In 2003 Capling and Nossal did research into Parliament and the democratization of foreign policy making. They used the Australian case of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT). They argue that due to internationalization of the decision making process via interstate and intrastate organizations, democratic supervision of national political institutions such as Parliament becomes more difficult.⁴¹ They state that the Canadian example, in which non-governmental organizations are involved in foreign policy making leads to bypassing Parliament which does not democratize foreign policy making. The creation of JSCOT in the Australian Parliament did not have the result the researchers hoped for; more influence of Parliament in foreign policy making. Although there was an extra layer in the foreign policy making process, they concluded that:

“The JSCOT initiative proved unable to substantially alter the way in which Australia’s foreign economic policy was made. [...] Rather, it became a tool of political management, a means by which the government could channel protest, deflect opposition, and in essence legitimize its own policy preferences.”⁴²

This is not a Dutch example, but it perfectly fits in the way earlier researchers such as Baehr, Terpstra and Struycken looked at the Dutch situation.

There are several reasons for this limited involvement of the Dutch Parliament in foreign policy making. First of all, Parliament usually lacks proper information. Information might be secret due to negotiation procedures or information might not be available at all. In some cases, reliable facts and figures simply do not exist. Parliament usually does not

⁴¹ A. Capling, K.R. Nossal, ‘Parliament and the Democratization of Foreign Policy: The Case of Australia’s Joint Standing Committee on Treaties’, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, No.4 (2003) 835.

⁴² Ibid, 851.

have the resources to collect their own information. It could request information from the government, but the government also does sometimes rely on other international sources. If Parliament does get the resources they have asked for, it is usually an overload of information. In that case, Parliamentarians are not able to process and determine the value of all information. An information overload is even more problematic for the small parties.

Secondly, the decision making process and negotiations between states usually gives Parliament an 'all-or-nothing' choice when the government presents the agreement to Parliament. Governments negotiate a deal with each other and sign a treaty. Parliament then has the choice to ratify the agreement as a whole or reject it as a whole. Parliament does usually not have the option to change parts of an agreement or treaty. Parliament can send the negotiators of the government to the negotiation table with several objectives, but the outcome of negotiations are uncertain, especially in the field of international relations. In order not to lose face, Parliament usually chooses ratification of the agreements the government has made.

The third reason is the transfer of a part of the decision making process to supranational organizations such as the European Union, the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. Due to globalization and European integration, more and more decisions are made in supranational organizations or in agreements on the international level. The national Parliaments do not have control over this decision making process or the voting if they hand over their sovereignty to supranational organizations. They can send the national representatives, mostly at the ministerial level, to the negotiations or influence the appointment of the representatives, but that is where the real influence from the national Parliaments stops.

The fourth and final reason are formed by the limited legal options for Parliament to get involved in foreign policy making compared to the legal options Parliament has in domestic policy making.⁴³

To summarize, the role of Parliament in foreign policy making has been discussed by many. The role of the Dutch Parliament and foreign policy making and the Netherlands and its international relations has, however, not been studied extensively. Early debates about the

⁴³ See: Brouwer, de Jong, Besselink, *Parlement en buitenlands beleid*.

role of Parliament in foreign policy making focused on the question of whether Parliament should play a role in foreign policy making or not. Famous authors as Locke and Rousseau pointed out that Parliament should focus on domestic issues, not on international relations. At the end of the nineteenth and begin twentieth century, the debate shifted towards the question *how* Parliament should influence the government on foreign policy making. At this time the Dutch perspective also gained more attention. The researches of the 1970s provided most important information about which roles the Dutch Parliament plays in foreign policy making. Also here, skepticism is found about the role and influence of Parliament in foreign policy making. With the rise of international institutions a new wave of criticism and skepticism was heard. Much of foreign policy and even domestic policy is being made in international organizations. For national Parliaments, it becomes much harder to influence foreign policy making. International politics also plays a more important role in Dutch politics. Although there might be deeper causes, the fall of Cabinet Kok II and Cabinet Balkenende IV seems to prove that statement. The role of the Dutch Parliament in international affairs seems not very large in those affairs. Parliament itself wishes it to be more influential.

2.2 The Dutch-Chinese Relations

As the first section made clear, not much research has been conducted on the role of Parliament in the period that this master thesis focuses on. There is, however, a good foundation on which further research can be conducted on the role of Parliament. The same can be said about the academic work on the Dutch-Chinese relations between 1978 and 1999. Not much work covers the period or is specifically focusing on the Dutch-Chinese relationship. Much has been written about China, also by Dutch academics. Most of them, however, did not focus on the Dutch-Chinese political relationship. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs conducted research on the Dutch-Chinese relations before and after 1978. These small studies were not published at the time they were written, but some are publically accessible now.

There has also been much work conducted on the political and economic relations between the European Union and China. The relationship between China and the Netherlands however, does not play a role in most of those works. Also the work of Duco

Hellema⁴⁴, who wrote a comprehensive work on Dutch foreign policy and relations, does not give much attention to the Dutch-Chinese relation. Only a few works have the Dutch-Chinese relationship as their main topic. Other academic works that mention something about the Dutch-Chinese relations usually mostly focus on the crises in this relationship, such as the submarine crises and the incident in Tian'anmen square. These scattered fragments of information are however not interesting for this chapter. They do not contribute to any scientific debate because they do not contain any views or insights. They are short and basic summaries of the events, such as the submarine crises or the incident in Tian'anmen square in 1989.

The most important reason for the low number of studies on Dutch-Chinese relations is that there is no strong relationship between the Netherlands and China. Countries within the European Union, the United States and Indonesia were more important for the Netherlands. On the other hand, one could argue that due to the high expectations of the Chinese market for the Dutch and the many political crises between the Netherlands and China, this bilateral relationship is an interesting topic to conduct research on and to write about. Unfortunately, that interest seems limited to the press, not to large numbers of academics. Nevertheless, some academic research was conducted.

In 1984, Colijn and Rusman published their study on the Dutch export license for the export of two submarines to Taiwan. The study is part of a broader study on policy and decision making on weapons exportation of the Dutch government. Part of the study is on the role of Parliament and the relation between the Netherlands and China, but the main focus is on the weapons exports to Taiwan.⁴⁵ The researchers offer an interesting inside view into the flow of information and into the decision making process. The research is very detailed and gives good insights. The conclusion however is not very useful for this thesis because it focuses mainly on weapons exports and the role of government and Parliament. They conclude that the process of decision making is not transparent at all and they show that some choices by actors in the process are the wrong choices. For example, the way the government deals with China.

⁴⁴ D. Hellema, *Nederland in de wereld: buitenlandse politiek van Nederland* (Houten 2010).

⁴⁵ K. Colijn, P. Rusman, 'Het Nederlandse wapenexportvergunningenbeleid' in Colijn, K., Kerstens, B. Marle, Y. van, Mey, L. van der, Rusman, P., *De Nederlandse wapenexport, Beleid en praktijk, Indonesië, Iran, Taiwan* (Den Haag 1984).

In 1989, Leonard Blussé published a book on Dutch-Chinese relationship to honor the long relationship between both countries and to share some insights to the public about the Dutch-Chinese relation, as at that moment the Dutch queen and her husband were planning to visit China again. The book contains the history from the beginning of the Dutch-Chinese relationship to 1989. In 2008, the journalist Floris Jan van Luyn wrote the second part about the period between 1989 and 2008. Although his work is written for the general public, rather than only the academic world, it is an important work on the Dutch-Chinese relations.⁴⁶ Blussé's focus is on political, economic and cultural aspects of this relationship viewed from a Dutch perspective. He does not mention a lot about the educational relationship which was mentioned by Colijn and Rusman. Being a sinologist and the selection of words Blussé uses in his work suggest that he was against the export of submarines to Taiwan⁴⁷ while Colijn and Rusman take a quite neutral position. In the mid 1980's, Blussé describes how the Dutch enjoy Chinese culture. None of the other authors mention this special interest. It might have had an influence on how Parliament and government deals with China.

In 1992, just after the Third Submarine Crisis, sinologist D'Hooghe published about the debate on the sale of submarines to Taiwan. She gave an overview of the parties involved and their arguments. Her article is not very analytical. She leave some questions open for the future, stating that because the debate just happened, it is too hard for the participants to open up and give more insights into the events.⁴⁸

Van der List finished his doctorate in 1995 with the publication of his dissertation about the Dutch liberal party, the VVD, and the Dutch foreign policy.⁴⁹ He gives a good overview on the export of submarines to Taiwan and states clearly that the government did not execute a resolution that passed Parliament. He gives a clear insight in the liberal thoughts about foreign policy making in the Netherlands. The VVD was politically divided in two camps, one in favor and one against the sale of submarines to Taiwan. The liberal party seems to aim for conservatism and continuity in foreign policy making which caused trouble

⁴⁶ L. Blussé, F.J. van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders, Geschiedenis van de Nederland-Chinese betrekkingen 1600-2007* (Zutphen 2008).

⁴⁷ Ibid, 202.

⁴⁸ D'Hooghe, The 1991/1992 Dutch Debate On the Sale of Submarines To Taiwan.

⁴⁹ G.A. van der List, *De macht van het idee, De VVD en het Nederlandse buitenlandse beleid 1948-1994* (Leiden 1995).

in the submarine crises.

One of the most important academic studies on Dutch-Chinese relations is the work of Henk Houweling. In 1997, he published a new framework in which the Dutch-Chinese bilateral relations could be viewed. His starting point is 'sequential development':

"The assumption is that the social context of unequal levels of development contains causal variables which help to determine the content of foreign policy behavior in dyads of developed/late developing countries."⁵⁰

He further gives an overview of the Dutch-Chinese relations starting from the 16th century. He states that the main target of the Dutch to 'sail' to China is money. Till today, nothing much has changed in the interests of the Netherlands. Houweling also placed the Dutch-Chinese bilateral relationship in the context of the Cold War and states that due to a fragmentation of the Asian communistic states, trade with some of those states, for example China, became possible for the Netherlands. He states, however, that trade and attention for the European and American markets is of greater interest to the Netherlands, especially for Foreign Direct Investment.

However, he makes a major mistake in his paper; he states that in 1989 the Dutch Royal Couple visited China. This is not true; the visit was first expelled and later cancelled due to the incident on Tian'anmen square.⁵¹ He ends with an open conclusion in which he wonders if the world will react the same way as it did in the past. Rising and established powerful nations got into conflict which ended in the First and Second World War. He questions if the world can manage to incorporate the upcoming economies into the world system.

Van Luyn gives a detailed overview of the incident at Tian'anmen square in 1989 and makes clear that there were a lot of doubts about the rise of China in the early 1990s. Like Blussé he points out that the Dutch population shows special interest in China, more than other European countries do.⁵² In his opinion, politics and political decisions make it hard for Dutch companies to do business in China. Van Luyn gives a clear description of the problems in the Dutch-Chinese relationship that occurred when Minister of Foreign Affairs Hans van

⁵⁰ Houweling, 'Dutch-Chinese Bilateral Relations', 6.

⁵¹ Ibid, 14.

⁵² L. Blussé, F.J. van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 225-226.

Mierlo used the European Union's presidency to criticize China on its human rights policy publically. On the other hand, he states that the Netherlands became less critical towards China, for example in matters of human rights.⁵³

Yvonne van der Heijden published in 2008 a book about the Dutch and Chinese trade relations. Like Blussé and Van Luyn, her work is also targeted to a larger public than the academic world. Nevertheless, she contributes to the academic debate. She disagrees with Luyn when he states that Dutch politics make it hard for Dutch companies to invest in China. Van der Heijden suggests that the uncertainties in Chinese politics make it harder for Dutch companies to trade with China.⁵⁴ More or less, they both blame politics for the difficulties the Dutch companies have had in doing business in and with China. Furthermore, Van der Heijden states that the aim for improvement of human rights does in reality not play a significant role in the Dutch-Chinese relations.⁵⁵ Very important in her statements is that she points to a relationship between the American-Chinese relation and the reaction of China to Dutch policy that is not favoured by Beijing. Due to tensions between China and the United States, the Netherlands is an example for the United States on how China might react to the United States if they adopt a pro Taiwanese policy. Others such as Houweling also point to this, but not as strongly as Van der Heijden does.

In 2009, Bookelmann graduated with a thesis about the human rights in China and the Dutch policy choice in stimulating those human rights or ignoring them in their strategy of improving the economic relations with China.⁵⁶ She recognizes the major problem within the Dutch-Chinese relationship and condemns the Dutch government for their soft reaction towards human rights violations. The thesis is written from an ideological perspective and is quite weak. It finishes with the hope for a new 'revolution' in China which will improve the human rights situation in China.

As stated above, not much has been written on the Dutch-Chinese bilateral relations and the work that has been done on the Dutch-Chinese relation is not always academic. Most works

⁵³ Ibid, 227, 231.

⁵⁴ Y. van der Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak*, 88.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 92.

⁵⁶ E. Bookelmann, *Nederland, China en de rechten van de mens, Het dilemma van buitenlandse zaken: Mensenrechten vs. Economische en politieke belangen* (Utrecht 2009).

contain more plain information than a contribution to an academic debate. Houweling has an interesting theory on how upcoming and settled states interact with each other. The main point to focus on in this debate is however, the relation between the sober economic results of the trade and operations of Dutch companies in China and the behavior of the Dutch politics. Van Luyn makes clear that Dutch politics troubles this economic relationship with China, while Van der Heijden states that other factors led to the sober economic results. In fact, all authors refer more or less to this debate, without making clear statements.

2.3 Dutch Foreign Policy

As stated earlier, most attention goes to the role of Parliament in foreign policy making and the Dutch-Chinese relations. An umbrella topic for both of them is the Dutch foreign policy making and the Dutch international relations. To place the thesis in a larger perspective, it is important also to stretch out some major debates in foreign policy making and the Dutch international relations.

One of the most important studies on Dutch international relations and foreign policy making is the work of the academic and politician Joris Voorhoeve. In 1979 he published his famous *Peace, Profits and Principles*.⁵⁷ The title represents the three major interests in Dutch foreign policy according to Voorhoeve. The Netherlands is aiming for peace, not for war, due to the size and power of the Netherlands and due to the second interest, profit from trade. The third element in Dutch foreign policy is the moral view. The Netherlands should act as a good example to the rest of the world. The attempts to improve human rights worldwide and an active involvement in peace keeping operations can be seen as an expression of that interest.

In particular, the last two parts of Voorhoeve's Dutch foreign policy are much debated. For example, authors as Malcontent and Baudet state that Dutch politicians declared to the world from the 1960s onwards that they gave the right example and that they were promoting human rights, but the actual implementation of this policy happened in the late 1980s, early 1990s.⁵⁸ James Kennedy even states that the Dutch Foreign policy on

⁵⁷ J.J.C. Voorhoeve, *Peace, Profits and Principles: a study of Dutch foreign policy* (Den Haag 1979).

⁵⁸ P. Malcontent, F. Baudet, 'The Dutchman's burden?', *Nederland en de internationale rechtsorde in de twintigste eeuw*, in: Graaff, B., de, Hellema, D., Zwan, B. van der (eds.), *De Nederlandse buitenlandse politiek in de twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam 2003) 97-98.

human rights promotion is just opportunism. He states that the Dutch politicians use human rights promotion and the fight against poverty to give the Netherlands more prestige.⁵⁹ The choice between human rights promotion and economic relations promotion is also much debated among politicians:⁶⁰

“Minister van der Klaauw werd dan ook bekritiseerd, omdat hij in vergelijking met zijn voorganger Van der Stoel teveel koopman was en te weinig dominee. Van der Stoel was er gedurende zijn ambtsperiode overigens ook van beschuldigd te veel koopman te zijn.”⁶¹

This debate is interesting because the Netherlands has to deal with a dilemma: to trade with China or to promote human rights. For example, this issue led in 1997 to a political crisis when Hans van Mierlo condemned China in public for its human rights violation. Everts makes clear in his work how governments can deal with such issues and gives possible methods to avoid, solve or ignore such dilemmas.⁶² It is however questionable if those policy interests are opposing each other. Chinese culture and tradition has taught that publically criticizing the Chinese government can harm relations, but in closed negotiations away from the public, there is much more room for criticism. Making a public statement makes the Chinese government feel that it loses face, which is seen as very negative in Chinese culture.

Duco Hellema gives a good overview on the Dutch foreign relations in his work which has been edited and updated four times already in 2010.⁶³ From the 1970s onwards, he has been trying to periodize the Dutch foreign policy into periods of continuity of policy and change. He also gives a detailed insight in the Dutch approach towards Atlanticism and Europeanism and states that the Netherlands tries to keep a good relationship with the United States in order to counterbalance the European powers.

It is remarkable that much about Dutch foreign policy making and Dutch international relations has been written via biographical works. Not only biographical works on Ministers

⁵⁹ J.C. Kennedy, *Nieuw Babylon in aanbouw. Nederland in de jaren zestig* (Amsterdam 1995) 81.

⁶⁰ B. van den Bos, *Partijleiders en buitenlandse politiek* (Den Haag 1986).

⁶¹ “Minister of Foreign Affairs Van der Klaauw is being criticised because he is compared to his predecessor Van der Stoel too much a merchant instead of a clergyman, Van Der Stoel was criticised on the same issue during his time in office”. D. Hellema, *Nederland in de wereld: buitenlandse politiek van Nederland* (Houten 2010) 337.

⁶² P. Everts, ‘Dilemma’s in de Buitenlandse Politiek van Nederland’, *Politiek Bestuurlijke Studie* 20 (Leiden 2006).

⁶³ Hellema, *Nederland in de wereld*.

of Foreign Affairs have been collected⁶⁴, but also biographical studies on top diplomats and high ranking officials from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been bundled and published.⁶⁵ Unfortunately, these biographical works are usually small and often focus on the period the politician or official was working in the field of international relations. The authors of those works hope to give the reader some insight in the personalities from the individuals who were in the front of the foreign policy making and execution. Besides that, they state, knowing more about the personalities might give more insight in Dutch foreign policy. It might help to understand the behavior of those involved in foreign policy making. Besides the small biographical works, in 1986, the four most important political leaders were asked in a long interview to give their view on the Dutch international affairs.⁶⁶ Although it is a different approach, it also gives some extra perspectives from which the Dutch foreign policy making could be understood.

The general headlines of the debate about Dutch foreign policy making and international relations are important for the thesis. The three main aspects as Voorhoeve formulated give a clear insight in how the Netherlands operate internationally; peace, profit and principles.

A debate among scientists and politicians about the aim for strong economic relations and on the other hand the promotion of human rights and fight against poverty is interesting because this dilemma plays a role in the Dutch-Chinese relationship.

Conclusion

This chapter is centralized around the main question of the thesis: *What role did the Dutch Parliament play in the Dutch-Chinese bilateral relations between 1978 and 1999?* The research question is split up in three elements: The first element is the role of Parliament in the Dutch foreign policy making and the international political relations of the Netherlands. The second element focuses on the debate about the Dutch-Chinese relationship between

⁶⁴ D. Hellema, B. Zeeman, B. van der Zwan (eds.), *De Nederlandse ministers van Buitenlandse Zaken in de twintigste eeuw* (Den Haag 1999).

⁶⁵ B. van der Zwan, B. de Graaff, D. Hellema (eds.), *In dienst van Buitenlandse Zaken, Achttienportretten van ambtenaren en diplomaten in de twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam 2008).

⁶⁶ Van den Bos, *Partijleiders en buitenlandse politiek*.

1978 and 1999 and the third element is about the Dutch international political relations and Dutch foreign policy.

The role of Parliament in foreign policy making has been discussed by early political thinkers up till today. The general trend in the debate is that at first Parliament should not have any influence on foreign policy making, while from the start of the twentieth century, the debate shifted towards the question how Parliament should have effective influence on foreign policy making. Even nowadays, both politicians and academics are not satisfied with the role of Parliament in foreign policy making. In 1972, a group of academics published an interesting and comprehensive study on the role of the Dutch Parliament in foreign policy making. This study can be used as a good foundation in which the second element, the Dutch-Chinese relations can be seen as a case. Not much has been written on the Dutch-Chinese relationship. Interesting in the debate is the role of politics, including Parliament, in the Dutch-Chinese bilateral relation and the economic relation viewed from the perspective of Dutch companies. According to some authors, it appears that political crises between the Netherlands and China do not improve the economic relations between the two countries.

Another difficulty in the Dutch-Chinese relationship is the two targets of the Dutch foreign policy of Voorhoeve's 'profit' and 'principles'. The policy of stimulating trade and economic relations combined with actively promoting human rights seem, according to most literature, to be two policy targets that clash with each other in the Dutch-Chinese relationship.

The research question fits properly in all three elements. It is a case in the debate about the role of the Dutch Parliament in foreign policy making and it contributes to the debate about the Dutch-Chinese bilateral relationship. Furthermore, it might give new insights in how the Dutch deal with the sometimes clashing policy targets of improving economic relations and actively promoting human rights.

The next chapter will give a brief overview of the Dutch-Chinese relationship from the beginning to 1978. It will give a context and background information to position the subject of the thesis.

3. Dutch-Chinese relationship 1600-1978

Two major factors that have been continued to shape relations between Europeans and Chinese down to the present [...]. The first is the tyranny of distance, which has partially overcome by modern technology and transportation. The second is the primacy of trade as the main conduit for and substance of their relationship.⁶⁷

Within the field of international relations between states, historical relations usually have great influence on the current bilateral relationship between states. Karen Mingst points out in a handbook for students of international relations that history provides the crucial background to the study of international relations.⁶⁸ It seems hard to forget historical happenings, especially if they are considered to be negative, such as war and political crises. For example, it is not possible to understand the current relationship between North and South Korea if the war of the 1950's is not taken into account; the same can be said about the bilateral relationship between India and Pakistan. The relationship between the Netherlands and Suriname or Indonesia cannot fully be understood if the colonial period is neglected. As Mingst stated, in every bilateral relationship, history plays a crucial role. Therefore, it is important to look into the Dutch-Chinese relationship prior to 1978. The foundation of the Dutch-Chinese relationship between 1978 and 1999 is based on the relations and agreements made in the period between 1945 and 1978.

To be able to put the Dutch-Chinese relations in the right context, this chapter deals with the historical relations between the Netherlands and China prior to 1978. This chapter is split up in three sections. The first part focuses on the Dutch relationship with China from the first contact between the two states and the foundation of the Dutch monarchy in 1813. The second section deals with the Dutch-Chinese relationship between 1813 and the Second World War. The third section gives some insights in the period after the Second World War up to 1978 and is more detailed than the first two chapters due to the fact that the period after the Second World War is of greater importance to the timeframe in this research.

⁶⁷ M. Yahuda, 'The Sino-European encounter, Historical influences on contemporary relations', in Shambaugh, D., Sandschneider, E., Hong, Z. (eds.) *China-Europe Relations, Perceptions, policies and prospects* (London 2008), 13.

⁶⁸ K.A. Mingst, *Essentials of International Relations* (New York, 2004) 4-5.

3.1 The Dutch East Indian Company

The first contacts between China and Europe go back to ancient European times. Those contacts, however, were always indirect. After the Spanish and the Portuguese sailed directly to China in the 16th century, the Dutch were the third European state that came in direct contact with China in the early 17th century.⁶⁹

The main reason the Dutch had to sail to Asia was trade and profit. When in 1602 the Dutch East Indian Company was founded, one of the objectives was to take over the Chinese Trade in the Asian waters.⁷⁰ The local Chinese were interested in trade with the Dutch, but to do so, the Dutch needed permission from the Chinese emperor. The Chinese saw themselves as the center of the world and thought that all nations around should bring tribute to the Chinese emperor. In 1607, the Dutch merchants brought tribute to the Chinese emperor, but were not successful in their attempt to get access to the Chinese market. In 1622, they tried to get access violently via an attack on Macau. This attempt failed and in 1624 the Dutch settled down on Formosa, currently Taiwan.⁷¹ From the fortress Zeelandia they slowly gained more control over the trade with China with the help of the Chinese Admiral Cheng Ch'eng-Kung, who fought for the Ming Dynasty during the internal struggle in China that led to the replacement of the Ming dynasty by the Qing Dynasty. The Dutch started to colonize Formosa. Because of the trade and the internal struggles on the mainland, many Chinese from Fujian immigrated to Formosa. The Dutch became allies with the new Qing Dynasty and after 38 years on Formosa, the Dutch were forced to leave Formosa in 1662 due to attacks from their former ally Admiral Cheng Ch'eng-Kung. The Dutch sent different missions to Beijing to bring tribute to the Chinese emperor, but all failed.⁷² It took them until 1717 to open their first trade company in China. Nevertheless, the Dutch East Indian Company gave space to the Chinese who immigrated to Java and the Portuguese who were living in Macau to trade with China for them.

In the period between 1690 and 1728, the Dutch did not send any ships themselves

⁶⁹ K. van IJken, *De historische betrekkingen tussen Nederland en China*, (Den Haag, 1999), 2-3 Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Dienst Documentaire Informatievoorziening.

⁷⁰ Houweling, 'Dutch-Chinese Bilateral Relations', 6-7.

⁷¹ Blussé, Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 50-55.

⁷² Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak*, 22-26.

to China to trade.⁷³ In the period 1734-1756 the Dutch trade on China was organized from Batavia while from 1756 the ships that sailed to China departed directly from Holland. Due to the Seven Years War and the American War of Independence, the Dutch trade on China did not go smoothly in the second half of the 18th century. With the collapse of the Dutch East Indian Company and the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, the Dutch were not able to trade with China anymore.⁷⁴

The Dutch had neither direct political relations with the Chinese government nor a permanent political mission in China in the first two centuries they had first contact with the Chinese. The missions sent to Beijing to bring tribute did not persuade the emperor to grant the Dutch with what they wanted: free access to the Chinese markets. The contacts between the Dutch and the Chinese went via the Dutch East Indian Company. Some smaller successes excluded, the Dutch did not succeed in controlling the Dutch-Chinese trade, but were able to profit from the trade on China via the Chinese immigrants on Formosa and later on Java. Due to the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era, the Dutch temporary lost control over their colonies in the East.

3.2 Dutch-Chinese relations 1813-1945

The Napoleonic Wars in Europe and the occupation of the Netherlands by France made it impossible for the Dutch to coordinate and control their colonies in the East. With the first abdication of Napoleon and the return of Willem I, who became King of the Netherlands, the Dutch tried to gain control over their colonies and to reopen the trade with China.⁷⁵ The first Dutch ships arrived in Canton in 1815. The important position the Dutch had before the Napoleonic era in the trade in Chinese tea could not be recaptured. In 1824, the Dutch Trade Company (Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij, NHM) was founded to improve Dutch trade overseas and in 1825, the first Dutch consul in China, Mr. Bletterman, was appointed.⁷⁶ Due to the fear that the Chinese also wanted to appoint a Chinese consul in Batavia, the Dutch

⁷³ IJken, *De historische betrekkingen tussen Nederland en China*, 11.

⁷⁴ Blussé, L., Luyn, F.J., *China en de Nederlanders*, 128-131. See also: IJken, *De historische betrekkingen tussen Nederland en China*, 13.

⁷⁵ Horst, H. van der, *Nederland, De vaderlandse geschiedenis van de pre-historie tot nu* (Amsterdam 2002), 284-294. See also: Alterna, B. Lente, D. van, *Vrijheid en Rede, Geschiedenis van Westerse samenlevingen 1750-1989* (Hilversum 2003) 133-144.

⁷⁶ IJken, *De historische betrekkingen tussen Nederland en China*, 16.

decided in 1938 to change the name of the consul into 'Dutch Commercial Agent'.⁷⁷

The Dutch did not participate in the Opium Wars in China and unlike most Western states, the Netherlands did not sign a trade agreement with China after the first Opium War. Instead, the Dutch sent a mission to investigate the options for a good trade agreement in 1843, but it took till 1863 for the first trade agreement between the Netherlands and China was signed. In 1872, the first Dutch consul in Shanghai was appointed. In the same year that the Dutch signed the first trade agreement with China, the Netherlands abolished slavery officially. The Dutch needed labor and in the last quarter of the 19th century, the Dutch-Chinese relationship was centralized around the recruitment of Chinese contract laborers.⁷⁸ In 1880, the Dutch consul moved his residence to Beijing on his own initiative. The Dutch government also appointed consuls in other Chinese coastal cities such as Hongkong in 1895.⁷⁹

In 1897, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs rejected a plan of minister-resident Knobel to declare that Swatow was Dutch territory. The Netherlands took a neutral position towards China. Dutch policy towards China was based on the Dutch economic and colonial interests in the region. China was weakened by internal problems. During the Boxer Rebellion, among other foreign delegations, the Dutch diplomatic delegation in Beijing was kept hostage for 54 days.⁸⁰ In 1901, an agreement between the Dutch and Chinese government was signed which stated that China would pay for the damage that was caused during the Boxer Rebellion. Compared to most Western nations that signed an agreement with China, the Netherlands got a relatively large amount of money back from the Chinese.

Due to the outbreak of the First World War, the period of international free trade came to an end in the period 1913-1914. Europe, including the Netherlands, was more focused on the happenings on the European continent than on other places in the world. The unlimited u-boat war of the German Navy made international trade for the neutral Dutch almost impossible. General Chang Xun sought refuge in the Dutch consulate in Beijing in 1917. The general was one of the last loyalists to the Manchurian cause. He fled to the Dutch consulate after a failed coup d'état. He was a guest in the Dutch consulate for one-

⁷⁷ Nederlandsch Commercieel Agentschap in China

⁷⁸ IJken, *De historische betrekkingen tussen Nederland en China*, 17.

⁷⁹ Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak*, 40-41.

⁸⁰ Blussé, L., Luyn, F.J., *China en de Nederlanders*, 161.

and-a-half years.⁸¹

After the First World War, most European powers were occupied with rebuilding their country and restricting Germany. In the Netherlands, the policy towards China wasn't changed. Improving the commercial relations with China was the priority within the Dutch foreign policy towards China.

In 1926, the Dutch government proposed to the Chinese government to reinvest the money in China. They proposed a water management study on the Yellow River, with a Dutch engineer leading the study. The turmoil in China in the 1920s made it hard to come to an agreement, but in 1933 the Dutch and Chinese government reached an agreement. 65% of the money would be put into development projects and 35% in cultural exchange between the Netherlands and China.⁸²

From the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century onwards, more and more Dutch companies gained access to the Chinese market. The Dutch were involved in the construction of new waterways and some Dutch companies moved to China, such as Philips, Koninklijke Olie, later named Shell, two Dutch banks and Dutch shipping companies.⁸³ In 1931, the Netherlands was the 7th largest foreign investor in China.

The Dutch and Chinese government signed an agreement in 1911 that allowed China to station a consul in the Dutch Indies. Dutch involvement is also found in the creation of the Chinese Communist Party. Henk Sneevliet, alias Maring or Ma Lin, was sent by the Comintern of 1920, held in Moscow to help the Chinese to create their own Communist Party. He was present in 1921 when the Communist Party of China was founded. Even until today, he is seen as an important foreign advisor.⁸⁴

After the Napoleonic era, the Dutch tried to re-establish their position in China again. Even with the foundation of a new Dutch trade company, they did not succeed. The first official trade agreements were signed between the Dutch and the Chinese. Most agreements focus on Dutch access to Chinese markets. The Dutch could finally profit as the large European powers granted themselves access to the Chinese markets by political

⁸¹ IJken, *De historische betrekkingen tussen Nederland en China*, 26.

⁸² Ibid, 24.

⁸³ Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak*, 42-48.

⁸⁴ Blussé, L., Luyn, F.J., *China en de Nederlanders*, 175-178.

pressure and military force. Many Dutch companies settled in China. The Japanese invasion and the internal chaos in China led to an unstable situation in China.

3.3 Dutch Chinese relations 1945-1978

After the Japanese surrender in 1945, the Dutch East Indies claimed independence. The Dutch government tries to get control over the Dutch East Indies via so called 'police actions'⁸⁵. Under American pressure, the Dutch retreated and granted independence to Indonesia in 1949. In the same year, the Communist Party seized power after a civil war and proclaimed the People's Republic of China. Most Dutch companies retreated or operated on a very low scale during the Second World War and the period of turmoil after. With the installation of the People's Republic, China closed itself to the Western World.⁸⁶ The nationalistic Kuomintang, under command of Chiang Kai-shek, was an ally of the Netherlands in the battle against the Japanese in the Second World War. After the proclamation of the People's Republic of China, the nationalists fled to Taiwan which they hold and claim till today.

In March 1950, the Dutch were one of the first to recognize the new communistic Government of the People's Republic of China. The Dutch representative in Beijing Mr. Vixseboxe wrote:

"Acting upon instructions received from my Government, I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that the Netherlands Government has as from to-day, recognized the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China as the jure government of China."⁸⁷

At the same time, the Dutch withdrew their recognition of the Kuomintang Government.⁸⁸ The official reason the Dutch gave was that the Communist Party controlled most of the Chinese territory and that it would like to keep a dialog with the new government in China, mainly for economic purposes. The real reason might lie with the threat of expropriations of

⁸⁵ Military invasions and operations to keep order in the Dutch East Indies. They were called 'police actions' to suggest that the Indonesian Rebellion was a internal matter.

⁸⁶ Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak*, 55-56.

⁸⁷ *Nota van Erkenning van de Centrale Volksvertegenwoordiging van de Chinese Volksrepubliek*, delivered on the 28th of March 1950 by the Dutch representative in Beijing on the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁸⁸ *Note verbale inzake de erkenning van de Centrale Volksregering van de Chinese Volksrepubliek*, delivered on the 27th of March 1950 to the Ambassador of the Chinese Nationalistic Government in the Netherlands.

Dutch properties.⁸⁹ Houweling, however, states that the Dutch were quite late in recognizing the new Chinese Government, four months after Great Britain. According to Houweling, the Dutch wanted the Chinese to recognize the United States of Indonesia, a federal construction that opposed the Republican Government in Jakarta. With Chinese recognition of the United States of Indonesia, the Dutch could have had more influence in the former Dutch East Indies.⁹⁰

Because the United States, the most important ally of the Netherlands in the 1950s, did not recognize the Communist Party as legal government, the Dutch did not support China in their attempt to get a seat in the United Nations. The UN charter states that a country can only be represented in the UN by one delegation. The seat of China was taken by the Nationalistic Government of Taiwan.⁹¹ Due to this conflict and the Dutch participation in the Korean War (1950-1953), the Dutch relationship with the new Chinese Government was not warm. The official letter that proclaimed the recognition of the People's Republic of China also contained a wish to start negotiations to exchange ambassadors⁹², but it took till 1954, a calmer period in the Cold War, to exchange Chargé d'Affaires between China and the Netherlands.⁹³

The Chinese market was officially closed to foreign companies and the Chinese Government was creating an autarkic economic system. In the beginning of the 1950s, Dutch companies had their offices in hotel rooms, trying to do some small scale business. The first international trade fair was held in 1957 in Guangzhou. Dutch companies delivered dairy, fertilizer and, in the 1960s, also a few dredgers to China. The first large trade mission to China after the foundation of the People's Republic of China was led by the Executive of Unilever Mr. Van den Bergh in 1964.⁹⁴

The Dutch relationship, however, was still not very warm, partly because of the Dutch "two China policy" in which the Netherlands did not fully support one of either China's on all international levels. Another reason is caused by the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and

⁸⁹ IJken, *De historische betrekkingen tussen Nederland en China*, 28. See also Hoofdafdeling Onderzoek en Documentatie, Bureau Onderzoek, *De factor Taiwan in de Nederlands-Chinese betrekkingen* (1982), 3.

⁹⁰ Houweling, 'Dutch-Chinese Bilateral Relations', 9-10.

⁹¹ *De factor Taiwan in de Nederlands-Chinese betrekkingen* (1982), Publication of Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Dienst Documentaire Informatievoorziening, 3.

⁹² *Nota van Erkenning van de Centrale Volksvertegenwoordiging van de Chinese Volksrepubliek*.

⁹³ IJken, *De historische betrekkingen tussen Nederland en China*, 28.

⁹⁴ Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak*, 64.

the Chinese autarkic and communist economy, which clashed with the Western ideas of trade and capitalist economy.⁹⁵

In 1966, some Chinese welders participated in a congress in Delft. When one of them tried to climb out of a window on the third floor and fell down, a political crisis was born. The wounded Chinese welder was taken to a Dutch hospital, but shortly after was abducted by some of his countrymen and brought to the Chinese Embassy where he died. The Chinese accused him of having contacts with the CIA, while the Dutch Intelligence Agency, the BVD, also had its suspicions towards the deceased welder. They believed he was a rocket engineer. After the incident, the Dutch expelled the Chinese Chargé d’Affaires, after which the Chinese did the same to the Dutch Chargé d’Affaires Mr. Jongejans. It took till 1968 for the relations to improve and the problems caused by the incident were solved.⁹⁶ When in 1969 the Dutch government granted asylum to the Chinese Chargé d’Affaires, the Chinese requested extradition of their Chargé d’Affaires. The refusal of the Dutch government to hand him over did however not damage the relationship because Beijing did not value this issue as important enough to harm the relationship. Besides that, China did not want to create a crisis around this issue; it might inspire other Chinese representatives oversea.⁹⁷

The preparations of Henry Kissinger and the visit of the American president Nixon to China in 1972 was a breakthrough in the Chinese-American relations. Up until that point, the United States had always had good relations with Taiwan. It had always tried to block the accession of the Peoples Republic of China and expulsion of Taiwan in the United Nations.⁹⁸ While the United States still went for ‘dual representation’, the Netherlands voted in favor of a resolution that expelled Taiwan from the United Nations and welcomed the People’s Republic into the United Nations. The Dutch hoped Taiwan would give up its claim to the rest of China, which would allow the Taiwanese to be part of the United Nations again.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ A.C. van der Zwam, *De geschiedenis van de Nederlandse consultaire vertegenwoordiging te Hongkong*, 60. Bureau Onderzoek Dienst Documentaire Informatievoorziening (DDI/ON), Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Den Haag, 1996.

⁹⁶ IJken, *De historische betrekkingen tussen Nederland en China*, 29. see also: Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak*, 64-67. And see also: Blussé, L., Luyn, F.J., *China en de Nederlanders*, 201-202.

⁹⁷ IJken, *De historische betrekkingen tussen Nederland en China*, 29.

⁹⁸ J. Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect, Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (Oxford/New York, 2004) 117-153,

⁹⁹ *De factor Taiwan in de Nederlands-Chinese betrekkingen* (1982), Publication of Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Dienst Documentaire Informatievoorziening, 6-7.

In 1971, the Dutch had started negotiations with China. In line with many other Western countries like the United Kingdom and Canada, the negotiations in 1972 led to an important agreement on which further relations would be built. The most important part of this agreement lies in the way both nations dealt with Taiwan:

“The Chinese Government reaffirms that Taiwan is a province of the People’s Republic of China. The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands respects this stand of the Chinese Government and reaffirms that it recognizes the Government of the People’s Republic of China as the sole legal Government of China.”¹⁰⁰

The agreement led to the exchange of Ambassadors between the Netherlands and China in 1972. The relationship between the Netherlands and China had improved much. In 1977, The Dutch Prince Claus and Crown Princess Beatrix visited China. Nevertheless, the Dutch government kept refusing to break fully with Taiwan, as the Chinese government wanted them to do, mainly because the Dutch kept their economic interest in Taiwan during the economic downfall of the 1970s in the Western world and the economic rise of Taiwan.¹⁰¹

In sum, after the Second World War and the foundation of the People’s Republic of China by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949, the Dutch-Chinese relations were worse than ever. The Dutch recognition of the Communist leaders in Beijing as the *de jure* government of China did not lead to the improvement of the relationship between both countries. The Cold War, different ways of organizing government and economy, different interests and allies and crises like the welders incident in Delft caused difficulties in the Dutch-Chinese relationship. Due to changes in international politics in 1972, this changed and the relationship improved rapidly in the years after. The Chinese leader Mao Tse Dong died in 1976. He was succeeded by Deng Xiao Ping after an internal struggle. The new leader of China turned more towards the west and opened Special Economic Zones in which the Chinese and mainly westerners can do business with each other.

¹⁰⁰ Communiqué van 16 mei 1972 inzake de betrekkingen tussen het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden en de Volksrepubliek China.

¹⁰¹ Houweling, ‘Dutch-Chinese Bilateral Relations’, 14-15. See also: IJken, *De historische betrekkingen tussen Nederland en China*, 30.

Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the Dutch-Chinese historical relations between the 1600s to 1978. The historical background is crucial to the study of international relations. To be able to understand the bilateral relationship between the Netherlands and China, it is of great importance to understand its history prior to the timeframe of this research. The first two sections gave a brief overview, while the third section, the period between 1945 and 1978, is of great influence on the relationship after 1978. The foundation of the Dutch-Chinese relationship between 1978 and 1999 was created after the Second World War. Below, a short concluding summary of this chapter is given.

In the early days of the 17th century, the Dutch sailed to China. Their main purpose was to do business. The Chinese government did not grant the Dutch access to their markets. Most attempts, sometimes peacefully, sometimes forceful, failed. The Dutch East Indian Company did not really get access to the Chinese markets and starts trading via Chinese migrants in Batavia and on Formosa. The Dutch had a good share in the tea trade until the beginning of the 19th century. During the period of turmoil in Europe till around 1815, the Dutch lost control over their colonies in Asia.

After the Napoleonic era, the Dutch tried to get control over their trade on China, but they did not succeed. It took until the second half of the 19th century, before formal relations between the Dutch and China were established after other Western states broke China open. In the same period, Dutch companies, other than trade companies, also start gaining interest in China. Up until the Second World War, many large Western companies opened branches in China.

The foundation of the Communist People's Republic of China in 1949 downgraded the relations between China and the Netherlands. The Dutch recognized the newly founded republic in 1950, but it took till 1954 for the first Chargé d'Affaires to be exchanged. Due to changes in international politics the Netherlands and China were able to come to an agreement in 1972, which led to a fast improvement of the relationship between both countries. As in 1977 some members of the Dutch Royal family visited China and China itself opened in 1978 via the installation of Special Economic Zones, and it appeared that the Dutch-Chinese bilateral relationship would have a bright future ahead.

4. Parliamentary years 1977-1981: The First Submarine Crisis

The [Dutch] Government had lost its Parliamentary majority in the dispute on February 3 [1981]. But Parliament in a voting on March 5, refused to draw the implication of its position when the government stuck to its decision to give the shipbuilder permission to export submarines to Taiwan; on the same day, the Dutch ambassador left Beijing for home.¹⁰²

When the Dutch and Chinese exchanged Ambassadors in 1972 and the relations improved rapidly in the years after, it seemed at that time that the Dutch-Chinese relationship would have a bright future ahead. It took however only several years before a new political crisis between the Netherlands and China was born. This chapter is the first chapter in this thesis that centres around a political crisis. The following three chapters will also deal with other political crises that occurred between the Netherlands and China between 1978 and 1999. All four chapters will have a close look at both the political crises and the role of the Dutch Parliament in those crises.

This chapter will deal with the First Submarine Crisis. During this period, the Dutch-Chinese political relationship became less warm due to the decision of the Dutch government to grant a license to a Dutch company to export submarines to Taiwan. The Chinese government saw Taiwan as a province of mainland China and would not accept a third party to export military material to this rebellious province. China therefore downgraded the Dutch-Chinese relationship from Ambassadors level to the level of Chargé d’Affairs. Within Dutch political history, this period became famous under the name of “the First Submarine Crisis”.

The first section of this chapter will describe the situation in the period after the visit of the Dutch royal couple in 1977 towards the First Submarine Crisis and the second section will deal with the First Submarine Crisis and its consequences. This chapter will end with a conclusion in which the role of the Dutch Parliament in the First Submarine Crisis will be

¹⁰² Houweling, ‘Dutch-Chinese Bilateral Relations’, 16.

examined.

4.1 Improving bilateral relations

The political change in China in the second half of the 1970s did not go unnoticed in the Netherlands. Mao Zedong's death and the political change that followed offered opportunities for Dutch companies. China opened its doors for the rest of the world with the installation of so called Special Economic Zones. In those zones, non-Chinese companies were allowed to work together with Chinese companies and do business under Chinese control. According to Van der Heijden the Dutch multinationals were quite sceptical in the beginning. She continues, stating that the Chinese export in the first years after 1978 was merely organized by the Chinese diaspora.¹⁰³ In the academic world there has been attention paid to this transition in China, but the questions raised are centred on whether or not the transition in China would develop in a successful way. The critical approach of the academic world and the multinationals can be understood due to the political instability and the weak world economy in the second half of the 1970s. If we look back however, China's share in the world economy increased substantially, due to the economic reforms.¹⁰⁴

The huge potential of China for the Dutch private sector was recognized in Dutch politics and the Dutch government wanted to improve its relations with China, especially economic relations. The Dutch Cabinet, supported in Parliament by the Christian Democratic Party (CDA) and the Liberal Party (VVD), came to power after a long formation period. Due to the weak economic situation in the Western world, the Cabinet had to deal with many social and economic issues such as growing unemployment.¹⁰⁵ The Cabinet saw the opening of China to the rest of the world as one of the potential solutions for the Dutch economic problems. In the longer run, the view in the Dutch politics was that China would develop itself into a super power. In the First Chamber, Broeks (PvdA) stated that in 1980 the widely shared vision in Parliament that China would become a military super power in about 25 years, together with Japan and the two already existing super powers, the United States of

¹⁰³ Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak*, 81-82, 85.

¹⁰⁴ W. Keller, B. Li, C.H. Shiue, *China's Foreign Trade: Perspectives From the Past 150 Years*, in: CEPR Discussion Paper No. 8118 (2010) 32-33.

¹⁰⁵ www.parlement.com (28-07-2011).

America and the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁶

Many government officials, members of the Cabinet and members of Parliament visited China in the period 1978-1980. Chinese officials also visited the Netherlands. It would be impossible to mention all of the occasions. The following examples will make it clear that many different officials and topics are involved in those visits. In November 1978, Member of Parliament Van Dijk (CDA) showed his interest in the visit to China from the Minister of Foreign Affairs Van der Klaauw and Secretary of State Beyen for Economic Affairs.¹⁰⁷ Secretary of State Kraaijeveld visited China in 1980 with a group of Dutch women, after a visit of a Chinese delegation of women in 1979. The most important topic discussed during those visits is the emancipation of women.¹⁰⁸ In 1980 Prime Minister Van Agt and Minister of Foreign Affairs Van der Klaauw visited China.¹⁰⁹ A visit that is later discussed often in the First Submarine Crisis. This will be discussed later in the following section 4.2.

China was much discussed in the Dutch Parliament. Most important for Parliament was the economic relation with China. For example, the Dutch government asked approval from the Dutch Parliament on a bilateral agreement between the Netherlands and China about civil aviation that made it possible for KLM to open a direct route on Chinese cities.¹¹⁰ Parliament shows its interest not only from a Dutch perspective, but also from a European perspective. Parliamentarians asked questions about the new agreements on the trade in textile between the European Economic Community and China.¹¹¹ Furthermore, a creation of a European-Chinese platform to discuss economic cooperation and international trade between China and the European Union also caught the attention of Dutch Parliamentarians.

Besides economic relations, the Dutch politics had also other interests in China. The Dutch government also wanted to improve the educational and scientific relations with

¹⁰⁶ Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal, *Stenografisch verslag van het gesprokene in de Bijeenkomst van de Eerste Kamer, welke op 15 september 1980 is gehouden, voorafgaande aan de Verenigde Vergadering tot sluiting van de zitting 1979-1980* (28-01-1981) 1123.

¹⁰⁷ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Vaste Commissie voor de Handelspolitiek, 1^e vergadering (06-11-1978), 3.

¹⁰⁸ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, *42e vergadering* (28-01-1981) 2612, 2752.

¹⁰⁹ Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak*, 81.

¹¹⁰ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Zitting 1979-1980, 16 291 A-C.

¹¹¹ See for example, Tweede Kamer, zitting 1979-1980, 15 800 hoofdstuk XIII no. 2. Or Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Vaste Commissie voor Buitenlandse Zaken, *3e vergadering* (27-08-1979).

China. The Government informed Parliament about the exchange of Dutch and Chinese academics and students.¹¹²

Many Members of Parliament expressed their concern about the Soviet-Chinese relations. The tension between both communist nations and the opening to the world of China and its liberalization offered chances for the West, but caused trouble in the relations between China and the Soviet Union. Closely linked to this topic were the Dutch weapon export and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Parliament stated that neither the Netherlands nor the European Community should be involved in raising tensions on the disputed border between China the Soviet Union.¹¹³

From the Parliamentary debates, it becomes clear that most information about China that is in the possession of Dutch Parliamentarians is provided by the Dutch government. Sometimes as regular reports about diplomatic missions or as attachment of the yearly budget plan¹¹⁴ and sometimes as an answer on direct questions from Parliament itself. It can be concluded that Parliament is poorly informed about the situation in China or about the Dutch-Chinese relationship. Besides the information provided by the government, Parliamentarians refer mostly to academics. However, usually not to academic journals, but to academics who express their opinion in the media. Baehr concluded in 1978 that there is limited contact between the members of different groups in the Dutch foreign policy elite.¹¹⁵ The references of the Dutch Parliamentarians in the period 1978-1981 seem to confirm this conclusion.

As described in chapter two in this thesis, Voorhoeve stated that the Dutch foreign policy can be split up in three fields of interest: *Peace, Profits and Principles*.¹¹⁶ The third element is hardly an issue for the Dutch Parliament in the period 1978-1981. The report from the Dutch government on human rights in Dutch foreign politics contains 172 pages, but does not mention China one single time.¹¹⁷ Although some Parliamentarians asked the

¹¹² Tweede Kamer, Zitting 1977-1978, 14 801, no. 5-6, 148. See also: Tweede Kamer, Zitting 1978-1979, 15 300 Hoofdstuk VIII, no. 2, 176. See also: Tweede Kamer, Zitting 1978-1979, 14 206, no. 6, 15.

¹¹³ See for example: Tweede Kamer, Zitting 1978-1979, 15 300 Hoofdstuk X, no. 131.

¹¹⁴ See for example: Tweede Kamer, Zitting 1979-1980, 15 800 Hoofdstuk XII, no. 2.

¹¹⁵ Baehr, 'Communicatie tussen elites als voorwaarde voor democratische controle op het buitenlands beleid', 166-167.

¹¹⁶ Voorhoeve, *Peace, Profits and Principles*.

¹¹⁷ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, zitting 1978-1979, 15 571 no. 2.

Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs about the human rights situation in China when he returned from a meeting with the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs,¹¹⁸ it is clear that for the Dutch Parliament good economic relations with China are far more important than the human rights situation in China in the period 1978-1981.

Just before the start of the First Submarine Crisis, a Member of Parliament Rietkerk (VVD) pointed out that he was pleased by the improved relations between the Netherlands and China.¹¹⁹ However, criticism was also heard in both Chambers of the Dutch Parliament. Broeks (PvdA) for example, criticised China on its behaviour in Tibet and Van der Jagt (GPV) stated in 1980 that all expectations about orders from China for the Dutch private sector were wrong assumptions.¹²⁰

China was discussed often in the Dutch Parliament in the period 1978-1981. This can be explained from different angles. First of all, China is one of the largest countries on earth. Furthermore, China was at the beginning of a political and economic transition in the period 1978-1981, which causes changes in international politics. Due to the new more liberal politics, there was a new potential market for the Dutch private sector. The Dutch government and Parliament wanted to improve the relations with China in different fields. The main field was however the field of economic relations. Many Dutch officials, Members of Parliament and members of the Cabinet visited China and received visitors from China. Within Parliament, many topics regarding China are discussed, such as China's role in the world system, weapon export to China, relations between educational institutions, economic relations and developmental projects in China. In 1978, Parliament was quite positive about the potentials for the Dutch private sector in China, however in 1980, this optimism was tempered. The Chinese government cancelled projects of Western companies due to financial problems. Nevertheless, a good bilateral relationship with China was seen as important by both the Dutch government and Parliament at the beginning of the First Submarine Crisis. This political crisis will be the subject of the next section.

4.2 First Submarine Crisis

¹¹⁸ See: Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 47^e vergadering (08-02-1979).

¹¹⁹ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 4^e vergadering (07-10-1980), 138.

¹²⁰ Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 24^e vergadering (27-05-1980), 755, 767.

In 1980, China put many projects on Chinese soil in which non-Chinese companies were involved on hold. There was disappointment in the Dutch private sector and in Dutch politics. Nevertheless, the reason why the Chinese put those projects on hold, namely financial problems, was understandable. Both the Dutch private sector and the Dutch politics shared the view that China would be an interesting growth market in the long term. From both the Dutch and the Chinese side, there was still the will to work together. The Dutch wanted orders from China, especially in a period of economic difficulties. The unemployment rate was growing and many Dutch companies had trouble surviving in the bad economic situation of the late 1970s and early 1980s.¹²¹ This was the situation in the Netherlands in 1980, just before the start of the First Submarine Crisis.

The political situation between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan was hostile in 1980. Both Taiwan and the People's Republic of China claimed to be the de jure government over the whole of China, including Taiwan. From the 1970s onwards, Taiwan lost political influence while China won international political influence. In 1971, China took over the seat from Taiwan in the United Nations to represent the Chinese people and in 1972 China and the United States of America became closer. China and the United States formalized their relations in 1979 and the United States canceled its defense treaty with Taiwan and promised China they would not deliver any offensive military material to Taiwan anymore.¹²² Taiwan became more and more politically isolated from the rest of the world. Since no violent events happened after 1967 China started to demilitarize its forces in the Chinese province of Fujian, just across the Strait of Formosa. With Mao Zedong gone, Deng Xiao Ping aimed at a quick and peaceful reunion of China and Taiwan.¹²³

Due to the political isolation and the cancellation of the defense treaty with the United States, Taiwan saw itself forced to look for other suppliers of military material. Although the American Taiwan Relations Act makes it possible for the United States to export defensive weapons to Taiwan, it cannot export offensive weaponry to Taiwan.

¹²¹ H. van der Horst, *Nederland, De vaderlandse geschiedenis van de prehistorie tot nu* (Amsterdam 2002), 566-567. See also: Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Zitting 1980-1981, 16 400, hoofdstuk XIII nr 2, 177-178.

¹²² Hellema, *Nederland in de wereld: buitenlandse politiek van Nederland* (Houten 2010), 339.

¹²³ Colijn, K., Rusman, P., 'Onderzeeboten voor Taiwan', in: Colijn, K., Kerstens, B. Marle, Y. van, May, L. van der, Rusman, P., *De Nederlandse wapenexport, Beleid en praktijk, Indonesië, Iran, Taiwan* (Den Haag 1984), 99-104. See also: Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Dienst Documentaire Informatievoorziening, *De factor Taiwan in de Nederlands-Chinese betrekkingen* (Den Haag, 1982), 8-9.

Therefore, Taiwan tried to place orders in Germany and in France, but also in the Netherlands. Because official political relations did not exist anymore between the Netherlands and the 'Republic of China', Taiwan approached the Netherlands carefully.

The first contacts between Taiwan and the Dutch company RSV (Rijn-Schelde-Verolme Corporation), that was going to build the submarines for Taiwan in a later stage of history, were made in 1978. Taiwan wanted RSV to export a hundred German F-104G Starfighters because Germany did not want to risk its good relations with China. RSV, however, did also not get an export license for the Starfighters.¹²⁴ The Netherlands also did not want to risk their good relations with China.

RSV was created via different mergers from Dutch shipbuilding companies in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They were merged under great pressure from the Dutch Minister of Economic Affairs and subsidized heavily. In an attempt to save the Dutch ship building industry from heavy international competition, the Dutch government invested around 1 billion dollar over the years. In the early years of the merger it seemed the company would have a good chance of survival, but the international competition and the oil crisis created huge problems for RSV, it did not get enough orders to be sustainable. In the late 1970 and early 1980s, it became clear that the integration failed. Due to a lack of orders, RSV would build ships for anyone to prevent bankruptcy. The company was therefore an easy prey for Taiwan in its search for navy ships.¹²⁵

Colijn and Rusman give a good description of how the Dutch Parliament and government were informed. They confirmed what Baehr and others concluded before. Within foreign policy making, it is difficult for Parliament to inform itself about a situation. Parliament's resources are limited. Besides that, there was not much contact between the different groups in the Dutch foreign policy elite.¹²⁶

In the beginning of 1980 Taiwan approached RSV again, now it wanted to purchase two *Sea Dragon* submarines from the *Zwaardvis*-class. The order was linked to an order from

¹²⁴ Colijn, Rusman, 'Onderzeeboten voor Taiwan', 112-113.

¹²⁵ www.parlement.com

¹²⁶ See for example: Baehr, 'Communicatie tussen elites als voorwaarde voor democratische controle op het buitenlands beleid', 166-167. Or see: Roschar, 'Een structureel model van de Nederlandse buitenlands-politieke elite. Or see: J.G. Brouwer, 'Het parlementaire lek in de goedkeuringsregeling verdragen' in: Brouwer, J.G., Jong, H.G. de, Besselink, L.F.M., *Parlement en Buitenlands beleid* (Zwolle 1993)34-35.

non-military products. A RSV-negotiator informed one of his personal relations at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs informally, who responded with the words: “Over my dead body”.¹²⁷ RSV showed its interest and in April 1980, there was a ‘letter of intent’. Knowing that it could lead to a rejection of the required export license from the Dutch government due to the good Dutch-Chinese relationship, RSV officials picked carefully which governmental officials from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economic Affairs they informed. After the signing of the first protocol in August 1980, Dutch Members of Parliament who are expected to be in favor of the export of submarines to Taiwan were also carefully selected and informed confidentially. Nevertheless, the planning was not executed perfectly by RSV. Some Members of Parliament claimed to be informed by their colleagues. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Van der Klaauw was purposefully kept out of the loop as long as possible, but after reconstruction, he was informed by one of the Members of Parliament.¹²⁸ Most faction leaders in the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament were informed, as well as most faction specialists in the field of foreign policy, sometimes directly by RSV officials, sometimes by other Members of Parliament. Some members were kept out of the loop; others did not know from each other that they were also informed confidentially. D’66 was not informed at all, something that RSV saw later as a blunder.¹²⁹ In the debates in Parliament, it became clear that most Members of Parliament did not discuss the way they were informed publically.¹³⁰

The relatively close ties between the Dutch government, Parliament and government officials on one side and RSV on the other side was created via the heavy subsidy that the Dutch government provided to RSV. On the other hand, Dutch Parliamentarians are relatively easy to approach for RSV employees and others in general, compared to, for example, American members of Congress.

Within the Dutch Cabinet, the Minister of Economic Affairs Van Aardenne was in favor of the export license because the order would have a positive economic effect. RSV would be rescued from bankruptcy and the order guaranteed a lot of employment. The

¹²⁷ Colijn, Rusman, ‘Onderzeeboten voor Taiwan’, 114.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 114-115.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 118-120.

¹³⁰ See: Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 35^e vergadering, (16-01-1980) and: Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 43^e vergadering (29-01-1981) and: Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 55^e vergadering (26-02-1981).

Minister of Foreign Affairs Van der Klaauw, however, was against the export license, due to the fact that it would seriously damage the Dutch relationship with China. The matter was taken so seriously that both ministers threatened the Cabinet they would resign if the Cabinet did not decide as they wished.¹³¹ Nevertheless, Van Aardenne was able to overrule Van der Klaauw in the Cabinet. Both Ministers stayed in office. Van der Klaauw was considered a good diplomat when he worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Being its minister, he was less successful.¹³²

On 12 November 1980, the committees for Foreign Affairs and Economic Affairs of the Second Chamber held a joint meeting. They were in favor of the export license, unless the relationship with China was harmed too much.¹³³ Upset about the result of the joint meeting and the way other Members of Parliament were informed, Brinkhorst (D'66) asked the government four official questions about a possible export license. Question three contained a request for information about the potential reaction of China if the export license was granted.¹³⁴ The debate continued, but not in the open in Parliament. Van der Hek (PvdA) wrote an article in *NRC Handelsblad*¹³⁵ and on the 25th there was an oral debate with the Committees of Foreign Affairs and Economic Affairs and the Ministers of both ministries. The debate had a confidential character.¹³⁶

The government made the decision to grant the export license on 28 November 1980, at the last possible moment before the optional order expired, and responded to Parliament with a letter on 8 December 1980. The government expected that China would not react very firmly and even saw chances for further economic cooperation with China.¹³⁷

Over two weeks after the decision of the Cabinet the Second Chamber had its first plenary debate.¹³⁸ The supporters of the export license were the parties in government VVD

¹³¹ G.A. van der List, *De macht van het idee, De VVD en het Nederlandse buitenlandse beleid 1948-1994* (Leiden 1995), 268, 304-307.

¹³² See for example: D. Bosscher, 'Een onwennig minister, Christolph Albert van der Klaauw', in: Hellema, D., Zeeman, B., Zwan, B. van der (eds.), *De Nederlandse ministers van Buitenlandse Zaken in de twintigste eeuw* (Den Haag 1999) 256-267.

¹³³ Colijn, Rusman, 'Onderzeeboten voor Taiwan', 122-123.

¹³⁴ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Zitting 1980-1981, Aangangsels van de handelingen 363, 725.

¹³⁵ *NRC Handelsblad*, 20 November 1980.

¹³⁶ Colijn, Rusman, 'Onderzeeboten voor Taiwan', 123.

¹³⁷ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Zitting 1980-1981, 16 520, nr 1.

¹³⁸ See: Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 35^e vergadering, (16-12-1980) 2154-2156.

and parts of the CDA faction. The most important opponents were the PvdA and D'66. According to the opposition, giving an export license for the export of submarines to Taiwan meant that the government broke with its 'one China policy' and the agreement with China from 1972. That agreement stated that the Dutch government respected China's view that Taiwan was a province of the People's Republic of China.¹³⁹

The opposition stated that by giving an export license, the government basically recognized Taiwan. The government responded that it saw Taiwan not as a state, but as a regular customer.¹⁴⁰ The supporters claimed that the trade with China was about the same size as the trade with Taiwan and that due to financial problems of the Chinese government, the trade with China did not have the potential to grow very fast in the near future.¹⁴¹

It is remarkable, however, that all members in favor of the export license were also in favor of good relations with China. Furthermore, the Minister of Foreign Affairs was not able to tell clearly how he would expect the Chinese to react. Another important argument that is used by both the opponents and the supporters of the export license is the question of whether the area between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China is a conflict zone or not. The ones in favor claim it is not a conflict zone, while the opponents state it is a conflict zone. The Netherlands does not export military goods to conflict zones. This was a widely agreed foreign policy. Furthermore, exporting military goods to conflict zones is against the Dutch law. From the debate it is clear that most Parliamentarians had no insight in the real relationship between China and Taiwan.

Different resolutions were written by the opposition. The most promising one to pass was written on 18 December 1980 by Brinkhorst (D'66). The resolution stated that the government should reconsider its decision to grant RSV an export license for the submarines because it would harm the Dutch-Chinese relationship. The resolution nearly passed; 76 Members of Parliament voted against and 74 in favor of the resolution.¹⁴² Although Parliament was far from satisfied about the process, it seemed that nothing could stop RSV to deliver the submarines to Taiwan.

2141-2165.

¹³⁹ Communiqué van 16 mei 1972 inzake de betrekkingen tussen het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden en de Volksrepubliek China.

¹⁴⁰ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 35^e vergadering, (16-12-1980) 2154-2156.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 2157.

¹⁴² Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 37^e vergadering (18-12-1980) 2314.

The Chinese ambassador in the Netherlands had, however, made clear that China would respond firmly if the Netherlands granted an export license to RSV. For China, it was a matter of principle. Exporting submarines to Taiwan was seen by the Chinese as recognizing Taiwan as an independent state and a violation of the agreement of 1972. The Chinese government did make several attempts to change the mind of the Dutch Cabinet.¹⁴³ On 2 January 1981, the Chinese threatened to downgrade the Dutch-Chinese relationship to the level of Chargé d’Affairs. When the Cabinet in 16 January 1981 decided not to withdraw the export license, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs made clear to the Dutch government that they wanted to start the negotiations to downgrade the relationship to Chargé d’Affairs.¹⁴⁴

Due to the Chinese response, which was stronger than many had predicted and due to the entanglement about the question whether the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs had mentioned the upcoming possibility of an export license for RSV to sell submarines to Taiwan during their visit in Beijing in the Autumn of 1980¹⁴⁵, Parliament decided to hold another debate about the situation in January 1981.¹⁴⁶ A second debate is remarkable as Brinkhorst (D’66) and Koekoek (BP) stated in the debate.¹⁴⁷ The debate was centralized around the opposition’s claim that the situation had changed and that therefore the export license should be withdrawn. There were also concerns that a bad relationship with China would weaken the Dutch position in the European Community. The Chinese had for example threatened to use Antwerp in Belgium as their main port to Europe instead of Rotterdam.¹⁴⁸

Parliament complained to the Minister of Foreign Affairs that it was very rude, especially in the Chinese culture, not to mention the possibility of an upcoming export license for RSV to export submarines to Taiwan.¹⁴⁹ A remarkable statement was made by Jacobse (VVD):

¹⁴³ Colijn, Rusman, ‘Onderzeeboten voor Taiwan’, 148.

¹⁴⁴ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Zitting 1980-1981, aanhangsel 684, 1331.

¹⁴⁵ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Zitting 1980-1981, 16 520, no. 7.

¹⁴⁶ See: Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 43^e vergadering, (29-01-1981) 2708-2747.

¹⁴⁷ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 43^e vergadering, (29-01-1981) 2708, 2725.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 2714.

¹⁴⁹ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Zitting 1980-1981, aanhangsel 684, 1331. See also:

“Ik beschuldig niemand in de Kamer, maar ik wil wel de ernstige vraag op tafel leggen of niet aanwijsbare, grote Nederlandse belangen in het gedrang zijn gebracht mede door het optreden van bepaalde mensen in en buiten dit parlement.”¹⁵⁰

It was clear that he meant Members of Parliament. Brinkhorst (D’66) and Van der Hek (PvdA) responded, but a clear conclusion was not made by the members of Parliament.

The most important conclusion in the second debate was made by Prime Minister Van Agt when he responded to questions of Members of Parliament:

“Het is een feit dat mijn collega’s Van der Klaauw en Van Aardenne in december met de Tweede Kamer hebben gedebatteerd over wat toen al een besluit was. Dat is correct.”¹⁵¹

As many authors stated before, one of the problems of Parliament in influencing foreign policy making is that Parliament is usually not involved in the negotiations. Parliament is most of the time only able to make decision on a very basic level: to ratify the whole agreement or to take nothing at all.¹⁵² In this case, the Prime Minister confirmed that the government had already taken a decision without a formal yes or no from Parliament.

On 3 February 1981, the Second Chamber voted in favor of a resolution from Brinkhorst (D’66) which stated that the government should withdraw the export license.¹⁵³ Several Members of Parliament from the CDA faction changed their mind and helped the resolution pass Parliament. 77 members voted in favor, 70 voted against the resolution.¹⁵⁴

The Dutch government responded on 20 February 1981 with a short letter to Parliament which stated that, due to the fact that the government had already granted the export license to RSV, they saw no legal options to withdraw the export license. Afraid that RSV would sue the government and afraid for the reputation and the trustworthiness of the

¹⁵⁰ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 43^e vergadering, (29-01-1981) 2723. [Jacobse accuses nobody personally, but he states that due to the behavior of certain ‘people’ in and outside of parliament damage is done to Dutch interests abroad.]

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 2727. [The Prime Minister points out that the debate in December was a debate about a decision that was already made.]

¹⁵² See for example: J.G. Brouwer, ‘Het parlementaire lek in de goedkeuringsregeling verdragen’ VI-VII.

¹⁵³ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Zitting 1980-1981, 16 520, nr 12.

¹⁵⁴ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 43^e vergadering, (03-02-1981) 2774-2777.

government if they changed their decision so shortly after it was taken, the government stated that it would not execute the resolution.¹⁵⁵

A third debate followed on 26 February 1981.¹⁵⁶ The central question in the debate was whether the government was legally able to withdraw the export license or not. The other arguments are centralized around the question of if the government should execute the resolution if it passed Parliament. When on 5 March 1981 Parliament voted against a resolution of Brinkhorst (D'66) and Terlouw (D'66), in which they expressed their melancholy, it became clear that both Parliament is not very strong in influencing the government in foreign policy making and that the export license and the Dutch-Chinese relationship was not important enough to send the government home and to call for elections.¹⁵⁷

China recalled its ambassador on 27 February 1981 and asked the Netherlands to do the same. On 5 March 1981, the Dutch ambassador left Beijing. On 5 May and 11 May 1981 the Chinese and Dutch embassies were downgraded to offices of Chargé d'Affairs.¹⁵⁸ The Chinese cancelled the visits of Dutch business delegations and Dutch companies in China were sanctioned, such as Shell, Martinair and Nedlloyd Hong Kong.¹⁵⁹ According to Van der Heijden, the economic damage was not that large. Companies as Philips had other reasons not to invest in China, such as political instability or economic insecurities.¹⁶⁰ Some authors, however, stated that the Netherlands had bad luck, due to the international situation. By responding so strongly to the Netherlands, China wanted to warn the United States not to get involved in internal politics, as the situation with Taiwan was seen by the Chinese.¹⁶¹

RSV wanted to sell submarines to Taiwan, for which they needed an export license from the Dutch government. RSV tried to influence the decision making by carefully selecting and informing government officials, members of Parliament and members of the Cabinet. In November 1980, the Cabinet decided to grant the export license to RSV due to the potential

¹⁵⁵ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Zitting 1980-1981, 16 520, nr 14.

¹⁵⁶ See: Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 55^e vergadering, (26-02-1981) 3501-3529.

¹⁵⁷ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 58^e vergadering, (05-03-1981) 3743-3744.

¹⁵⁸ Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Dienst Documentaire Informatievoorziening, *De factor Taiwan in de Nederlands-Chinese betrekkingen* (Den Haag, 1982), 14.

¹⁵⁹ Houweling, 'Dutch-Chinese Bilateral Relations Constant Elements in a Changing World System', 16.

¹⁶⁰ Y. van der Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak*, 88.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, 84.

benefits for the Dutch economy. Three debates in Parliament followed in the period till March 1981. In the first debate, Parliament supported the government in its decision. After a strong response from the Chinese government, Parliament changed their opinion and passed a resolution which stated that the government should withdraw the export license. The government, however, did not execute the resolution due to legal problems. A third debate followed, in which Parliament was not convincing enough to force the Cabinet to execute the resolution. At the same time, the topic was not important enough for the Dutch Parliament to demand the government to resign. In May 1981 the Dutch-Chinese relationship was downgraded to the level of Chargé d’Affairs and several Dutch companies that were operating in China were sanctioned.

Although the official reason to grant the export license to RSV was based on economic grounds, there was also a political element present. Because the government had supported RSV so heavily in the 1970s, the Dutch government did not want to see RSV go bankrupt after all their investments. The Ministry of Economic Affairs also had financial interests in RSV. The government would lose a lot of money. A bankruptcy of RSV had therefore not only economic consequences, but it could have also political consequences for parties and officials if RSV went bankrupt.

Conclusion

China was discussed often in the Dutch Parliament during the period of 1978-1981. Parliament was interested in the economic benefits that China might offer in the near future. It encouraged the government to invest in the relationship with China. Members of Parliament and Cabinet visited China to help the Dutch private sector in getting Chinese contracts and orders. The most important issues discussed in Parliament were trade agreements, the relationship between China and the European Community, educational exchanges and cooperation, developmental projects in China and China in world politics.

Nevertheless, it can be concluded that the role of the Dutch Parliament in the Dutch-Chinese bilateral relations was very remarkable in the period of 1978-1981. It could be argued that Parliament acted against the national interest of the Netherlands by allowing the government to seriously harm the Dutch-Chinese political and economic relationship. By

permitting the government to grant an export license to RSV and to withdraw that permission after a firm Chinese response, it showed that Parliament could be easily influenced. By holding a third debate and accepting the refusal of the government to withdraw the license, it showed it was not willing to use all its power. The decision making process within Parliament was unstructured and chaotic much like its outcome; Parliament was not able to uphold the renewed good relations with China any longer.

The behavior of the Dutch Parliament can best explained by the following factors. First, it can be concluded that Parliament was badly informed about China and Chinese-Taiwanese relations. Most of its information came directly from the Dutch government and some information via the media. The way the Dutch Parliament was informed was even used as a way to influence the decision making process as the example of RSV clearly shows.

Second, party politics played its role in the decision making process. The parties in power were not willing to withdraw their support for a minister or the whole Cabinet after the refusal to execute a Parliamentary resolution. Staying in power was by far more important than the execution of a single resolution.

Third, the government had invested heavily in RSV. A bankruptcy of RSV might have political consequences for parties and Ministers involved. Orders from Taiwan meant a guaranteed survival of RSV for the upcoming years and no political consequences.

Fourth, Parliament is elected by the people. The maximum length of one term in which a Member of Parliament stays in office is four years. Politicians and parties want to be reelected. They are more willing to choose sure short term profits, than unsure long term profits. In this case, the short term profits were the Taiwanese orders, the unsure long term profits was the potential Chinese market.

The Dutch Parliament was not able to influence the government much on its foreign policy towards China. In fact, it weakened its position in the foreign policy making process by accepting the refusal of the government not to execute a Parliamentarian resolution. It was not willing to use all its legal power to force the government to execute Parliaments' will. Some Members of Parliament were critical about other Members of Parliament, some were critical about the process, but publically there was no sign of any reflection on the part of Parliament itself. The Dutch Parliament did express its criticism to the government quite

clearly, but it could not find the courage to motivate the Dutch government in such a way that achieved anything.

5. Parliamentarian years 1981-1985: The Second Submarine Crisis

A written question from the Committee of Foreign Affairs from the Dutch Parliament to the Dutch government: *“Op welke wijze wordt getracht de goede verstandhouding met de Volksrepubliek China te herstellen, en is in dit opzicht enige vooruitgang te melden?”*¹⁶²

The First Submarine Crisis ended with the downgrading of the political cooperation between the Netherlands and China. Furthermore, China imposed sanctions to Dutch companies that were operating in China. Due to other domestic political crises, there was no political stability in the Netherlands between 1981 and 1982. When the first Cabinet of Prime Minister Lubbers was formed in 1982, the situation domestically became more stable. When in the years 1983-1984 Taiwan approached the Netherlands again about buying more submarines, the Second Crisis broke out. The Dutch government decided not to sell more submarines to Taiwan, which led to an improvement of the Dutch-Chinese bilateral relationship.

This chapter is the second part in the thesis about the role of Parliament in the Dutch-Chinese relationship between 1978 and 1999. This part focuses on the years between 1981 and 1985. During these years, another political crisis occurred between the Netherlands and China. This crisis became known as ‘Second Submarine Crisis’. This chapter is followed by two other chapters which both will deal with another political crisis between China and the Netherlands.

The first part of the chapter deals with the domestic political situation in the Netherlands. The second section will focus on the Dutch-Chinese relationship, except everything related to the Second Submarine Crisis. The third part deals with the Second

¹⁶² Tweede Kamer, zitting 1981 -1982, 17 100 hoofdstuk V, no. 31, 4. The committee of Foreign Affairs of the Dutch parliament asked the Dutch government in a reply to the budget plan for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 1982-1983 which attempts the Dutch government did to improve the Dutch-Chinese relations and if these attempts had any result.

Submarine Crisis and the improved relations between the Netherlands and China. The chapter ends with a conclusion.

5.1 The Dutch domestic situation

On May 26, 1981, elections took place in the Netherlands. D'66 was the major winner of this election. The former government did not have enough support in Parliament anymore. After a long and tough formation, Cabinet Van Agt II took office. The major issue of contention was about domestic social economic issues. This Cabinet was supported in Parliament by CDA, PvdA and D'66. The Cabinet lasted only for eight months. The PvdA suffered big losses during the provincial elections of 1982.¹⁶³ During a struggle about budget cuts, the cabinet fell when PvdA ministers stepped down.¹⁶⁴

CDA and D'66 were able to reach an agreement about the budget cuts and new social economic policy. A new Cabinet was formed under the name 'Cabinet Van Agt III'. The major assignment for this Cabinet was to organize new elections. Because all the PvdA Ministers and Secretaries of State stepped down, other officials from CDA and D'66 took over the open positions in the government. The Prime Minister Van Agt led the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the elections of 1982 D'66 lost many seats in Parliament. VVD was the major winner of the elections and formed a government with CDA. The new Cabinet was called 'Lubbers I'. Their major plan was to implement major cutbacks on governmental expenditures in an economically difficult period. The government stayed in office until the next elections in 1986.

Besides the major budget cuts in a difficult social economic period, the government had to deal with the cruise missile crisis in which both Parliament and society was divided about the question whether to install American cruise missiles on Dutch soil or not.

On the 19th of February 1983, a Dutch judge granted RSV a deferment of payment. The company went down after a lack of orders and two failed projects in Algeria and for the American market. The government subsidies which kept people employed at RSV created such an overcapacity, that RSV went bankrupt. After its bankruptcy, Parliament ordered an

¹⁶³ In Dutch: Statenverkiezing.

¹⁶⁴ www.parlement.com (30-08-2011).

extraordinary Parliamentary investigation¹⁶⁵ to answer the question of how RSV, which had gotten so much government support, could go bankrupt. The committee concluded that the government supported RSV too long financially and the Minister of Economic Affairs did not inform Parliament correctly and completely in all cases. Parliament decided however to keep having faith in the Minister of Economic Affairs because Parliament believed he should not only be held responsible for this failure.¹⁶⁶ The bankruptcy of RSV did not influence the delivery of the submarines to Taiwan.

In the period of 1981-1982, the Dutch domestic political situation was not stable. Two short Cabinets took office and two elections were held within 2 years. The most important debates in Parliament and society had a social economic background. After the formation of Cabinet Lubbers I in 1982, the Dutch domestic political situation became more stable.

5.2 Chinese relations discussed in Parliament

In despite of the unstable domestic political situation and the difficult economic period, Parliament showed its interest in China and the Dutch-Chinese relationship. Many topics that were related to China were discussed. China as a country is mentioned at least in 600 different debates and reports produced by or sent to Parliament in the period 1981-1985. Besides the political topics that are listed and explained below, the Dutch Parliament was also culturally interested in China. Chinese wisdom or folk stories were used by different Parliamentarians in Parliamentary debates.¹⁶⁷

China's role in the world was discussed in the Dutch Parliament. Due to tensions between the West and the East in the Cold War, the relationship between China and the Soviet-Union was interesting for the Dutch Parliament. In 1981, Parliament expresses its happiness of the participation of both China and the Soviet-Union in an international rubber

¹⁶⁵ In Dutch: parlementaire enquête. The Dutch parliament is authorized to launch an extraordinary investigation towards public issues. These investigations give parliament more options to gather information than regular governmental or public resources.

¹⁶⁶ www.parlement.com (30-08-2011).

¹⁶⁷ See for example; Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 70^e vergadering (20-04-1983) 3581 or Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 35^e vergadering, (22-06-1983) 1046 or Eerste Kamer, 34^e vergadering (21-06-1983) 1032.

conference that led to an agreement that both countries co-signed.¹⁶⁸ The Dutch Parliament mentioned in different debates that China and the Soviet-Union had become closer politically.¹⁶⁹

The Dutch Parliament saw the rise of China as a regional power and a potential world power. The entry of China in the Asian Development Bank was discussed. Voorhoeve (VVD) pointed out that China's entry should not lead to a forced withdrawal of Taiwan.¹⁷⁰ The Chinese role in the International Monetary Fund was also discussed¹⁷¹ as well as China's role in the United Nations. The Dutch government mentioned, for example, that 28 countries did not pay the contribution to the United Nations (completely). China was one of those countries.¹⁷² China's power was growing. China was working on its own nuclear program and some Parliamentarians saw a shift from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean as political center of the world.¹⁷³ This view had consequences for international security. A Parliamentarian delegation from the Committee for Foreign Affairs that traveled to Moscow in 1981 reported back to the Dutch Parliament that about one-third of the Soviet army is reserved for the border with China.¹⁷⁴ Van Rossum (SGP) asked in 1984 if Prime Minister Lubbers talked about the Dutch-Chinese relationship or China in general during his visit to the United States. The Prime Minister responded that this was not the case.¹⁷⁵

The economic relations with China were also a concern for the Dutch Parliament. For example, Eversdijk (CDA) asked the government in 1982 for the result of the visit of PTT, the Dutch national post and phone company, to China¹⁷⁶ or Smit-Kroes (VVD) questioning of the government about the airline agreement and direct flights of KLM to Beijing.¹⁷⁷ The Dutch Parliament stated that China is a tough competitor in the shipbuilding market.¹⁷⁸

¹⁶⁸ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 22^e vergadering (26-11-1981) 628.

¹⁶⁹ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 23^e vergadering (23-11-1982) 699 or Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 8^e vergadering (14-12-1982) 191.

¹⁷⁰ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 67^e vergadering (29-03-1984) 4120.

¹⁷¹ Tweede Kamer, zitting 1981-1982, 17 100 hoofdstuk IX B, no. 2, 20, 30-31.

¹⁷² Tweede Kamer, zitting 1981-1982, 17 105, no. 6.

¹⁷³ See for example, Vaste Commissie voor Defensie, Defensienota 1984, 111^e vergadering (18-06-1984).

¹⁷⁴ Tweede Kamer, zitting 1981-1982, 16249, nrs. 9-10, 34.

¹⁷⁵ Tweede Kamer, vergaderjaar 1983-1984, 18 230, no. 3, 6-7.

¹⁷⁶ Tweede Kamer Vaste Commissie voor Verkeer en Waterstaat, Begroting Rijkswegenfonds en PTT, 10^e verdadering (25-01-1982) 59.

¹⁷⁷ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 23^e vergadering (16-02-1982) 2055.

¹⁷⁸ See: Vaste commissie voor Economische Zaken, Stukken inzake de scheepsnieuw-bouw, 86^e vergadering (22-05-1985).

There was criticism from Dutch Parliamentarians on the Dutch economic policy towards China. Weisglas (VVD) stated that he read in the newspaper about more opportunities for Dutch companies such as Philips, Schiphol and the Port of Rotterdam. Van der Spek (PSP) stated in 1984 that the Dutch economic policy towards China is not very consistent. The minister replied in return that the economic interaction and the trade between China and the Netherlands grew by about 13%. Engwirda (D'66) pointed out that some of the Parliamentarians were skeptical due to the delivery of submarines to Taiwan, but he stated that this skepticism was not based on true facts.¹⁷⁹

Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Bolkestein was asked to present a report about the Dutch-Chinese trade relations.¹⁸⁰ The report presented an overview on the Dutch-Chinese bilateral trade relations. It also contained advice for the private sector. Engwirda (D'66) pointed out that economic trade with China was growing, but not as fast as the Chinese trade with other European countries within the European Community.¹⁸¹ Parliament clearly wanted to improve the relations with China, especially the trade relations.

According to Brookelmann, the Dutch government did not care much about human rights in China. Trade and good economic relations with China were far more important.¹⁸² For the Dutch Parliament, trade relations were important, but Parliament was also concerned with other issues. The Chinese offered to take over radioactive waste from nuclear plants in the Netherlands, but the Dutch Parliament did not take this offer seriously. Parliament debated several times about how to deal with the radioactive material, but due to uncertainties about the safety of handing it over to the Chinese, they refused to take the offer seriously.¹⁸³ Also the safety of imported products from China was of the concern of the Dutch Parliament. Konings (PvdA) asked questions about the import of dangerous toys for children from China.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹ Vaste commissie voor de Buitenlandse Handel, Exportbeleid Buitenlandse Economische Betrekkingen, 36e vergadering (17-12-1984).

¹⁸⁰ See: Tweede Kamer, vergaderjaar 1983-1984, 18 206, no. 6.

¹⁸¹ Vaste commissie voor de Buitenlandse Handel, Exportbeleid Buitenlandse Economische Betrekkingen, 36e vergadering (17-12-1984).

¹⁸² See: E. Bookelmann, *Nederland, China en de rechten van de mens*.

¹⁸³ See for example: Vaste Commissie voor het Milieubeheer, Nota Radioactief afval, 4^e vergadering (01-10-1984) 1-42. or see: Tweede Kamer, zitting 1982-1983, 17 600 hoofdstuk V, no. 37.

¹⁸⁴ Tweede Kamer, zitting 1982-1983, Aanhangsel 327, 327-328.

Before and during the Olympic Games in 2008 in Beijing, many western countries, including the Netherlands were very critical on China's human rights policy. Bookermann criticizes the Dutch government and Parliament for not being critical. In the period 1981-1985, the Dutch Parliament did criticize China on its human rights policy, but on a very small scale. Schutte (GPV) criticized China for its one-child-policy and asked the Dutch government to lower its contribution to a fund of the United Nations that subsidizes population projects in third world countries, including China.¹⁸⁵ Van Weezel (CDA) wanted more attention for human rights projects in different countries, including China.¹⁸⁶ In 1985, Lering (RPF) stated that due to the 'barbaric one-child-policy' in China, many female babies were murdered, because a boy is economically more valuable. He condemned the government for neglecting to criticize China, while it approaches China in a very friendly manner in order to improve political and economic relations.¹⁸⁷

The Dutch government provided development aid to some third world countries. China was one of those countries. In 1981, the Minister of Development Aid informed Parliament they were involved in a project in four countries, including China. They cooperated in an agricultural project.¹⁸⁸ During a debate about a general policy shift in Development Aid in 1985, the Dutch Parliament was surprised that the Dutch government supported development activities in China.¹⁸⁹ This example shows how badly the Dutch Parliament was informed.

Educational cooperation and exchange of knowledge and scientists and students was also of concern for the Dutch Parliament. In 1984, Den Ouden-Dekkers (VVD) asked the Minister of Education about how the educational relations between the Netherlands and China could be improved.¹⁹⁰ During the political crisis, the exchange of students and knowledge was not blocked by China.

The general interest of the Parliament was to improve the relations with China, mainly the economic relations. This resulted in different requests from Parliamentarians to

¹⁸⁵ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 49^e vergadering, 16-02-1983, 2396.

¹⁸⁶ Vaste commissie voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, Nota herrijking Bilateraal beleid, 6^e vergadering, 03-09-1984, 120.

¹⁸⁷ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 98^e vergadering, 27-06-1985, 6179.

¹⁸⁸ Tweede Kamer, zitting 1981 -1982, 17 100 hoofdstuk V, no. 12, 37.

¹⁸⁹ See: Vaste Commissie voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 56^e vergadering, 04-03-1985.

¹⁹⁰ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 20^e vergadering, 07-11-1984, 1271.

improve the relations with China. During the period 1981-1984, many Parliamentarians asked the government when China would ratify the different agreements that were already signed by government officials from both countries. Such agreements included a cultural agreement, an economic and a technological agreement.¹⁹¹

In the period of 1981-1985, different Dutch governmental officials and Parliamentarians visited China. The main goal was to improve the relations that were downgraded during the First Submarine Crisis. Those visits were reported to Parliament, but not discussed in detail, except the visits to China and Taiwan during the Second Submarine Crisis. They are discussed in section 3 of this chapter.

In retrospect, the Dutch Parliament showed much interest in China. Educational exchanges, development aid, human rights, and China's position in the world were all discussed. Most important for Parliament was to improve the Dutch-Chinese relation again. The trade relations are discussed most and can be seen as the most important foreign policy goal towards China for both the government and Parliament. Parliament, however, was badly informed about the situation in China and about the Dutch-Chinese relationship. Most information Parliament receives comes directly from the Dutch government. In several cases, Parliament even requested special reports on different topics in the Dutch-Chinese relationship.

All these topics were discussed during a political crisis. The next paragraph deals with this political crisis: the Second Submarine Crisis, and will end with a short description of the improvement of the Dutch-Chinese bilateral relationship.

5.3 Second Submarine Crisis

This section will focus on the improvement of the Dutch-Chinese relations after the refusal of the Dutch government to allow RSV to export more submarines to Taiwan. The first part will deal with the Taiwanese order and the debate in Parliament, government and society that became famous as the Second Submarine Crisis. The second part will discuss the improvement of the relationship between China and the Netherlands.

¹⁹¹ See for example: Tweede Kamer, zitting 1981-1982, 17 100 hoofdstuk XIII, no. 12, 7. Or see: Tweede Kamer, zitting 1982-1983, 17 600 hoofdstuk V, no. 28, 8. Or see: Tweede Kamer, vergaderjaar 1983-1984, 18100 hoofdstuk V, no. 94, 1.

Ter Beek (PvdA) and Van der Hek (PvdA) asked the government on 2 December 1982 if the government was planning to send a delegation to Taiwan, to include a government official from the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The delegation was sent to get civilian orders from Taiwan and to investigate the Taiwanese demand for more submarines.¹⁹² Their underlying question was what this meant for the Dutch one-China policy. Sending a Dutch official for business to Taiwan might be interpreted by China as a first step in recognizing the government of Taiwan. The official answer was sent back to Parliament on February 1983. The government stated that all actions which might be interpreted as recognition of the Republic China and the Taiwanese government would be avoided.¹⁹³

Between July 26 and August 4, 1983, the faction leader of the VVD, Ed Nijpels, went on a visit to Taiwan. In a meeting with the Taiwanese prime minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, it became clear that Taiwan wanted to order at least two more submarines and an unknown number of minesweepers. Van der List described how enthusiast Nijpels was about the order. He was very confident he could persuade the Dutch Parliament to grant RSV with another export license.¹⁹⁴

Van der Hek (PvdA) asked the government on 13 December 1983 if it was true that the government was planning to send a delegation to Taiwan to investigate if the Dutch industrial sector can get orders from Taiwan. Like the year before, he again emphasized the participation of government officials in the delegation. The official answer arrived in Parliament on 24 January 1984, after the plenary Parliamentary debate about the arms sale to Taiwan which was held on December 28, 1983.¹⁹⁵

In the answer, the government admitted that several Parliamentarians from VVD and CDA were informed about the delegations' visit and purposes. The government stated furthermore that it had been involved in different talks with Taiwanese government officials. From the question of Van der Hek, it became clear that Parliament was not fully informed about the different delegations that were sent to the east. In November, the government

¹⁹² Tweede Kamer, 32ste vergadering, 14-12-1983, 1988.

¹⁹³ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal 1982-1983, Aanhangsel 505.

¹⁹⁴ Van der List, *De macht van het idee*, 360-361.

¹⁹⁵ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal 1983-1984, Aanhangsel 383.

had sent a special negotiator, Henry Wijnaendts to China to investigate how China would react if an export license was granted to RSV.¹⁹⁶

During the visit of Wijnaendts to China between 8 and 11 November 1983 he was not received officially by the Chinese government. He met with a Chinese minister in a restaurant. He reported back to Parliament on 27 December 1983 that China did not have any understanding for the Dutch position. Another arms sale to Taiwan would have serious consequences for the Dutch-Chinese relationship. On the other hand, the Chinese made clear that if the Netherlands would not grant RSV an export license, then the Dutch-Chinese relations would be normalized and intensified.¹⁹⁷

Former Secretary of State Dik came back from Taiwan with 30 pages of orders for Dutch companies. The Chinese only wanted to confirm their vision and promise of the improvement of the relations if there was no export license granted officially after Parliament was informed of the visit of Wijnaendts.¹⁹⁸

Then, between Christmas and New Year, on December 28, 1983, Parliament held a plenary debate about the issue. Prime Minister Lubbers and the Minister of Economic Affairs and the Minister of Foreign Affairs were present. The government sent two letters to Parliament in which they first spoke of a 'decision' not to grant a license to RSV to export more submarines to Taiwan. The second letter, which arrived several hours later in Parliament, showed that the government changed the word decision to 'opinion'. This was criticized by Parliament. The government arguments not to grant a license were based on a good relationship with China, the peaceful unification of Taiwan and the international context. No other country delivered arms to Taiwan, only the United States, which had promised in new talks to China that it would reduce the arms sales to Taiwan in the future.

The VVD, the party that formed the government together with CDA, was a proponent of an export license for RSV and opposed the government in their 'decision'. Employment

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, See also: Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 37^e vergadering, 28-12-1983, 2325-2326.

¹⁹⁷ D. Schoonoord, 'Diplomatiek klusjesman, Henry Wijnaerds', in: Zwan, B. van der, Graaff, B. de, Hellema, D. (eds.), *In dienst van Buitenlandse Zaken, Achttien portretten van ambtenaren en diplomaten in de twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam 2008) 201-214. See also: Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1983-1984, 18207, nr 3.

¹⁹⁸ Schoonoord, 'Diplomatiek klusjesman, Henry Wijnaerds', 204-205.

and the Dutch economy were more important to them, although Jacobse (VVD) stressed that he also wanted a good relationship with China, something that was an impossible position. The other party that made up the government, CDA, and the opposition parties PvdA and D66 supported the government. They were in favor of a good relationship with China, especially because a good relationship would be beneficial for the Dutch private sector. Besides that, they argued that any further arms sales might harm the peaceful unification of China and Taiwan.

The debate focused on the situation during the First Submarine Crisis, in which the opponents of an export license claimed that the former government promised that an arms sale would only happen once, while the VVD stated that this was a new situation and that everything was still open. According to them, such a promise was never made.

Smaller parties, such as PSP, RPF, CP and group Scholten / Dijkman were more extreme in their views and expressions. They supported an export license or opposed it due to their political position towards China. Most of these parties brought up discussions about the human rights in both China and Taiwan. They seemed more interested in these topics than the bigger parties in Parliament such as VVD, CDA, PvdA and D'66.

Parliament complained about the wrong expectations the government might have given to the Dutch industrial sector and the timing of the debate between Christmas and New Year. Furthermore, the debate was held after the 'decision' from the government, which made it harder for Parliament to influence the decision or decision making process. Janmaat (CP) even concluded that Parliament had no real power if the VVD did not withdraw its support for the government.

Parliament asked for more government support for RSV, which without the orders was close to bankruptcy.

Parliament concluded that the first submarines still needed to be delivered to Taiwan, but that no new export license would be given. Parliament wrote many resolutions but most parties did not cooperate with each other, which resulted in different resolutions with basically the same content.¹⁹⁹ Only on the question of whether or not the government should guarantee the finish of the two submarines of the first order was there any contact

¹⁹⁹ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 37^e vergadering, 28-12-1983, 2295-2356.

and cooperation between CDA and PvdA.²⁰⁰ Although there was a strong debate, again the government was the victor. Parliament did not influence foreign policy much.

The refusal of the Dutch government to grant an export license for other submarines for Taiwan led to an improvement of the Dutch-Chinese relation. In the joint declaration of 2 February 1984 they stated:

“The representative of the Netherlands government informed the representative of the Chinese government of the Netherlands government’s decision not to grant a permit for further export of arms to Taiwan. The Chinese government highly appreciates this decision of the Netherlands government [...] Both sides have agreed not only to normalize but also to intensify their relations.”²⁰¹

As before the Second Submarine Crisis, Parliament motivated the government to take initiative to improve the Dutch Chinese relations. Parliament asked the government to send trade delegations to China.²⁰² China ratified two agreements about cultural and technological exchange that were signed on 30 October 1980 in 1984.²⁰³ A delegation of the Parliamentarian committee for Foreign Affairs visited Japan and China between 2 and 14 September 1984. They reported back about their visit to Parliament. From the report, it becomes clear that the Parliamentarians were treated very well in China. The major part of the report is positive about China, more positive than the Dutch Parliament was in general. The term ‘human rights’ is not mentioned in the document. The mainly cultural program in China is probably set up to impress the Dutch delegation. The delegation concluded:

“Dit parlementaire bezoek leidt tot een beter begrip van China en dat leidt op zijn beurt weer tot de bevordering van verschillende vormen van samenwerking.”²⁰⁴

²⁰⁰ IJken, *De historische betrekkingen tussen Nederland en China*, pp. 58.

²⁰¹ I. D’Hooghe, ‘The 1991/1992 Dutch Debate On the Sale of Submarines To Taiwan’, pp. 42-43

²⁰² Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1983-1984, Aanhangsel 468.

²⁰³ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, vergaderjaar 1983-1984, 18377 (R1257), No. 1 and Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, vergaderjaar 1983-1984, 18299, No. 1.

²⁰⁴ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1983-1984, 18824, No.1, 11. Translation from Dutch: “This parliamentarian visit leads to a better understanding of China, which leads to a promotion of different forms of cooperation.”

Parliament discussed the visit of the delegation together with a separate visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs who did talk about the human rights situation in China.²⁰⁵ The conclusion of the Parliamentarian delegation was shared by the rest of the Parliament.

The Second Submarine Crisis was less long and less deep than the First Submarine Crisis. Parliament as a whole however, was not able to influence the decision making process much. The 'decision' was already made in the government before it was seriously discussed in Parliament. Some Parliamentarians were informed in advance. Due to a hearing with companies, it seems in general that the Parliamentarians were better informed about the Dutch interests than during the First Submarine Crisis, although then information was again only provided from a Dutch perspective. Parliament had critiqued the way the government dealt with the crisis; it did not have any consequences for the government. The enthusiasm of the VVD of arms sales and the behavior of some of the Parliamentarians raised questions if they really acted on the behalf of Dutch national interests or if party politics also played a role in their position in the debate.

After the Second Submarine Crisis, the Chinese government was willing to upgrade the Dutch-Chinese relationship to the level of Ambassadors. They also ratified some of the earlier signed cultural agreements and promised to intensify the bilateral relationship. Parliament pushed the government to improve and intensify the relations further so that the Dutch private sector could profit from the improved relationship.

Conclusion

In the period of 1981-1985, the Dutch Parliament showed great interest in China, more than expected, due to difficult domestic issues such as the cruise missile crisis and the domestic political instability in the first years of the 1980s. However, Parliament's interest in China and its attempts to improve the relations with China did not result in much influence on the decision making process concerning China. Furthermore, Parliament criticized the government on the process of decision making, but was not able to participate in the decision making process in way that it wished.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, See also: Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1983-1984, 18824, No.2.

The limited influence of Parliament in foreign policy making of the Dutch government concerning China can be explained by the following factors.

Parliament was better informed about China than it was during the First Submarine Crisis. However, the information Parliament had was received mostly from the government. Especially during the Second Submarine Crisis, Parliamentarians were informed selectively. Therefore, even though Parliament's information position concerning China was better than during the First Submarine Crisis, generally speaking, Parliament was not well informed about China's interest and position.

Parliamentarians were influenced by China. Firstly, Parliament was shocked by China's strong response during the First Submarine Crisis. The strong response made Parliamentarians more willing to listen to the Chinese arguments. Secondly, China impressed Dutch Parliamentarians during their visit to China. In their report about the visit and the Dutch-Chinese relations, Parliamentarians were not as critical about the human rights situation as they were in Parliament itself.

In most cases, as with during the Second Submarine Crisis, it was the government who decided first. Parliament followed the government's decision and debated the decision in Parliament; it did not take the initiative. Furthermore, the most important debate in the Second Submarine Crisis was held between Christmas and Western New Year, a period considered by most as a holiday. Parliamentarians are less willing to invest more time on certain issues due to the holidays.

There was almost no cooperation between the different political parties. This resulted in a large number of resolutions during the Second Submarine Crisis debates that said more or less the same thing, but were not supported due to the very limited level of cooperation between different political parties within Parliament. Little or no cooperation strengthened the government's position and weakened the position of Parliament within the foreign policy making process.

The Second Submarine Crisis was considered less important than other policy topics. The VVD, which was part of the coalition government, was in favor of an export license, but was not willing to withdraw its support from the government when the government did not want to grant RSV with an export license.

In despite of Parliaments limited influence, the general aim of Parliament, an improvement of the bilateral relations with China, was achieved. After the Second Submarine Crisis, the Netherlands and China exchanged diplomats and in 1984-1985 the Dutch-Chinese relationship gradually improved.

6. Parliamentary years 1985-1990: The Tian'anmen square incident

"The Twelve, deeply shocked by the tragic developments in China, strongly condemn the violent repression used against peaceful demonstrators [...] The Twelve appeal to the Chinese leadership to engage without delay in the search for a peaceful solution to the present conflict. [...] The European Community and member States have already taken a number of measures."²⁰⁶

During the Second Submarine Crisis, the government was able to prevent further military exports to Taiwan. In response, the Chinese government was not only willing to reinstate full diplomatic relations but also to give the Dutch private sector a privileged position in China to make up for the losses they suffered after the First Submarine Crisis. The political relations between the Netherlands and China improved along with the economic relations until they came to a standstill in the summer of 1989 when Chinese troops violently broke up a protest of students in the streets of Beijing. The international community, including the Netherlands, responded firmly and imposed sanctions on China. Again, in a short period, the Dutch-Chinese relationship reached another low point.

This is the third chapter that deals with a political crisis between China and the Netherlands in the period of 1978 to 1999. This chapter covers the Parliamentary years 1985 to 1990. During these years, there are two Parliamentary elections and three cabinets. Although the second administration of Prime Minister Lubbers stepped down and despite the high levels of unemployment, this is seen as a relative stable period in Dutch politics. The fourth and final chapter will deal with the Parliamentary years 1990-1999.

The first part of this chapter deals with the domestic political situation in the Netherlands. The second part will focus on the improved Dutch Chinese relationship. The third section focuses on the incident at Tian'anmen square in the summer of 1989. The chapter ends with a conclusion.

²⁰⁶ Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1988-1989, 21174, No.1, 2.

6.1 The Dutch domestic situation

The Dutch domestic political situation in the period from 1985 to 1990 was relatively stable. Prime Minister Lubbers led the country in three continuous administrations. During the first two administrations, he was the leader of a coalition between the liberal party VVD and the Christian Democrats CDA. The third coalition under Lubbers was between the VVD and the Labor party PvdA. A discussion about the possibility that the Americans would station cruise missiles on Dutch soil in defense against the Russian aggression led to much turbulence in Dutch society during 1985. Huge demonstrations were organized and 3.7 million signatures were collected in a petition against the possibility. Their protests did not matter as the Dutch government agreed with the presence of the missiles, although later it became a moot issue, due to the improvement of the East-West relations. The economic situation started to improve slowly in the mid-1980s, but the level of unemployment was still high. Budget cuts in the government spending and privatization were the social economic targets of this cabinet.

The elections in 1986 did not change much of the cabinet or its policy. A great deal of attention was given to the high unemployment rate. Other topics included the creation of a new system of social security, the privatization of the national post company, a new media law and a new policy to protect the environment. The government stepped down after three years due to a conflict between the coalition partners CDA and VVD. The political parties could not find an acceptable outcome in the debate about the tax regulations for traveling expenses. The labor party had a new, more moderate leader, Wim Kok, and became more acceptable for the CDA to form a coalition with.

New elections were held in September 1989. CDA kept its 54 seats and VVD and PvdA lost five of its seats in the second chamber in Parliament. CDA and PvdA formed the new coalition that was again led by Prime Minister Lubbers. Although the government was still cutting its budget, their most important target was on social-economic development. Additionally, East-West relations underwent huge changes due to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

6.2 Chinese relations discussed in Parliament

China was discussed a great deal in the Dutch Parliament in the period 1985-1990. Over 400 official Parliamentary documents mention China. This section will discuss all the topics that were discussed in the Dutch Parliament in relation to China except the Dutch response to the incident in Tian'anmen square in the summer of 1989. This will be discussed in the third section of this chapter.

China was not only discussed in the Dutch Parliament but also by corporate managers who were interested in investing in China. The Dutch public started to show a special interest in the Orient, especially in China. In the 1980s, the Orient was still an unknown world to the Dutch population, but this was about to change. It all started with the 'Ni hao!' course from the educative broadcasting corporation Teleac. In 1986, they broadcast a Chinese language course for beginners on Dutch television. A few million Dutch inhabitants have seen one or more episodes and Teleac sold over 20.000 packages with course materials.²⁰⁷ Blussé reports extensively about museums which held expositions about China. Furthermore, China also became a more popular travel destination.²⁰⁸

Some Dutch journalists and reporters traveled to China, mostly undercover as tourists. In magazines, books, and newspapers they reported extensively about their visits to China. Carolijn Visser, Herman Wigbold and Adriaan van Dis, for example, published about China after their visits. They brought a new image of China back to the Netherlands. They opened the eyes of the people that believed in a Chinese communist workers paradise. They described a reality of a large and poor country. They pointed out that the cities showed similarities with old English industrial towns during the European industrialization period.²⁰⁹ Adriaan van Dis wrote in his book *Een Barbaar in China* in 1986:

²⁰⁷ Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak*, 89.

²⁰⁸ See: Blussé, Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 199-210.

²⁰⁹ Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak*, 95-98.

“Zo elegant als het schrift is, zo eentonig is de bouwkunst in dit land. Alles heeft de zelfde vorm; fabriek, kantor, flatgebouw, park, prullenbak, zelfs de lantarenpaal is vierkant. Het is allemaal ontworpen op dezelfde staatstekentafel door architecten met verstijfde armen en het wereldbeeld van een cipier.”²¹⁰

The popularity of China among the Dutch population did not influence Parliament much. China was not discussed any more than in the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s. It seems however, that the topic of human rights in relation to China was discussed more often than in the previous years.

That there was interest in the Dutch-Chinese relations and the developments in China is made very clear by the Parliamentary committee for foreign affairs in 1987 when they asked formally in which way the Dutch government tried to deepen the relationship with China.²¹¹

Van Dis (SGP) states in a debate about development aid that the repression of the Chinese population by the government had not stopped. In the same debate, Trommel (D66) also pointed out that the human rights situation in communist China was remarkably bad.²¹² Human rights debates were divided between two subjects; the one-child-policy and the situation in Tibet. In 1990, Van Es (GL) and Gualthérie van Weezel (CDA) asked the government about the human rights situation in Tibet and the positions of the Dutch government and the European Union in this conflict.²¹³ The Parliamentary committee for development aid asked the government detailed questions about population growth and the one-child-policy in China in 1988.²¹⁴ Leering (RPF) also asked the government questions about the persecution of Christians in China.²¹⁵

However, Parliament did not want to talk about the human rights situation alone when it came to China. There was much more to discuss, such as the improved relations between China and the European Union, according to Van Traa (PvdA). Cooperation was

²¹⁰ A. van Dis, *Een barbaar in China* (Amsterdam 1987), 43-44. [While the Chinese writing is so elegant, the architecture is so monotonous in this country. Everything has the same shape, factory, office, apartment building, park, garbage can and even the streetlights are square shaped. It is all designed at the same drawing board by architects with stiff arms and the same world view as a jailor.]

²¹¹ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1987-1988, 20200 V. No. 21, 2.

²¹² Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 33ste vergadering Vaste Commissie voor ontwikkelingssamenwerking (14-05-1990) 10 and 60.

²¹³ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Noten (25-01-1990) 1670-1671.

²¹⁴ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1987-1988, 20529, No. 3, 3.

²¹⁵ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1989-1990, (02-05-1990) aanhangsel 655.

much deeper and touched many fields.²¹⁶ Parliament and the private sector in the Netherlands was more interested in the economic relations with China, especially after the improvements of the relation after the Second Submarine Crisis and China's promise to intensify the cooperation.

The Dutch-Chinese economic relationship did improve after the appointment of Ambassadors in the mid 1980s. In 1985, Philips was the first Dutch multinational that started a joint venture with a Chinese company to be able to produce audio and video recorders in China. Unilever also went back to China by opening a soap factory in Shanghai followed at the end of the 1980s by Akzo and DSM.

The improvement of the economic relationship was small, much smaller than hoped and expected. There was disappointment among some Parliamentarians about the Dutch-Chinese economic relations, especially after the Chinese promised to intensify the bilateral relationship. In many debates in the period of 1985-1989, Parliament complained about the disappointing economic relations with China. In 1987, Eisma (D66) stated in Parliament:

“Overigens wordt er niet alleen door dat bedrijf [Philips], maar door veel meer bedrijven geklaagd. Ik beweer trouwens niet dat dit alleen de schuld van de overheid is. Gezien de potentiële markt in China is men er telaat ingesprongen. [...] Als je echter Nederland vergelijkt met andere landen die een marktpositie in China trachten te verkrijgen, dan vallen de resultaten van Nederland tegen.”²¹⁷

The Dutch private sector seemed to hesitate. According to Van der Heijden, it was not because of the political difficulties between the Netherlands and China in the beginning of the 1980s, but because of the internal political situation in China. The unpredictable economic policy of China made investing in China a risky business.²¹⁸

Taiwan, however, seemed to be a more stable and reliable trading partner. In a debate about Wilton-Fijenoord, a ship building company, Leering (RPF) pointed back to the

²¹⁶ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 52ste vergadering Vaste commissie voor EG zaken, (08-06-1988) 9.

²¹⁷ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 30^{ste} vergadering, 03-12-1987, 1497. [Not only that company (Philips), but much more companies are complaining. I'm not saying it is only the fault of the government. With the potential markets in China, they went in too late. (...) If you compare the Netherlands with other countries who try to conquer a market share in China, then the results are disappointing.]

²¹⁸ Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak*, 88-89.

Second Submarine Crisis. He stated that the RPF was right at the time by defending an export license for RSV to export submarines to Taiwan. A good political relation with China did not lead to a better economic relation. Leering (RPF) stated that the option to export submarines to Taiwan should be back on the table.²¹⁹

In a debate Weisglas (VVD) expressed his disappointment on the trade with China in 1990 when he proposed that Taiwan should become a member of GATT. The Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Bukman responded in Parliament with a question towards the VVD in which he asked if the Netherlands should not pay any attention to the consequences from 'Red China' if Taiwan became a member of GATT. Weisglas (VVD) responded with "this is a beautiful classic", mocking the term 'red China'. The Secretary of State for Economic Affairs responded with: "o.k., the other China".²²⁰ Although the Secretary of State made a small political mistake by calling China 'red', this example makes it clear that there is a strong image among politicians when it comes to the (economic and political) ideology of the People's Republic of China. Both Taiwan and the People's Republic of China were seen as China. To make clear which China was being discussed, people used to refer to the People's Republic of China as 'red' or 'communist' China.

Besides the widely expressed disappointment in the Dutch economic relations with China, also other economic topics were discussed. Van Vlijmen (CDA) mentioned China, among others, as a competitor for the Netherlands in the international arms trade.²²¹ Parliament was also generally interested in the developments of the Chinese role in the IDA and the implications for Taiwan after China accepted its membership. This interest was no different than that in the beginning of the 1980s.²²²

The Netherlands and China also signed a tax agreement. The Parliamentary committee for treasury decided in 1987 not to follow a full procedure to approve the new agreement with China about the avoidance of double tax, but they asked questions after

²¹⁹ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 50^{ste} vergadering (24-02-1988) 2698.

²²⁰ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 17de Vergadering Vaste Commissie voor de buitenlandse handel (05-02-1990).

²²¹ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 82ste Vergadering Vaste Commissie voor Defensie (15-06-1987) 10.

²²² See for example: Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 90^{ste} vergadering, 03-09-1986 and Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 28^{ste} vergadering, 13-05-1986.

tacit approval.²²³ By following this route, Parliament made itself powerless. After approval, Parliament was not able to do much to cancel or change the contents of this treaty.

Closely related to economic relations was the Dutch development aid policy towards China. China is one of the 'sector states' or core countries that received development aid from the Netherlands. Some Parliamentarians wondered if China should get development aid at all. The Chinese economy was growing rapidly. Van Dis (SGP) goes much further when he wondered in Parliament if the Netherlands should help to build a super power.²²⁴ Already in 1986, Parliamentarians raise questions why the government chose to support China, Bukman (CDA), for example, confronted the Minister of Foreign Affairs directly with this question.²²⁵

Also other topics related to China were discussed in Parliament. Parliament asked the government to open a consulate in Shanghai. The government however, refused, due to the high costs. The other question regarding Dutch diplomats in China asked by Parliamentarians was in regards to the freedom Dutch diplomats had in China to travel around and to do their work.²²⁶ De Gaay Fortman (PPR) raised a question about guards of honor that were deployed to welcome a visiting head of state. De Gaay Fortman (PPR) complained that China deployed a guard of honor for a visiting Dutch Minister President, as he stated that this only should be done for the head of state. He pointed to the division of power and honor in the Netherlands. He asked the minister to make an official policy and to communicate with other states to express the Dutch wishes for visiting officials.²²⁷

Due to the improved relations after the Second Submarine Crisis, many Dutch government officials visited China in the second half of the 1980s. Engwirda (D'66) stated in November 1987: "Sommige landen worden door veel ministers in korte tijd bezocht. Ik denk daarbij aan China en Polen."²²⁸ Prime Minister Lubbers and Minister of Foreign Affairs Van

²²³ See: Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1987-1988, 20340, No2.

²²⁴ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vaste Commissie voor ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 33^{ste} vergadering, 14-05-1990, 9.

²²⁵ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 21^{ste} vergadering, 18-04-1986, 786.

²²⁶ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1985-1986, Aanhangsel 485.

²²⁷ Eerste Kamer der Staten Generaal, 30ste vergadering, 19-05-1987, 1315.

²²⁸ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vaste Commissie voor de Buitenlandse Handel, 16-11-1987, 8.

der Broek visited China in 1987.²²⁹ Government officials on the level of minister or secretary of state who visited China always reported about their visit to Parliament. Not only government officials visited China or the region, Parliamentarians did as well.

In 1985, a delegation of both chambers of the Dutch Parliament visited China after they received an invitation from the National Congress of the Communist Party of China. The report about the visit was sent to the Dutch Parliament and the delegation expressed that it was a very pleasant and enjoyable trip. Furthermore, the report states how the Dutch Parliament sees its own role in the Dutch-Chinese relations:

“Op politiek gebied streeft Nederland naar betere relaties met de Volksrepubliek, waarbij het Nederlandse parlement een ondersteunende rol speelt, naast de inspanningen die de regering zich terzake getroost.”²³⁰

The report is not critical about China, but some criticism was heard in Parliament before and after the trip. This was not the only visit. In 1986, a delegation of the Parliamentarian committee for economic affairs visited Japan and Hong Kong.²³¹ Even the Netherlands Court of Audit visited China in September 1988 after employees of the Audit Administration of China visited the Netherlands in 1987.²³² Chinese government officials also visited the Netherlands. In 1986, the Chinese minister of agriculture and the vice minister of trade visited the Netherlands.²³³ On March 10th, 1987, the chairman of the Dutch second chamber announced that there was a delegation of the National Congress of the Communist Party of China on the stand. The chairman welcomed the delegation in Dutch, at which the Dutch Parliamentarians responded by applauding loudly.²³⁴ The visits were organized to improve the relations, and they did.

²²⁹ See for example: Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak*, 91 or L. Blussé, F.J. van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 201.

²³⁰ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1985-1986, 19351, No. 1, 7. [In the field of politics, the Netherlands endeavor for a better relationship with China by which the Dutch parliament will play a supporting role, alongside all the efforts of the Dutch government.]

²³¹ See: Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1985-1986, 19 550, No. 1.

²³² In Dutch: Algemene Rekenkamer

²³³ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1986-1987, 19756, No. 1-2, 16.

²³⁴ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 56^{ste} vergadering, 10-03-1987, 2974.

China was no longer interested in simply importing goods from other states or providing foreign companies access to the Chinese internal markets. China also wanted to gain new technologies. IHT Merwede, a Dutch company that provided dredger ships to China was allowed to build them on Chinese soil. Part of the deal was that China became also involved in the construction process and would get access to the technology.²³⁵ The cooperation between China and the Netherlands in the field of education and science was relatively strong. Both states participated in exchange programs. The Netherlands welcomed Chinese students while China also welcomed Dutch students. The Chinese students mostly studied at the Technical University of Delft.²³⁶ China also showed interest in cooperation in the field of new technologies, for example in wind and solar energy.²³⁷

Agriculture is another field in which the Dutch-Chinese relations were progressing in the period of 1985-1989. In 1985, the Netherlands organized the first Dutch agricultural exhibition and a seminar program in Beijing. Hundred companies participated and 18.000 Chinese from all over China visited the exposition. In January 1986, an agricultural attaché was appointed at the Netherlands Embassy in Beijing. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fishery²³⁸ reported that the agricultural cooperation with China did not have a high profit, but the Netherlands has gained a reasonable position compared to most other European countries.²³⁹

A lot of topics related to the Dutch-Chinese relations were discussed in the Dutch Parliament between 1985 and 1989. The most important topics were human rights and economic relations. Both themes were more and more seen as being disappointing. Van der Heijden and Brookelmann concluded that human rights concerns were far less important than economic relations. Better relations were found within the field of education and agriculture. Many Dutch officials visited China and the Netherlands received many high ranking visitors from China as well. Although Parliament asked the government about the student protests

²³⁵ Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak*, 90-91.

²³⁶ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vaste Commissies voor Buitenlandse Zaken, voor Onderwijs en Wetenschappen en voor Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Cultuur, 10-10-1988, 19. See also: Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1985-1986, 19200, No.2, Hoofdstuk VIII.

²³⁷ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1984-1985, 19203, no. 2, 40.

²³⁸ In Dutch: Ministerie van Landbouw en Visserij.

²³⁹ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1986-1987, 19756, No. 2, Bijlage 5, 9.

in 1986 and the economic disappointments, both Parliament and the government saw no reason to change their policy towards China. The country was marked as an important (potential) trading partner and almost without hesitation Parliament pushed the government forward to establish those relations.

Everything changed in June 1989. This time, it was the Netherlands, together with the other eleven states of the European Economic Community, who responded to the happenings in Beijing, better known as the Tianan' men Square incident. The next section will deal with this incident, the Dutch response and the role of the Dutch Parliament.

6.3 The Tian'anmen square incident

The Dutch Chinese bilateral relationship improved after the Second Submarine Crisis was solved. The Netherlands and China started to cooperate in many fields, treaties from before the submarine crisis were ratified and more were signed. Although the bilateral relationship did not intensify as much as the Dutch government, Parliament and corporate world had hoped for, everybody seemed to agree that the relationship was moving into the right direction.

This came to an abrupt end in June 1989. On April 15th, 1989, former Secretary General of the Communist Party of China, Hu Yaobang died. Hu was forced to resign in 1987. The party regarded his actions to end the student protests in 1986 as being too mild. In response to his death and driven by the lack of freedom, students gathered in Beijing at Tiananmen Square. The students called for more liberalization and 'greater democracy'.

At the same time, the Russian leader Gorbachev was on a unique visit to China. The world press was present in Beijing to report about this visit that was designed to end the conflicts between China and the Soviet Union and to improve the relations between the two biggest communist states. The Chinese leadership felt embarrassed by the student protests in Beijing. Due to the presence of the world press, the Party was not able to control the flow of information.

On May 20th, martial law was declared. Within the Communist Party, there was disagreement on how the government should deal with the students. Some received the student leaders and tried to negotiate with them. Whatever the government tried, the students were not planning to leave before they got what they wanted. The government

feared the spread of unrest and saw only one option left; to break the protest and to take Tiananmen Square by force.

On June 2nd, the first military units arrived in Beijing. They marched to Tiananmen Square, sometimes stopped and slowed down by blockades from protesters and sympathizers. On the evening of the 4th, the army started to clear Tiananmen Square with rifle fire and tanks. The student protest ended in a bloody massacre. The crackdown was followed by the arrest of thousands of students and sympathizers. The number of deaths and arrests made by the police is unknown even today. It is estimated that there were between 400-3000 deaths and over 10,000 arrests. In the aftermath, the students were not supported by other groups in society. Therefore, a larger protest did not break out.²⁴⁰

The world was watching the movement and encampment at Tiananmen Square for days via the presence of the international press in Beijing. The crackdown on the student protest was broadcast all over the world. The world was shocked by what happened at Tiananmen Square. Soon after the Tiananmen Square incident, China found itself isolated from the rest of the world.

Due to the student unrest in Beijing, the Dutch government decided to postpone the visit of Queen Beatrix to China. After the escalation of the protest, the trip of Queen Beatrix was cancelled. The Dutch-Chinese bilateral relationship cooled down.

The first response in Parliament was during a debate on June 6th by Ter Beek (PvdA):

“De gruwelijke gebeurtenissen in de Volksrepubliek China, in Beijing en ook ver daarbuiten, vervullen ons met ontzetting en afschuw. De moedige strijd van de Chinese studenten — en niet van hen alleen — en de schreeuw om meer vrijheid en democratie worden met bloedig geweld gesmoord. Op zo'n moment mag de wereld en zeker de beschaafde wereld niet zwijgen. Daarom vragen wij, te bevorderen dat de regering bij monde van de minister van Buitenlandse Zaken morgen in deze Kamer een verklaring aflegt over de Nederlandse reactie op deze afschuwelijke gang van zaken. [...] Wij hopen dat de verklaring van de minister morgen-middag ook gevolgd kan worden door een debat.”²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ J.M. Roberts, *The Penguin History of the Twentieth Century*, 795-798 and Sue Williams, PBS Documentary, *China: A Century of Revolution, part III Born Under the Red Flag 1976-1997 (Zeitgeist 1997)*.

²⁴¹ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1988-1989, 82^{ste} vergadering, 06-06-1989, 6308.

On June 7th, 1989, 3 days after the crackdown on the student protest at Tiananmen Square, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Van den Broek wrote a letter to Parliament. The letter contained the official text of the statement from 'the twelve' on the situation in China. The European states decided that they should take action together. The Twelve stated that they were shocked about what happened. They condemned the use of force and the repression of the Chinese population. They suspended high level contact with China and took several other unnamed measures against China.²⁴²

The same day, the Committee for European Affairs and the Committee for Foreign Affairs held a scheduled meeting. Blauw (VVD) and Van Traa (PvdA) asked the secretary of state to put the situation in China on the agenda of the meetings of the Council of Europe. De Hoop Scheffer (CDA) stated that the presence of an Ambassador in Beijing should not be seen as support for the Chinese government. He therefore saw no need to withdraw the Ambassador from Beijing.²⁴³ Between 5 and 8 of June, a delegation of both chambers of the Dutch Parliament participated in a meeting of the West European Union. The Assembly condemned the events in China and a resolution for an emergency debate was filed.²⁴⁴

On June 21st, the Committee for Foreign Affairs met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The situation in China was on top of the agenda. The minister informed the Parliamentarians about the situation in China. The measures taken by 'the Twelve' were central in this contribution to the debate. Most Parliamentarians agreed with the European approach. Only Eisma (D66) asked the minister if he would be able to make his own policy if the European partners made decisions that were not in line with Dutch policy. The minister stated that he was not in favor of most measures against China because more measures might also block the opportunity to have contact and cooperate with forces in China that support the liberalization that China started with in 1978.²⁴⁵

On June 26th and 27th, the European Council held a scheduled meeting in Madrid. They also condemned the events in Beijing. The council also took measures. They wanted to discuss the human rights situation in China in different international platforms; they wanted to ask China to grant western observers access to prisons and trials against protesters, they

²⁴² Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1988-1989, 21 174, No. 1.

²⁴³ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1988-1989, 20800V, No. 151, 4-5.

²⁴⁴ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1988-1989, 17257, No. 14 and 254, 2.

²⁴⁵ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1988-1989, 20800V, No. 162, 1-2.

suspended any military cooperation with China, they suspended high level contacts; they postponed any new cooperation and limited the cooperation only in the fields and projects that 'would still matter'; and they decided to extend visas from Chinese student who are asking for extensions.²⁴⁶

Also on June 28th and June 29th the Dutch Parliament held debates about the situation in China. The Parliament was divided, but this did not result in a sharp debate. The main topics discussed were the position of the Dutch ambassador in Beijing and the cooperation between China and the Netherlands in the field of high technology. Furthermore, Parliament asked how the measures of the European Council would be implemented. The human rights situation in Tibet was mentioned several times by Parliamentarians.²⁴⁷

Over the course of July, it became clearer what the measures against China meant for the Dutch Chinese relationship. China's status as a 'sector state' in the development aid program of the Netherlands changed from participant to temporarily suspended.²⁴⁸ Parliament, which supported the measures proposed by the European institutions, became more critical. Lonink (PvdA) and Weisglas (VVD) asked the minister on July 7th why the government stopped only two Dutch development projects in China.²⁴⁹ The Ambassadors of 'the Twelve' visited the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the People's Liberation Army. The Dutch Parliament asked questions about this event.²⁵⁰

The Tiananmen Square incident in June 1989 shocked the whole world. The world responded firmly and in the second half of 1989, China found itself isolated from the rest of the world. Most western states froze their relations with China. In Europe, it was mainly the European institutions that responded and took measures on behalf of its member states. The Dutch Parliament followed the European institutions as well as the Dutch government. There was not much criticism from Dutch Parliamentarians at first. Although Parliament asked the government to keep them informed and push the government to put the situation in China

²⁴⁶ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1988-1989, 21203, No. 1, 3-4.

²⁴⁷ See: Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 90^{ste} vergadering, 20-06-1989 and Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 91^{ste} vergadering, 29-06-1989.

²⁴⁸ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1989-1990, 21300V, No. 111, 5.

²⁴⁹ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1989-1990, Aanhangsel 775.

²⁵⁰ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1989-1990, 21300V, No. 11, 4.

on the agenda, Parliament was not involved in the consulting and decision making process of the European institutions and of the Dutch government. It seems that the influence of the Dutch Parliament and even of the Dutch government was limited within the European structure. While Roberts uses several pages to describe the incident at Tiananmen Square in his book about the history of the twentieth century, Duco Hellema does not even mention the incident in his extensive and leading work on Dutch foreign policy.²⁵¹ In response to the incident at Tiananmen Square, Europe decided, the member states, including the Netherlands, followed.

Conclusion

The domestic political situation in the Netherlands between 1985 and 1989 was relatively stable. Within the Dutch society, there was a large interest in Chinese culture. After the Second Submarine Crisis, China promised to intensify its relation with the Netherlands, so the expectations among Dutch politicians were high. From a Dutch point of view, the relations were not intensified enough, which led to a lot of disappointment from Dutch politicians. Until the Tian'anmen Square incident, the Dutch politicians tried to improve their relations with China and criticized the human rights situation in China. Directly after the incident at Tian'anmen square, the Dutch Parliament supported the firm European response, but a month after the incident Parliament criticized the government for not putting enough pressure on China to improve its internal human rights policy.

Parliament made clear the government had a leading role and Parliament a supporting role when it came to the relations with China. What the supporting role meant was not clear at all. What was clear is that the Dutch Parliament did not have much influence on foreign policy making towards China in the period 1985-1990. This can best be explained by the following factors.

Firstly, the Dutch Parliament ratified agreements with China via tacit approval. By not even debating an agreement, Parliament adopted a minor role by choice. Secondly, Parliament was influenced by China. Parliamentarians were significantly more positive towards China shortly after they visited the country. In reports they are less critical,

²⁵¹ See: D. Hellema, *Nederland in de wereld* and J.M. Roberts, *The Penguin History of the Twentieth Century*, 795-798.

especially when it comes to the human rights situation. On the other hand, they ask representatives from the government to talk with China about its human rights situation at every encounter.

Third, in the period 1985-1990, Parliament was badly informed about China. Most information came directly from the government or the media.

The most important reason why the influence of the Dutch Parliament on foreign policy making towards China was so shallow was due to Europe as a whole. Most strict measures that were taken as a response against the Chinese government after the incident at Tian'anmen Square are taken at the European level rather than on a country by country basis. The Dutch Parliament had no real authority at this administrative level. When Parliamentarians asked if the Netherlands was able to create its own policy, the government gave an unclear and mostly negative response.

When Parliament was critical about the execution of the European measures, the government ignored the criticism. Parliament was not willing to go further than criticism. The topic was simply not important enough for them and they were not willing to risk a cabinet crisis over China.

It can therefore be concluded that the goal of the Dutch Parliament, improved relations with China, was not accomplished. Parliament saw itself forced by the Tian'anmen square incident to sanction China. It had however very little influence on the creation and execution of those sanctions against China.

7. Parliamentary years 1990-1999: The Third Submarine Crisis and improved relations

Van Wijngaarden (GroenLinks): “De normen voor levering van wapentuig vervagen onder economische druk. Zo heeft het niet leveren van wapens aan Taiwan niets te maken met conversie of wapenbeheersing, maar alles met de hoop op een vettere kluif, namelijk Chinese orders.”²⁵²

The incident at Tiananmen Square and the European response cooled down the Dutch-Chinese relationship. The European Community imposed sanctions on China. China announced that it would continue on the path of economic liberalization. Shortly after the Tiananmen Square incident and the firm response of the world, most states, including the Netherlands, restored the relations with China. The period 1990-1999 was marked by an improvement of the Dutch-Chinese relations in almost all fields. The increasingly good relations were however disrupted by two incidents. In the period 1991-1992, the Dutch politicians debated again whether they should sell submarines to Taiwan. After a political struggle, the Dutch government decided not to grant a license to export submarines to Taiwan due to the relationship with China. Taiwan however would receive help to build the submarines on Taiwanese soil. This crisis is known in the Netherlands as the Third Submarine Crisis.

The other incident that disrupted the Dutch Chinese relations briefly in the period 1990-1999 was the EU resolution proposed by the Netherlands at the human rights convention in Genève in 1997. The resolution condemned China for its human rights policy. At the time the Netherlands held the chair of the European Union and did what predecessors also had done. France and Germany however did not support the resolution in the end. They saw economic opportunities in China. The latter responded firmly and punished the Netherlands for its role in proposing the resolution. The visit of the Minister of Economic Affairs Weijers to China was cancelled. Like the incident at Tiananmen Square, this incident was also overcome relatively quickly. At the end of the 1990s, nothing seemed to

²⁵² Eerste Kamer der Staten Generaal, 22ste vergadering, 23-03-1991, 989. [Translated from Dutch: “the norms for arms sales become vaguer under economic pressure. Not delivering any weapons to Taiwan has nothing to do with controversial arms control, but everything with the hope for big orders from China”]

block intensive relations between the Netherlands and China. In 1999 the trip of the Dutch Queen Beatrix that was originally scheduled for summer 1989 finally took place.

This chapter is the fourth and last chapter that deals with a political crisis between the Netherlands and China. The first section of this chapter will deal with the domestic political situation in the Netherlands between 1990 and 1999. The second section focuses on the improved relations shortly after the Tiananmen Square incident and the European condemnation and sanctions and the Third Submarine Crisis that followed shortly after. The third section focuses on the topics related to China discussed by Dutch Parliamentarians and the gradually improved relations disrupted briefly by the incident in 1997 in Genève. This chapter ends with a conclusion.

7.1 The Dutch domestic situation

The Dutch domestic political situation was relatively stable in the period of 1990-1999. The period was marked by three cabinets. In 1989, the third cabinet from Prime Minister Lubbers, a coalition between the Christian democrats CDA and the labor party PvdA, came to power. In 1994, this cabinet was followed by two cabinets under the leadership of Prime Minister Kok. His cabinets were based on a coalition of PvdA, VVD and D'66. The latter was founded in 1966 and fought for a more transparent and democratic government as well as placing a higher priority for education and internationalization.

Cabinet Lubbers III came to power in 1989, a few months after the incident at Tiananmen Square. After years of budget cuts, Cabinet Lubbers III wanted to invest more in society. There were however also controversial budget cuts in social security measures, due to economic difficulties. This cabinet had to deal with several international issues, such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the communist era, the Maastricht Treaty and the First Gulf War. Domestically, this cabinet invested in anti crime measures, end of active conscription, liberalization of the national railway, the creation of Vinex locations²⁵³, euthanasia and a reorganization of the high school system.

During the elections of 1994, the political parties from Cabinet Lubbers III lost their majority and after a difficult formation Cabinet Kok I was created. This cabinet consisted of

²⁵³ Creation of large new neighborhoods on the edge of existing cities and towns called after the fourth policy paper on city planning.

PvdA, VVD and D'66. During this cabinet the Dutch economy flourished. The unemployment rate dropped. The cabinet went further on the path of European integration; it decided to build the Betuwe route²⁵⁴ to Germany. The cabinet decided to deploy Dutch troops in former Yugoslavia as part of a UN mission. The mission failed dramatically when the Dutch troops were not able to defend the enclave Srebrenica and 8000 Muslim men were murdered by Serb troops.

Nevertheless, this cabinet was successful in the eyes of the Dutch population and after the elections in 1998, Cabinet Kok II was formed. The coalition was less stable in the second term. This cabinet also profited from a flourishing economy. In May 1999, the cabinet resigned due to the failure to gain the approval of the first chamber on a bill that would regulate a new form of democracy; a referendum. The coalition was however able to solve the difficulties and continued its tasks in June 1999. The cabinet dealt with issues such as the introduction of the Euro in 2002, participation in peace keeping operations, same-sex marriage and the preparation of the crown prince. The cabinet had to deal with the consequences and response to the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11 in 2001. The cabinet resigned when the NIOD presented a critical report²⁵⁵ about the failed mission to protect the former Yugoslavian enclave Srebrenica.²⁵⁶

The Dutch domestic political situation in the period 1990-1999 was, partly due to a flourishing economy relatively stable.

7.2 The Third Submarine Crisis

The Dutch-Chinese relations cooled down after the Tiananmen Square incident in the summer of 1989. The European Community imposed sanctions on China and froze all high level contacts after the People's Liberation Army violently took Tiananmen Square in Beijing. The Dutch Parliament supported the firm response at first but in the autumn of 1989 and at the turn of the year, more criticism was heard among Parliamentarians.

With the same speed the Europeans responded to the Tian'anmen incident, the

²⁵⁴ A heavily debated railway that was proposed to connect the Port of Rotterdam and the industrialized areas in Germany.

²⁵⁵ NIOD, *Srebrenica, een 'veilig' gebied - Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een 'Safe Area'* (Den Haag 2002).

²⁵⁶ www.parlement.com.

European states still wanted to improve their relations with China. Not everybody in the Dutch Parliament supported this step. GroenLinks Parliamentarians stated that it seemed like the government had forgotten what happened in Beijing. In October, November and December 1990, Parliamentarians, mostly from the opposition, asked the government critical questions about the human rights situation in China and the improvement of the Dutch-Chinese relations.²⁵⁷ A resolution from the opposition that stated that they regretted that the government and the European Community had reestablished normal relations with China (and Iran) was not supported by a Parliamentarian majority.²⁵⁸

The government responded to all raised questions that the human rights situation in China had improved a little. There had been contact between European governments and the Chinese government about the events of summer 1989. Furthermore, China played a constructive role in other international affairs such as the invasion of Iraq and the situation in Cambodia. Prime Minister Lubbers stated that some things have to be offered to be able to mobilize broad support that would make an international solution for the situation in Kuwait possible.²⁵⁹

The repeatedly asked questions in Parliament about the human rights situation and the Chinese policy towards Tibet proves that Parliament was still very concerned about the human rights situation in China. Nevertheless, a majority in Parliament did support the government in the end in their decision to, together with other European states, reinstall normal relations with China. Shortly after the Dutch-Chinese relations cooled down they were back to normal.

This situation however did not last for long. In October 1991 it became widely known that a delegation from Taiwan had visited the Rotterdamse Droogdok Maatschappij (RDM) three months earlier. The delegation was actively looking for a company to place military orders with. Taiwan wanted to buy four new submarines for a total amount of about three billion

²⁵⁷ See for example: Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 17^{de} vergadering, 31-10-1990, 885 or Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 34^{ste} vergadering, 11-12-1990, 2053-2054, 2063, 2081.

²⁵⁸ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 19^{de} vergadering, 06-11-1990, 988.

²⁵⁹ See: Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 17^{de} vergadering, 31-10-1990.

guilders.²⁶⁰ Taiwan however had shown interest in buying military equipment from the Netherlands much earlier than that. This information was public, but Parliamentarians did not seem to care or did not know this for a fact. In June 1990 Rusman and Colijn, wrote an extensive piece about the First Submarine Crisis, published in *Vrij Nederland* about the Taiwanese interest and ongoing negotiations. Before that, the International Defense Review wrote about it briefly in February 1990.²⁶¹ While in the 1980s, Parliamentarians were complaining about the fact that they were selectively informed by RSV about the possible sale of Submarines to Taiwan, a decade later, Parliament did not seem to care at all.

In the communiqué of 1984 that was agreed upon by both the Netherlands and China, the Netherlands promised not to grant any export licenses for arms sales to Taiwan and in return China would normalize and intensify its relations with the Netherlands.²⁶² The original text of this document was however hard to find for Parliamentarians, according to Van Middelkoop (GPV) in 1993.²⁶³ Due to the impact of the sales of submarines to Taiwan on the Dutch-Chinese relations a decade earlier, it is remarkable that Parliamentarians did not ask questions about these ongoing negotiations.

It took until May 1991 before Parliamentarian Rosemöller asked the government about their position towards a new arms deal with Taiwan. The government responded with a firm 'no arms sales to Taiwan' and most believed at the time that this was the end of the debate.²⁶⁴

The Third Submarine Crisis started in the fall of 1991, when the media, Parliamentarians and the government were starting to pay attention to the ongoing events. Although the Joint Communiqué stated that the Netherlands would not export any military equipment to Taiwan, many politicians started to doubt the value and importance of this agreement.

Within the government, in Parliament and especially in the private sector, there was disappointment about the economic relationship with China. The Chinese promised to

²⁶⁰ L. Blussé, F.J. van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 219.

²⁶¹ I. D'Hooghe, 'The 1991/1992 Dutch Debate On the Sale of Submarines To Taiwan', 42.

²⁶² Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, *De factor Taiwan in de Nederlands-Chinese betrekkingen* (Den Haag, 1982), bijlage 1984, 28.

²⁶³ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 8^{ste} vergadering, 06-10-1993, 416.

²⁶⁴ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, aanhangsel 774.

intensify their relations with the Netherlands, but the economic figures proved otherwise. Van der Heijden, Houweling and d'Hooge all compared the Dutch-Chinese relationship and the Dutch-Taiwanese relationship. The Dutch exports to Taiwan in the second half of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s were more than two times bigger than the exports to China. The imports from Taiwan were bigger at first in the same period, but were overtaken in the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s by China. It was the exports that the Dutch politicians and the Dutch private sector were most concerned with, however. Due to the negative import-export balance with China, the unfulfilled promises and a 303 billion US dollar Six Year Development plan from Taiwan, the so called 'Taiwan' lobby got a stronger position. The Taiwan lobby was formed by parties that saw chances for economic success in trading with Taiwan, such as RDM, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and a majority of the press²⁶⁵

When in the fall of 1991 the French corporation Thomson CFS was allowed to export six frigates without weapons systems to Taiwan, the Taiwan lobby found itself strong enough to give it another try. Especially because the Chinese response was relatively mild toward France when the Chinese government responded with a statement that this arms transfer was 'regrettable'. The sale of submarines to Taiwan was back on the table.

In the beginning of 1992, Wijnaerndts secretly flew again to China. He was sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to investigate how the Chinese would respond to a new arms sale to Taiwan. He also expressed the disappointment that was felt about the Dutch-Chinese economic relations. By doing that, he also put pressure on the Chinese to give Dutch companies orders.²⁶⁶

Parliament and government was divided. Ingrid d'Hooge published an overview of the event shortly after the government decided not to grant RDM with an export license in which she analyzed the role of each party of interest that played a role in the debate. The VVD was in favor of the sale of submarines to Taiwan. They gained more and more support from one of the parties in government: the CDA. The Prime Minister, also a member of CDA, was also in favor of an arms sale. An opinion poll was held in February 1992, at the request

²⁶⁵ I. D'Hooghe, 'The 1991/1992 Dutch Debate On the Sale of Submarines To Taiwan', 43 and 47, Houweling, 'Dutch-Chinese Bilateral Relations, 19-23, Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak*, 102-105.

²⁶⁶ D. Schoonoord, 'Diplomatiek klusjesman, Henry Wijnaerndts (1932)', 205.

of RDM. The result was clear; two thirds were in favor of an arms sale. The left wing parties were against the sale. PvdA, also concerned about arms sales in general opposed the arms sale together with GroenLinks.²⁶⁷

On the morning the government was planning to make a decision on whether to grant RDM with an export license or not, China decided to place a 300 million US dollar order at Fokker. The order of seven F100 Fokker airplanes made it easier for the government to explain to the public why they refused to give RDM an export license. The debate in Parliament that followed the decision of the government on 19 February 1992 was firm. D'66 member Tommel blamed the government for the chaotic situation:

“Voorzitter! Het beleid van de regering inzake de leverantie van onderzeeërs aan Taiwan is op een fiasco uitgelopen. Taiwan is geschoffeerd, RDM en de hele Rotterdamse regio zijn een miljardenorder misgelopen en China is kwaad, omdat opnieuw is gevraagd, of wij onderzeeboten aan Taiwan mochten leveren.”²⁶⁸

It was Parliamentarians, the press and RDM who pushed for a reopening of the debate. The debate resulted in a number of resolutions from various parties in order to change the position of the government or to make it more firm.²⁶⁹ The Dutch company HAS was allowed to export a radar system, as part of the French frigates deal with Taiwan. In the end, the government held its course and even managed to get orders from China.

At the end of February 1992, the crisis seemed to be over. The government decided not to give an export license to RDM to export submarines to Taiwan or to export the knowledge to build them in Taiwan itself. China ordered seven F100 airplanes from Fokker and a visit of Minister of Economic Affairs Andriessen to China later that year was scheduled. During the entirety of the 1990s however, Parliamentarians kept bringing up or kept referring to the option to sell submarines to Taiwan, even when there was not concrete interest from Taiwan.

²⁶⁷ See: I. D’Hooghe, ‘The 1991/1992 Dutch Debate On the Sale of Submarines To Taiwan’.

²⁶⁸ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 54^{ste} vergadering, 19-02-1992, 3429.

²⁶⁹ See for example: Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1991-1992, 22513, no. 2, or Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1991-1992, 22513, no. 3, or Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1991-1992, 22513, no. 4.

7.3 Chinese relations discussed in Parliament and improved relations

The end of the Third Submarine Crisis marked the beginning of better relations between the Netherlands and China and in particular, the economic relations improved a great deal. Again, China was a much debated topic in Parliament. The institution produced over 1200 documents in the period of 1990-1999 that mentioned China. The most important topics debated in Parliament were the economic relations with China, the human rights situation in China and development aid for China. This section will discuss all those topics. There is also attention paid to the less discussed topics related to China.

After the Third Submarine Crisis, Minister of Economic Affairs Andriessen went on a trip to China to get orders for Dutch companies. He came back with 1.8 billion of contracts and letters of intent. The trip was considered to be a success. From that moment onwards, more and more Dutch companies showed interest in China and made actual investments. Parliament kept following the Dutch Chinese economic relations very closely in the years after the Third Submarine Crisis. On the request of Parliament, the government reported about this issue with regularity.²⁷⁰

Economic relations with China and the growing Chinese economy stayed one of the major interests of the Dutch Parliament in the 1990s. Like Parliament followed the developments of the membership of Taiwan and China at the IDA in the 1980s, in the 1990s, Parliament followed the developments about the possible membership of China of the World Trade Organization (WTO) closely. The government reported about the ongoing events repeatedly.²⁷¹ China's membership in the WTO would make it easier to trade with China.

The economic relationship was not only being monitored by Parliament at the state level, but also at a supranational level. In 1992, a new European treaty, the Maastricht Treaty, was signed. The treaty came in effect in November 1993. The treaty created the European Union. Europe integrated and the bodies of the European Union had more and

²⁷⁰ See for example: Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1992-1993, 22596, no. 3 / 4 or Eerste Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1992-1993, 22800 XIII and 22800 F, No. 172b, 31.

²⁷¹ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1995-1996, 23 639, No. 2, 13-14.

more influence on decision making at a national level, including in the Netherlands. The Dutch Parliament however asked the government repeatedly for information about the relations between the European Union and China. Parliament lost influence at the negotiating table to Brussels.

Nevertheless, Parliament tried to influence and improve the economic relationship with China. In 1995, the government presented a new plan called; Herijking van het buitenlands beleid.²⁷² Parliament welcomed this document but asked several questions. Parliament wanted to know how the government would deal with the emerging economies of India and China.²⁷³ Leers (CDA) asked the government several questions about the coordination of the economic missions to China.²⁷⁴ The government provided China with a special financial deal in 1995. This package was a seven year deal in which the Netherlands invested and negotiated with China. Only several states, such as Indonesia, received a special deal from the Netherlands. Government reported about the progress and implementation of the special deal.

Closely related to the economic relations with China was the development aid that the Netherlands provided to China. The Ontwikkelings Relevante Export Transacties (ORET) was a program from the Dutch government that provided a subsidy for projects for which it was not possible to find regular commercial financing. China was heavily debated in Parliament when it came to regular development aid and the ORET program. In 1997, Roethof (D66) brought in a resolution that stated that too much of the ORET money was used for projects in China and India while the ORET program was designed for countries that are poorer and less strong.²⁷⁵ This was however not the strongest criticism that was heard from Parliament when it came to development aid to China.

Closely related to the economic relations and the development aid was the criticism that was raised by Parliamentarians from both opposition and government parties regarding the human rights situation in China and in regards to the Chinese policy in Tibet. From the beginning to the end of the period of 1990-1999, Parliamentarians were very critical about

²⁷² Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 24337, no. 1 / 2.

²⁷³ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 24337, no. 3, 4.

²⁷⁴ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, Vergaderjaar 1995-1996, aanhangsel 210.

²⁷⁵ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 36^{ste} vergadering, 11-12-1997, 2882-2883.

the way China dealt with human rights. In almost every debate that was related to China, this topic was mentioned. It was used, mostly unsuccessfully however, to block policy towards China when it came to development aid, economic relations or cultural exchange and cooperation. Additionally, when government officials visited China, Parliament demanded that they bring up the topic and discuss it with their Chinese hosts.²⁷⁶ In more detail, the Christian parties in Parliament asked about the persecution of Christians by the Chinese government.²⁷⁷ Parliament was also concerned about the faith of dissidents in China.²⁷⁸

It was also this topic, the human rights situation in China, which led to the Netherlands and China having another short political crisis. The first half year of 1997, the Netherlands held the chair of the European Union. In the spring of 1997, the Netherlands took the initiative to put a resolution up for voting at the annual United Nations conference for human rights in Genève. Parliament was critical about the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Van Mierlo when it came to his policy towards China. Parliament held the opinion that the Netherlands should be more critical towards China because of its bad reputation on human rights.²⁷⁹

Van Mierlo did what the other states had done before him. He was critical towards China and proposed a resolution to condemn China in public. This time however, Germany, France and others did not support the resolution. Instead, they made the decision to improve their economic relations with China. The latter however responded harshly to the proposed resolution. China did not wish to be criticised in public. The scheduled trip of the Dutch minister for Economic Affairs to China in 1997 was cancelled by China. It took almost a year until the Dutch-Chinese relations were normalized again.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁶ See for example: Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1992-1993, 2280V, No. 83, or Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1992-1993, aanhangsel 558 or Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 27^{ste} vergadering, 25-11-1992 or Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 88ste vergadering, 04-06-1997 or Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1995-1996, 21501-20, No. 48.

²⁷⁷ See for example: Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1992-1993, aanhangsel 798 or Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1993-1994, aanhangsel 340 or Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1995-1996, aanhangsel 609.

²⁷⁸ See for example: Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1995-1996, aanhangsel 610 or Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1997-1998, 21501-02, No. 245.

²⁷⁹ Blussé, Van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 232-233.

²⁸⁰ Van der Heijden, *De dans van de leeuw en de draak*, 116-117.

The private sector responded also to the incident. They were disappointed in the Dutch government as well as the Dutch Parliament. In their opinion, the Netherlands was too critical. Politics created crisis after crisis with China and this was not good for business. As Blussé and Brookelmann concluded before, what in fact happened was that the Netherlands became less critical of China. Maybe not always in Parliament, but the actual policy towards China was more positive and welcomed China as a business partner.²⁸¹ From now onwards, the Netherlands and China agreed to talk about human rights via the path of the so called quiet diplomacy. The Netherlands could bring up the topic of human rights and discuss it with China, but the discussion should be one between equals and based on Chinese conditions, so demanded China from the Netherlands. Discussions about human rights should not be held publically, according to the Chinese government. Parliament followed this closely and remained mostly critical both in the bilateral and multilateral relations with China.

In the period of 1990-1999, many high ranking officials from the Chinese government visited the Netherlands. Additionally, many high ranking Dutch government officials visited China in the same period. After 1991, the Dutch government organized economic missions to China on an almost annual basis. The economic missions were usually made up from representatives and CEO's from Dutch companies led by a Minister or Secretary of State. The government reported all visits to Parliament. Parliament usually urged the government officials to bring up the topic of human rights, which they did. The reports Parliament received were often less critical about human rights than Parliament wished to see.²⁸²

There are also other topics related to China that were debated within Parliament. As an example, Parliament complained that China did not cooperate with the Netherlands when the Netherlands wanted to send illegal Chinese immigrants back to China. Many of those immigrants were not over 18 years of age. Due to the fact that most of them did not possess any identification documents, China refused to 'take them back'. Parliament urged the

²⁸¹ Blussé, Van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 233 and Brookelmann, *Nederland, China en de rechten van de mens*, 48-50.

²⁸² See for example: Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, 68^{ste} vergadering, 12-05-1993, 4873, Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, 27^{ste} vergadering, 25-11-1992, 2095, Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1995-1996, 24844, No. 7, Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1996-1997, 25005, No. 2, Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1996-1997, 25000XI, No. 6.

government throughout the 1990s several times to solve this matter. Government usually responded that there were ongoing negotiations with the Chinese government and its representative in The Hague, the Chinese Ambassador about the issue.²⁸³

Other topics discussed in Parliament were related to international political situations. For example, the Dutch Parliament wanted to be informed and asked questions about the Chinese role in international arms control agreements, especially when it came to nuclear weapons and nuclear testing.²⁸⁴ Furthermore, the Dutch government reported to Parliament about the Chinese position in the conflicts within former Yugoslavia. When the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade was bombed by NATO, Parliament supported China and stated NATO should apologize for this huge mistake. China's role in the First Gulf War was also reported to Parliament. Other questions regarding China within the field of international politics were about Chinese-Russian relations and the rise of China as a super power.²⁸⁵

In the period of 1990-1999 the Netherlands signed and ratified several agreements with China. An example is the Education program for managers in 1993. Parliament ratified it via the tacit approval method. This meant that by doing nothing, the agreement or treaty is ratified automatically. This method might be easy, but it limits the control of Parliament. If every agreement or treaty is debated in Parliament, followed by a vote, Parliament can more actively influence the government.²⁸⁶ In the same period however, the government started to inform Parliament annually about agreements and treaties that were being drafted or negotiated. In this way, Parliament was informed in advance and could redirect the government when it wished.²⁸⁷

²⁸³ See for example: Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1994-1995, 23900VI, No. 5, Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, 8^{ste} vergadering, 03-10-1996, Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1996-1997, aanhangsel 252, Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1996-1997, aanhangsel 225, Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1997-1998, 19637, No. 304.

²⁸⁴ See for example: Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1994-1995, 23900V, 23900X, No. 13, Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1993-1994, 23400V, 23400X, No. 29, Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, 30^{ste} vergadering, 25-11-1993, Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, 68^{ste} vergadering, 31-03-1992, Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1995-1996, aanhangsel 825.

²⁸⁵ See for example: Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1994-1995, 23900V, No. 11, Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1993-1994, 23400 V, No. 41, Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, 30^{ste} vergadering, 28-11-1991, Eerste kamer der Staten Generaal, 22^{ste} vergadering, 18-03-1997.

²⁸⁶ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1994-1995, 23900V, No. 3, 29.

²⁸⁷ See for example: Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal, 1994-1995, 23530, No. 10.

Finally, some minor topics related to China were also discussed in Parliament. These topics were the Dutch-Chinese relationship in the field of education and technology. Although China and the Netherlands cooperated relatively well in both fields, Parliament did not play a significant role when it came to education or technological cooperation. The same can be said about environmental cooperation. Mostly, it was one way communication. Government reported to Parliament, which then took the information for granted. Parliament sometimes asked for additional information, but usually did not debate or comment on these issues. However, Parliament was more critical about the Chinese population policy, especially when it comes to the one-child-policy. Parliamentarians kept bringing up the Chinese policy almost annually and government promised to include it in their human rights policy towards China.

Conclusion

In the period of 1990-1999, the Dutch Parliament had to deal with two political crises that marked the Dutch Chinese bilateral relation. The first and biggest crisis during this period was the Third Submarine Crisis in which the government decided not to grant an export license to RDM to export submarines to Taiwan. The second crisis was smaller. The Dutch government, under pressure from the Dutch Parliament, proposed a resolution that condemned China's human right policy at a UN conference in Genève in 1997. In both crises, Parliament seemed to have more influence on the decision making process than it had before, but it acted in a way that disrupted the Dutch-Chinese relations. In all other topics, not directly related to the political crises, Parliament did not have much influence or did not use the influence it had at all.

During the Third Submarine Crisis, the Dutch Parliament was not well informed about the contacts between RDM and Taiwan and the Taiwanese wish to order more submarines. Parliament did not learn much from the first and second submarine crises. Instead of being on top of the information and to end the crisis simply with a resolution that prevented any further disruptions in the Dutch Chinese relations, Parliament was responsible for the outbreak of the crisis along with other parties such as RDM and the press. Parliamentarians even speculated about disregarding a signed and ratified treaty. This would have harmed the international position of the Netherlands.

Parliament was able to force politicians and government officials who visited China to criticize China's human rights policy during the visits. Parliament also criticized China's human rights policy often publically in Parliament. Parliament was not well informed about China and Chinese culture. Being criticized publically was considered as losing face, something any Chinese would want to prevent. Criticizing China publically would anger China and is counterproductive. Discussing human rights issues with China behind closed doors is probably more productive.

Parliament had two wishes concerning China. Firstly, it was in the Dutch and in the Parliament's interest that the Netherlands had good economic relations with China. Secondly, Parliament wanted to improve the human rights situation in China. Due to its behavior, the Dutch Parliament did not contribute to a better human rights situation in China. Secondly, Parliament disrupted the political and economic relations between the Netherlands and China twice.

8. Conclusion

“Op politiek gebied streeft Nederland naar betere relaties met de Volksrepubliek, waarbij het Nederlandse parlement een ondersteunende rol speelt, naast de inspanningen die de regering zich terzake getroost.”²⁸⁸

This thesis is about the role of the Dutch Parliament in the Dutch Chinese relations in the period of 1978 to 1999. The research question of this thesis: *What role did the Dutch Parliament play in the Dutch-Chinese bilateral relations between 1978 and 1999?*

The research question and its answer try to contribute in the debate about the role of Parliaments within the field of international relations. Furthermore, this thesis tries to contribute to the debates about the Dutch-Chinese relationship and to Dutch political history.

The role of the Dutch Parliament in the Dutch-Chinese relations in the period 1978-1999 was small, much smaller than Parliament wished for. In times of political crises Parliament's role was larger, but during those crises, Parliament usually played a negative role and disrupted the Dutch Chinese relations by its actions. The Dutch Parliament had many more legal options than it used to influence foreign policy making towards China. In general, when it comes to Dutch foreign policy making towards China, the Dutch Parliament was a paper tiger.

China was debated often in Parliament. Over 3000 Parliamentarian documents mention China. The most important and frequently debated topics that Parliament discussed were the economic relations between the Netherlands and China, the human rights situation in China, development aid for China and the relationship between the Netherlands, China and Taiwan. Other topics, also debated in Parliament, but less frequently and with less disagreement among the most influential political parties were: visits from government officials or Parliamentarians to China or from China to the Netherlands, cultural, education and technological cooperation between the Netherlands and China, cooperation in the field

²⁸⁸ Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal, vergaderjaar 1985-1986, 19351, No. 1, 7. [In the field of politics, the Netherlands endeavor for a better relationship with China by which the Dutch parliament will play a supporting role, alongside all the efforts of the Dutch government.]

of agriculture, the Dutch representation in China, the international position of China, the economic rise of China, China's membership of international organizations and China's behavior on international arms markets.

Despite this great attention for China, Parliament was not able to influence the Dutch Chinese bilateral relationship much, especially not in a positive way. Parliament's role can best be explained by the following factors.

Firstly, Parliament had limited resources. Due to those limited resources, Parliamentarians were usually not well informed about foreign states or foreign relations. Furthermore, this limited access to information made Parliament vulnerable. Third parties were able to influence Parliament by informing Parliamentarians selectively. Both in regards to the information Parliamentarians received as well as the Parliamentarians that received the information. The most important source for information for Parliament was the government.

Secondly, Parliament was divided among different political parties based on elections. When a political party was part of the coalition that makes up the government, staying in power seemed to be more important than a parties view on the Dutch Chinese relationship. In other words, party politics made Parliament less effective when it comes to influencing policy making.

Third, building good relations with other states is a long term process. Parliamentarians serve a maximum of four years, often less time, in between elections. Due to the election process, Parliamentarians are more willing to choose short term or popular solutions than long term solutions. Sometimes, short term or popular solutions are not the best solutions when it comes to building good relations with another state.

Fourth, in the period 1978-1990, European states, including the Netherlands, took steps towards further integration. The further the integration went, the more decision making power was given to the European bodies. The national Parliaments, including the Dutch Parliament lost influence in all fields that the European community and later European Union made decisions on.

Fifth, the Dutch Parliament has only a limited number of seats, 75 in the First Chamber, 150 in the Second Chamber. Parliamentarians have to select what they want to

pay attention too and what they ignore. They cannot deal with all issues that a perfect Parliament should deal with.

Sixth, Parliamentarians are elected officials. They are not elected because of their expertise in their field, but because they are a member of a certain political party. Parliamentarians usually do not have the knowledge or the skills that diplomats or government officials have that deal directly with foreign relations, such as the relations between the Netherlands and China. Furthermore, Parliamentarians are only in office a limited number of years compared to experts in the field they are representing for their political party in Parliament. Information is therefore lost relatively quickly. Besides that, Parliament itself does not have the ability to learn from its own actions that other organizations do, due to elections and the rapid reorganization of people. .

In short, it can be concluded that the Dutch Parliament, due to its structure and organization was not able to influence foreign policy making towards China much. For the above reasons, Parliament did not use all legal tools it had. Time after time, it was not able to oppose its will on the government and change its policy towards China. When it came to international affairs, it was a Parliament of paper tigers.

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Appendix I:

Distribution of Seats in the Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal 1974-2011

	'74	'77	'80	'81	'83	'86	'87	'91	'95	'99	'03	'07	'11
KVP	16												
ARP	6												
CHU	7												
CDA ²⁸⁹		24	27	28	26	26	26	27	19	20	23	21	14
SGP	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1
GPV		1	1		1	1	1	1	1				
RPF					1	1	1	1	1				
ChristenUnie ²⁹⁰										4	2	4	2
PvdV													
VVD	12	15	13	12	17	16	12	12	23	19	15	14	16
LPF											1		
PVV													10
BP	1	1											
D66	3		2	4	6	6	5	12	7	4	3	2	5
PvdD												1	1
PvdA	21	25	26	28	17	17	26	16	14	15	19	14	14
CPN	4	2	1	1	2	2	1						
PSP		1	1		2	2	1						
PPR	4	5	3	1	1	2	1						
GroenLinks ²⁹¹								4	4	8	5	4	5
SP									1	2	4	12	8
AOV									2				
OSF									1	1	1	1	1
50+													1

Source: Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, Parlement & Politiek www.politiek.com (22-05-2011).

²⁸⁹ Founded in 1977 after an integration of KVP, ARP and CHU.

²⁹⁰ Founded in 2000 after an integration of GPV and RPF.

²⁹¹ Founded in 1990 after an integration of CPN, EVP, PPR and PSP.

Appendix II:

Distribution of Seats in the Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal 1971-2010

	'71	'72	'77	'81	'82	'86	'89	'94	'98	'02	'03	'06	'10
KVP	35	27											
ARP	13	14											
CHU	10	7											
CDA ²⁹²			49	48	45	54	54	34	29	43	44	41	21
SGP	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2
GPV	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2				
RPF				2	2	1	1	3	3				
ChristenUnie ²⁹³										4	3	6	5
KNP													
RKPN		1											
LPF										26	8		
Leefbaar NL										2			
PVV												9	24
PvdV													
VVD	16	22	28	26	36	27	22	31	38	24	28	22	31
BP	1	3	1										
DS'70	8	6	1										
NMP	2												
CP					1								
CD							1	3					
D66	11	6	8	17	6	9	12	24	14	7	6	3	10
PvdD												2	2
PvdA	39	43	53	44	47	52	49	37	45	23	42	33	30
CPN	6	7	2	3	3								
PSP	2	2	1	3	3	1							
PPR	2	7	3	3	2	2							
EVP					1								
GroenLinks ²⁹⁴							6	5	11	10	8	7	10
SP								2	5	9	9	25	15
AOV								6					
Unie 55+								1					

Source: Parlementair Documentatie Centrum, Parlement & Politiek www.politiek.com (22-05-2011).

²⁹² Founded in 1977 after an integration of KVP, ARP and CHU.

²⁹³ Founded in 2000 after an integration of GPV and RPF.

²⁹⁴ Founded in 1990 after an integration of CPN, EVP, PPR and PSP.

Appendix III: Cabinets 1973-2002

In this appendix are all Dutch cabinets enlisted that governed the Netherlands in the period 1973-2002²⁹⁵. The most important dates for the cabinets and Parliament are included as well as the most important officials when it comes to foreign policy making. The Ministers are closely followed by their Secretaries of State.

Cabinet Den Uyl (1973-1977)

PvdA, PPR, D66, KVP and ARP

Elections: 29 November 1972

Missionair: 11 May 1973

Demissionair: 22 March 1977

Resigning: 19 December 1973

Prime Minister: Drs. J. M. den Uyl (PvdA)

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Mr. M. van der Stoep (PvdA)

- Secretary of State: Dr. P.H. Kooijmans (ARP)

- Secretary of State: Mr. L.J. Brinkhorst (D66) (11 May 1973 - 8 September 1977)

Minister for Developmental Aid: Drs. J.P. Pronk (PvdA)

Minister of Economic Affairs: Drs. R.F.M. Lubbers (KVP) (11 May 1973 - 20 December 1977)

- Secretary of State: Th.M. Hazekamp (KVP) (11 May 1973 - 8 September 1977)

Cabinet Van Agt I (1977-1981)

CDA and VVD

Elections: 25 May 1977

Missionair: 19 December 1977

Demissionair: 26 May 1981

Resigning: 11 September 1981

Prime Minister: Mr. A.A.M. van Agt (CDA)

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Dr. Ch.A. van der Klaauw (VVD)

- Secretary of State: Drs. D.F. van der Mei (CDA) (28 December 1977 - 11 September 1981)

Minister for Developmental Aid: Drs. J. de Koning (CDA)

Minister of Economic Affairs: Drs. G.M.V. van Aardenne (VVD):

- Secretary of State: Th.M. Hazekamp (CDA) (28 December 1977 - 11 September 1981)

- Secretary of State: Mr. K.H. Beyen (VVD) (9 January 1978 - 11 September 1981)

²⁹⁵ Based on information from www.parlement.com.

Cabinet Van Agt II (1981-1982)

CDA, PvdA and D66

Elections: 26 May 1981

Missionair: 11 September 1981

Demissionair: 16 October 1981

Formation: 17 October 1981 – 3 November 1981

Missionair: 4 November 1981

Demissionair: 12 May 1982

Resigning: 29 May 1982

Prime Minister: Mr. A.A.M. van Agt (CDA)

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Mr. M. van der Stoel (PvdA)

- Secretary of State: Mr. H. van den Broek (CDA)

Minister for Developmental Aid: Drs. C.P. van Dijk (CDA)

Minister of Economic Affairs: Dr. J.C. Terlouw (D66)

- Secretary of State: P.H. van Zeil (CDA)

- Secretary of State: Ir. W. Dik (D66)

Cabinet Van Agt III (1982)

CDA and D66

Missionair: 29 May 1982

Demissionair: 8 September 1982

Resigning: 4 November 1982

Prime Minister: Mr. A.A.M. van Agt (CDA)

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Mr. A.A.M. van Agt (CDA)

- Secretary of State: Mr. H. van den Broek (CDA)

Minister for Developmental Aid: Drs. C.P. van Dijk (CDA)

Minister of Economic Affairs: Dr. J.C. Terlouw (D66)

- Secretary of State: P.H. van Zeil (CDA)

- Secretary of State: Ir. W. Dik (D66)

Cabinet Lubbers I (1982-1986)

CDA and VVD

Elections: 8 September 1982

Missionair: 4 November 1982

Demissionair: 22 May 1986

Resigning: 14 July 1986

Prime Minister: Drs. R.F.M. Lubbers (CDA)

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Mr. H. van den Broek (CDA)

- Secretary of State: Dr. W.F. van Eekelen (VVD) (5 November 1982 - 14 July 1986)

Minister for Developmental Aid: Drs. E.M. Schoo (VVD)

Minister of Economic Affairs: Drs. G.M.V. van Aardenne (VVD)

- Secretary of State: P.H. van Zeil (CDA) (5 November 1982 - 22 June 1986)

- Secretary of State: Mr.Drs. F. Bolkestein (VVD) (5 November 1982 - 14 July 1986)

Cabinet Lubbers II (1986-1989)

CDA and VVD

Elections: 22 May 1986

Missionair: 14 July 1986

Demissionair: 3 May 1989

Resigning: 7 November 1987

Prime Minister: Drs. R.F.M. Lubbers (CDA)

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Mr. H. van den Broek (CDA)

- Secretary of State: Drs. P.R.H.M. van der Linden (CDA) (14 July 1986 - 10 September 1988)

- Secretary of State: Mr. B.J.M. baron van Voorst tot Voorst (CDA) (27 September 1988 - 7 November 1989)

Minister for Developmental Aid: Drs. P. Bukman (CDA)

Minister of Economic Affairs: Dr. R.W. de Korte (VVD)

- Secretary of State: A.J. Evenhuis (VVD) (14 July 1986 - 1 July 1989)

- Secretary of State: Drs. E. Heerma (CDA) (17 July 1986 - 27 October 1986)

- Secretary of State: Mr. Y.C.M.Th. van Rooy (CDA) (30 October 1986 - 7 November 1989)

Cabinet Lubbers III (1989-1994)

CDA and PvdA

Elections: 6 September 1989

Missionair: 7 November 1989

Demissionair: 10 May 1994

Resigning: 22 August 1994

Prime Minister: Drs. R.F.M. Lubbers (CDA)

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Mr. H. van den Broek (CDA) (7 November 1989 - 3 January 1993)

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Dr. P.H. Kooijmans (CDA) (2 January 1993 - 22 August 1994)

- Secretary of State: P. Dankert (PvdA) (7 November 1989 - 16 July 1994)

Minister for Developmental Aid: Drs. J.P. Pronk (PvdA)

Minister of Economic Affairs: Dr. J.E. Andriessen (CDA)

- Secretary of State: Drs. P. Bukman (CDA) (7 November 1989 - 28 September 1990)

- Secretary of State: Mr. Y.C.M.Th. van Rooy (CDA) (28 September 1990 - 22 Augustus 1994)

Cabinet Kok I (1994-1998)

PvdA, VVD and D66

Elections: 3 May 1994

Missionair: 22 August 1994

Demissionair: 6 May 1998

Resigning: 3 August 1998

Prime Minister: W. Kok (PvdA)

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Mr. H.A.F.M.O. van Mierlo (D66)

- Secretary of State: Mr. M. Patijn (VVD)

Minister for Developmental Aid: Drs. J.P. Pronk (PvdA)

Minister of Economic Affairs: Dr. G.J. Wijers (D66)

- Secretary of State: A. van Dok-van Wee (PvdA)

Cabinet Kok II (1998-2002)

PvdA, VVD and D66

Elections: 6 May 1998

Missionair: 3 August 1998

Demissionair: 19 May 1999

Missionair: 8 June 1999

Demissionair: 16 April 2002

Resigning: 22 July 2002

Prime Minister: W. Kok (PvdA)

Minister of Foreign Affairs: J.J. van Aartsen (VVD)

- Secretary of State: Drs. D.A. Benschop (PvdA)

Minister for Developmental Aid: Mr. E.L. Herfkens (PvdA)

Minister of Economic Affairs: A. Jorritsma-Lebbink (VVD)

- Secretary of State: Drs. G. Ybema (D66)