



CENTRE FOR SECURITY STUDIES

**DEFENCE WHITE PAPER  
PROJECT**

**ASSESSING THE  
NETHERLANDS'**

**DEFENCE WHITE PAPER  
OF 2018**

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## About the author

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# Introduction

The Netherlands' Ministry of Defence released the Defence White Paper in March of 2018 this time the White Paper was based around the Dutch principle of *“Invest in our people, strength and visibility”* and the 2018 White Paper was released after several years of budget cuts and for 2018, the Dutch government has allocated 1.5 billion Euros and the White Paper essentially outlines how the allocated funds would be utilized in the coming years. The White Paper along with its predecessor is largely based on the Charter as well as the Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and it covers all of its national territories which includes the Caribbean part of the Kingdom, as well as the territory of allies. It's also based on the common mutual interests in maintaining and upholding the international legal order and stability. The White Paper also delves into the need for supporting civil authorities concerning law enforcement, disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, both nationally and internationally. The Netherlands have been relatively small but is considered a sophisticated partner in international security.

The White Paper's first objective is to invest in the people of the Netherlands, as it is the people who keep the country safe, and they want to restore their trust in their organisation. Secondly, the paper is focused on diversifying their employees and recruiting more people as well as modernising and enhancing the current strike capabilities and strengthening the country's information-driven operating methods. The third key area in investments would be on increasing and improving national and international cooperation to ensure that the organisation evolves into one that is robust and agile. As the White Paper is stressing the need for strength and visibility, the government has proposed to let military personnel wear their uniform while travelling, and upon further analysis, they have decided to maintain certain defence establishments which were initially earmarked for closure. More incentives and more drives would be held at local and regional levels to attract more people into the armed forces and for the betterment of the country. All these measures would eventually prove the versatility and readiness of the Dutch Armed Forces. The White Paper is drawn upon the capability targets set up by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

(NATO) and is in line with the long-term objectives that are included in the 2014 Wales Summit hosted by NATO.<sup>1</sup>

## Aims and Plan of Action

What the White Paper aims to achieve-

- It aims to keep its territories safe which includes the Netherlands, the Kingdom, the EU and NATO territory. As part of achieving such objectives, the White Paper has allocated the Dutch share of participating in the Enhanced Forward Presence of NATO, as well as for the Rapid Response Force and the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force of NATO. It also accounts for providing necessary aid and support for St Maarten and St Eustatius following the hurricane.
- Secondly, the White Paper aims to contribute to global commitments such as in their fight against the UN mission in Mali, the rapidly deployable units of the EU and providing capacity building in vulnerable countries.
- Thirdly, to foster security and to pose the Netherlands as a hub and its lines of communication.<sup>2</sup>

Since their number one priority is their people, the Committee behind the White Paper understands that the people have been going through a hard time, and thereby has taken a few months to completely analyse what the people are unhappy about and what they can do to make their lives better. As a result, the White Paper has outlined the plan of action for the coming years, and it includes plans to make the defence organisation safer. They intend to take some of the following measures:

- Providing more career opportunities to the people.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministerie van Defensie. “Defence White Paper 2018.” Defensie.nl. Ministerie van Defensie, June 19, 2018. <https://english.defensie.nl/downloads/policy-notes/2018/03/26/defence-white-paper>.

<sup>2</sup> Ministerie van Defensie. “Defence White Paper 2018.” Defensie.nl. Ministerie van Defensie, June 19, 2018. <https://english.defensie.nl/downloads/policy-notes/2018/03/26/defence-white-paper>.

- Improving and simplifying the allowances system.
- Providing flexible employment contracts, which include the option of serving as a reserve.
- Making sure that the employees receive the right equipment and more opportunities to participate.
- Improving the accommodation and healthcare of the people.
- To improve the wireless internet connectivity across the country.
- To increase the current compensation arrangement for the state pension from 90% to 100%.
- Setting up a national “debt of honour” for the military personnel who have suffered from a major disability or trauma because of their actions abroad.

Such measures would ensure the modernisation and the strengthening of the striking power of the Netherlands and such measures are essential under the need for the execution of the constitutional tasks and the deployments in the Netherlands and under NATO, EU or UN auspices.<sup>3</sup>

However, it is to be noted that the Netherlands would be unable to meet all of NATO’s capability targets, and hence the following priorities are set:

- The armed forces must remain versatile as security matters are always evolving.
- Modernising existing weapons infrastructure, as the adversaries are also modernising their equipment at an alarming rate.
- Would operate on an information-driven basis with the aid of a solid IT infrastructure.

The country is taking measures to improve readiness and strengthen operational support the level of readiness and operational support must be at the highest level at all times. To endure such high standards are kept, the following measures are taken:

- To modernise and strengthen the armed forces with high standards, and also with respect to futureproofing.

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<sup>3</sup> Ministerie van Defensie. “Defence White Paper 2018.” Defensie.nl. Ministerie van Defensie, June 19, 2018. <https://english.defensie.nl/downloads/policy-notes/2018/03/26/defence-white-paper>.

- To invest heavily in cyber, intelligence, IT, and information-gathering capabilities to ensure an information-driven performance.
- To increase the deplorability of fighter aircraft and helicopters.
- To modernise the weapons systems like the Bushmaster (all-wheel drive armoured vehicles), Fennk (armoured reconnaissance vehicle), CV90, self-propelled howitzer, Apache helicopters, landing transport dock and hydrographic survey vessels.
- Increasing the capacity of the Defence Explosive Ordnance Disposal Service.
- Strengthening the defence measures against chemical, and biological. Radiological and nuclear.
- To cooperate closely with the allies and strategic partners
- To review civil-military relations along with the Ministry of Justice and Security.
- To form a conflict prevention unit that is aimed at the prevention of conflicts
- To press for a more open European defence market with a level playing field
- Prioritise research into new threats

Following the implementation of such measures, the country will be capable of doing the following:

### **With respect to the Royal Netherlands Navy:**

- For a limited period, the Navy can set up a task force of five ships and conduct missions in the context of allied defence or crisis management.

Or,

For an extended period, the Navy can deploy two surface ships, one being based on air defence and the other being a submarine.

### **With respect to Royal Netherlands Army:**

- For a limited time, the country can deploy a task force of brigade size

Or,

For an extended time, they could deploy a composite task force of battalion size and for a limited time, an army corps headquarters to direct land operations and can utilize the Patriot air defence system for a limited period.

### **With respect to Royal Netherlands Air Force:**

- Till the replacement of the F-16 arrives, a group of eight fighters for a limited period and a group of four fighters for an extended period can be deployed.
- Following the introduction of the F-35, a group of four fighter jets can be deployed for an extended period
- For an extended period, helicopters can be deployed on land or at sea
- For a limited time, air-to-air refuelling capability

### **With respect to Royal Netherlands Marechaussee:**

- The deployment of one platoon for a limited time for crowd control or for an extended time for close protection tasks.
- For an extended time, policing the civil police can be deployed to support stability.

### **With respect to National Security Tasks:**

- Permanently available capabilities
- The Marine brigade and Special Security Missions Brigade contribution to the Special Interventions Service (DSI)
- Two composite units for port security
- One CRBN Unit
- Four EODD teams
- Two F-16s/F-35 for Quick Reaction Alert

- A digital wing for cyber threats
- A mine countermeasures vessel
- Host Nation Support coordination and management
- Capabilities from sustained operations capacity
- 4,600 military personnel at least for military assistance and support.
- Two watch vessels to support civil authorities
- A ground-based unit for surveillance and security<sup>4</sup>

### **How the country aims to achieve future-proof funding:**

The White Paper aims to make the funding transparent and predictable and thus aims to future-proof the funding. The following measures are taken:

- Investments worth EUR 1.5 billion a year would make it possible to fund the current armed forces on a sustainable basis
- Draft proposals which are aimed at increasing the predictability and shock resistance of the material budget
- Each year, before the budget all investment plans would be discussed by the House of Representatives.
- Currently working on a cost-to-readiness model to gain a better understanding of the relationship between costs and readiness
- The review of the defence white paper every year.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ministerie van Defensie. “Defence White Paper 2018.” Defensie.nl. Ministerie van Defensie, June 19, 2018. <https://english.defensie.nl/downloads/policy-notes/2018/03/26/defence-white-paper>.

<sup>5</sup> Ministerie van Defensie. “Defence White Paper 2018.” Defensie.nl. Ministerie van Defensie, June 19, 2018. <https://english.defensie.nl/downloads/policy-notes/2018/03/26/defence-white-paper>.



## Conclusion

Recently, the budget for defence expenditure has been increased and is being used to maintain and modernise the existing military infrastructure, however, this leaves little or no room in terms of finances for innovation and preparation for modern and continuously evolving forms of conflict.

At this current rate, the majority of the allocated defence funds are being used for the optimization of the existing weapons system, or in other words, making them more fit for the current state of conflicts, as well as increasing their life span. Despite being built on such architecture, the country would have excellent equipment which includes improved capabilities. As the defence expenditure is around 1.4% of the country's economy, which is close to the European average, the country must spend its resources efficiently and it must be spent in a way that can enhance the capabilities of NATO.

The White Paper of 2020, primarily focused on strengthening the support from the roots of the country, i.e., its people. The paper was presented after careful deliberation and scrutiny from various committees, and only after that, it was presented to the public. The 2020 white paper was themed about making the lives of the people better and it was centred on them, for example, more people were to be recruited and it would give them immense privileges and flexible contracts.

## Bibliography

1. Ministerie van Defensie. "Defence White Paper 2018." Defensie.nl. Ministerie van Defensie, June 19, 2018. <https://english.defensie.nl/downloads/policy-notes/2018/03/26/defence-white-paper>.