

ROGER JANSSEN In search of a path

An analysis of the foreign policy
of Suriname from 1975 to 1991



IN SEARCH OF A PATH

For my parents Marianne and Johannes

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Cover photo: The flag of Surinam was raised on 5 December 1975 at a ceremony held in front of United Nations Headquarters, following the admission of the newly independent country to the United Nations as the 144th Member State. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim making a statement during the ceremony.

Left to right: Henricus Augustinus Franciscus Heidweiller, the first Permanent Representative of Surinam to the UN; Henck Arron, Prime Minister of Surinam; Secretary-General; Gaston Thorn (Luxembourg), President of the General Assembly. United Nations, New York, UN Photo # 107793. Used here under Fair Use stipulations.

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List of abbreviations

| | |
|---------|---|
| ABN | Algemene Bank Nederland, General Bank of the Netherlands |
| ACP | African, Caribbean and Pacific countries |
| AG | Actie Group, Action Group |
| Alcoa | Aluminium Company of America |
| APC | Armoured Personnel Carrier |
| ASFA | Associatie van Surinaamse Fabrikanten, Association of Surinamese Manufacturers |
| AVV | Amsterdams Volksverzet, Amsterdam People's Opposition Movement |
| BEP | Bosneger Eenheids Partij, Bush Negro Unity Party |
| BOMIKA | Bond van Militair Kader, Union of Military Cadre |
| BVD | Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst, Dutch homeland security; now AIVD |
| CARICOM | Caribbean Community and Common Market |
| CBI | Caribbean Basin Initiative |
| CCK | Comité Christelijke Kerken, Committee of Christian Churches |
| CDA | Christen Democratisch Appèl, Christian Democratic Party |
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| CLO | Centrale Landsdienaren Organisatie, Civil Servants Association |
| CONS | Commissie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking Nederland-Suriname, Commission for Development Cooperation between the Netherlands and Suriname |
| COPEI | Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente, Political Electoral Independent Organization Committee; also known as Partido Social Cristiano, Social Christian Party |
| CRI | Centrale Recherche Informatiedienst, Central Research and Information Service |
| CSM | CARICOM Single Market |
| C-47 | Centrale 47, Central 47; a federation of 47 trade unions organized by the PNR |
| DA'91 | Democratisch Alternatief 1991, Democratic Alternative 1991 |

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|---------------|--|
| DEA | Drug Enforcement Agency |
| D66 | Democraten 66, Democrats 66; Dutch centre-left liberal party |
| EC | European Community |
| ECLAC | Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean |
| EDF | European Development Fund |
| EEC | European Economic Community |
| EMM | Eendracht Maakt Macht, Unity Makes Strong |
| EU | European Union |
| FAL | Federatie van Arbeiders in de Landbouw, Federation of Agricultural Labourers |
| FAO | Food and Agricultural Organization |
| FDO/Front and | Front voor Democratie en Ontwikkeling, Front for Democracy Development |
| FF | French Franc |
| FNV | Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging, Federation Dutch Labour Movement |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GNP | Gross National Product |
| GUNT | Gouvernement d'Union Nationale de Transition, Transitional Government of National Unity |
| G-77 | The Group of 77; an association of 77 developing nations |
| HABITAT | UN Human Settlements Programme |
| HDS | Herstel Democratie Suriname, Restoration of Democracy Suriname |
| HPP | Hernieuwde Progressieve Partij, Renewed Progressive Party; founded as Hindostaanse Progressieve Partij, Hindustani Progressive Party |
| IADB | Inter-American Development Bank |
| IBA | International Bauxite Association |
| IBRD | International Bank for Reconstruction and Development |
| ICJ | International Commission of Jurists |
| IDA | International Development Association |
| IIRSA | Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| ITU | International Telecommunication Union |
| KLM | Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij, Royal Dutch Airlines |
| KTPI | Kaum Tani Persatuan Indonesia, Indonesian Peasants' Union; in 1987 renamed Kerukanan Tulodo Pranatan Inggil, Party for National Unity and Solidarity |

| | |
|----------|--|
| MOP | Meerjaren Ontwikkelingsprogramma, Long-term Development Programme |
| MP | Military Police |
| NAM | Non-Aligned Movement |
| NATCOM | Nationale Commissie ter Preventie van Buitenlandse Inmenging in Suriname, National Commission for the Prevention of Foreign Interference in Suriname |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NCO | Non-Commissioned Officer |
| NDP | Nationale Democratische Partij, National Democratic Party |
| NF | Nieuw Front, New Front |
| Nf | Dutch guilder |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NIO | Nederlandse Investeringsbank voor Ontwikkelingslanden, Netherlands Investment Bank for Developing Countries |
| NL | Nationaal Leger, National Army |
| NMR | Nationale Militaire Raad, National Military Council |
| NPK | Nationale Partij Combinatie, National Party Combination |
| NPS | Nationale Partij Suriname, National Party Suriname |
| OAS | Organization of American States |
| OGEM | Overzeese Gas- en Elektriciteitsmaatschappij, Overseas Gas and Electricity Company |
| OLADE | Organización Latinoamericana de Energía, Latin American Energy Organization |
| PALU | Progressieve Arbeiders en Landbouwers Unie, Progressive Workers' and Farm Labourers' Union |
| PBP | Progressieve Bosneger Partij, Progressive Bush Negro Party |
| PCC | Partido Comunista de Cuba, Communist Party of Cuba |
| PL | Pertajah Luhur, Full Confidence Party |
| PLOS | Planning en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation |
| PNP | Progressieve Nationale Partij, Progressive National Party |
| PNR | Partij van de Nationalistische Republiek, National Republican Party |
| PPP | Progressieve Politieke Partij, People's Progressive Party |
| PRC | People's Republic of China |
| PSV | Progressieve Surinaamse Volkspartij, Progressive Suriname People's Party |
| PvdA | Partij van de Arbeid, Dutch Labour Party |
| PVF | Politieke Vleugel Van der Far, Political Faction Van der Far |
| RAVAKSUR | Raad van Vakcentrales in Suriname, Council of Trade Unions in Suriname |

| | |
|--------|---|
| RIB | Rijksinkoopbureau, Dutch Central Purchasing Agency |
| RLD | Rijksluchtvaartdienst, Dutch Civil Aviation Authority |
| RTC | Ronde Tafel Conferentie, Round Table Conference |
| RVP | Revolutionaire Volkspartij, Revolutionary People's Party |
| SACN | South American Community of Nations, also known as Comunidad Sudamericana de Naciones or CSN |
| SAP | Structural Adjustment Programme |
| SBM | Surinaamse Bauxiet Maatschappij, Surinamese Bauxite Company; later renamed Suralco |
| SDP | Surinaamse Democratische Partij, Surinamese Democratic Party |
| SDR | Surinamese Dollar; official currency since 1-1-2004 |
| SELA | Sistema Económico Latinoamericano y del Caribe, Latin American and Caribbean Economic System |
| Sf | Surinamese guilder |
| SI | Socialist International |
| SKM | Surinaamse Krijgsmacht, Surinamese Armed Forces |
| SLM | Surinaamse Luchtvaartmaatschappij, Surinam Airways |
| SML | Stichting voor de Ontwikkeling van Machinale Landbouw in Suriname, Foundation for the Development of Mechanical Agriculture in Suriname |
| SNLA | Surinamese National Liberation Army; a guerrilla front active in East Suriname |
| SPA | Surinaamse Partij van de Arbeid, Surinamese Labour Party |
| SPS | Socialistische Partij Suriname, Socialist Party of Suriname |
| TRIS | Troepenmacht in Suriname, Armed Forces in Suriname; the former colonial armed forces |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCTAD | UN Conference on Trade and Development |
| UNESCO | UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNDP | UN Development Programme |
| UNHCR | UN High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNITAR | UN Institute for Training and Research |
| UPU | Universal Postal Union |
| USA | United States of America |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |
| VDP | Verenigde Democratische Partijen, United Democratic Parties |
| VFB | Vijfentwintig Februari Beweging, Twenty-five February Movement |
| VHP | Verenigde Hindostaanse Partij, United Hindustani Party; in 1973 renamed Vooruitstrevende Hervormings Partij, Progressive Reform Party |

| | |
|-----|---|
| VOC | Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, Dutch East India Company |
| VP | Volkspartij, People's Party |
| VS | Vereniging Surinaams Bedrijfsleven, Suriname Trade and Industry Association |
| VVD | Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie, People's Party for Freedom and Democracy |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WIC | West-Indische Compagnie, Dutch West India Company |
| WMO | World Meteorological Organization |

Introduction

We are undoubtedly faced with a major crisis of the territorial sovereign state in its traditional form. No state is any longer self-sufficient or safe within its boundaries, not even the superpowers, let alone the new mini-states; all are facing a diminution of their sovereignty. (Frankel 1988:229.)

The foreign policy of small states is often neglected as a topic among scholars. The reason for this disregard lies in the perception that the sovereign status of these states has been caught in an escalating process of erosion in the wake of the tendency towards increased international interdependence. Instead, writers in the field of global politics tend to concentrate on the more influential actors. It is thus not surprising that up until the present no comprehensive analysis of Suriname's foreign policy has been published. Commonly, Suriname is perceived as a small, exotic country somewhere in the remote region of the Caribbean and Latin America. However, an extensive account of the country's various political and socio-economic interactions with other global actors is of substantial value in bringing to light some of the difficulties experienced by small states while conducting their own foreign affairs. Consequently, my objective is to provide the first comprehensive analysis of Suriname's foreign policy from the transfer of sovereignty in November 1975 up until mid-1991, when a Dutch proposal was circulated, suggesting the creation of a Commonwealth between the Netherlands and its former colony.

For a good understanding of the Surinamese government's willingness to discuss the possibility of its foreign interests once again being represented by The Hague it is necessary to consider the brief history of the Republic's participation in the international system. Even though in November 1975 Suriname gained *de jure* independence, not only did its political and socio-economic structures remain predominantly under Dutch influence, its external relations also continued to be largely directed from across the Atlantic. This heavy dependence on the Netherlands was primarily expressed in the generous aid package granted to Paramaribo accompanying the relinquishment of Dutch responsibility for administering this distant Caribbean territory.

With Suriname making only modest progress in terms of establishing diplomatic relations with neighbouring states or in participating in regional organizations, its sovereign status may best be described as having little more than nominal value. In this context Evert Azimullah (1980:2), political scientist and foreign policy advisor to the Chin A Sen regime (1980-1982), argued that the Republic's external relations in the immediate post-independence period generally came down to symbolically and only occasionally 'flying the flag' on the American continent without undertaking any major initiatives that may have ended the country's dependence on the Netherlands. This inactive foreign policy, however, came to an abrupt end on 25 February 1980, when the military under the leadership of Desi Bouterse overthrew the elected government.

Many Surinamese placed their hopes in the subsequent military-led governments to break the impasse the Republic was facing both in its internal and external affairs. Disappointingly, the officers and politicians now in charge were largely inexperienced in the field of political and socio-economic planning. Gradually, their self-proclaimed 'Revolution' led to growing instability in the country's internal affairs, particularly following The Hague's decision to suspend Dutch financial aid after the 'December murders' in 1982. With this Suriname's traditional foreign policy stance began a fundamental shift – a development that became especially obvious with the diminishing Dutch role following the coup and the intensification of discord between The Hague and Paramaribo, particularly after the December Murders.

This 'expensive success' in terms of transatlantic links was only short-lived since Suriname's foreign policy met with dramatic disappointment in a bid to source alternative political partners and financial donors – notably in its interactions with Cuba, the United States, Brazil, Libya and France. Caught in the slipstream of North-South tensions and trapped in the East-West conflict, the Republic's goal of procuring new financial resources, economic markets and political advisors resulted in an unpredictable – and ultimately unproductive – foreign policy. Suriname's external relations did not stabilize until civilian rule was re-established, with the armed forces withdrawing to their barracks in November 1987.

The newly elected government under Jules Wijdenbosch was faced with the difficult task of re-establishing international confidence in, and Dutch acceptance of, the durability of Suriname's democratic institutions. Although considerable resources were devoted to this primary foreign policy objective, with the goal of attracting investors and aid, Paramaribo experienced enormous problems in achieving this as military interventions would persist – culminating in the 1990 Christmas Coup, when army officers once again assumed leadership. This latest coup d'état resulted in the aforementioned proposal by Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers for Suriname's participation in a Commonwealth with the Netherlands.

These dramatic events have been largely ignored by scholars of international affairs. Whereas the history of other nations in the region with similar experiences of internal and external turmoil – including Grenada, Nicaragua and Haiti – is comparatively well-documented, only fleeting attention has been paid to Suriname's problems. Particularly in the English-speaking world, serious voids in the literature are apparent, occasionally resulting in misconceptions and misunderstandings of Suriname's foreign policy by writers who, rather than taking into account the country's internal dynamics, tend to view its political affairs primarily in the context of the Cold War. Notably Bruce McCollm's essay 'The Cuban and Soviet dimension' (1984) is a sad example of the anti-communist rhetoric used to denounce Suriname's regional position as an outpost of the 'Soviet empire'. Although Robert Leiken's 'Soviet and Cuban policy in the Caribbean Basin' (1984) is more analytical, this author also examined the Republic's international plight purely in terms of East-West tensions.

The failure of some authors to understand Suriname's domestic setting and hence the foundations of its regional and global position is comprehensible since little documentation on the country's brief post-colonial history is available. Although a relatively large collection of articles, reports, theses, books and discussion papers has been published on the developments in the Republic, these sources deal either with individual aspects of Suriname's foreign policy or tend to focus on specific socio-economic and political developments. Moreover, the bulk of these publications is printed in Dutch and as such are not easily accessible to scholars specialized in Caribbean and Latin American studies. Finally, Dutch sources such as newspaper articles and debates in the Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (The Dutch House of Representatives) have reflected an anti-Surinamese sentiment – especially during the early and mid-1980s – that it comes as no surprise that a section of the Dutch public has a negative attitude towards the former colony.

Scholars are immediately confronted with this difficult problem since they generally rely on Dutch documentation. I was no exception since articles published in the newspapers *NRC Handelsblad*, *Het Parool*, *de Volkskrant*, *Haagsche Courant* and *Trouw* along with the parliamentary debates, have been largely used as primary sources. However, it must be noted that despite the lack of impartiality in these sources – particularly towards Suriname's military strongman Desi Bouterse – the ease of accessing these newspaper archives, plus their constant and critical reporting on the Republic's affairs, make the Dutch press and political discussions in the Dutch parliament indispensable sources of information.

This blinkered view is exacerbated due to the Surinamese media often having to contend with censorship and some even with closure, following the military coup of February 1980. Freedom of speech was severely con-

strained after the Bouterse regime issued a decree in May 1983, banning the distribution or reproduction of information threatening 'national security'. Although in response to international pressure government censorship of the Surinamese media eased as of May 1984, newspapers and radio stations were bound to follow a code that clearly prevented them from criticizing the successive regimes. Furthermore, both the National Information Service and Surinamese News Agency (SNA) were placed under the direct supervision of the officers during the various military-led governments. Still, I have also made wide use of articles published in *De Ware Tijd* and *De West*, Suriname's two principal daily papers, to counter the danger of relying too heavily on the Dutch interpretation of events. Moreover, reports and comments printed in the *Weekkrant Suriname* and *De Ware Tijd Nederland*, two weekly newspapers aimed at Surinamese migrants in the Netherlands, have been examined so as to strengthen a Surinamese perspective on developments in the Republic.

In a similar vein, I have made extensive use of various publications by Surinamese politicians and officials who have been involved in the country's foreign policy decision-making process. These include *Herinneringen aan de toekomst van Suriname; Ervaringen en beschouwingen* (1996) and *De revolutie uitgedleden; Politieke herinneringen* (1987) by André Haakmat and *Suriname cocaïneverhaal in de Nederlandse pers; Een grote leugen* (1988) by Henk Herrenberg. Both authors were Ministers of Foreign Affairs under Bouterse and, in Herrenberg's case, also Ambassador to the Netherlands, thus providing first-hand accounts of the formulation and implementation of Suriname's foreign policy. In addition, two books which include interviews with Bouterse have been carefully analysed. The first, titled *Willem Oltmans in gesprek met Desi Bouterse* (1984), was written by the Dutch journalist Willem Oltmans, who strongly defended the regime; the second, *Dekolonisatie en nationaal leiderschap; Een terugblik op 15 jaar onafhankelijkheid* (1990) was edited by Ludwich van Mulier, sympathizer of the military and spokesperson for various pro-Bouterse organizations in the Netherlands. In both publications Bouterse made use of the opportunity to express his views – having little other possibility in the Dutch media to express the military's view on the Republic's affairs.

Another excellent source of information was the *Foreign service training programme for junior diplomats from Suriname*, published in 1981 by the University of Suriname and the Surinamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This training programme, presenting the Republic's foreign policy targets includes a series of chapters by commentators on economics, law and politics such as Soerindre Rambocus (later to be executed due to his participation in a counter-coup), Sandew Hira and Kenneth Middellijn. *Suriname; Het steentje in de Nederlandse schoen* (1994) by Marten Schalkwijk falls into the same category. This author worked as a senior administrator in the Surinamese Foreign Affairs Department from 1981 until 1989. The importance of this book lies in its

supplementary function to the training programme as it explains how foreign policy goals, specifically with regard to the Netherlands, were implemented.

Unfortunately – but understandably – almost all Surinamese sources relating to the Republic's foreign policy focus on Dutch relations. The memoirs of Osvaldo Cardenas form the single exception. In *De revolutie van sergeanten* (1988) the former Cuban Ambassador to Suriname gives not only a valuable interpretation of progress in the relations between the two 'revolutionary' Caribbean countries, but also an insight into the political decision-making process in Paramaribo during the early 1980s.

To date, however, few scholars have tackled the difficult task of examining these various sources in order to investigate Suriname's current affairs. One of the few valuable publications in this field is Baijah Mhango's *Aid and dependence; The case of Suriname* (1984). The author, who served as Head of the Faculty of Economics at the University of Suriname, provides a comprehensive account of the Republic's dependence on Dutch development aid as a result of the conclusion of the 'Treaty on Development Cooperation between the Netherlands and Suriname' in June 1975. Other valuable publications include those by the Surinamese professor in Latin American studies Betty Sedoc-Dahlberg, whose article 'Suriname: 1975-1989; Domestic and foreign policy under military and civilian rule' (1990b) gives a good introduction to the country's political affairs since independence. Likewise *Surinam; Politics, economics and society* (1987) by Henk Chin and Hans Buddingh' provides extensive coverage of this period. Finally, the work of Edward Dew has to be acknowledged, particularly his book *The difficult flowering of Surinam; Ethnicity and politics in a plural society* (1978), which contains an excellent account of the problematic decolonization process.

With regard to Dutch scholarly interest in Surinamese affairs it must be noted that most studies concentrate on the colonial past. In this field, Pieter Emmer's 'The importation of British Indians into Surinam (Dutch Guiana) 1873-1916' (1984) and 'Nederlandse handelaren, kolonisten en planters in de Nieuwe Wereld' (1992) provide an insight into the foundations of modern Suriname. Most important, however, are the extensive studies by Gert Oostindie, including articles and books such as 'De teloorgang van een bijzondere relatie' (2004), *Decolonising the Caribbean; Dutch policies in a comparative perspective* (2003) and *Knellende Koninkrijksbanden; Het Nederlandse dekolonisatiebeleid in Caraïben, 1940-2000* (2001) (the last two publications were co-authored with Inge Klinkers). Furthermore, Peter Meel's essay 'Money talks, morals vex; The Netherlands and the decolonization of Suriname, 1975-1990' (1990) as well as his book *Tussen autonomie en onafhankelijkheid; Nederlands-Surinaamse betrekkingen 1954-1961* (1999) are both studies of merit. Where the first focuses on the transatlantic relationship between 1975 and 1990, the second work examines the decolonization process in detail.

Another book worth mentioning is *De toekomst van de relatie Nederland-Suriname* (2004a), edited by Pitou van Dijck, in which well-known Dutch and Surinamese scholars, including Dirk Kruijt, Hans Lim A Po and Frits van Beek, analyse the aid relationship between the two states from 1975 up until the present day.

Outside the Surinamese and Dutch context only very few authors have attempted to examine the socio-economic and political developments of this small Caribbean state. However, the work of two scholars cannot be ignored. Anthropology professor Gary Brana-Shute, who published numerous articles on the Republic, presents in his article 'Back to the barracks? Five years "revo" in Suriname' (1986) some particularly useful background information regarding the internal and external pressures on the officers to redemocratize the country. The second is Tony Thorndike, an academic in the field of international relations, whose work includes the study 'Suriname and the military' (1990), outlining the various phases of Bouterse's regime intelligently and clearly.

Before utilizing these various sources to analyse Suriname's foreign policy, a number of points should be noted with respect to international relations theory. To begin with, I have classified Suriname as a small state. Although it seems impossible to adequately define the term 'small state' – all ideas put forward by scholars in an attempt to interpret 'small' on the basis of territorial size, political influence, military strength or economic power have ultimately been inconclusive – it generally refers to the rather arbitrary population figure of a country with fewer than one million inhabitants. Furthermore, it can be argued that many of these small states, most of them islands, often experience similar problems; thus, scholars tend to group them together for the purpose of studying their external relations.¹

Secondly, while analysing Suriname's external relations, it is necessary to be aware of the term 'international system'. According to Kalevi Holsti (1992:10, 15) this concept refers to the interaction between various powerful entities in world politics. In addition to the numerous independent states, these also consist of a wide variety of other actors such as international organizations (both governmental and non-governmental), multinational corporations (MNCs), as well as terrorist groups and liberation movements. This implies that Paramaribo is one of many players on the stage of world politics. However, it is a player that has experienced severe limitations in implementing its foreign policy objectives due to its size. In this context it is necessary to acknowledge that the Republic represents just one specific case of a small, developing country that has encountered difficulties in implementing its foreign policy. Therefore the Surinamese example in the broader international framework can hardly give an exhaustive analysis of all problems other smaller nations

¹ For an excellent discussion on this topic, see Hein 1989.

may face. Still, as a case study it will highlight the complex position of small developing states within the international system.

Finally, the concept of 'sovereignty' needs to be considered, defined by Sir Francis Hinsley (1966:1, 28) as 'the idea that there is a final and absolute authority in the political community' and that 'no final and absolute authority exists elsewhere'. Although the various cabinets in Paramaribo have ultimately been the final and absolute authority in the country's political and socio-economic developments, the brief history of the Republic's interaction with other international players has demonstrated that Suriname has frequently been forced to alter its course in order to accommodate global events and trends, as well as adjusting to the pressure exerted and actions taken by other actors. The concomitant lack of success experienced by small states participating in world politics, as stated in the opening quote, could lead scholars to conclude that the weakest members of the global community be urged to withdraw from the international system and, in a rather neocolonial fashion, leave it up to the more powerful actors to represent their foreign interests. This is certainly not my proposed argument. On the contrary, I acknowledge the significance given to foreign policy by smaller countries as they rely on the communication with other actors to ensure the advancement of their often isolated and diminutive societies. However, in allowing these states the benefits associated with participating in global politics, it is essential to keep in mind the constraints impeding the development of smaller nations.

Hence, it must be stressed that, despite all practical restrictions experienced by small states relating to the full control of their own affairs as imbued in the concept of 'sovereignty', they are still internationally recognized as independent and as such possess the legal right to pursue their national interests, to insist on non-interference from other countries and to be respected as equals. Bouterse, for instance, at the height of Dutch-Surinamese tensions, argued that 'they [the Netherlands] should say: after 1975 that piece of land, that we called our Suriname, a territory of 164,000 square kilometres, has become a sovereign state for us. And thus they must also treat us as such'.²

The purpose of this book then, is to bridge the gap between the existing studies, which were mainly published in Suriname and in the Netherlands and focused on the Republic's political and socio-economic developments, and the scarce and scattered literature regarding the country's foreign affairs. Furthermore I approach the subject by taking into account aspects of international relations theory, looking at issues of dependence and sovereignty as the framework for an analysis of Suriname's foreign policy. Finally, I intend to counter some of the historiography's Cold War rhetoric and the repeatedly one-sided negative press exposure of Suriname's foreign policy. Instead,

² *Elseviers Weekblad* 1984:33. Dutch citations have been translated in English by the author.

emphasis will be placed on the importance of Suriname's internal dynamics in shaping the country's particular course in foreign policy. In other words, while studying the correlations between Suriname's internal situation and its responses to specific international events within a historical context, it is possible to understand why it conducted its external affairs in the manner in which it eventually did.

CHAPTER I

Colonial rule

In Surinam Holland is Europe; Holland is the centre of the world [...] Surinam feels only like a tropical, tulip-less extension of Holland; some Surinamers call it Holland's twelfth province (Naipaul 1962:164).

This first chapter presents a historical analysis of the political and socio-economic foundations of present-day Suriname. The most noticeable characteristic in the development of the former Dutch Guyana is the significant influence the colonial power wielded over the territory during more than three hundred years. Initially claimed by Spain and for a short period administered by Britain, Suriname came under Dutch control in 1667. The various trading companies, colonial associations and governmental departments that subsequently became responsible for the supervision of the territory stressed its agricultural importance, initially providing the European market mainly with sugar and coffee. To supply this emerging plantation-based economy with the necessary workforce, West African slaves and later contract labourers from British India and the Dutch East Indies were introduced. Despite these measures aimed at establishing a profitable cash-crop colony, the territory remained of little economic value to its European master.

However, demand during the Second World War stimulated the growth of the bauxite industry, thus giving the colony a modest degree of prosperity as multinational corporations began to invest substantially in the mining of this raw material. Primarily as a consequence of this new economic stability, The Hague allowed the local political elite some degree of autonomy in domestic affairs. Nevertheless, the Netherlands continued to assert enormous influence in terms of the colony's development, in particular by determining the level of budgetary support. It was not until the financial burden began to weigh heavily on Dutch society – largely due to expenses incurred by the steady flow of Surinamese migrants to the metropole as well as substantial socio-economic aid made available to the colony – that The Hague became willing to enter into dialogue with the local elite to discuss Suriname's decolonization. Without a public referendum and hastily driven on by the Dutch, the country gained independence on 25 November 1975.

The arrival of the Dutch

Suriname's particular location has considerably influenced the historical evolution of its political and socio-economic features. This necessitates a degree of familiarization of the country's geographical make-up. The Republiek van Suriname (Republic of Suriname), is situated on the north-east coast of South America and forms part of the wider Guyana region, an area located between the Amazon and Rio Negro rivers in Brazil and the Orinoco in Venezuela. The 163,265 square kilometre area is bordered by the Atlantic in the north, French Guiana in the east, Brazil in the south and Guyana in the west.

Even though it is considered a small state, Suriname occupies a relatively large area; the interior consists mainly of a mountainous landscape covered by dense rainforest. The country's specific climatic conditions – which can be defined as tropical with fairly heavy rainfall throughout the year and an average temperature ranging between 23 and 30 degrees Celsius with high humidity – have contributed to rather unpleasant living conditions for many immigrants. Not surprisingly, in this relatively untouched virgin hinterland, the main communication and transport network to the small Amerindian and Maroon settlements consists of various rivers running from the Brazilian border to the Atlantic coast. The interior is in fact so impenetrable that even today some of the country's borders are disputed, as can be seen in Map 1. Interestingly, the regions between the Coeroeni and Boven-Corantijn (or New River) in the west, and between the Litani and Marowijne in the east, are actually administered by Guyana and French Guiana respectively.

In contrast to this underdeveloped hinterland, the coastal region is a fertile savannah extending inland 50 to 150 kilometres from the coast. The large majority of inhabitants live in this area, either in the capital Paramaribo or in smaller towns scattered along the coast or beside rivers such as Nieuw Nickerie, Moengo and Albina. In this low-lying region socio-economic activities have often only been possible due to the implementation of a series of polder systems for drainage of the many swamps. The gradual transition from land to sea has posed great challenges not only to agriculture (due to frequent flooding) but also to the maritime sector, as the many sandbanks block access for large ships along a substantial part of Suriname's coast. Moreover, the coastline's configuration effectively shatters any illusions visitors might have about beautiful Caribbean beaches – and consequently holds little attraction for international sun-seeking tourists.

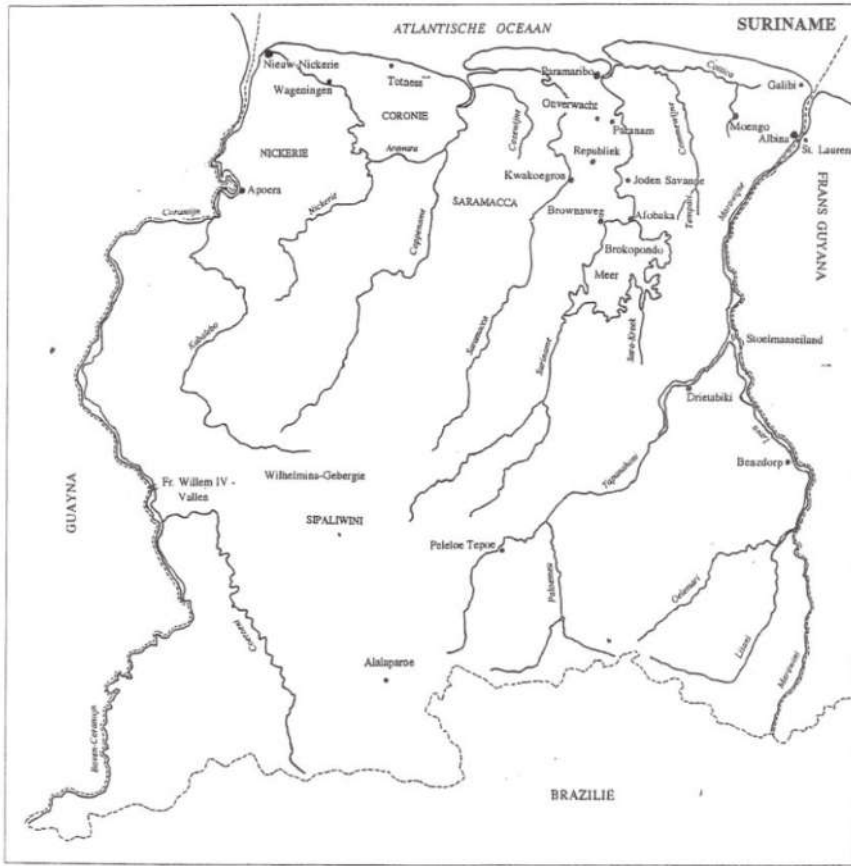
The fact that Suriname is essentially classified as a Caribbean country, despite its location on the South American mainland, is another distinct aspect derived from the country's history. Originally inhabited by small Arawak and Carib communities, the 'modern' history of Suriname, it may be argued, began with the 'discovery' of the Wild Coast by the Spanish explorer

Alonso de Ojeda in 1499. Gradually, Madrid's ensuing claim to Latin America and its trade monopoly with the New World began to weaken, as other European powers increasingly participated in the race to exploit the riches of the Western Hemisphere. Spain's commercial hegemony eventually took a decisive blow with the expansion of English, French and Dutch maritime enterprises in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. The United Provinces, in revolt against the Spanish Crown, were involved in a process of economic diversification assisted by important technological advances in shipbuilding, allowing the Netherlands to attack overseas territories held by the Spanish-Portuguese Union (Barbosa 1987:351-2). In order to consolidate their expansion in the Western Hemisphere, in 1621 influential Dutch commercial and political circles established the West Indische Compagnie (WIC, Dutch West India Company) which, according to Charles Boxer (1990:27)

was modelled in many ways on that of the VOC [Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, Dutch East India Company] although the offensive role of the Western Company in the war against the Iberian Atlantic empire was emphasized from the start. The WIC, which was given a monopoly of all Dutch trade and navigation with America and West Africa, was likewise authorized to make war and peace with the indigenous powers, to maintain naval and military forces, and to exercise judicial and administrative functions in those regions.

Armed with this authority, as of 1624 the WIC began to raid and occupy the north-east of Brazil. However, this endeavour proved unsuccessful. By 1654 the WIC had lost all authority over these sugar-producing areas (Burns 1980:59-62). Instead, the Company withdrew to a few Caribbean islands and trading posts on the American coast. Only in 1667, with the signing of the Treaty of Breda following the Second Anglo-Dutch War, did the WIC regain a colony in South America, exchanging Nieuw Amsterdam – present-day New York – for British settlements along the Suriname River. Once again the WIC developed a sugar-based industry with the help of wealthy Jewish planters fleeing Roman Catholic dominated Brazil to take advantage of Dutch Guyana's more tolerant religious laws (Barbosa 1987:358-9).

In contrast to the East Indies, which had quickly gained an important economic status in the Netherlands, Suriname's commercial beginnings seemed to stumble right from the start. Confronted with the colony's deficient political and socio-economic infrastructure, the WIC sought to reduce its losses in the Caribbean trade by accepting the city of Amsterdam and the merchant family Van Aerssen van Sommelsdijk as partners in the so-called Geotrooieerde Sociëteit van Suriname (Charter Company of Suriname), founded in 1683 with the objective of administering the colony under a charter similar to the one previously granted to the WIC (Hoefte 2001:13-4).



Map 1. The Republic of Suriname (Bakker et al. 1993:6)

In the political realm a new government structure was established in which the Governor (appointed by the Charter Company), together with the members of the Hof van Politie en Criminele Justitie (Court of Police and Criminal Justice) and the Hof van Civile Justitie (Court of Civil Justice) – both elected by white settlers – decided over the colony's domestic affairs. This system remained in place until the Charter Company's liquidation in 1795, after which the Comité tot de Zaken van de Koloniën en Bezettingen op de Kust van Guayana en in Amerika (Administrative Committee for the Colonies and Possessions on the Coast of Guayana and in America)¹ assumed responsibility for Suriname (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:4).

¹ Later renamed Administrative Council for the West Indian Possessions and Colonies in America and on the Coast of Guayana.

In the socio-economic realm Suriname was developed as a plantation colony. The settlers made great efforts to drain and develop new land for the cultivation of sugar and coffee. In 1667 there were less than 180 sugar plantations, by 1795 this figure had risen to 591 estates, with agricultural output reflecting these increased activities as sugar production rose from 2,700,000 pounds in 1683 to almost 12,600,000 in 1775; the newly introduced coffee crop resulted in an annual export figure of around 20,000,000 pounds by the late eighteenth century (Emmer 1992:42).

To allow this cash-crop economy to function effectively, the plantations required cheap labour. A steady stream of slaves, procured by the WIC, populated the country. Through its own commercial posts in Africa, the WIC delivered approximately 300,000 slaves in exchange for various commodities bound for Europe (Wooding 1981:5-9). Despite this steady supply of slaves, in economic terms Suriname would remain an insignificant overseas dependency.

In his study on Dutch colonization in the New World, Emmer (1992:12-3) lists three main arguments why the colony continued to be largely ignored by both governmental and commercial circles in the metropole. Not only did Surinamese planters have a severe disadvantage compared with their British and French counterparts – products from the Dutch Caribbean did not enjoy protection or subsidies on the metropolitan market – but also, given the politically stable and socially tolerant climate in the Netherlands and due to the large number of sailors and soldiers required by the WIC and VOC, only relatively few migrants could be attracted to settle in the Dutch Caribbean. Furthermore, since the authorities in The Hague ‘were not prepared to see the Dutch colonies as anything but subjected to metropolitan wealth’ (Oostindie 1995:148), thus refusing to carry the financial burden for their overseas possessions, the local administration experienced difficulties in allocating sufficient funds to advance the colony’s development.

Following the violent turmoil accompanying the North American revolution and the Napoleonic wars,² the situation in the colony became critical. Agricultural production stagnated due to the metropolitan power not investing sufficiently to enable the modernization of plantations or the expansion of farming areas. On top of that about 10% of the slaves had fled the plantations to form independent communities deep inside Suriname’s rainforest. From their hideouts these Maroons, as the runaway slaves became known, frequently raided plantations, which the limited colonial army was generally unable to protect. Even though by the mid-eighteenth century the situation had somewhat eased with the signing of treaties by the Governor,

² Resulting in the temporary occupation of Suriname by the British from 1799 to 1802 and from 1804 to 1816.

guaranteeing the Maroons' autonomous status, some continued to resist Dutch rule in the so-called Boni Wars (Hoefte 2001:8).

In political terms, the newly founded Kingdom of the Netherlands – in 1815, after the Napoleonic wars and the French occupation of the Low Countries, the Republic was succeeded by a Kingdom – took direct control of Suriname's internal affairs as outlined in the 1816 Government Regulation defining the political structure of the colony. This regulation gave the Governor (who was appointed by the Crown) considerably more power than the Hof van Politie (Court of Police, also known as Politieke Raad or Policy Council), which held purely advisory functions. In fact, the Governor was directly – and solely – responsible to the King, Willem I. In an attempt at a more effectual colonial policy, between 1828 and 1845 Suriname and the six Dutch Antillean islands (Curaçao, Aruba, Bonaire, St. Eustatius, St. Maarten and Saba) were united as a single administrative unit run by a Suriname-based Governor General.

Not until the new administrative Regulation of 1865 would power shift somewhat away from the Governor – who was appointed by The Hague – to the white settlers represented in the Koloniale Staten, (local parliament, former Court of Police), by way of a very limited census and capacity suffrage. Even though the local powers of the Governor remained large, he now answered to the Dutch parliament in The Hague. For the first time in Suriname's history the Colonial Council (nine elected, four appointed members), not only received the right of initiative, amendment, petition and interpellation, but also of drawing up the budget (Hoefte 2001:14-5).

Emerging socio-economic structures

So far the history of the colony can largely be characterized by Dutch efforts to establish a profitable cash-crop colony. One event, however, would significantly influence Suriname's future development: the abolition of slavery in 1863. Even though the former slaves, known as Creoles, would be forced to work on the plantations for another decade (while receiving very poor pay), from 1873 onwards many of them began to leave the farming districts in search of alternative employment in the growing urban areas and the emerging mining industry (Hoefte 2001:10-3). Anticipating a shortage of plantation labour, the colonial authorities attempted to recruit Chinese contract workers from the Dutch East Indies, Hong Kong and Canton. Consequently, from 1853 onwards, small groups of Chinese reached the shores of Dutch Guyana. But as their numbers remained limited, agricultural labourers continued to be thin on the ground.

Seeking an alternative, the colonial administration enlisted workers from British India. London eagerly came to an agreement with The Hague on this

so-called coolie trade, in exchange receiving control of the last Dutch fortifications in West Africa (Tinker 1974:112-3). As a result, between 1873 and 1917 around 34,000 Hindus and Muslims were shipped, mainly from East Bengal, to Paramaribo (Oostindie 2000:118). This trade, it should be emphasized, was implemented under dubious promises and practices often reminiscent of the days of slavery. In the words of Emmer (1984:110):

Slaves and indentured workers had had the same experience when they entered the plantation to which they had been sold or allotted. This applies to the process of enslavement and recruitment, to the arrival in the colony as well as to the labour conditions, medical care, housing, and the use of leisure time. Furthermore, the patterns of resistance and criminality as well as those of punishment and oppression show multiple comparative elements between the time of slavery and that of indentured labour.

A similar fate befell the over 32,000 workers from the Dutch East Indies, generally Javanese, who from 1890 were transported to the Caribbean colony to replace the British Indians – many of whom in the meanwhile had established themselves as small farmers (Oostindie 2000:118). Persudi Suparlan (1995:253-7) gives a grim description of the circumstances under which some Indonesians were brought to Dutch Guyana as he tells the story of how a young girl was abducted from East Java, shipped to Suriname and subsequently assigned to a plantation without her consent or her parents' knowledge. Eventually, this 'importation' of Javanese provided Suriname with a unique demographic character compared to, for instance, Guyana or Trinidad and Tobago. In addition to the Creoles and Hindustanis, Suriname's population also consisted of a sizeable and distinct group of coolie labourers.

It was not until the outbreak of World War II that all migration programmes came to an end. During the following decades the ethnic composition of Surinamese society – the 1950 census counted a population of 204,300, increasing to 324,000 in 1964 and to 384,900 in 1971 – remained fairly stable.³ When breaking down the figures in terms of ethnicity the extraordinary consequences of The Hague's labour policy literally become visible, with the Hindustanis and Creoles emerging as the two strongest groups – each making up about one third of the population – and the Indonesians and Maroons growing into medium-sized communities, representing 15 and 10% of the inhabitants respectively. Smaller groups of Amerindians, Europeans and Chinese complemented this 'colourful' mixture of Surinamese people.⁴

³ Verschuuren 1994:87. Only few Asian labourers returned to India or Java after their contracts had expired, see Oostindie 2000:118.

⁴ Derveld 1982:19. To impose their rule over these different ethnic groups, the colonial authorities attempted to assimilate them into a European-Christian characterized society by predominantly providing access to free education for all in the Dutch language from 1876 onwards;

Rudolf van Lier (1949:11), in the footsteps of John Furnivall (1939:xv), would describe this mixture as a 'plural society', arguing that:

In the plural society there is no unity of race and language; there exists a typological diversity between the religions; the groups also live in different economic spheres. These differences do not come about due to variations within one culture, but are rather attributable to the origins of these groups from peoples with different cultures. Often, the social class and status these groups have obtained largely run along the same lines as their cultural and racial differences and as a result of disparity in the economic structure of these groups.

In other words, Suriname's plural society became increasingly characterized by social structures which, in fact, had evolved along ethnic lines. Within these structures, the Amerindian and Maroons particularly, but also the Javanese and Hindustanis, experienced difficulties in exerting their influence, while the Creoles tended to predominate in this respect. A clear indication of this ethnic division can be observed in the 1936 State Regulation, which extended voting rights to a wider public. The 2,995 people registered on the electoral roll in 1945 included 2,377 Europeans or Creoles, 283 Hindustanis, 273 Chinese and only 62 Javanese. A similar picture can be found by comparing the number of Surinamese students enrolled in Dutch universities in 1967: of the 876 students, 65% were Creole, 14% Hindustani and 14% Chinese, with again only 1% Javanese; the Amerindians and Maroons were not given the right to vote and were not represented in higher education institutions in these years (Bakker et al. 1993:117).

As pointed out by Van Lier, this inequality between the various ethnic groups was reflected in the economic structures of the colony; noticeably, the Asian immigrants were least able to take advantage of the transformation from a cash-crop economy to a mining based economy. Whereas at the turn of the century Creoles, to a significant extent, had left the agricultural areas, the Javanese and Hindustanis continued to experience hardship as labourers on plantations or small farms. However, the era of relying on large-scale agricultural production came to an end, stimulated by the continuing break-up of large plantations, which had decreased from 180 in 1903 to 72 in 1932 and eventually to 24 in 1950. Although these estates were replaced by labour-intensive smaller farms generally engaged in rice and citrus fruit production – to compensate for the loss of the traditional sugar and coffee

remarkably, 25 years earlier than in the Netherlands (Verschuuren 1994:73). Nonetheless, although the use of non-European languages, religious practice and cultural activities was widely discouraged, the ethnic awareness of the diverse communities could not be broken and each group managed to preserve its cultural inheritance.

trade – agricultural products fell from 80% of total exports in 1863 to only 6% in 1939 (Van Dijck 2001:50-1).

A similar fate befell the exporters of balata, the latex of the Bully tree used for cable covering and insulation, as well as the gold mines. Since 1889 Dutch industry and in particular telegraphy were increasingly fuelling a demand for balata from the West Indies and in 1910 this product made up almost 40% of Suriname's exports. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, however, the balata production collapsed in the face of harsh competition from the Dutch East Indies and due to the growth of wireless telegraphy (Verschuuren 1994:67-8). In a similar vein the export of gold, mined in Dutch Guyana since 1718 and occupying an important position in external trade between 1870 and 1908, began to experience severe difficulties from the end of World War I as the industry steadily lost significance. The last gold mine closed down in 1969 (Vogel 1992:133-4).

By contrast, the mining of bauxite would gain a paramount position in Suriname's export trade from the 1940s. Although the Aluminium Company of America (Alcoa), through its subsidiary *Surinaamse Bauxiet Maatschappij* (SBM, Suriname Bauxite Company), had begun to mine bauxite at Moengo as early as 1916 and the Dutch Billiton company had started activities along the Suriname river near Paramaribo early in 1940, it was only with America's involvement in World War II that the extraction of this raw material emerged as the principal pillar of the Surinamese economy (Vogel 1992:134). During this war, bauxite exports contributed 83.5% of the value of Suriname's external trade, turning the country into the world's leading bauxite producer, until Jamaica eventually took this position in 1957. However, despite this new and emerging economic sector, before and during the war the industry's overall financial contribution to the colony's treasury remained limited – the main reason being The Hague's ambiguous attitude, which revealed itself in placing the interests of the Dutch East Indies above those of the West.

This was clearly visible in a conflict between Royal Dutch Shell and US Standard Oil in the pre-WWII period, with both companies competing for access to important oilfields in Sumatra. The Hague eventually granted Shell permission to explore the oilfields in the East; in an effort to appease Washington's irritation it compromised in the West, the upshot being that the colonial government in Paramaribo was forced, under Dutch instruction, to assure Alcoa that it would not raise the low taxes and duties on bauxite exploitation for another sixty years. According to Buddingh' (2001:76): 'This extremely favourable contract allowed Alcoa to make super profits, which exceeded the Surinamese governmental budget by far. The investments made by the company between 1916 and 1935 were regained within one year.'

Whereas initially the bauxite was simply mined in the colony and then shipped to the United States for further processing, facilities to convert bauxite

into alumina and aluminium were eventually established within Suriname. In order to supply the power for this industry, in 1958 the colonial government signed an agreement with Alcoa, allowing the American concern to construct a large hydroelectric dam at Brokopondo for the planned processing facilities in Paranam. In 1965, after five years of construction, the Brokopondo scheme was complete and although falling short of its predicted capacity and displacing about 5,000 Maroons from their traditional land, the Afobaka Dam, as the project became known, provided significant employment opportunities for many Surinamese, while generating electricity for the Paramaribo region. In return, Suralco, the former SBM, profited from the agreement as new mining concessions were extended to an additional 75 years, import duties on necessary equipment were even further reduced and, once again, favourable export taxes were introduced (Meel 1999:271-7). The export of bauxite finally gained such a significant position in the colony's socio-economic activities that the Surinamese guilder (*Sf*) was pegged to the US dollar since the global trade of this raw material was largely conducted in this currency (Verschuuren 1994:100).

Despite these substantial investments by Alcoa and Billiton, expectations that the bauxite industry would have a big push effect on Suriname's overall socio-economic situation did not materialize. Even though almost 10% of the Surinamese labour force actually found employment in the bauxite sector, the industry's contribution to the national budget continued to be meagre even in the post-war period, caused by the persistent low tax level the government had imposed on alumina and aluminium exports (Meel 1999:281). In a bid to attract other potential foreign investors with the objective of diversifying the colony's economic basis, from 1947 onwards the Netherlands provided financial aid in the form of a socio-economic Welvaartsfonds (Welfare Fund) for Suriname, designed to improve the country's infrastructure. By 1954 *Nf* 40 million had been spent on various projects, including housing developments and schemes directed at providing credit for small businesses, particularly on ventures intended to strengthen the rice-farming sector (Meel 1999:259-61).

With the ending of the Welfare Fund The Hague announced a Ten Year Plan consisting of *Sf*. 124 million, to which it initially contributed two-thirds (half loan, half grant) with Suriname making up the other third. However, as Paramaribo began to experience liquidation problems, funds made available by the European Economic Community (EEC) were used to cover Suriname's contribution. The main objective of this scheme, as outlined by the Stichting Planbureau Suriname (National Planning Office – a body modelled on the Dutch Social and Economic Council), was to modernize the agricultural, transport and communication sector as well as improving public health and educational facilities (Meel 1999:261-70).

Successive Five Year Plans in 1967 and 1972 were supported by The Hague with Nf 240 million (again half loan and half grant) and Nf 400 million (40% loan and 60% grant) respectively. Both schemes were designed to strengthen the aims outlined in the previous Ten Year Plan, which had focused on lowering unemployment and restructuring the administrative sector (Verschuuren 1994:104-16). The financial assistance thus received was cherished to such a high degree by local politicians and business people that critics of this policy used the term *foetoeboi* (errand boy/servant) to denounce the myopic focus on international capital, skills, technology and the global export and import markets. The interests of the local population, in contrast, seemed to play only a subordinate role, as was illustrated when the Dutch wood-processing company Bruynzeel was granted generous concessions, a gesture displacing many Amerindians and Maroons from their traditional areas while clearing large sections of Surinamese forest.

The winding path towards political independence

Meanwhile, in both the socio-economic sphere and the political field the Dutch government continued to exercise significant control. Since initially local participation in politics remained restricted to educated and wealthy citizens, the Koloniale Staten was a flawed vehicle for communicating the wishes of the general public to the Governor. This situation did change as voting rights were gradually extended and between 1908 and 1926 a number of Creole parliamentarians formed the Eendracht Maakt Macht (EMM, Power of Unity) movement, in doing so slowly gaining control in the Koloniale Staten. Since the EMM could not be classified as a political party – it rather functioned as a pressure group – the emerging Creole working class organized unions to articulate its political and socio-economic views. Particularly during the Depression of the 1930s, these unions became influential bodies demanding changes in the colony's industrial and social policies. In this context, the performance of resistance fighter and anti-colonialist Anton de Kom, who had been influenced by socialist ideas during his stay in the Netherlands before returning to his home country, was outstanding as he devoted his life to improving Suriname's general living and labour conditions (Meel 1999:226).

Whereas this pre-war period was characterized by Dutch attempts to contain 'communist' agitation of unions and individuals such as De Kom, fresh impulses in the political process were gained as Queen Wilhelmina, during her wartime exile in London, showed a willingness to reform colonial relations after the war. The monarch proposed 'a commonwealth of the Netherlands, Indonesia, Suriname and Curaçao, with each overseas territory looking after its own affairs in internal autonomy and relying on its own

strength, but in reciprocal assistance' (Oostindie and Klinkers 2001, I:36).

The arrival of coloured American troops to protect Suriname's important bauxite industry was another factor boosting self-confidence among Creoles. In 1943 the Unie Suriname (Union Suriname) was set up to defend their 'privileged' standing against Governor Kielstra's efforts to improve the situation of the Asian communities.⁵ As a direct response to the Union Suriname, the Hindustanis founded their first political parties in 1946, most of which by 1949 had merged to form the Verenigde Hindostaanse Partij (VHP, United Hindostani Party; later renamed Vooruitstrevende Hervormings Partij, Progressive Reform Party). Meanwhile, the leaders of the Union Suriname established the Nationale Partij Suriname (NPS, National Party of Suriname), representing the interests of the Protestant Creoles while the Roman Catholics were united in the Progressieve Surinaamse Volkspartij (PSV, Progressive Suriname People's Party). Finally, in 1947, from various Javanese pressure groups emerged the Kaum Tani Persatuan Indonesia (KTPI, Indonesian Peasants' Union), to act on behalf of all Indonesians living in Suriname (Derveld 1982:36-9).

The most interesting aspect with regard to the development of these parties, as Stan Verschuuren (1994:93-4) has argued, was that these political organizations (often led by wealthy representatives of the respective cultural group) were all founded on racial and religious grounds; they thus tended to share similar political ideologies while seeking benefits for their own ethnic communities. As a result, a patron-client relationship between politicians and their voters emerged based on the parties' ability to further the interests of their respective cultural group (for example, by providing employment within the civil service), in turn leading to a loyal support substructure endorsing their own ethnic-religious politicians at election times. Dew (1988:130) described this phenomenon as *apanjaht* politics, meaning 'the practice of voting for your own race, your own kind'. Even though the main negative aspect of this political system was obviously the division of the population into ethnic and cultural rivals, *apanjahtism* also contributed to maintaining a group identity against the otherwise overwhelming Dutch dominance.

The Netherlands showed little enthusiasm in meeting representatives of these parties to discuss the colony's future status. Suriname's wish for a Ronde Tafel Conferentie (RTC, Round Table Conference) following the war was initially rejected, primarily due to dramatic events unfolding in the

⁵ In contrast to the Hindustanis and Javanese, the Creoles were more Dutch 'oriented' and therefore found it easier to adjust to the assimilation policy which The Hague had forced on to the colony since the abolition of slavery. Johannes Coenraad Kielstra, Governor of Suriname between 1933-1944, abandoned this assimilation policy and instead encouraged the Hindustanis and Javanese to follow and practise their own culture, religion and language, see Oostindie 2000:133.

Dutch East Indies.⁶ Nevertheless, by 1948, The Hague had succumbed to the pressure exerted by both Paramaribo and the Netherlands Antilles, spurred on by an anti-colonial atmosphere in Latin America led by Venezuela⁷ and strengthened by the Atlantic Charter of 1941.⁸ In 1948 the first RTC was organized in The Hague, consisting of twelve representatives from the Netherlands, eight from Suriname and eight from the Netherlands Antilles. Although this conference dealt only with the colonies' internal structures, the talks resulted in considerable socio-economic and internal political autonomy as outlined in the *Statenregeling* (State Regulation) of 1948 and reconfirmed in the *Interimregeling* (Interim Regulation) of 1950.⁹

Suriname's general elections of 1949 and 1951 – for the first time based on the principle of universal franchise – were conducted in the spirit of political autonomy as agreed upon during the Round Table Conference. The Creole NPS emerged victorious because the 'first past the post' principle favoured its candidates in the urban areas above the representatives of other ethnic groups, who were largely residing in the rural districts.¹⁰ Nonetheless, given the tensions between the Creole party's main factions – one headed by union leader Johan (Jopie) Pengel, and the other by David Findlay, a representative of the old elite – the elections of 1955 were won by Findlay's newly formed *Surinaamse Democratische Partij* (SDP, Surinamese Democratic Party) in coalition with the *Partij Suriname* (PS, Party of Suriname), KTPI and PSV (Derveld 1982:49).

To regain control, Pengel realized he needed broader support in the *Staten* (successor to the *Koloniale Staten*) and found a willing partner in VHP leader Jagernath Lachmon, at the time working as a lawyer for the *Moederbond*,

⁶ The Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia, which unilaterally declared itself independent on 17-8-1945, were involved in an ongoing conflict. Eventually, the Netherlands had to accept Indonesia's independence on 27-12-1949, for an excellent analysis of this period, see Van Den Doel 2001.

⁷ Calling for the independence of all 'foreign' administered territories in the region. From the early 1920s until the end of World War II Venezuela saw a steady rise in oil production, which substantially boosted government revenue. By 1930 the country had paid off its foreign national debt and by the early 1940s the Medina administration successfully began to increase the government's share of crude oil profits, thus raising its power over the petrol-based multinational companies. This provided Venezuela with considerable prestige among other developing nations and colonial territories, see Ewell 1984:63-8.

⁸ In which American President Franklin Roosevelt pressed for the right of self-determination in colonial societies, see Meel 1999:31.

⁹ Meel 1999:37-41. Since The Hague was unsure of the possibility of continuing the *Verenigde Staten van Indonesië* (United States of Indonesia) or the *Nederlands-Indonesische Unie* (Dutch-Indonesian Union) it was unwilling to agree to final regulations outlining Dutch constitutional relations with the Netherlands Antilles and Suriname, see Meel 1999:31.

¹⁰ It should be noted that the Dutch voting system was – and still is – based on the principle of 'proportional representation'. During the first RTC, however, the NPS successfully lobbied for the introduction of the 'first past the post' system to ensure its victory in the forthcoming elections.

the General Alliance of Labour Unions in Suriname, established in 1952 by Pengel. As a result, between 1958 and 1967 Suriname was ruled in the spirit of 'Fraternization' by a NPS-VHP coalition, supported by the PSV and KTPI (Hendrickson 1984:262). During this period, the government promoted harmony between ethnic groups, for example by increasing the number of Hindustanis and Javanese employed in the civil service and by changing Emancipatiedag (Emancipation Day, the 1st of July), in commemoration of the abolition of slavery, to a so-called Dag der Vrijheden (Freedoms Day), to be celebrated by all ethnic groups. Moreover, a new national flag, anthem and coat of arms were introduced to emphasize Suriname's unity (Meel 1994:642).

Later initiatives were also directed against The Hague, in a bid to demonstrate Suriname's resentment against several aspects of the Statuut voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden (Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands), concluded in 1954 between Suriname, the Netherlands Antilles and the Netherlands, particularly with regard to the Kingdom's foreign relations. Although the Charter recognized Suriname's internal autonomy and, at least in theory, mentioned that the three Kingdom partners enjoyed an equal status, it also confirmed The Hague's responsibility for defence matters, trade and international finance (Oostindie and Klinkers 2003:85). Furthermore, The Hague had successfully established control over the territories' foreign affairs and excluded their right to unilaterally withdraw from the Charter, a clause proposed by Suriname's representative primarily for reasons of 'prestige' (Ooft 1976:9).

It was only with reluctance that Suriname had accepted the Charter – primarily on account of The Hague's continued financial support – and before long dissatisfaction with Dutch foreign policy arose. This was specifically the case since the metropolitan government rejected Suriname's demand to act more firmly against South Africa's apartheid regime and instead abstained from UN motions condemning Pretoria (Meel 1994:643). Paramaribo's subsequent push for talks with The Hague on the right to follow an independent foreign policy failed, as the coalition government was threatened with collapse in late 1960. Within the VHP the fear then prevailed that the Creoles, in their effort to gain more freedom from the Netherlands, were ignoring the interests of the other ethnic groups, who actually favoured Suriname's continued participation in the Dutch Kingdom (Meel 1994:643-4). Following the 1967 elections, tensions within the NPS-VHP coalition grew as Lachmon's demand for additional VHP seats in the cabinet, based on an increase of the party's representation in the Staten, was rejected by Pengel, who preferred a coalition with the smaller Actie Groep (AG, Action Group) and SDP instead (Dew 1978:151).

The calculation by the NPS that the new coalition would prove easier to handle misfired as the SDP and AG not only threatened to abandon the

prestigious Torarica project – a hydroelectric and irrigation scheme along the Suriname River – due to the high costs involved, but also rejected any move towards independence. On top of that, the new government was seriously shaken, firstly by the death of AG chairman Persoewan Chandieshaw (which paralyzed the party due to internal conflict) and secondly by Pengel attracting severe public criticism as a result of granting government contracts to friends and substantially increasing his own salary with the justification that he was heading three ministries: General Affairs, Internal Affairs and Finance. The final blow came as the Prime Minister organized a seventy-delegates strong team to travel abroad to promote Surinamese trade relations while at the same time refusing to implement the promised wage increase to teachers, bowing to Dutch pressure to cut budget spending. Faced with strikes by the teachers' union, Pengel eventually resigned in February 1969; new general elections were called for the end of that year (Dew 1978:152-5).

These elections were won by the *Progressieve Nationale Partij* (PNP, Progressive National Party) led by Jules Sedney in coalition with the VHP, AG, *Sarekat Rakjat Indonesia* (SRI, Indonesian People's Party), PSV, KTPI and *Progressieve Bosneger Partij* (PBP, Progressive Bush Negro Party). The first aim of the Sedney cabinet was to enhance the relatively weak position of the Asian part of the population by, for instance, declaring that the dates of important religious Hindu and Muslim festivals would become national holidays (Dew 1978:160). Secondly, the new government attempted to attract foreign investors by establishing joint ventures with multinational corporations, thus improving the country's infrastructure and relaxing tax laws (Verschuuren 1994:114-5). Thirdly, and in contrast to most British Caribbean territories,¹¹ the notion of constitutional independence from the Netherlands was rejected for, as Lachmon claimed, at least another 25 years (Bakker et al. 1993:137).

As unemployment began to rise (over 15% by 1971) and migration emerged as a critical political issue – between 1964 and 1971 62,000 people left the country, 57,000 of whom settled in the Netherlands – the Sedney administration came under pressure from the Creole-dominated unions. Through coordinated strikes they opposed the government's economic policy, accusing it of primarily serving the interests of the multinational corporations. In this context, the influence of the Black Power Movement on the Creole workers cannot be ignored, particularly when it is borne in mind

¹¹ Whereas Paris had incorporated its Caribbean possessions into French overseas *Départements*, thus ensuring continued control, London, by contrast, was actively seeking to decolonize its territories. This process began in August 1962, with Jamaica gaining independence along with Trinidad and Tobago, and would last until the early 1980s, when Belize was granted sovereignty. Today, in fact, Great Britain controls only several smaller islands. Thus Lachmon's request for Suriname's continued participation in the Dutch Kingdom was in stark contrast to the position taken by most British Caribbean leaders, see Clark 1992:33.

that its political activists repeatedly managed to inspire Creole opposition to the Hindustani-dominated government (Dew 1978:161-8). The consequences of this increasing tension were eventually reflected in the 1973 elections, as the Nationale Partij Kombinatie (NPK, National Party Combination), composed of the NPS, Partij van de Nationalistische Republiek (PNR, National Republican Party), PSV and KTPI, won a clear mandate by calling for higher wages and the implementation of employment-generating investments (Verschuuren 1994:116-7).

More importantly, however, with the NPK's victory, a favourable political climate was established, enabling new Prime Minister Henk Arron (a former bank official of Creole background) to take the step of asking for Suriname's immediate independence (Dew 1974:20-1). The origin of this development, which would eventually lead to Suriname's rather sudden withdrawal from the Charter, can be found, as Meel (1994:650-2) has argued, in the emergence of cultural nationalism during the 1950s and its subsequent transformation into political nationalism in the 1960s. Whereas in the first two decades after World War II political parties had primarily been interested in gaining more autonomy in internal affairs, they had generally dismissed the notion of full sovereignty – the colony was simply too dependent on Dutch financial support, its local elite too strongly influenced by Dutch cultural values and its population too fragmented into separate ethnic communities (Verschuuren 1994:93). In reaction to the government's plans many Javanese, for example, expressed the wish to return to their homeland, rejecting the prospect of establishing themselves permanently in an independent Suriname (Derveld 1982:22).

Nevertheless, despite dismissing sovereignty as a serious option, cultural nationalism emerged as an influential force after World War II under the charismatic leadership of Eddy Bruma. In 1950 Bruma established the Amsterdam-based cultural foundation *Wi Egi Sani* (Our Own Things) and introduced this movement to the colony in the mid-1950s. By 1959 Bruma managed to combine cultural and political nationalism in the founding of the Nationalistische Beweging Suriname (NBS, Nationalist Suriname Movement) (Meel 1999:187), with the main objective of opposing Dutch cultural domination through the emancipation of Surinamese culture while promoting the national language *Sranan Tongo*, which was eventually used for the new national anthem (Meel 1994:651-2).

Frustrated by the weak performance of the NPS-VHP coalition during the subsequent RTC held in 1961 – where Paramaribo failed to achieve more political freedom in foreign affairs – Bruma was able to transform cultural nationalism into a vocal political and socio-economic force by founding the PNR, whose primary aim was the establishment of the sovereign Republic of Suriname. Denounced as 'communist' at the peak of the Cold War, the PNR

attracted little electoral support and only in 1969 would its first representative gain a seat in the Staten (Meel 1994:652-7). In order to broaden the party's support, Bruma recognized the political importance of the Creole working class and, as a result, organized the unions Centrale 47 (C-47, Central 47; a federation comprising 47 unions) and Centrale Landsdienaren Organisatie (CLO, Civil Servants Association) in 1970 and 1971 respectively. This enabled him to attack the socio-economic policy of the VHP-PNP government (Meel 1994:657).

At the same time the NPS, now led by Arron – following Pengel's death in 1970 – shared the opposition benches with the PNR and in a similar manner rejected the Sedney administration's policies by stimulating industrial actions through its own associated union the Moederbond. More importantly, with regard to the issue of constitutional independence, the NPS had meanwhile moved considerably closer to the PNR. In fact, during the 1973 election campaign Arron announced that he would push for full sovereignty by 1975. He made this announcement for several reasons: to win the votes of those with nationalistic tendencies, to advance the new partnership with the PNR and to enhance the feeling of belonging to a cross-cultural nation (Meel 1994:657; Oostindie 1996:218-9).

As Surinamese nationalism gained in strength, the political climate in the Netherlands also changed, now favouring the decolonization of its remaining overseas territories. Whereas the Dutch had initially incorporated their colonies into the political structure of the Kingdom as outlined in the Charter of 1954 – thus rejecting the idea of granting independence to their Caribbean possessions – in the late 1960s The Hague drastically altered its position. As Anthony Payne (1984:176) has pointed out, firstly, the Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA, Dutch Labour Party) and other Dutch socialist organizations became increasingly concerned that the Netherlands, particularly in the Developing World, would likely be characterized as being a heavy-handed colonialist nation. Due to this concern, matters pertaining to developing countries gained in importance within Dutch foreign policy, along with issues relating to human rights, disarmament and democracy – thus allowing a small state like the Netherlands, according to Ken Gladdish (1991:176), to achieve some international visibility. Secondly, as Payne (1984:105) argued:

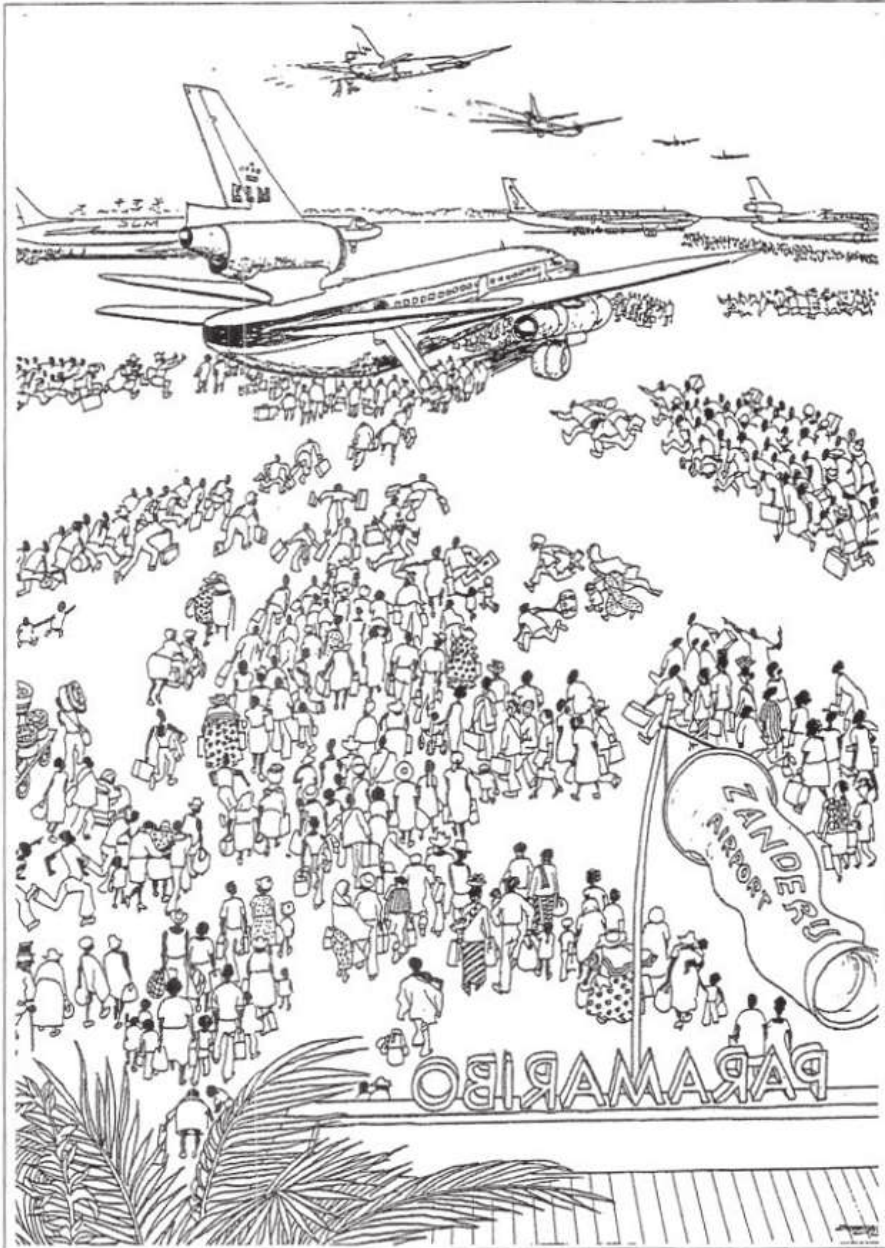
the Tripartite scheme [the Charter] did not succeed in insulating the government and people of the Netherlands from Caribbean problems. High unemployment, low wage levels and the absence of effective welfare provisions produced a steady flow of immigrants from Suriname to Holland, attracted by the prospect of greater economic opportunities. From the late 1960s onwards, the numbers seeking to settle in Europe increased sharply, reaching a total of nearly 150,000 by 1975, and included not only members of the Surinamese elite, but people of all races and from all levels of society, including the working-class.

These two developments in favour of decolonization gained considerable significance following riots in the Netherlands Antilles in mid-1969. On 30 May 1969, a workers' protest against the automation process at the Shell oil refinery on Curaçao led to violent clashes with the police in which two people were killed. In addition there were many arson attacks in the capital, Willemstad. Under the Charter The Hague had little choice but to fly in marines to restore peace and order. Although this was achieved within days of the soldiers' arrival, the operation resulted in harsh criticism – both at home and internationally – comparing the Dutch action with colonial policies of the previous century (Jong and Ten Napel 1988:14-5). Surprised by the events of May 1969, the Netherlands began to realize that responsibility for its Caribbean territories increasingly became a heavy burden, especially since political and socio-economic developments in the Dutch Caribbean were to some extent beyond the control of the metropole. This realization gained even more importance because Dutch membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Community (EC)¹² signalled a departure from the empirical foreign policy of the pre-war period, shifting, instead, towards a North Atlantic-European centred approach of dealing with international affairs (Gladdish 1991:165-7).

Under these opportune political conditions, in his government programme the newly elected Prime Minister Arron (1974:5) announced that Suriname's sovereignty would be gained no later than 1975. Even though the Dutch and Surinamese ruling parties enthusiastically welcomed this declaration, the local population reacted less favourably. In response, many began to join the growing transatlantic stream of migrants who would rather live in the relatively stable environment of the Netherlands than in the unpredictable situation of their homeland. The following cartoon reflects the mood of those literally rushing to Zanderij Airport to board one of the Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij (KLM, Royal Dutch Airlines) flights bound for Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport in the final months before the end of more than three hundred years of Dutch rule.

Among these migrants was an increasing number of Asians 'escaping' from the newly independent country; many were anxious about the fact that no Hindustanis were represented in the NPS-PNR coalition while not one Creole was seated on the opposition benches (Dew 1974:20). This political polarization between the two largest ethnic communities gave rise to the anxiety felt by the Hindustanis, who envisaged subordination in a nation dominated by Creoles. As Dew (1978:179) argued:

¹² The creation of the EC was the direct result of the incorporation of the European Community for Coal and Steel, the European Atom Community and the former European Economic Community into one European organization on 1-7-1967.



Cartoon 1. The fear of independence (Bakker et al. 1993:137)

In addition to socio-economic motives which earlier research had found behind most of the migration, a new political motive – fear – was added. After 1973, the number of Creoles emigrating continued to rise, but the rate of Hindustani emigration rose still more rapidly. In 1974, for the first time, Hindustanis constituted a majority of those leaving the country.

The alarm expressed by many Asians is more understandable in view of the ordeal they had undergone in the former British colony of Guyana a decade earlier. A Hindustani shopkeeper, in answer to the question of a journalist of *The New York Times* (26-1-1975:F79) as to why he was planning to leave (Suriname), stated: 'Why ... the Creoles were hardly in power when they started to control prices and take over the economy. You only have to look next door to Guyana and see what will happen here in a short while.'

Indeed, Suriname's neighbour Guyana, likewise characterized by an *apanjaht* system, had experienced serious racially inspired political violence during the last days under British rule. The Hindustanis, organized in the PPP, People's Progressive Party under the leadership of Cheddi Jagan, had not only lost their political control following the general elections of 1964, but the ruling People's National Congress (PNC) of Forbes Burnham, representing the interests of the Creoles, had begun to exclude the ethnic opposition from influential positions as they gradually established a Creole-dominated authoritarian regime following the transfer of sovereignty (D'Agostino 2003:112). Many Surinamese Asians had observed the situation in Guyana and, expecting a similar development in their own country, decided to move to the Netherlands.

Despite the enormous socio-economic costs incurred by this exodus, with many skilled and educated Surinamese leaving (Dew 1973:10), and with the strong possibility of an outbreak of racial violence, neither the government (favouring a withdrawal from the Kingdom) nor the opposition (rejecting the idea of independence) was willing to take any steps to ease this uncertain political climate. Instead, tensions within the Staten increased when in May 1974 Arron opened discussions with the Netherlands relating to a transfer of sovereignty. Strengthened by economic successes such as the establishment of the International Bauxite Association (IBA) in the spring of 1974 (in which Suriname's Development Minister Frank Essed had played a decisive role), the signing of agreements with Suralco and Billiton (acquired by Royal Dutch Shell) regarding increased taxes on bauxite exports and the conclusion of a bauxite versus oil trade agreement with Venezuela, Arron felt comfortable about meeting the Dutch delegation for discussions on the country's political future (Dew 1978:178-81).

Similarly, Arron felt confident enough to reject the opposition's demands for several conditions to be met before the VHP would be willing to support Suriname's decolonization. These conditions primarily included the Staten to

be elected on the basis of proportional representation, the promise of new elections to be held shortly after independence, the military to be made up of a cross section of Suriname's ethnic composition and the requirement of a two-thirds majority in parliament for the nationalization of private enterprises and for the appointment of the Vice-President (Dew 1978:193).

Even though Lachmon's bargaining position had improved in the Staten following the defection of three NPS delegates from the government in the wake of disagreements on the issue of independence (thus resulting in a 19-19 stalemate in parliament in June 1975), Suriname's decolonization appeared to be an unstoppable process. Despite the new situation in the Staten and the repeated warnings of the possibility of racially inspired turmoil by the opposition, The Hague showed no intention of responding positively to Lachmon's suggestion that decolonization be delayed. Instead, the Netherlands actively encouraged Suriname to declare itself independent in the short term, while offering a generous financial aid package. According to Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation Jan Pronk, 'aid is one of the few political levers available to the Netherlands to further independence' (Oostindie and Klinkers 2001, II:200).

In view of the Dutch hurry to get the transfer of sovereignty over and done with, it came as no surprise that The Hague accepted Arron's proclaimed date for independence: 25 November 1975 (Dew 1978:183-5). This strong commitment to the decolonization process was illustrated very clearly as Dutch Prime Minister Joop den Uyl (PvdA) refused to be intimidated by arson attacks in Paramaribo (independence opponents set fire to government buildings) during his visit to Paramaribo in May 1975 to initiate the final phase of bilateral negotiations on Suriname's withdrawal from the Kingdom. In fact, Den Uyl declared that he had moved closer to reaching an agreement with Arron during this visit, promising that the Netherlands would maintain a 'special relationship' with Suriname following independence. *The New York Times* reported on the progress of the talks between Den Uyl and Arron:

Main issues under discussion [were] the amount of Dutch aid to an independent Surinam and how it [was] to be spent; the problem of travel to the Netherlands by Surinamese, who [are] now considered Dutch citizens with unrestricted entry; and the defence of Surinam's borders, which [are] disputed by neighbouring Guyana (*The New York Times* 22-5-1975:12.)

During subsequent meetings these three issues – money, migration and defence – were eventually resolved as The Hague agreed to provide approximately Nf 3.5 billion in financial aid, while allowing Surinamese citizens to travel freely to the metropole for another five years (following this period they would have to choose between Surinamese or Dutch nationality) and agree-

ing to assist Suriname on a diplomatic level in its border disputes – although refusing to safeguard the country's borders militarily (Oostindie and Klinkers 2001, II:155-8).

This was a generous agreement in many respects and as such it contrasted sharply with the way the Netherlands had reacted to the prospect of Indonesian independence – after a long and bitter military struggle following World War II the Netherlands had finally withdrawn from Irian Java (West New Guinea) in 1962 (Weil 1970:216-7). In comparison, as, Robertico Croes and Lucita Moenir Alam (1990:91) pointed out, the Netherlands moved with a remarkable speed to secure the decolonization of the West Indian territories through an almost 'aggressive, at times even arrogant and condescending' approach aimed at thrusting the Dutch Caribbean into independence as quickly as possible.¹³

In the Surinamese context, this was exemplified in the brief actual decolonization process itself, beginning with the Haagse Protocol (Protocol of The Hague) of May 1974, in which Suriname's intention of withdrawing from the Kingdom was acknowledged, and resulting in a series of top-level meetings between Dutch and Surinamese representatives, particularly in the first half of 1975. It is interesting to note that Suriname's decolonization occurred without a popular referendum being held.

The 1973 elections could hardly serve as an indication that the Surinamese public favoured independence by voting for the NPK. Rather, due to the very nature of *apanjaht* politics, the electorates tended to vote for their respective ethnic parties and were less swayed by political issues. Moreover, as journalist Ro Persad pointed out in the Surinamese newspaper *De Ware Tijd* (25-11-2005:A9), in the NPK's printed campaign programme for the 1973 elections no reference was made to the possibility of Suriname becoming independent.

Besides these recent internal developments the Surinamese were surprised by the political atmosphere in the Netherlands on the issue of decolonization. Governor Johan Ferrier would hear about Suriname becoming independent for the first time while on a private visit to the Netherlands. Listening to Den Uyl's inauguration speech on the radio on 23 May 1973, in which the Dutch Prime Minister announced that Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles should receive independence within the following four years, Ferrier was astonished and disappointed that the Netherlands was literally 'pushing' Suriname out of the Dutch Kingdom (Jansen van Galen 2005:83).

Not only was the speed of the decolonization process surprising, but also

¹³ Parallels may be drawn here between the Dutch-Surinamese situation and events marking Australian-Papuan New Guinean relations. Just months before Suriname gained its independence, the Australian Labour Party led by Gough Whitlam withdrew from its overseas possession with the promise of a generous aid package, despite reservations about independence expressed by the Papuan New Guinean population, see Johnson 1983:245-6.

the fact that many details outlining the country's transition to sovereignty were agreed upon without the Surinamese opposition parties having a say. Faced with the risk of being completely excluded from these negotiations – due to the Staten's inactivity caused by the stalemate and to the VHP's intention of boycotting the debates in the States General – opposition leader Lachmon eventually changed his tactics and decided to participate in the parliamentary debate in The Hague in October 1975, to which members of the Surinamese Staten were invited. However, all attempts by VHP delegates to stop the decolonization process were dismissed by Dutch parliamentarians. Even though some concerns were expressed about the absence of a Constitution for the new Republic, the House of Representatives accepted Suriname's independence with 106 to 5 votes while the Eerste Kamer (Senate) passed the bill with 53 to 11 votes (Oostindie and Klinkers 2001, II:139-40).

On their return, Arron and Lachmon began searching for a compromise that should satisfy the VHP's earlier demands. Lachmon was forced to support the ongoing independence process not only because The Hague had voted in favour of Suriname's independence in the short term, but also because a VHP member of the Staten had meanwhile decided to support the move towards sovereignty – thus making it impossible for the opposition to block the independence bill. Events unfolded rapidly. Some amendments to the bill were made relating to the ethnic composition of the military as well as the government promise to hold new elections soon after independence and to study the proposal for proportional representation. The opposition accepted the newly drafted Constitution following a series of marathon debates in the Staten between 16 and 19 November 1975 and in doing so accepted independence for their country.

Finally, at midnight, November 25, the Dutch and old Surinam flags were lowered, and Independence became a reality with the hoisting of the new. The next morning, before a host of visiting dignitaries [including Crown Princess Beatrix and Minister President Den Uyl], the members of the *Staten* – now Parliament – of Surinam met once again to install Governor J.H.E. Ferrier as President and formally proclaimed the Republic of Surinam an independent state. (Dew 1978:190-6.)

In retrospect it can be observed that Suriname's political and socio-economic institutions developed under considerable influence from its former colonial master, the Netherlands. It was The Hague, in competition with other European states, that decided on Suriname's present borders with neighbouring territories, thus defining the country's physical composition. In the same vein, Dutch commercial and business circles determined the country's economic structures by first establishing a cash-crop colony, and later, through investments in companies such as Billiton and Bruynzeel (in addition to the American company Alcoa), exploiting Suriname's natural resources

in response to the demands of European and American markets. Moreover, Dutch colonial officials controlled the demographic formation of Surinamese society by introducing slaves from West Africa and later Hindustani and Javanese contract workers, in order to provide plantation owners and mining companies with a cheap labour force. Finally, in the political sphere, the Netherlands played a paramount role in setting up and dominating the local administration during the pre-war period. Following the announcement of the Charter in 1954 it would continue to influence developments in the colony, primarily through regulating its financial contributions to the Surinamese budget. Confronted with this colonial legacy, the question arises as to what extent Suriname's political and socio-economic foundations were able to fulfil the aspirations held by its citizens at the transition to independence on 25 November 1975.

CHAPTER II

Independent in name only

Suriname is a small country – at least when measured with an economic yardstick – and it occupies a fairly isolated position with regard to both the Caribbean region and its neighbouring countries. Precisely due to that position of being small and poor, one may assume that also as a politically independent country, Suriname will, economically speaking, remain strongly dependent on foreign countries. (Ooft 1976:28.)

The official announcement of independence on 25 November 1975 opened a new chapter in Suriname's history. The transfer of sovereignty enabled the new Republic to interact with other states and international organizations in line with its own national interests and without interference from the former mother country. However, after over three hundred years of colonial rule the socially fragmented, economically underdeveloped and politically volatile country experienced difficulties in adopting a stable position in what – for Suriname – was an entirely new international environment. As an outpost on the South American mainland surrounded by Latin societies yet distant from the Caribbean islands with which more features were shared, the young Republic made very little progress in integrating into its geopolitical domain.

Instead, right from the start, Suriname's foreign policy focused almost exclusively on the Netherlands. After all, strong socio-cultural relations existed between the two countries; not only were the Dutch language and values widely accepted within Surinamese society, the Netherlands also continued to be perceived as a stable and wealthy guide, an alluring image that among many Surinamese actually fuelled the desire to migrate to the former mother country. In addition, the 'golden handshake' as agreed upon during Dutch-Surinamese independence negotiations only stimulated long-term dependency on the Netherlands while colonial structures, primarily serving vested business interests in Europe and the United States, were maintained – an undesirable situation that would eventually culminate in a military coup by Surinamese nationalists on 25 February 1980. In the wake of the subsequent shift towards a 'revolutionary' policy, the Dutch hold on Suriname began to wane until bilateral relations deteriorated to such an extent, following the December Murders of 1982, that the Netherlands suspended the 1975 Aid Treaty and

stopped its payments. For the first time in the country's history, Suriname had not only gained *de jure* but – involuntarily – also *de facto* independence.

Creation of the Surinamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs

A short outline of Suriname's political structures, including an analysis of the establishment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is necessary for an understanding of the Republic's international activities following the transfer of sovereignty. The Grondwet (Constitution) adopted on 24 November 1975 delineated Suriname's parliamentary system, with legislative power vested in a Parlement (Parliament), the former Staten, whose representatives were elected by universal suffrage. Parliament, in turn, chose the cabinet members (upon recommendation of the Prime Minister), who in their turn were responsible to the Staten. Parliament also elected the President, a largely symbolic figurehead representing the country from a position above party lines, leaving executive matters to the government (Fernandes Mendes 1989:299-303).

Although these arrangements were generally upheld as a sound constitutional foundation (due to the separation of executive, legislative and judicial powers), the weak point was, as Chin and Buddingh' (1987:90) have emphasized, that Suriname's Constitution 'adopted almost word-for-word [...] that of the Netherlands, with a ceremonial president substituted for the monarch'. While Hugo Fernandes Mendes (2001:117) appreciated Paramaribo's decision to implement a parliamentary-based democracy – rather than, for example, a presidential-based system – he similarly concluded that Suriname's political structures had evolved from those of the Netherlands: 'The choice for a system of parliamentary democracy resulted from the desire for continuity. It ensured that the gradual constitutional development of the country was not disrupted.' Since this constitutional development had been founded and introduced by a distant colonial power, it must be noted that Suriname was embracing and advancing the Constitution of a foreign nation whose political traditions, economic framework and socio-cultural characteristics differed sharply from its own.

The upshot of emulating the Dutch Constitution was that the transition from a colony to a sovereign state involved remarkably few constitutional modifications – these seemed to consist solely of expanding the Arron administration's responsibilities, including the right to conduct an independent foreign and defence policy, two aspects previously under the auspices of the Netherlands as outlined in the Charter. Moreover, the title of Governor Ferrier was simply changed to that of President, a rare occasion in modern history whereby a Governor, representing the interests of a distant European power,

overnight became the former colony's new head of state – now representing the aspirations and hopes of a new nation. Cynically, it may even be argued that the most visible change during the night of 24 to 25 November 1975 was the hoisting of the new Surinamese national flag.

A similar 'invisible' process was recognizable in the manner in which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was founded. Again, a strong orientation towards the Netherlands can be noted. In fact, Suriname's first and only 'international' post during the pre-independence period had been established in The Hague, in November 1947. The reason for forming this 'embassy' had been the notion in the Staten that the colony's interests were inadequately represented among Dutch politicians and civil servants. In the words of then Staten member Emile de la Fuente:

Suriname can no longer let itself be spoon-fed by The Hague, which without knowledge of the factual local situation makes arrangements that are contrary to our interests. Now we are placing a representative in the Netherlands who will stand up for our interests [...] making known the many opportunities this rich country has to offer. (Alihusain 2005:1.)

The first Surinamese 'diplomat' Raymond Pos held the position of (General) Representative of Suriname in the Netherlands from 1947 until 29 December 1954, after which he would continue as Suriname's 'Minister Plenipotentiary' in The Hague – a new post, created under the Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – until August 1963. Pos primarily represented his country's constitutional and political interests in his dealings with the Dutch government.

Broader institutional assistance to the Representative came about with the formation, in December 1949, of a Commissioner's Office for Surinamese Affairs in The Hague, for promoting the material, economic and social interests of Suriname in the Netherlands. The first Commissioner to be appointed was Henry de Vries.¹ While the Representative was a political figure, the responsibilities of the Commissioner and his Office were of a more practical nature and may be compared to those of a consulate. The Commissioner's Office played, for example, a vital role in attracting Dutch professionals such as engineers and doctors, needed for the socio-economic development of Suriname. Not only was it responsible for selecting and recruiting these experts, but also for organizing their emigration to the colony. And when, following the transfer of sovereignty, the Surinamese population was granted the freedom to move

¹ Interestingly, with the backing of the Dutch government, De Vries became Governor of Suriname on 25-2-1965. This position had originally been reserved for Pos, who had enjoyed strong support of the Surinamese authorities. However, following the sudden death of Pos in late 1964, De Vries was able to assume the position of representing the Crown in Suriname, see Alihusain 2005:6-7.

to the Netherlands until November 1980, the Commissioner's Office assisted Surinamese students (with education, housing and scholarships), and workers (with pensions, health-care benefits and official documents) while supporting civil servants when visiting the Netherlands. In February 1961 the Office was dissolved; its responsibilities were taken over by the Minister Plenipotentiary's cabinet (Alihusain 2005:1-6).

Besides this The Hague-based cabinet, in 1961 a subsidiary office was opened in Amsterdam, to serve the sizable Surinamese community in the capital. The total number of staff employed at the Minister Plenipotentiary's cabinet and at the Amsterdam office would expand from 23 in 1961 to 40 in 1974.

Table 1. Suriname's Ministers Plenipotentiary in The Hague, 1954-1975

| | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Raymond Pos | 1954-1963 |
| Severinus Emanuels | 1963-1964 |
| Johan Einaar | 1964-1967 |
| Walter Lim A Po | 1967-1970 |
| Daisy Polanen | 1970-1973 |
| Wim van Eer | 1973-1975 |

Of the six Ministers Plenipotentiary taking office between 1954 and 1975 (see Table 1), Pos, Emanuels and Lim A Po would continue their careers within the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Einaar came from the diplomatic corps before heading the Plenipotentiary Minister's Cabinet in The Hague and Van Eer would continue to serve as Suriname's first official Ambassador to the Netherlands after the country's independence (Alihusain 2005:8-9).

With the creation of its own 'representative offices' in The Hague and Amsterdam, the Surinamese government made attempts at influencing wider areas of Dutch foreign policy in the post-war period. The first efforts were reflected in Paramaribo's wish to include one Surinamese and one Antillean representative in Dutch delegations (comprising five official members) to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and to meetings of the UN Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).² The Hague rejected this request and would only allow direct Surinamese and

² The complete Dutch delegation would consist of fifteen members: five official delegates, five deputy members and five advisors. Together, Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles were permitted to send one deputy member and one advisor – both positions were rotated between the two Caribbean territories.

Antillean representation to the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and to the International Labour Organization (ILO) (Meel 2001:131).

The wish to increase Suriname's influence in the field of foreign policy gained impetus in the beginning of 1960. As mentioned in Chapter I, Suriname denounced The Hague's abstentions within the UN regarding motions condemning South Africa's apartheid policy. After the shooting of non-militant anti-apartheid protestors at a rally in the South African township of Sharpeville in March 1960, an atrocity generating widespread outrage, not least amongst Paramaribo's Creole population, the Staten decided to send a letter of condemnation to both the Dutch and South African governments. In addition, trade links with the apartheid regime were broken off and a lobby was started to encourage the UN Secretary General to undertake further actions against Pretoria. The Netherlands rejected Suriname's stance as illegitimate since under the Charter foreign policy and trade were 'Kingdom affairs' and as such the responsibility of the metropolitan government (Meel 2001:131-2).

The Surinamese bid for autonomy in the field of foreign affairs also came to the fore in the hope of gaining an independent membership of both the UN and the Organization of American States (OAS). However, before long this hope had to be abandoned, due to both organizations only allowing independent nations to join. In addition, Suriname persuaded the Netherlands to investigate the possibility of gaining an associate status at UNESCO. Not surprisingly, this was in vain since only sovereign states were eligible for membership (Meel 2001:133).

Nevertheless, through these events The Hague began to understand that Paramaribo's wish to make its own voice heard in the Kingdom's foreign affairs could no longer be ignored. In 1960 the Netherlands had already allowed a relatively large Surinamese delegation to travel to Ghana and India (much of Suriname's population were from these two countries) and to proceed from there to Hong Kong, Japan and the United States.³ Meel (2001:132) describes the significance of this event as follows: 'This trip can be said to have been Suriname's "discovery" of the world. For the first time Surinamese officials went abroad all by themselves, not on behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.' Furthermore, besides three elderly Surinamese officials, who shortly after World War II had joined the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Achmed Karamat Ali became the first official from the colony to be accepted into the service of the Kingdom's diplomatic corps, in January 1961 (Alihusain 2005:13-4).

³ Initially, the Surinamese delegation also intended to travel to Indonesia, but this idea was abandoned due to the strained nature of Dutch-Indonesian relations at that time.

Under these circumstances The Hague even agreed, albeit reluctantly, to Paramaribo's demands for a new Round Table Conference in the spring of 1961, to discuss possibilities of increasing Suriname's influence in the field of foreign policy. Paramaribo's central objective was a revision of the Charter, aimed at allowing the autonomous governments of The Hague, Willemstad and Paramaribo to each conduct its own foreign policy. The Netherlands, however, was appalled by this idea, fearing disintegration of a united Dutch position with regard to international events and was forced to play, in the words of Meel (2001:133-4), a 'clever game'. The Dutch delegation offered to accept Paramaribo's wish if, in turn, the Surinamese delegation would also accept The Hague's condition that Suriname would become responsible for its own defence – and thus in fact become a sovereign state. This Dutch countermove, as The Hague was very well aware, was considered unacceptable by the Surinamese delegation. Combined with Willemstad having very little desire for an autonomous foreign policy – and consequently failing to support Paramaribo's position – Suriname eventually rescinded its requests for a change in the Charter (Alihusain 2005:13-4).

Nevertheless, as a direct result of this Round Table Conference, the tide would begin to turn. The Hague recognized that it had to provide Paramaribo with some tools for exercising (limited) influence in the Kingdom's foreign policy matters. This revealed itself in allowing Suriname to establish a Bureau Buitenlandse Betrekkingen (Foreign Affairs Bureau) as part of the Prime Minister's Department of General Affairs while advising the Surinamese government on international issues and events. Henk Heidweiler, appointed head of this newly created Bureau, would in later years become one of the country's most influential diplomats, devoting much of his time to easing post-independence bilateral tensions with the Netherlands.

Another direct result of the conference was the admittance of some Surinamese public servants into the Dutch diplomatic corps. Four of these – besides Heidweiler, Robert Ferrier, Carlo Lamur and Inderdew Sewrajsingh (Alihusain 2005:14-5) – would join the Surinamese diplomatic service when Suriname gained independence. Finally, in 1962, Paramaribo was allowed to send its own representative to the Dutch delegation at the UN General Assembly in New York. In the same year the Netherlands also approved of Suriname becoming an associate member of the European Community. However, despite these concessions, foreign affairs continued, as outlined in the Charter, to be part of the so-called Kingdom affairs and as such, Paramaribo's room to manoeuvre on the international stage remained fairly restricted and subjected to Dutch approval (Meel 2001:134).

It was not until what would become the closing chapter of Dutch rule that The Hague was willing to grant Paramaribo more autonomy in this field. This increased autonomy became visible when shortly before the transfer

of sovereignty the Foreign Affairs Bureau was expanded into two divisions: 'International Judicial Affairs' and 'Treaties and Protocol'. Following the withdrawal from the Kingdom in November 1975, a Ministry of General and Foreign Affairs was established, of which the various subdepartments, although not exclusively, oversaw Suriname's external relations. In August 1978 this Ministry was restructured into two equal departments: General Affairs and Foreign Affairs, with the latter consisting of the divisions International Political Affairs and International Economic Affairs (*Foreign service training* 1981:10). The interesting point is that in the first few years following independence, Foreign Affairs played second fiddle to General Affairs. Consequently, Suriname had neither a minister nor a ministry dealing exclusively with international relations. Instead, the Prime Minister, heading the combined Department of General and Foreign Affairs, among his other tasks and duties, simply supervised the Republic's attempts at establishing links with the region and on the global stage.

During the process of forming the Ministry of Foreign Affairs The Hague continued to play a significant role. As Meel (1990:79) has argued in his study on Suriname's decolonization, Dutch influence remained considerable since

in foreign affairs Suriname lacked trained executives and the financial means to organize a complete diplomatic service. For this reason, particularly in the first years following independence, the Netherlands acted as Suriname's adviser. Besides, Dutch embassies looked after the interests of Suriname in a great number of states where the Republic was not represented by diplomats of its own.

The Hague's influence was strengthened even further through the training of Surinamese diplomats in specifically designed courses taught by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other educational institutions in the Netherlands (*Foreign service training* 1981:10).

The foundation of this close cooperation lay in the advice presented to both governments by the tripartite advisory Koninkrijkscommissie (Kingdom Commission), which had been formed in August 1974 with the task of indicating 'feasible alternatives for the existing constitutional relations' (*Koninkrijkscommissie* 1974:27-9). Its findings, published in October 1974, had led to two agreements; according to the first, Paramaribo would be represented by Dutch embassies where the Republic had no diplomatic mission of its own, while the second treaty specified the format within which the Netherlands was to provide Suriname with advice and support regarding the implementation of its foreign policy (*Het Parool*, 18-12-1982:3).

Regional integration; A failed opportunity

Given the close relations between The Hague and Paramaribo it comes as no surprise that during the first years of independence the Republic's foreign policy with regard to the Caribbean and Latin America could be characterized by almost complete inactivity. This was particularly disappointing in view of the Surinamese government's strong push, especially in the early 1960s, to gain precisely this right. After November 1975, however, what little urgency that remained would also fade. Paramaribo's global and regional activities merely boiled down to establishing a handful of diplomatic missions and gaining membership of a few international organizations. By the end of 1976 there were Surinamese embassies in The Hague, Caracas, Washington, Mexico City (whose ambassador also represented Suriname's interests in the UN), Brasilia and Brussels (also responsible for relations with the European Community). In turn, the Netherlands, Indonesia, Guyana, Venezuela, South Korea, the United States, Brazil and France opened diplomatic offices in Paramaribo (*Nieuw Suriname*, 25-12-1976:4-5). Even though many more countries officially recognized the new state, most (including Jamaica, Canada, India and Japan) chose to maintain official relations through non-resident ambassadors dealing with Suriname from locations elsewhere in the region (*Nieuw Suriname*, 18-12-1976:9).

The crucial point in all of this was that the Republic maintained only three embassies in South America. Conversely, only three Caribbean and Latin American countries⁴ maintained direct diplomatic links with Paramaribo. No Surinamese embassies were opened anywhere in the Third World beyond the Western Hemisphere and, except Indonesia, no developing nation established a direct diplomatic mission in Paramaribo.

This actual state of affairs contrasted sharply with the spirit of the preamble of the Republic's Constitution, expressing the desire of the Surinamese people 'to live in peace and friendship with each other and with all other peoples in the world on the basis of freedom, equality, brotherhood and human solidarity' (Fernandes Mendes 1989:298). In a similar vein, Arron's foreign policy strategy appeared to be primarily imbued with symbolic meaning. Its principal objectives were summarized by the Republic's 'new' Ambassador, former Minister Plenipotentiary in the Netherlands Van Eer, just days after the transfer of sovereignty:

⁴ In addition to France, which in some respects must be regarded as a regional power due to its administration of the neighbouring territory of French Guiana along with several Caribbean islands.

We have always compared ourselves with the Netherlands, far away across the ocean. But now we shall direct our focus on the Latin American countries surrounding us and on the Third World. We shall make use of both the relations with the Netherlands and of the contacts with the nations around us for the development of our country. (*de Volkskrant*, 1-2-1975:3.)

When comparing the Constitution's preamble and this statement with actual foreign policy – as, for example, demonstrated in the Republic's choice of locations for its diplomatic missions – Arron's approach to further integrate Suriname into the Latin American political and socio-economic system and that of the Third World in general, must be seriously questioned.

A similar 'non-ambitious' regional approach was observable in the Republic's attitude towards international organizations. Admittedly, under the Arron cabinet Suriname did join the UN and many of its subbranches, including the ILO, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the World Intellectual Organization (WIPO), and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). It also became a member of the IBA and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) while signing a treaty with the European Community under the terms of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (Lomé Convention) (*Handbook nations* 1980:189). Nevertheless, the Republic's involvement in the Caribbean and Latin American context remained fairly restricted, consisting simply of becoming a member of ECLAC, OAS, the Organización Latinoamericana de Energía (OLADE, Latin American Energy Organization), the Sistema Económico Latinoamericano y del Caribe (SELA, Latin American and Caribbean Economic System) and the Amazon Pact (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1990a:178). It should also be noted that at that time, Suriname's participation in these regional organizations was not characterized by an outstanding contribution, given the Republic's repeated failure to attend conferences (*Foreign service training* 1981:134).

This apparent neglect of regional affairs also revealed itself in a speech delivered by Prime Minister Arron (who, as pointed out, at the same time served as Foreign Minister) to the UN General Assembly on 12 October 1976. While stating Suriname's interests in following a foreign policy stance as defined by other Latin American countries, Arron made no subsequent references to the region or its problems. Instead, he gave an outline of the Republic's position on UN resolutions regarding the Middle East and South Africa, general trade and financial issues (*Nieuw Suriname*, 29-10-1976:1). This reference to global problems, while ignoring regional themes, was understandable – albeit not justifiable. Apparently, in order to closely follow The Hague's UN policy, Paramaribo's foreign policy officials waited for the Dutch to express their point of view before putting forward their own position (Haakmat 1987:104). Neither should it be overlooked that according to the aforementioned agreements between Suriname and the Netherlands, the

latter still advised Suriname in foreign policy matters. And the fact that Dutch interests clearly went beyond the Caribbean and Latin American regions was easily recognizable in Arron's speech to the General Assembly.

Suriname's failure to integrate into the region contributed, in its turn, to the impression held by many Caribbean and Latin American politicians that the country was a foreign player on the continent. Jan Breman (1976:262), who travelled to the region shortly after the transfer of sovereignty, summarized this attitude as follows:

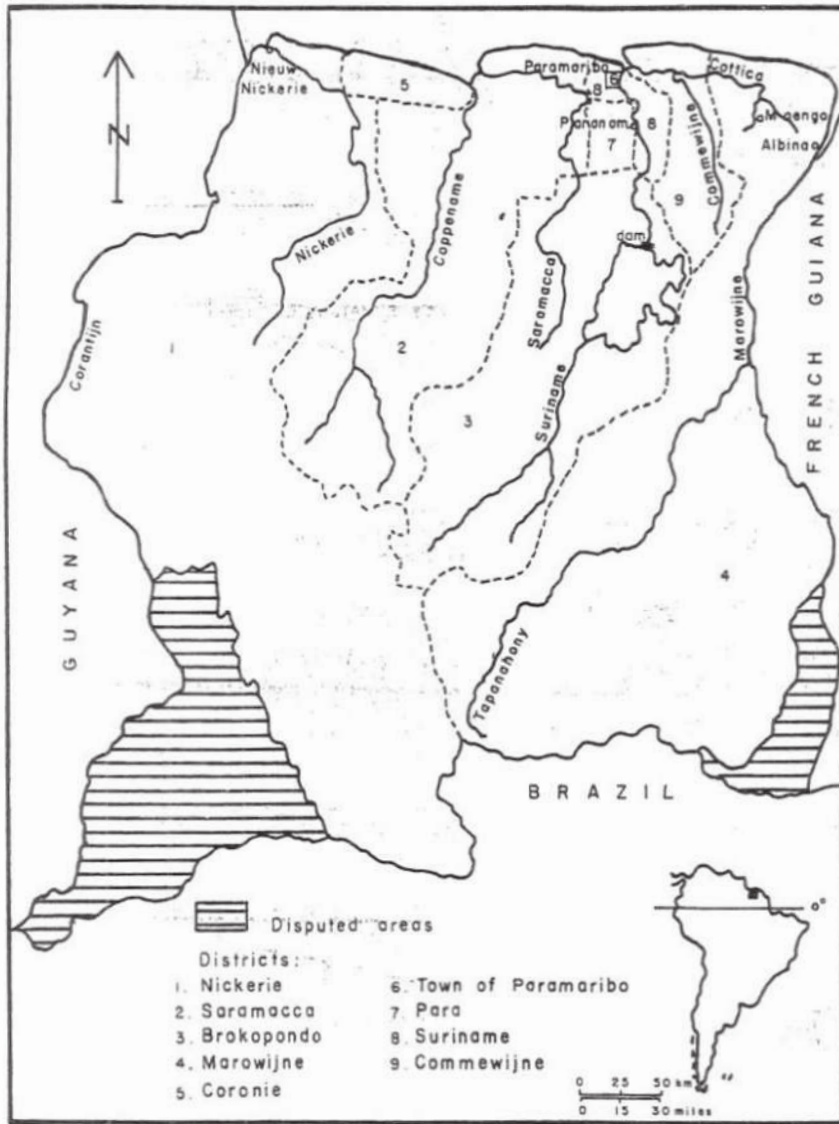
Conversations with government officials showed me quite clearly that Surinam is still considered a typical colonial society – far more so than the Netherlands Antilles, for instance – and that Surinam's intensive contacts with the Netherlands, however well-intended, have had a disorienting effect. This is the real isolation into which Surinam has recently been placed.

The Republic's isolation particularly manifested itself in its limited agenda on regional issues. In fact, discussion topics were restricted to those that would gain economic benefits through bilateral agreements with local powers and that would peacefully settle long-running border disputes. Ultimately, neither of these objectives was achieved successfully. In the first case, despite the Republic signing bilateral agreements to pave the way for economic cooperation with Venezuela, Guyana and Brazil, these treaties 'did not materialize' (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1990b:27) while trade relations with the Caribbean and Latin America also remained disappointing (see later in this chapter).

The second objective proved an even harder nut to crack. Despite Suriname's two disputed territories being sparsely populated (as demonstrated in Map 2), they carried a certain degree of political and economic importance. Not only was the government's prestige at stake here, but the areas were also a potential source of valuable raw materials and minerals.

Suriname's border disputes with Guyana and French Guiana had originated in a lack of geographical knowledge of the interior river system among the various colonial powers. An awareness of this deficiency had resulted in several expeditions, mainly at the turn of the twentieth century, to survey the numerous rivers. These had led to the discovery of new and larger branches of the Coeroeni and Litani, previously thought to have been the main rivers and therefore serving as border demarcations (Burrowes 1984:228-30).

With these new discoveries in mind the Dutch attempted to expand Suriname's territory to the Boven-Corantijn (or New River) and the Marowijne. A treaty with Britain, recognizing the new western border, was finally signed in 1936, but proved to be short-lived since neither government ratified it due



Map 2. Suriname's disputed territories (Dew 1978:ii)

to the outbreak of World War II. Instead, following Guyana's independence, the conflict flared up once again, leading to several border violations by Guyanese troops in the late 1960s. Suriname, disappointed by The Hague's passive response to these clashes, even created its own *Defensiepolitie* (Defence police), which subsequently fought with Guyanese soldiers on two occasions, in 1967 and in 1969. Eventually, tensions eased to some degree following negotiations by Trinidad and Tobago in 1970, resulting in the withdrawal of troops on both sides, but not in solving the issue (Oostindie and Klinkers 2001, II:76).

Following this, Suriname and French Guiana entered into extensive diplomatic consultations in a bid to define the exact border demarcation. Again, talks would not result in an acceptable compromise satisfying both Paramaribo's and Cayenne's territorial claims. Thus, despite repeated efforts to settle these bones of contention, none of the three countries involved withdrew its demands, as a result of which the territories concerned – remaining under the administrations of Guyana and French Guiana respectively – would continue to strain Suriname's relations with its neighbours.

Besides these two regional foreign policy objectives, the young Republic followed a passive course. As Gerardus Kruijer (1977:41) has pointed out, it was a rare occasion for Surinamese delegates to travel to neighbouring countries – either during the decolonization process or in the post-independence period – or for representatives from regional states or organizations to visit their colleagues in Paramaribo. Instead, Surinamese delegations primarily travelled to The Hague with representatives from the Netherlands being the most frequently received guests in Paramaribo (*De West*, 21-5-1977:1, 3-6-1977:1, 15-6-1977:2). Consequently, Azimullah's assessment (1980:2) of Suriname's pre-coup foreign policy (written on behalf of the Bouterse regime), as simply 'flying the flag' to demonstrate the country's visibility, may well sum up the situation. Moreover, Azimullah, when working for the Institute of International Law and International Relations at the University of Suriname, accused the Arron cabinet of merely pursuing short-term foreign policy objectives as a means of enhancing personal prestige within the domestic sphere, while failing to define a coherent regional integration policy as a government.

To counter this harsh criticism, the severe restrictions under which the Arron administration was operating should also be pointed out. One important aspect of this were the financial limitations imposed on the Ministry of General and Foreign Affairs, which tended to restrict efforts to expand the Republic's interactions within the region. In fact, the Ministry's budget amounted to Sf 19,994 million in 1976 and Sf 23,487 million in 1977 (*Nieuw Suriname*, 25-11-1976:4), with the national budget for the same period listing expenditures as high as Sf 404,9 million and Sf 581,5 million respectively (*Europa year book* 1979, II:1458). Even though the funds allocated to the Ministry seem, at first

sight, not unreasonable, it should be borne in mind that Foreign Affairs played second fiddle to General Affairs.

Furthermore, it is questionable whether Paramaribo could have allocated additional funds to the Foreign Affairs Department since, as Paul Streeton (1993:197) has emphasized, small nations such as Suriname consistently face financial restrictions. Given that they tend to have governmental structures similar to larger nations (since certain services have to be provided, regardless of a country's size), 'these political and administrative structures may raise costs per head for the smaller countries'. Thus, Suriname's limited financial resources simply made it very difficult to invest in a comprehensive regional integration strategy, that may have included the establishment of additional diplomatic posts in Latin America and the Caribbean or participation in more international organizations concerned with the socio-economic and political development of the Western Hemisphere.

These financial constraints equally applied to human resources. Again, in the words of Streeton (1993:197): 'If talent is randomly distributed, the quality of its leaders in all fields will be lower for a small country than for a larger one, since it can draw only on a smaller pool.' The Surinamese Foreign Affairs Department was well aware of this problem and, to compensate for its limited human resources, after November 1975 acquiesced to several of its diplomats being trained in the Netherlands. Of course this again heightened Suriname's dependence on The Hague because, according to Charles Farrugia (1993:223-4), often those officials educated and trained in the former metropole – consciously or not – adopt its political culture and subsequently its ideas on how to formulate and implement policies.

Heidweiler (mentioned earlier in this chapter) presents a good example. During the pre-independence period, he had been part of the Dutch diplomatic corps before being appointed as Suriname's Ambassador in Mexico. Not surprisingly, Foreign Minister Haakmat complained about the strong Dutch influence on his department following the coup d'état. In Haakmat's words (1987:104):

The Foreign Affairs Department was created by the Netherlands, the first Surinamese diplomats were trained through a Dutch crash course. Furthermore, the core of Suriname's diplomatic service consisted of three experienced diplomats of Surinamese origin who had transferred from the Dutch diplomatic service: the most experienced and well known amongst them was Mr. H. Heidweiler.

Another significant factor in restricting Suriname's ability to conduct foreign affairs was the country's geopolitical location. Although situated on the South American mainland, the country was commonly perceived as a Caribbean state due to the strong Dutch influence on its political and socio-economic

structures and features similar to other Caribbean nations – including the experience of isolation, colonialism, plantation economy and slavery. But whereas these similarities had provided the Caribbean with a certain awareness of a shared inheritance, the region has also been characterized by a strong sense of fragmentation. According to Colin Clarke (1993:33) the degree of cooperation between what are foremost island states has generally remained restricted, which can be attributed to their separation, both linguistically and politically (due to their colonial pasts) as well as to increased ideological confrontations – as a result of the East-West conflict also manifesting itself in the area.

In light of this, Suriname's lack of enthusiasm for exchanging diplomatic missions with local powers such as Jamaica and Cuba, or for joining the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) or the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) for that matter, becomes more understandable – particularly considering the fact that very little aid could be expected to come from that quarter. Furthermore, the Caribbean's state of fragmentation may serve to justify Suriname's preference to seek cooperation with states on the South American mainland. After all, that is where its few regional diplomatic missions were located and where most cooperation in regional organizations was achieved – despite the cultural, social, political and economic distinctiveness of these Latin nations.

The migration issue

With this background knowledge of the foundations of Suriname's foreign relations in mind the first foreign policy issue the country was faced with can be evaluated. Following the declaration of independence, the long-standing problem of Surinamese migration to the Netherlands soon began to weigh heavily on Surinamese-Dutch relations. As outlined in Chapter I, many Surinamese held the Netherlands in a favourable light compared with the Republic's own unstable domestic structures – an instability that originated in the socio-cultural divisions within Suriname's population. Lesley Forrest (1984:85) commented as follows on this issue:

For some observers, Surinam with its multi-racial population, and endless varieties of colour, language, culture and religion [...] is a remarkable 'showcase of cultural pluralism'. [...] for others it expressed something more like an uneasy tolerance between diverse ethnic groups, struggling to find some basis for national unity and an identity distinct from the one imposed on them by centuries of colonial domination.

Consequently, due to this 'uneasy tolerance', Dutch continued to be the national language, even if it was by no means spoken proficiently by all

Surinamese, who rather communicated in Hindi, Indonesian or Chinese, but above all in Sranan Tongo. Similarly, in the religious field, Hinduism, Islam, Confucianism and Judaism were all major faiths, although Christianity, introduced by Dutch missionaries, remained particularly strong. Also in the educational system, which was modelled after the Dutch one (and to a large extent depended on The Hague's financial support), Dutch was still the main language of instruction while providing students with information about developments in the former metropole rather than instilling in them knowledge relating to Suriname and its surroundings. As a direct result of this socio-cultural divide 'Dutch (read Western) culture was considered to have the most prestige in Suriname, since it offered the greatest chances of ascending the social scale – a social scale which usually led across the sea, to the Netherlands' (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:163-4).

This 'uneasy tolerance' also found expression in the economic and political spheres. High unemployment⁵ and unequal income distribution⁶ led to a general sense of disillusionment pervading the young Republic. In the sphere of politics, particularly those of Asian background viewed their 'new rulers' with animosity, generated by their exclusion from government (Dew 1978:175).

Unavoidably, these issues were reflected in Dutch-Surinamese relations since this rather general lack of confidence in the new Republic was a major push factor. The emigration flow towards the Netherlands, as demonstrated in Table 2, would continue long after November 1975. Although between 1976 and 1978 emigration figures began to decline, they would again rise rapidly from 1979 – causing a debilitating brain drain as among the 112,688 emigrants were many highly skilled and well-trained people. This, in turn, contributed to a further destabilization of the economy or, as Mhango (1984:47) has argued: 'Given the general shortage of skills to begin with (shortage in managerial, technical, or supervisory skills), emigration can be said to have adversely affected the absorptive capacity of the economy in the post-independence period.'

⁵ Over 17% by 1980, see Chin and Buddingh' 1987:139.

⁶ The mainly Creole employees of Suralco and Billiton earned on average three times more than the – largely Hindustani and Javanese – agricultural labourers, see Mhango 1984:53.

Table 2. Migration / remigration

| Year | Migration | Remigration | Net Migration |
|------|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| 1974 | 17,902 | 3,066 | 14,836 |
| 1975 | 39,699 | 3,037 | 36,662 |
| 1976 | 5,757 | 5,142 | 615 |
| 1977 | 4,786 | 3,430 | 1,356 |
| 1978 | 7,388 | 2,618 | 4,770 |
| 1979 | 18,162 | 2,372 | 15,790 |
| 1980 | 18,994 | 2,290 | 16,704 |

Source: Mhango 1984:109

In June 1975, five months before the transfer of sovereignty, Suriname and the Netherlands had reached full agreement on a post-independence migration policy – again closely following the advice of the Kingdom Commission. According to the first agreement (Appendix I), regarding nationality, Surinamese nationality would be obtained (and Dutch nationality lost) by those born in Suriname as well as living there at the date of independence. Surinamese residing in the Netherlands on Independence Day would receive Dutch citizenship. The second agreement (Appendix II) stipulated that Surinamese wanting to take up residence in the Netherlands would be freely allowed to do so until November 1980 on the condition that they could prove to have acquired accommodation and means of subsistence. Finally, the third agreement (Appendix III) granted Surinamese the right to travel freely to the Benelux – Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg – without any visa requirements.

Despite these treaties the transatlantic exodus would far exceed expectations, with surveys among immigrants in the Netherlands having indicated the opposite, namely an increased willingness to return to Suriname. According to data from a mid-1974 inquiry (Ooft 1976:72) and from a census taken early in 1976 (*De West*, 20-3-1976:6), about 50% of the interviewees eventually intended to remigrate. The Hague could only hope. By this time over 150,000 Surinamese were residing in the Netherlands,⁷ mostly concentrated in the Randstad (the four main cities of western Holland), thus placing great financial pressure on the Kingdom's treasury to fund housing, educational, medical and other social services. Some Dutch citizens, unaware of their coun-

⁷ Against no more than 5,000 Surinamese and Dutch Antilleans at the time of the proclamation of the Charter in December 1954; Oostindie and Klinkers 2003:178.

try's enormous influence on Suriname's domestic structures, viewed the 'new residents' negatively. Especially the Hindustanis and Javanese experienced difficulties in integrating into Dutch society due to their marked cultural distinctiveness. As a result, many harboured the hope of returning 'home', despite the problems the young nation was facing (*de Volkskrant*, 29-11-1975:17).

This issue was also addressed by Arron in his first radio and television speech following independence, in which he spoke specifically to those Surinamese who had taken up residency in the Netherlands.

Your country is ready to greet you with loving arms. Come back, you are needed in this country. Unfortunately, today many Surinamese are separated from us. Fear, a lack of self-confidence but especially a lack of trust in their own abilities is causing this separation. (*de Volkskrant*, 26-11-1975:1.)

In other words, migration had become an important aspect of the bilateral relationship. Consequently, as early as February 1976, Dutch Minister of Social Affairs Jaap Boersma approached Arron to stimulate the departure of Surinamese from the former metropole (*De West*, 19-2-1976:1). The Dutch keenness to encourage remigration was exemplified by The Hague's announcement of a so-called *landingspremie* (a disembarkation bonus; a financial incentive by the Dutch government to support Surinamese remigration to the Republic) and by its promise to cover part of the fare and costs of settling (*de Volkskrant*, 25-3-1976:3). Furthermore, on the recommendation of the Dutch Transport Ministry, the frequency of flights between Amsterdam and Paramaribo by the two national airlines KLM and Surinaamse Luchtvaart Maatschappij (SLM, Surinam Airways) was increased to three per week (during holidays four weekly flights), following an earlier agreement on a reduction in fares on this route (*De West*, 12-3-1977:1).

That these tactics were successful to some degree can be concluded from the data on Surinamese remigration which, as is clear from Table 2, reached its peak in the years 1976 and 1977. Nonetheless, still faced with a net migration surplus, in 1978 The Hague (despite having signed treaties on residency and visa requirements) set about introducing stricter measures aimed at discouraging Surinamese immigration. These included thoroughly checking requests for Dutch residence permits and stringent inspections of arrivals at Schiphol Airport (*De West*, 10-2-1978:2). However, this did not stem the influx of migrants and soon a popular saying emerged stating that 'only the government resides in Paramaribo, its citizens live in the Netherlands' (*de Volkskrant*, 10-2-1978:7).

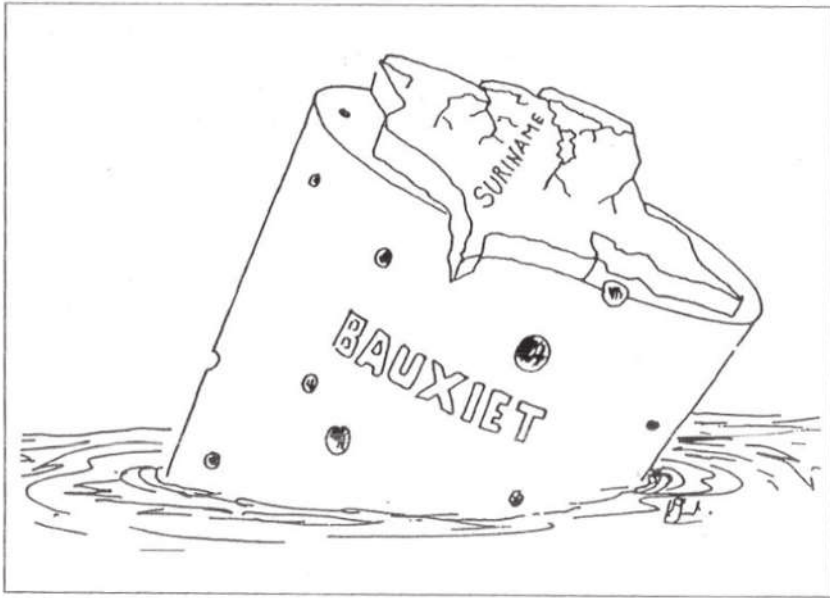
In contrast, policies implemented by the Arron cabinet to stem the exodus must be judged as, at best, modest attempts. The authorities refrained from taking any steps beyond verbally encouraging their trained and educated

citizens to return. A good example of this approach was the announcement in the summer of 1976, that a selective remigration program was to be implemented which only targeted the Surinamese with specific skills. While this selective group gained some financial and logistical assistance to re-settle in the small republic (by helping to find them housing and employment), the general bulk of the Surinamese migrant population in the Netherlands was offered no such support (*de Volkskrant*, 3-11-1976:1). In fact, fearful of being unable to cope with an influx of returnees (straining the Republic's poor socio-economic structures even further), Arron opposed to the financial incentive scheme made available by the Dutch for remigration. By mid-1977 Paramaribo had successfully convinced The Hague to rescind its programme covering some of the travel and resettlement costs (*Het Parool*, 12-8-1977:3). Many Surinamese would eventually decide against returning to the Republic, fearful of being rejected as 'Dutch influenced' by those who had stayed behind (*de Volkskrant*, 8-7-1978:15).

According to Frank Bovenkerk, who studied the attitudes among Surinamese taking up residency in the Netherlands, no more than 3% of those surveyed were actually willing to return to Suriname in the post-independence period (*de Volkskrant*, 5-4-1976:4). In contrast to the earlier cited migration enquiries – in which many Dutch Surinamese had expressed their wish to return – Bovenkerk's study indicated a definite refusal to remigrate. This outcome was initially dismissed by Dutch officials but was later acknowledged with great disappointment. As a direct consequence, the debate on the migration/remigration issue put heavy strains on Dutch-Surinamese relations. That this debate did not escalate can be credited to Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation Jan Pronk, who showed a great understanding of Suriname's demand that first of all a stable socio-economic environment had to be created before remigration should be actively encouraged. He was therefore willing to withdraw some Dutch policies and incentives aimed at encouraging Surinamese remigration to the former colony.

Under the thumb of international capital

The core issue in Dutch-Surinamese relations regarded the financial and technical assistance made available by The Hague to strengthen Suriname's socio-economic development. Before examining Paramaribo's foreign policy approach of attempting to determine the level and specific use of Dutch aid, it is necessary to elaborate on the Republic's economic situation, including the predominant role played by foreign capital.



Cartoon 2. Surviving on bauxite (Bakker et al. 1993:85)

As pointed out earlier, Suriname's economic activities were built on relatively weak foundations. Despite the country's potential to diversify its activities into areas such as crop production and forestry, to an enormous extent the national economy depended on the extraction and processing of bauxite, providing at times up to 90% of all export earnings. The often published and thus well-known Cartoon 2 aptly portrays Suriname's economic position at the time of independence. Despite Arron having negotiated new agreements with Suralco and Billiton during the decolonization talks (increasing taxes on bauxite exports by over Sf 20 million in 1974), this extra revenue was largely offset in the following years as the fall in bauxite prices and the migration of skilled labour reduced the profitability of the two multinational corporations operating in Suriname.

This situation was exacerbated by the output of the agricultural sector which, despite having a well-established rice-export industry (supplemented by some production of sugar, citrus fruits, coffee, cocoa and bananas) was very inefficient. Even though almost three quarters of the workforce were employed in agriculture, the country was still forced to import food. Similarly, the third major sector, forestry, was not fully developed and what development there was, primarily concentrated on the operation of a

modern lumber mill run by Bruynzeel in West Suriname (*Europa year book* 1977, II:1541).

Despite their shortcomings, there was no escaping the fact that together, these three sectors – bauxite, agriculture and forestry – formed the economic pillars of the young nation. Their significance is illustrated in Table 3, which demonstrates that the country's export consisted almost entirely of mining, agriculture and forestry commodities – with Sf 547,400,000 out of a total of Sf 585,000,000 in 1977. It is also important to note that according to Table 4 these exports found the majority of buyers in the industrialized world. In contrast, the principal imported commodities generally consisted, as displayed in Table 5, of various manufactured products, along with minerals, fuel and food stuffs. As Table 6 reveals, these goods also originated from trade conducted almost exclusively with northern countries, whereas regional states, except Trinidad and Tobago, played only a subordinate role (*Europa year book* 1979, II:1460).

Table 3. Export commodities in million (Sf)

| Exports | 1976 | 1977 |
|------------------------|-------|------|
| Bauxite | 101 | 117 |
| Alumina | 252 | 281 |
| Aluminium | 65 | 96 |
| Rice (husked) | 35.5 | 36.4 |
| Bacoven (bananas) | 7.5 | 6 |
| Shrimps | 21.1 | 31.8 |
| Wood and wood products | 11.9 | 11 |
| Others | 26.6 | 5.8 |
| Total | 520.6 | 585 |

Table 4. Export partners in 1977

| Countries | Value in million (Sf) |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| Japan | 26.6 |
| Netherlands | 146.5 |
| Norway | 50.7 |
| Soviet Union | 10.3 |
| United Kingdom | 67.7 |
| USA | 406.9 |
| Venezuela | 45 |
| Yugoslavia | 19.1 |

Table 5. Import commodities in million (Sf)

| Imports | 1976 | 1977 |
|--------------------------|------|------|
| Food and beverages | 144 | 187 |
| Fuel and lubrication oil | 98 | 146 |
| Basic manufactured goods | 142 | 189 |
| Cloth and yarn | 19 | 16 |
| Cars and motorcycles | 18 | 20 |
| Investment goods | 103 | 152 |
| Total | 524 | 710 |

Table 6. Import partners in 1977

| Countries | Value in million (Sf) |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Brazil | 18.6 |
| People's Republic of China | 23.0 |
| Federal Republic of Germany | 28.9 |
| Japan | 50.0 |
| Netherlands | 151.4 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 96.9 |
| United Kingdom | 26.3 |
| USA | 217.2 |

Industrialized nations also enjoyed a strong position with regard to the ownership of many enterprises operating locally. The financial and technical investments made by multinational corporations implied that a significant share of the Republic's economic activities was in fact dominated by foreign companies. As outlined earlier, the most striking example of this was the mining and processing of bauxite, an industry in the hands of American-controlled Suralco and Dutch-owned Billiton. A similar picture, however, can be found in examining the other two economic pillars, agriculture and forestry. For instance, the Boston-based United Fruit Company tended to dominate the banana production while the Surinam-American Industry, involved in the catching and processing of shrimp, played a leading role in the fishery sector (Lagerberg 1989:135). The Dutch-owned Marienburg plantation controlled the local sugar industry while the Stichting voor de Ontwikkeling van Machinale Landbouw in Suriname (SML, Foundation for the Development of Mechanical Agriculture in Suriname), a farm project funded by The Hague, exerted significant influence on the country's rice production as it forced small-scale farmers, who were unable to compete with the SML's advanced technology, into bankruptcy (Verschuuren 1994:110-

1). Furthermore, the wood-production sector was controlled by Bruynzeel, whose operations repeatedly required the displacement of Amerindian and Maroon communities as well as the deforestation of large parts of Suriname's interior.

A comparable situation of foreign ownership of locally operating companies blighted the nation's service industry. For example, in the transport sector, KLM and the Koninklijke Nederlandse Stoomvaart Maatschappij (KNSM, Royal Dutch Steam Shipping Company) dominated the all-important air and shipping routes between Suriname and the Netherlands. Moreover, as Chin and Buddingh' (1987:127) have pointed out

although local enterprises were particularly active in the service sector, this sector was still largely controlled by foreign firms. Banks and insurance companies in particular were in foreign hands. Foreign firms also controlled the most important activities in the construction sector. Even the gas and electricity utilities were controlled by a foreign company, the Dutch OGEM [Overzeese Gas- en Electriciteitsmaatschappij, Overseas Gas and Electricity Company].

Not having the means to enter into these main industries, the Surinamese tended to establish small businesses. As a result, it comes as no surprise that the country experienced a steady outflow of funds from its narrow economy, amounting to a net transfer – primarily the difference between external investments and profits sent overseas when acquired by foreign-owned companies – of Sf 39 million in the year of independence alone (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:127).

To make matters worse, these foreign-owned and -controlled enterprises had been and continued to be the prime beneficiaries of Dutch monetary assistance. This direct link is made in Buddingh's study (2001:79) on Dutch-Surinamese economic relations. With regard to the period shortly before independence the author argued that:

Taking into account that the financial support for agriculture, forestry and mining was mainly spent on infrastructure, it is obvious that the money was invested in a unidirectional way. The local industrial sector hardly received any of it. Moreover, foreign firms, including the Dutch forestry company Bruynzeel, the Dutch mining company Billiton and the American aluminium company Alcoa, benefited most. (Buddingh' 2001:79.)

No major shift in this policy of aid distribution was discernable even after the transfer of sovereignty. In fact, with regard to Dutch financial assistance in the production sector between 1975 and 1981, Buddingh' (2001:82) states that 'two Surinamese-Dutch joint ventures – Bruynzeel Suriname Houtmaatschappij and Energie Bedrijf Suriname [Energy Company Suriname] – and the sugar plantation Marienburg were almost [the] exclusive beneficiaries'.

In a bid to counter this unfavourable situation, the Arron cabinet pursued the 'Surinamization' policy implemented by the former Sedney administration. This entailed a gradual increase of state participation in foreign-owned firms and the introduction of local workers to replace overseas employees. Some of the Dutch development aid was used to finance this state participation in companies such as Bruynzeel,⁸ OGEM, of which the state eventually owned 60%, and the local subsidiary of the Algemene Bank Nederland (ABN, General Bank of the Netherlands), with 51% being owned by the government (*Trouw*, 4-12-1976:25). In other words, Suriname was following a trend emerging in many developing countries, including Saudi Arabia, where the authorities not only took control of the vital oil industry, but also trained its own population to gain access to local management positions (Al-Farsy 1980:128-9).

The Arron government was accused, as was its predecessor, of primarily serving the interests of the '*comprador* class' (see later in this chapter) by entering into joint-venture enterprises with foreign capital and investing large sums of Dutch development aid in projects generally benefiting multinational corporations. According to the neo-Marxist Hira (1983a:172):

Considering the importance of the role of the state in transforming Suriname's economic structure, it was inevitable that the imperialists would soon affiliate themselves with the pretty bourgeois parties in Parliament and in the administration in order to consolidate their position in the economy.

This relationship between the 'bourgeoisie', the government and foreign companies has also been pointed out by other scholars, particularly when referring to the financial contributions made by multinational corporations to various political parties, thus creating a situation in which the 'administration cannot free itself from trade and industry, to which it is bound hand and foot' (Ooft 1976:29). In fact, Buddingh' (2001:79) argued that the 'bourgeoisie' and the government did not even attempt to distance themselves from multinational corporations as they were so inextricably linked.

The low priority investors attributed to the setting up of a Surinamese industry was not to be blamed only on the small internal market. It was also a reflection of the peculiar position of the local elite. Because of the traditional dominance by foreign businesses [...] the Surinamese bourgeoisie sought positions in both the state and the trade sector. As a result high government officials often [also] held positions within foreign companies [...].

⁸ Especially after the firm had registered significant losses, see *De West*, 20-5-1976:4.

The 'golden handshake' or 'golden handcuffs'

The golden handshake accompanying the transfer of sovereignty would become the most profound foreign influence on Suriname's socio-economic development. This 'golden handshake' was agreed upon in the *Verdrag betreffende Ontwikkelingssamenwerking tussen Nederland en Suriname* (Treaty on Development Cooperation between the Netherlands and Suriname) signed in June 1975, in which it was settled that the Kingdom would give the Republic financial assistance amounting to a total of Nf 3.5 billion over a period of ten to fifteen years (Mhango 1984:8).

Article I (Appendix IV) states that the objectives of the treaty were to achieve Surinamese self-reliance in economic affairs and to establish an adequately functioning social welfare system. Considering its generous funds and honourable aims, the golden handshake has often been perceived as the noblest of agreements reached between an industrialized and a developing nation, designed to safeguard the latter's progress. The amount of Dutch aid was indeed impressive when compared with development funds provided by other colonial powers in the region. Whereas the British, for example, dispatched sections of their Caribbean dependencies with on average £ 100 per capita (Clarke 1993:33) or US\$ 200 (US\$ 1 = £ 0,49; *Europa year book* 1976, II:1626), the Dutch aid package equated to an impressive Sf 6,100 per capita or US\$ 3,400 (US\$ 1 = Sf 1,79). At the same time it must be acknowledged that Suriname, with a per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$ 1,183 in 1975, belonged to the top group of middle-income developing countries (Mhango 1984:8-10).

To understand the reasons for this firm Dutch commitment to stimulate Suriname's development, it is necessary to consider the attitude of the government and of the public with regard to aid. Although the provision of financial and technical assistance to the Third World dates back to the early 1950s, following the formation of the centre-left Den Uyl cabinet in 1973, The Hague emphasized the need for aiding developing nations to effectuate a redistribution of wealth. This commitment, in fact, was an integral part of Dutch foreign policy (Cooper and Verloren van Themaat 1989:119).

The 'engine' of this 'devotion' can be found in Dutch Labour Minister for Development Cooperation Pronk, who favoured the establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) and promoted self-reliance in the Third World. Although emphasizing the structural alterations that had taken place within the international economy, Pronk was convinced that financial and technical aid also played an important role in supporting changes in developing countries. Hence, at the fall of the Den Uyl cabinet in 1977 (in which Pronk served as a Minister), Dutch public assistance had grown to 0.9% of its Gross National Product (GNP) and private moneys, such as those collected by

non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had risen to 1.07%; a vast amount compared with the aid provided by other industrialized countries (Bertholet, De Clercq and Janssen 1984:293-8).

Nonetheless, when carefully analysing the golden handshake, the Aid Treaty is shorn of many of its noble qualities. As Maarten Kuitenbrouwer (1996:30) has pointed out, despite the Dutch commitment to aid, 'the Creole government of Suriname more or less blackmailed the progressive Den Uyl government into granting 3.5 billion guilders'. Realizing The Hague's wish to close the colonial chapter of its history, the Arron government threatened to delay the decolonization process should the Netherlands be unwilling to provide the funds Paramaribo thought necessary to finance Suriname's socio-economic development. A similar view was expressed early on by Den Uyl personally, when he warned in December 1974: 'If the Netherlands appears to be in great haste with Suriname's independence, the compensation money will have to be all the greater; it is already difficult enough not to be pushed into a situation where one is blackmailed' (Oostindie and Klinkers 2001, II:201). Describing in detail the negotiations between The Hague and Paramaribo relating to the level of Dutch financial assistance, Oostindie and Klinkers (2001, II:204) also emphasized the difficulty of the Dutch position. 'There was fear [on the Dutch side] that, should the negotiations fail, independence itself would become an issue [...] Once again, the weak negotiating position of the Netherlands revealed itself.' In other words, the golden handshake was often seen by Dutch scholars and politicians as nothing else than an annoying and expensive way to secure Suriname's independence.

There were also Surinamese who viewed the Aid Treaty with scepticism. Mhango (1984:25), for instance, argued that 'the signing of the aid agreement in 1975 can be seen as the birth of a neocolonial state'. He emphasized that the objectives inherent in the treaty, despite supporting Suriname's socio-economic development, also served Dutch interests. First of all, in its attempt to stabilize the Republic's domestic situation through aid, The Hague was trying to address the migration issue within Suriname's domestic sphere so as to prevent it from becoming a 'Kingdom affair'. A prospering Republic would not only help put a stop to Surinamese emigration to the Netherlands, but also help convince those taking up residency in the former metropole to return and help build the young nation. Secondly, the Dutch 'generosity' must be questioned since, according to calculations made by Mhango (1984:25), about 80% of the development funds were spent on Dutch goods and services, resulting in a substantial proportion of the money flowing back to the donor (as will be discussed later in this chapter). Thirdly, the financial assistance was devised to strengthen the reputation of the Dutch Labour government in the developing world.

Most importantly, the Aid Treaty allowed the Netherlands to sustain its

influence in the Republic's domestic affairs, notwithstanding Suriname's sovereign status. This point was raised by Meel (1990:79), who argued that

the treaty has to be qualified as unique since all other countries receiving Dutch aid were supported on the basis of unilateral resolutions. The responsibility for spending the money was thus left with the receiving party. With respect to Suriname the development treaty ordained that Paramaribo and The Hague were to share this responsibility. Consequently The Netherlands remained closely involved in Suriname's economic development.

Dutch involvement was primarily achieved through the Commissie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking Nederland-Suriname (CONS, Commission for Development Cooperation between the Netherlands and Suriname), a body established under Article 8 of the Aid Treaty comprising three representatives from each country. The agreement also stipulated that, with reference to Article 5, of the Nf 3.5 billion in aid, Nf 0.5 billion was to serve as a guarantee on loans from development funds and banks, Nf 0.3 billion was to be held in reserve to cover any possible shortfalls and Nf 2.7 billion was to be spent according to the Meerjaren Ontwikkelingsprogramma (MOP, Long-term Development Programme). In this, the Surinamese government was committed to outlining the Republic's socio-economic development, to which it agreed in Article 6 and 7. The MOP, in turn, was conditional on the premise that one quarter would be spent on socio-educational projects, another quarter on investments in infrastructure schemes and the remaining half on directly productive projects.

Thus The Hague still held sway over Suriname's socio-economic development as the MOP had to 'pass' the 'verdict' of the CONS or the necessary funds would not be forthcoming. The situation was even more painful as The Hague profited from the treaty, primarily because its aid tied Suriname's development to a considerable degree to the Netherlands. This was achieved through, under Article 13 of the treaty, the Republic committing itself to giving preference to Dutch products whenever purchasing foreign goods and services essential to the implementation of the MOP. The second advantage the Dutch had negotiated was that these products would be exempt from all Surinamese taxes and official charges (Mhango 1984:26).

As a direct outcome, The Hague was able to significantly strengthen its future economic position in its former colony. Due to the continued predomination of Dutch capital in Suriname's agriculture and industry, technology, skills and exports, Dutch control over the young nation's economy was guaranteed, even after expiration of the aid agreement. Meanwhile, cheaper products and more efficient services, which could have been purchased from neighbouring countries, were virtually excluded from the Surinamese market. In the long term, this situation clearly added to the Republic's regional isolation since it implied that Paramaribo's attempts at establishing closer relations with other

Caribbean and Latin American nations lacked credibility.

In addition, the massive injection of Dutch aid exerted some negative effects in the short term. While Suriname resented its continued dependence on the Netherlands and therefore tried to weaken the influence of these neocolonial ties – primarily by ignoring the Aid Treaty's stipulation with regard to the specific use of funds – anxiety became the most marked characteristic of bilateral relations. Growing tension, in conjunction with the corruption and scandal that became part and parcel of this financial assistance, contributed significantly to undermining the country's political structure. The situation was compounded by Suriname having to operate from a shaky bargaining position within CONS. The Surinamese government, generally represented by Premier Arron, Minister of Development Michel Cambridge and special delegate Essed, was often faced with the frustrating task of having to accommodate the demands of their Dutch negotiation partners.

In fact, only half a year or so after independence Arron began to voice reservations. His criticism was directed at the Aid Treaty's clause stipulating that the Republic must purchase Dutch goods and services, despite the availability of more cost-efficient products and skills from other developing countries and from the UN (*De West*, 22-7-1976:2). A short time later it was The Hague's turn to point out that Paramaribo's economic plans for 1977 specified investments amounting to 65% for directly productive projects, contrary to the previously agreed 50%. Consequently, the Netherlands threatened to withhold further funds. To ease the tension, Pronk travelled to Paramaribo at the end of 1976 and following negotiations with Arron, both politicians decided to restructure the CONS. Four additional working committees were formed and placed under the aegis of CONS, specializing in projects in West Suriname (where new bauxite-mining activities were planned), agriculture, fishery (including processing facilities), and public housing and education (*De West*, 20-12-1976:11). Furthermore, the Dutch Minister agreed to financing both regional and UN assistance through the CONS to counter Surinamese accusations of neocolonialism (Haakmat 1993:12).

If these changes were intended to stabilize bilateral relations, they were unsuccessful. By mid-1977 further Dutch disapproval of Suriname's economic policy was voiced when The Hague accused Paramaribo of neglecting smaller, socially oriented schemes, while directing funds to more costly prestige projects (*Het Parool*, 18-8-1977:3). By the beginning of 1978 the new Dutch government under Christian Democrat Andries van Agt⁹ expressed its disappointment with the slow implementation of projects following their approval by the

⁹ A coalition of the Christen Democratisch Appèl (CDA, Christian Democratic Party) and the Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD, People's Party for Freedom and Democracy; Dutch centre-right liberals).

CONS (*de Volkskrant*, 23-2-1978:1). In fact, when during President Ferrier's official visit to the Netherlands in September 1977 Queen Juliana stated in her welcoming address that 'with a certain pride our two countries may write in the annals of history how we gained independence from each other in friendship and in harmony' she gave a truly false impression of the state of Dutch-Surinamese relations (*Het Parool*, 15-9-1977:11).

Six months later, during the Queen's return visit to Paramaribo, it was impossible to conceal the problems besetting bilateral links, which had reached an all-time low, exemplified by the Surinamese delegation walking out of a CONS meeting (*de Volkskrant*, 4-2-1978:7). The Paramaribo government justified this walkout by accusing the Dutch of self-interest, insisting that increasingly strict criteria be met before the required funds were forthcoming for Surinamese projects presented to the CONS (*De West*, 28-1-1978:1). Essed, for instance, commented that 'even though during negotiations on the Aid Treaty it had been agreed that no new conditions would be imposed for Suriname with regard to a contribution from its own savings, the Dutch want to involve themselves in this matter time and time again' (De Groot 2004:149).

This criticism was also brought to the fore in Arron's government programme for 1978. In his speech the Prime Minister declared Suriname's main objective to be supplementing political sovereignty with economic independence. To do so, he argued that the young Republic should have more influence on decisions with regard to aid-related investments and that The Hague's request that the exact wording of the Aid Treaty be adhered to, was to be considered an act of interference with internal affairs. This announcement was designed to promote two main goals. First of all, Arron's reference to the necessity for Suriname to undertake its own investment decisions was a forerunner to Paramaribo's more aggressive stance in upcoming ministerial meetings – in an attempt to improve bilateral relations – between Jan de Koning (Pronk's successor) and Cambridge. Secondly, Arron's critique of the exact reading of the Aid Treaty was intended to gain greater freedom in increasing the proportion of funds for directly productive projects, rather than acquiescing in the agreed limit of 50% (*De West*, 16-3-1978:6).

This 'new' interpretation of the Aid Treaty was deemed necessary to justify the enormous cash flow directed towards West Suriname, where plans were afoot to exploit bauxite reserves to guarantee the continued operation of Suralco and Billiton.¹⁰ The government's scheme foresaw the building of a new dam in the Kabalebo region to deliver electricity to the proposed mining

¹⁰ Alcoa and Royal Dutch Shell had decided to reduce their investments in the Republic in view of the establishment of more cost-efficient bauxite-mining and processing plants in Guiana, Australia and Brazil.

sites in the Bakhuis hills, and to construct a railway for transporting the raw material to the harbour of Apoera (De Groot 2004:153).

To emphasize the gravity of the plan and the controversy it stirred up, Chin and Buddingh' (1987:134) have noted that

during the period 1976-9, the government spent SG [Surinamese guilders] 580m. [million] on development aid, of which some 60 per cent was spent on the development of western Suriname. Approximately SG 170m. of this 60 per cent was invested in the railway [...] Yet, in 1979, when the railway was almost completed, it suddenly appeared that bauxite concerns had no interest in tapping the Bakhuis reserves.

With the withdrawal of multinational corporations, the plans for West Suriname were exposed as prime examples of mismanagement of Dutch aid, consequently contributing significantly to the increase in bilateral tensions, clashing over the crucial point of how to use the remaining cash.

In order to appreciate the seriousness of this crisis in Dutch-Surinamese relations, The Hague's and Paramaribo's opposing approaches to the advancement of the Republic's socio-economic development must be considered. On the Dutch side, the authorities feared that the large sums of money invested in West Suriname would violate the principle of the Aid Treaty as these constituted more than the 50% originally allocated for directly productive projects. The second concern was that this would only further increase the country's dependence on bauxite-based operations. Instead, The Hague favoured small-scale projects which were thought to limit foreign ownership, with the additional advantage of providing more employment prospects for the local population (Meel 1990:80). The Surinamese authorities rejected this approach and followed a policy generally endorsed by their CONS delegate Essed, who, educated at Wageningen Agricultural University, championed the Harrod-Domar ('Big Push') Theory which advocated heavily investing in one specific project which would then spark spin-off effects, leading to a production rise in other economic sectors (Lagerberg 1989:131). Furthermore, Paramaribo was hesitant about The Hague's advice.

By virtue of the development aid treaty, The Netherlands found itself in the ambiguous situation of being donor, spender and receiver at the same time. It furnished Suriname with huge sums of money, but on the condition that Dutch capital goods and Dutch technicians, engineers, constructors and advisers were retained for the implementation of projects. (Meel 1990:81.)

By the late 1970s another point of friction had emerged as inflation began to erode the promised Nf 3.5 billion in aid. As Mhango (1984:70) stressed:

What appeared to be a large golden handshake at the outset in 1975, turned out therefore, after barely four years, to be a dwindling sum of money in real terms, with the most important source of inflation being the very aid-donor the Netherlands, from which the bulk of inputs into aided projects originated.

De Koning, however, initially rejected Suriname's claims for compensation of the financial loss accrued through inflation when he visited Paramaribo in March 1978. Instead, he instructed the Dutch delegation to be 'extremely frugal' and 'highly critical' during the subsequent CONS negotiations in December 1978 (*de Volkskrant*, 22-12-1978:9).

A year later, De Koning once again travelled to Paramaribo to participate in another round of tense CONS negotiations. Although this time dangling a carrot of Nf 700 million to compensate for inflation, the Minister emphasized that funds would be transferred only if the Aid Treaty's rules were strictly enforced (*De West*, 18-12-1979:3). Since – from The Hague's viewpoint – this was not the case, the Van Agt cabinet repeatedly resorted to the drastic step of withholding funds to 'force' the Republic to take more notice of its aid policy (Meel 1990:81). It should be noted that this build up of pressure contradicts the assumption, asserted by Eveline Bakker, that the functioning of the CONS was largely free of friction and that Suriname was not bound to purchase products and expertise from its former colonial master (Bakker et al. 1993:141). Instead, up until the February 1980 coup, Dutch-Surinamese relations would remain tense with regard to the operations of CONS and the evaluations of the various MOPs.

The coup d'état of February 1980

Suriname's failure to integrate into the region and restrict Dutch influence were not the only problems the Arron cabinet had to deal with. Internally the cabinet appeared unable to stabilize the political situation, with confidence being damaged by a series of corruption allegations involving various ministries and state authorities. For instance, in March 1976 it was reported that customs officers in Paramaribo harbour were guilty of large-scale bribery (*de Volkskrant*, 20-3-1976:5); a month later the Ministries of Social Affairs and of Economic Affairs were subjected to lengthy anti-corruption inquiries (*de Volkskrant*, 6-4-1976:6). This investigation also involved Minister Eddy Bruma in a widely publicized scandal. In March 1977 Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries Willy Soemita was accused of accepting bribes (*Het Parool*, 4-3-1977:3) and at the end of the year Arron was forced to defend himself against accusations of illegally transferring funds into a private American account (*Het Parool*, 29-10-1977:1). This series of corruption allegations continued

unabated and in October 1978 it was discovered that the top management of the state-owned airline SLM had been involved in large-scale fraud (*de Volkskrant*, 21-10-1978:7).

Even more disconcerting was the turmoil within the democratic system as a result of the scandal surrounding the general elections of 31 October 1977. The victory of the NPK coalition – composed of the *Hernieuwde Progressieve Partij* (HPP, Renewed Progressive Party; founded as *Hindostaanse Progressieve Partij*, Hindustani Progressive Party), KTPI, NPS and PSV – which gained 21 seats against the 17 seats won by the *Verenigde Democratische Partijen* (VDP, United Democratic Parties), made up of *Pendawa Lima* (The Five Brothers; a party representing the interests of Indonesian migrants), PBP, *Socialistische Partij Suriname* (SPS, Socialist Party of Suriname) and VHP, was soon called into question due to alleged election fraud, as an excessive number of NPK votes were discovered in several electorates (*Europa year book* 1979, II:1462; *de Volkskrant*, 28-11-1978:7). Arron would assume the role of Prime Minister for a second term, despite serious allegations still circulating, thus setting the stage for a continued routine of chaos and corruption.

Suriname's political structures were damaged even further by the phenomenon of *apanjahtism*, which had resulted in 'a "we – versus – they" set of group identification, which was counterproductive to national identity and national development' (Dew 1980:130). It is in this context that two KTPI members of parliament withdrew their support from the NPK government early in 1979.¹¹ In May 1979 the government experienced another setback as a NPS Staten member died. For the second time in the Staten's history this resulted in a 19-19 stalemate following the refusal of the VDP to provide a quorum in order to vote for a new NPS delegate. This dispute was not settled until August, when both sides agreed to hold new elections in the beginning of 1980 (Dew 1980:46).

In addition, large sections of the working class, represented by organizations such as trade unions and religious communities, along with part of the middle class advocating a more nationally controlled development free from foreign interests, opposed the socio-economic policies and expressed their severe disapproval of the alleged power abuse and corruption scandals surrounding the government. They increasingly rejected the NPK coalition, accusing Arron of ruling on behalf of what Thorndike (1990:36) called the '*comprador bourgeoisie*' – the section of society holding positions in trading companies, banks and multinational corporations, while depending on Dutch and American financial support and investments.

¹¹ After failing to pressure Arron into backing their embattled parliamentary group and strengthening support for their ethnic community.

Finally, the Prime Minister appeared to underestimate the level of discontent felt by the Surinaamse Krijgsmacht (SKM, Surinamese Armed Forces) regarding the civilian authorities. This discontent centred on the demands of the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) that they be accorded governmental recognition through the Bond van Militair Kader (Bomika, Union of Military Cadre), a union modelled on a Dutch example (Kroes 1982:124). In fact, an officially commissioned report, compiled by judge O.W. Abendanon, to be used for negotiations in the conflict between Bomika and the authorities, criticized the government and the armed forces command, citing that 'insufficient communication and consultation between the political authorities and the military leadership has resulted in misunderstanding and frustration among the armed forces' (Slagveer 1980:168). Consequently, the judge considered the formation of a union a justifiable step. Arron, however, prevented the publication of the report and, instead, arrested several leaders of Bomika, charging them with unlawful behaviour (Kroes 1982:124-6).

These government actions only increased the tensions that would ultimately lead to a coup d'état, which was carried out swiftly and with little bloodshed in the early hours of 25 February 1980. According to Rob Kroes, mutinying soldiers took control of Paramaribo's various military camps, arresting commanding officers who were not supportive of the coup. Following this, a gunboat on the Suriname River fired on the police headquarters, offering the only resistance to the overthrow (Kroes 1982:126). After the building had burned down, the police capitulated and the soldiers were in control of the Republic. The fact that the coup had been initiated by only sixteen young NCOs came as a surprise to many Surinamese. The general public remained passive; some sections actually welcomed the military (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:36). Dissatisfaction with the country's ethnically polarized and corrupt politics was so widespread that any change of government was regarded as an improvement. Yet, although in many Latin American societies the military's involvement in state affairs has gained wide acceptance, it would be wrong to describe Suriname as another 'praetorian state' (Perlmutter and Plave Bennett 1980:199).

Instead, the SKM coup was an indication of a broader trend that had appeared in many developing nations as they gained independence in the post-war period. In the words of Morris Janowitz (1988:5-6):

in general, the nations that emerged from colonial domination after 1945, found themselves with very little military institutions and limited paramilitary or police resources; the few where military conflict had been necessary for achieving independence were exceptions. The new nations were incomplete states in the first years after independence, by the standards of the industrial nations, their apparatus for the monopolization of violence had yet to be developed. The outstanding characteristic of the military leaders of these new nations, compared to the pat-

terms of the nation-state of Western Europe, was the extent to which they professed a commitment to socio-political change. They were prepared to assume political power, in varying degrees, in the name of such change.

This commitment to socio-political change was also the general basis for the overthrow of the Arron government, although the conflict regarding the recognition of Bomika had served as the actual trigger for the military coup. Nevertheless, the way in which this socio-political change was to be brought about remained a stumbling block for the officers throughout the entire period of their intervention in state affairs. Political concepts for the redirection of Suriname's development process had not been prepared prior to the mutiny and even during the post-coup era a clear orientation was not recognizable (Thorndike 1990:37).

At that time only a handful of books and articles advocating a stronger nationally based socio-economic orientation had been published by Surinamese politicians and scholars. Just weeks after the coup, a selection of pamphlets was published by SPS politician Herrenberg, who would later gain an influential position within the military-led government. Educated in Algeria, Herrenberg adopted a strong nationalist viewpoint, denouncing the Netherlands in his booklet *Real independence* (1972) as 'the most disastrous country for the Surinamese in general, and for the nationalist and socialist revolutionary in particular' (Herrenberg 1980:41). While his rejection of the 'barbarian Dutch colonial exploiters' indicated his desire to achieve political sovereignty, in *The will to will* (1978) he had also set great store in gaining economic independence (Herrenberg 1980:101). Even though Herrenberg had several ideas concerning Suriname's future, he, like other left-wing politicians, fell short of specifying his political and socio-economic goals and, more importantly, how to obtain these.

This lack of objectives was also apparent in the first communiqués issued by the nine-member-strong Nationale Militaire Raad (NMR, National Military Council), which had been established to take control of the Republic's governmental institutions. In these official statements the NCOs defined their policy broadly and accepted the necessity of admitting civilian technocrats into the new cabinet. The first announcement, broadcast immediately after the coup, called on all Surinamese 'to place themselves at the disposal and be in service of the process of socio-economic, societal and moral reorientations and construction of the Republic of Suriname' (Slagveer 1980:74). However, no details of any intended reforms were given. The second statement, issued in the evening of 25 February, announced that 'finally, the National Military Council informs you that a civilian council will be presented as soon as possible, with the task of dealing with administrative matters' (Slagveer 1980:75).

The officers, in fact, suspended neither the Constitution nor the Staten.

Instead, President Ferrier, on the 'recommendation' of the NMR, invited Chinese PNR politician Henk Chin A Sen – who Chin and Buddingh' (1987:40) describe as 'a physician of impeccable behaviour but totally lacking in political experience' – to form a new government. This step was then 'confirmed' by the Staten (still composed of the elected members of the pre-coup period), in doing so not only handing over power to the military-led administration, but even approving an amnesty bill to prevent charges being laid against the soldiers allegedly involved in the shooting of several police officers during the coup. The new cabinet, a multi-racial coalition (even though dominated by Creoles), was inaugurated on 15 March. Besides Prime Minister Chin A Sen (also acting as Minister of Foreign Affairs) it consisted of two representatives from the military and several PNR delegates. However, despite the government's civilian appearance, the military's role should not be underestimated. The NMR formed the actual centre of power and issued the 'directives' that the civilian administration, technocratic in nature, was to implement (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:39-41).

This Chin A Sen cabinet would soon gain international recognition. A strong global condemnation of Arron's overthrow remained absent, as can be deduced from the second communiqué issued by the NMR. In this, besides announcing the inclusion of civilians in the administration, it was declared that Suriname would peacefully and lawfully participate within the international system and respect the interests of multinational corporations operating in the country:

the National Military Council pledges to respect all treaties signed by the Republic of Suriname and subscribes to the objectives of the United Nations and the principles on which this organization is founded. The Council states explicitly that it respects all fundamental human rights, as defined in the Treaty of Rome and all such treaties. The interests of foreign investors will be left undisturbed. (Slagveer 1980:75.)

Indisputably, the Dutch willingness to cooperate with the Chin a Sen government helped to convince other countries to accept the new rulers in Paramaribo. Yet initially, the Dutch States General refused any contact with the NMR and adopted a motion calling for the reinstatement of democracy (*NRC Handelsblad*, 7-3-1980:2). Furthermore, The Hague expressed its disapproval of the coup by cancelling a planned Dutch naval visit to Paramaribo (*de Volkskrant*, 25-3-1980:1). Nonetheless, Van Agt evaluated the situation as relatively stable, not only because Chin A Sen was a civilian politician, but most importantly because President Ferrier (the former Governor) was respected in Dutch political circles and considered a moderating force within the new regime.

With all of this said, it should be noted that The Hague was partly to blame

for the coup taking place. In fact, it may be argued that it had contributed to stimulating an anti-Arron atmosphere by sharply criticizing his government for 'mispending' Dutch aid and for its lack of 'comprehensive' socio-economic policies. Moreover, Dutch officers, stationed at the Military Mission in Paramaribo maintained close contacts with the NCOs (Haakmat 1987:51-2). The Mission, which was an incorporated part of the Dutch embassy, had been established after the transfer of sovereignty to move the equipment of the former Troepenmacht in Suriname (TRIS, Armed Forces in Suriname; the former colonial armed forces) to the newly founded SKM and to provide these armed forces with financial, organizational, logistical, technical and administrative support (Meel 1990:79).

Particularly the role of Dutch Colonel Hans Valk, who maintained good relations with the emerging military strongman, Sergeant Major Bouterse (later Lieutenant Colonel), has given rise to controversy since Valk, as chief of the Mission, 'either unwittingly or out of unvarnished partisanship had stimulated the coup' (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:38). Consequently, as it grew apparent that the Netherlands was prepared to continue working with the new regime, other powers, including the United States, Brazil and Venezuela – after their initial cautious reaction to the coup¹² – soon followed the Dutch example and accepted the Chin A Sen administration. Dutch acceptance, it must be pointed out, was primarily expressed by the absence of any strong condemnation.

Yet The Hague miscalculated that maintaining contacts with moderate-civilian elements in the government would eventually lead to some form of redemocratization; Dutch-Surinamese relations continued to deteriorate following the February coup. This development was particularly noticeable in mid-1980, when Chin a Sen pressured De Koning (heading the first high-level Dutch delegation to Paramaribo after the coup) to increase the aid in order to compensate for inflation, which by then had resulted in an erosion of Nf 700 million (*De West*, 30-6-1980:1). The Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation countered this request by arguing: 'I simply do not have that money. I would have to take it from Dutch subsidies to poor countries. Apart from that I would bind my successors for a series of years to such an agreement with considerable financial repercussions for the future' (*de Volkskrant*, 30-6-1980:1).

The Dutch delegation also rejected claims made by the new Surinamese Minister of Economic Affairs Henk Abrahams, who emphasized that, according to a financial investigation conducted early in 1980, most of the aid had found

¹² As expressed in the American State Department's concern with regard to 'the violence and the threat to the duly elected government of the country', see *The New York Times*, 27-2-1980:A5.

its way back to the Netherlands. Abrahams pointed out that Dutch companies and organizations such as Ilaco, Nedeco, Carimeco, Nederlands Economisch Instituut, Amels, Billiton, Hollandse Vereniging Amsterdam, Bruynzeel, Lareco, Rabobank, KLM-Aerocarto and the ABN had earned substantial revenues whilst profiting from development projects implemented between 1975 and 1980 (Hira 1983a:95). To demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the Dutch refusal to assume responsibility for the problems caused by inflation and to express their support of the Chin A Sen government, a large number of Surinamese protested against what they perceived as 'Dutch neocolonialism' – in an attempt to intimidate the Dutch delegation accompanying De Koning (*de Volkskrant*, 30-6-1980:1).

In view of the opposing positions held by the two governments and the strained atmosphere in which the Dutch-Surinamese talks were conducted, it came as no surprise that with the Surinamese representatives walking out of the meeting, talks were broken off (*De West*, 3-7-1980:1). Chin A Sen justified this drastic step as 'Minister De Koning was not even willing to discuss reasonable proposals for financing the development of our country. We had no choice' (*de Volkskrant*, 3-7-1980:1). Meanwhile, anti-Dutch sentiment rose following the breakdown in negotiations. As demonstrations and industrial actions continued – while shouting out slogans such as 'De Koning, Suriname is not a pot of honey' (*De West*, 3-7-1980:5) – airport workers even threatened to carry out a strike at Zanderij Airport in an attempt to prevent De Koning from leaving the country. Bilateral relations had clearly reached a new low point.

Escalating internal and external tensions

The serious deterioration in Dutch-Surinamese relations was not the only problem Paramaribo was facing; domestic affairs had also grown increasingly unstable. After an unsuccessful counter-coup by Fred Ormskerk¹³ in April 1980 (*De West*, 6-5-1980:1), a second coup d'état, led by Bouterse, on 13 August 1980, ended with the expulsion from the NMR of the three most left-wing members (Badrissein Sital, Chas Mijnsals and Stanley Joeman) and with the dismissal of President Ferrier. This coup was carried out to suspend the Constitution and the Staten with the intention of consolidating Bouterse's

¹³ The organizer of the counter-coup, used to be one of the leading figures within the NPS. He still had contact with several officers of the armed forces, who had advanced within the army during the Arron era and who rejected the Bouterse-regime. Ormskerk had also still contact with the former Minister for Agriculture and Fishery Johan Kasantaroeno who had served under Arron (Kasantaroeno had fled to the Netherlands after the overthrow of the Arron government), see Hira 1983a:82.

own position (*De West*, 14-8-1980:1). Besides Bouterse as Commander of the renamed Nationaal Leger (NL, National Army), the newly emerging power structure included NMR Chairman and army officer Iwan Graanoogst, Prime Minister Chin A Sen (also sworn in as President) and his PNR colleague Haakmat who was appointed as Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Justice and Police (Meel 1990:83). In other words, the latest coup brought about the officers' direct participation in Suriname's governing body, thus ensuring the NCOs' objective of breaking with the 'old order' of the immediate post-independence period.

Despite these developments, The Hague continued to support the civilian elements within the regime and, in the hope of aiding the anticipated redemocratization attempts by Chin A Sen and Haakmat, proved more generous than before when agreeing to finance a total of 55 development projects, amounting to the unprecedented approval of 96% of the Surinamese requests included in the emergency programme submitted to the CONS (*NRC Handelsblad*, 22-9-1980:13). The Van Agt cabinet also showed a certain willingness to compromise on the issue of inflation. Nevertheless, although disputes in the CONS came to a temporary halt, The Hague could barely restrain its disappointment with the NCOs' increasingly authoritarian style of rule as exemplified by the introduction of corporal punishment for those suspected of offences against the regime's 'new order' (*de Volkskrant*, 7-11-1980:5) and by the imposition of restrictions on the Dutch media reporting on the Republic's domestic affairs. As a result, the Netherlands began to more frequently voice its opposition to developments in Suriname.

What followed might best be described as a revenge strategy, as the authorities on both sides of the Atlantic began to respond negatively to each other's policies. Concerned about Paramaribo's authoritarian rule, the Dutch public reacted with a growing anti-Surinamese attitude, as is reflected in Cartoon 3. Not only is the Bouterse regime unjustifiably compared with the most brutal right-wing *juntas* elsewhere in the world, but the diminutive 'General', symbolizing Suriname, makes a mockery of the perceived foolish, juvenile behaviour of the NCOs. With respect to the limitations imposed on the Dutch media, on several occasions The Hague's Ambassador in Suriname, Max Vegelin van Claerbergen, presented the Chin A Sen cabinet with letters of protest, expressing Dutch discontent with the imprisonment and expulsion of Dutch journalists (*de Volkskrant*, 8-12-1980:3).

In its turn, Paramaribo vehemently protested against the Dutch introduction of visa regulations through which The Hague tried to prevent a renewed exodus of migrants to the Netherlands. All attempts to convince the Van Agt cabinet to extend the treaty – by then expired – regarding the right to take up residency in the Netherlands remained fruitless. The Chin A Sen regime eventually reacted by implementing visa regulations for Dutch citizens trav-

elling to the Republic (*De West*, 18-12-1980:1). In doing so, Suriname actually played into the hands of the Dutch, who had wanted to introduce travel and residency restrictions on Surinamese immigrants as early as November 1975. Relations further deteriorated as Haakmat felt 'cheated' when he was unable to deliver a speech to the UN General Assembly on 3 October 1980, in which he had intended to criticize Suriname's dependence on its former colonial master. Confronted by strong pressure from other developing states, which successfully lobbied Haakmat (1987:113-6) to change the original text, he eventually gave a speech which included no reference to the Netherlands.

Despite Dutch-Surinamese relations continuing to worsen, it should be noted that Paramaribo challenging its 'patron-client' relationship with The Hague was not an entirely negative development. Although the failure to prevent the application of Dutch visa restrictions to Surinamese arriving at Schiphol Airport and the impotence to criticize the Netherlands at the UN General Assembly may have highlighted Paramaribo's weak position, Haakmat, nonetheless, was determined to implement a more independent foreign policy. A clear indication of this can be detected in his comments on the visa affair: 'We will not hesitate to use our influence among South and Central American countries to ensure that the Netherlands treats our citizens



„Wij Dienen Orde Op Zaken Te Stellen Om De Verworvenheden Van Het Vrije Westen Beter Te Kunnen Verdedigen!“

Cartoon 3. Right-wing *juntas* of the world (*de Volkskrant*, 13-9-1980:3)

in a decent way' and to stop the 'hunt for illegal Surinamese' in the former metropole (*de Volkskrant*, 22-12-1980:3).

Before he could achieve his aim of creating closer regional links, in January 1981 Haakmat was replaced as Foreign Minister by Harvey Naarendorp, amidst accusations that his public statements promoting a sober course 'endangered the revolutionary process' (*Het Parool*, 7-1-1981:3). In fact, Haakmat's dismissal was part of a wider power struggle concerning Suriname's future direction. In this internal contest the influence of the moderate faction – and hence the one most easily 'manipulated' by the Dutch – was obviously diminishing. This became clear when the three former NMR members charged with an attempted left-wing countercoup in August 1980 were released from prison and given high governmental positions in March 1981 (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:47).

This political reshuffling to accommodate the growing power of left-wing forces finally allowed Bouterse to define the objectives of the February coup more clearly as he announced that 'we all strive for a socialist society, in which there is work for everyone, where social justice prevails, and where poverty, exploitation, racism or suppression are left in the past' (*De West*, 6-3-1981:3). Besides reinforcing the radicals' power within cabinet, Bouterse was able to consolidate an emerging nationalistic oriented foreign policy course. This was apparent, for instance, in his accusation that the Dutch Military Mission had interfered with Suriname's domestic affairs and therefore he demanded the closure of its office in Paramaribo (*Trouw*, 22-4-1981:3).

After the removal of almost all moderate elements in the regime and the expulsion of its military advisors, the Dutch government was faced with the possibility of losing control – for the first time in Suriname's modern history – of developments in its former colony. The only way for The Hague to continue exercising some measure of influence was through financial aid. In order not to break this last vital connection, the Netherlands was willing to make more compromises on the Aid Treaty and to accept requests brought forward by Suriname's CONS delegates, including the previously rejected demand for the relocation of funds from infrastructure programmes to directly productive projects (Meel 1990:84).

However, despite this cooperation, Dutch influence on Surinamese affairs continued to weaken. In fact, René de Groot (2004:192) argued that 'in retrospect it must perhaps be concluded that Dutch influence in Suriname in 1980 and 1981 was too weak to be able to bring about a restoration of democracy [...] Suriname's destiny was now being determined in Suriname – and not in the Netherlands'. The main reason for this development was Bouterse's deliberate attempt to break the Republic's dependence on its former colonial master and on other industrialized nations. The Manifesto van de Revolutie (Revolution's Manifesto) proclaimed on 11 May 1981 emphasized this foreign

policy aim while stating that 'the meaning of the coup of 25 February 1980 lies above all, after an age-long struggle, finally and for always, in the rule of neo-colonialism in Suriname having been broken' (*Suriname schijnonafhankelijkheid* 1985:15).

This Manifesto would serve as the basis for the new Revolutionary Front government, which was formed at the end of 1981 under the leadership of the Revolutionaire Volkspartij (RVP, Revolutionary People's Party), with the Progressieve Arbeiders en Landbouwers Unie (PALU, Progressive Workers' and Farm Labourers' Union) as junior partner. The government's main objective was to strengthen the 'revolutionary' consciousness of the Surinamese people through popular mobilization, political education and the creation of an armed people's militia (Thorndike 1990:41). This development, not surprisingly, resulted in the expulsion of the remaining moderate elements within the regime, culminating in the 'resignation' of Chin A Sen in February 1982, who was replaced by Henry Neyhorst as Prime Minister and by Ramdat Misier as President (*De West*, 5-2-1982:1, 8-2-1982:1). Naarendorp, a former professor of law who at an earlier stage had succeeded Haakmat as Foreign Minister, expressed the new regime's wish to further distance the Republic from the influence of the Van Agt cabinet, stating that 'our primary responsibility does not lie with Mr Van Agt but with the Surinamese people' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 13-2-1982:1).

The Netherlands, in turn, announced the temporary withholding of aid, while making an exception for projects already in the pipeline. This allowed The Hague to wait and see what directions the Neyhorst government would take and what its policies for redemocratization would entail (*De West*, 20-2-1982:1). After an unsuccessful counter coup by Sergeants Wilfred Hawker and Rambocus in March 1982 (*De West*, 13-3-1982:1) – ending in the immediate execution of one of the two coup leaders – the Dutch government, appalled by the regime's fierce response, lost hope of any democratic reforms eventually being implemented. It therefore recalled its Ambassador Johannes Hoekman to The Hague for consultations (*NRC Handelsblad*, 17-3-1982:1).

Suriname, for its part, was not in the mood to be impressed by Van Agt's action and instead, aware of the country's dependency on Dutch financial support, accused the Netherlands of unilaterally breaking the Aid Treaty and interfering with the Republic's domestic affairs (*de Volkskrant*, 22-2-1982:3). At the same time, Surinamese supporters of the regime in the Netherlands staged a demonstration in The Hague, opposing Dutch foreign policy towards Suriname, including the threat of withholding aid (*De West*, 6-3-1982:2). In addition, Dutch companies such as KLM-Aerocarato, OGEM, Shell, Billiton and Bruynzeel were cited in a report by the Surinamese Justice Department in June 1982 and charged with having bribed politicians during the pre-1980 era (*De West*, 11-6-1982:3). Another measure highlighting Paramaribo's discontent

with The Hague was the cancellation of the bilateral Air Traffic Treaty in October 1982. The regime used a rather minor conflict between SLM and the Antilliaanse Luchtvaart Maatschappij (ALM, Antillean Airlines) to justify this disruption of transatlantic flights to Amsterdam (*De West*, 14-10-1982:1).

To make matters worse, parallel to the series of cabinet reshuffles which had begun to characterize Surinamese politics, the Netherlands also experienced a succession of short-lived governments, which made it no easier for Paramaribo to evaluate The Hague's position. Following new general elections in May 1981, Van Agt continued to lead a coalition government, replacing his former junior partner, the VVD, with the PvdA and Democraten 66 (D66; Dutch centre-left liberals). Only a few weeks later, however, the coalition collapsed and it was not until November 1981 that the three parties were able to form a new government. Then Van Agt once again failed to hold the coalition together, which collapsed in May 1982, after which Van Agt led a CDA-D66 minority cabinet. New elections were held in September 1982, resulting in a CDA and VVD coalition under Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers. This combination proved more stable and Lubbers would continue to dominate Dutch politics throughout the remainder of the 1980s (*Europa year book* 1983, I:919).

Taking into account the initially unpredictable situation in The Hague, Neyhorst felt confident enough to accuse the Dutch authorities of neocolonialism and to denounce the former Arron administration for having lacked 'nationalistic ideas' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 1-11-1982:6). In contrast to the pre-coup governments, his cabinet was to follow an independent course during future CONS negotiations, rejecting the Dutch domination in these. In Neyhorst's own words:

I do not want to call them [pre-coup governments] marionettes, but they had no independent vision, and as such, much was decided by the Dutch embassy in Paramaribo. Since the events of 25 February 1980, the Dutch have had to deal with other people, relatively young people with their own ideas who refuse to be told what to do. Furthermore, we know that three quarters of the Long-term Development Programme has been written by the Netherlands. Now we want our own development programme. (*NRC Handelsblad*, 1-11-1982:6.)

While it may have been a positive step to distance the country from the Netherlands, thus paving the way to a more regionally oriented foreign policy, the regime's 'revolutionary' programme began to create a divide between the government and its citizens. Following Chin A Sen's withdrawal, the influence of the new technocratic government weakened as the highest political authority was placed in what was known as the Beleidscentrum (Policy Centre), with Bouterse and his Deputy Commander Roy Horb emerging as Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:51). In

other words, the Policy Centre provided the military with effective control over state matters as it decided the direction of Suriname's political and socio-economic development.

Large sections of the public, by contrast, began to reject the role of the military in politics and their proclaimed 'revolutionary' objectives. Under the leadership of Cyrill Daal, president of the Moederbond, they demanded a redemocratization of the country and organized demonstrations and strikes as of March 1982 (*NRC Handelsblad*, 6-3-1982:1, 5). A few months later, the Federatie van Arbeiders in de Landbouw (FAL, Federation of Agricultural Labourers) and various employee organizations in the health and educational sectors joined the industrial actions by the Moederbond (*de Volkskrant*, 18-8-1982:1). These anti-government protests reached their zenith during the official state visit to Suriname by Grenada's Prime Minister Maurice Bishop in October 1982. More precisely, due to a strike by air traffic controllers and employees of a nearby power station, Bouterse not only had to delay the landing of Bishop's plane at Zanderij Airport, he was also forced to welcome Grenada's Prime Minister by candlelight, while attempting to show his guest Suriname's 'revolutionary' progress. Moreover, while Bishop addressed a small crowd of 1,500 sympathizers who had assembled in the centre of Paramaribo to greet one of the Caribbean's best known Marxists, not far away Daal held an anti-government rally numbering about 15,000 demonstrators (De Groot 2004:194).

Fearing a further escalation of this tense situation, other unions under the leadership of Fred Derby (President of the C-47) decided to exploit the government's vulnerable position by proposing that the authorities open up channels for negotiations. Derby's request for direct contact with the regime eventually gained support from the Moederbond and the FAL, after which a plan was drafted to outline a return to democratic rule. The military, although accepting the request for negotiations, rejected the notion of redemocratization since, according to Bouterse, 'democracy without leadership leads to anarchy, and anarchy leads to demise. And of course no one in this world wants that, especially not in our country' (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:55).

Despite his rhetoric, the military strongman failed to intimidate the unions and various religious communities, which together with the Associatie van Surinaamse Fabrikanten (ASFA, Association of Surinamese Manufacturers) and the Vereniging Surinaams Bedrijfsleven (VSB, Suriname Trade and Industry Association), had united for the purpose of creating the Associatie voor Democratie (Association for Democracy). This polarization between the government and large sections of the public finally escalated to such an extent that the military panicked and broke up the stand-off in a most brutal manner, by setting fire to several offices belonging to unions, newspapers and radio stations, and by arresting sixteen prominent dissidents. Fifteen

of these opposition leaders were tortured before being executed at military headquarters on 8 December 1982 (De Groot 2004:194-5).

The news of the Decembermoorden (December Murders), as this sad event in Suriname's history has become known, sent shock waves through Surinamese society while the Dutch government and public were equally appalled. Bouterse's strategy of dismissing the killings as part of an attempted escape in order to appease The Hague, was soon proved wrong by reports confirming the cold-blooded murder of opposition leaders (*NRC Handelsblad*, 11-12-1982:1). As a direct result, the Dutch cabinet came together on 10 December 1982, after which it instructed Dutch Ambassador Hoekman to issue a letter of protest stating that 'development aid may never become a support of repressive regimes, nor may it lead to complicity in serious human rights violations' (De Groot 2004:195). On 16 December the cabinet issued a sharp official protest condemning recent developments in Suriname and informing the regime that all forms of aid would be frozen for an indefinite period of time. The Neyhorst government countered this by claiming the continued validity of the Aid Treaty, so that the Netherlands ought to be bound to sustain its funds to the Republic (*NRC Handelsblad*, 20-12-1982:1). The Hague dismissed this claim and, instead, repeated its firm rejection of any further cooperation with the regime.

Make use of an extra row of space – this is the conclusion and shouldn't be linked to the main body directly – in other chapters, a space between the main body and conclusion has been used as well and I liked the idea of indicating that this is the conclusion)

Clearly, the scene was set for an open political confrontation between the former colony and its erstwhile master, only seven years following Suriname's withdrawal from the Dutch Kingdom. In order to evaluate the Republic's foreign policy in the initial period after independence, it can be argued that, although Suriname enjoyed a sovereign status, it continued to rely heavily on The Hague's political and socio-economic guidance. The price to pay for this blinkered orientation towards the Netherlands was the failure to establish credible relations with countries in the Caribbean and in Latin America, which could also have provided the young nation with benefits such as trade relations and development aid. Instead, Suriname's continued dependence on Dutch funds, markets, technology and skills exuded the strong impression of a patron-client relationship. Whereas the patron, the Netherlands, enjoyed enormous influence in the field of planning and implementing the Republic's socio-economic development, the client, Suriname, often obliged to Dutch 'advice' so as to sustain the flow of funds as outlined in the 'golden handshake' of 1975.

Nevertheless, growing differences between both nations became apparent as issues such as migration and the specific use of financial aid 'clouded'

bilateral relations. Dutch-Surinamese tensions, in fact, rapidly increased after the elected Arron government was usurped by a military-led regime in February 1980. Although The Hague initially continued to give aid and kept communication channels with the new government open in a bid to at least exercise some control over the Republic's development, Dutch influence diminished steadily with the dismissal of the moderate faction of the regime. The new rulers increasingly scorned the Republic's dependence on the Kingdom and sought to break with the 'old order' of the pre-1980 era. This was primarily achieved by an increasingly authoritarian government style that would eventually result in the execution of its opponents in the December Murders of 1982. The Netherlands responded immediately by suspending all aid – thus setting the scene for an open diplomatic conflict between The Hague and Paramaribo.

CHAPTER III

David versus Goliath

A master/servant or rider/horse relationship no longer exists (Ambassador Herrenberg, *Trouw*, 21-6-1983:3).

Following the December Murders of 1982 Dutch-Surinamese relations became severely strained at all levels. The Netherlands reacted angrily to the executions and, more importantly, strongly refused to accept the military's political influence. Paramaribo in turn denounced the neocolonial interference by The Hague and rejected its stance. Rapidly, relations deteriorated, becoming increasingly antagonistic. In this tense atmosphere both governments resorted to a wide range of foreign-policy tactics in a battle of one-upmanship. These actions included the termination of military, technical, professional and educational cooperation, support for various opposition movements within the other's country, use and misuse of the media, disruption of air links, lobbying other governments and international organizations, expulsion of each others' diplomats, while The Hague also suspended economic assistance. The primary objective of both parties was purely and simply to undermine the other to as great an extent as possible. In view of the fact that the Dutch were holding most of the cards, the battle was decidedly one-sided.

The Netherlands becomes the 'enemy'

To understand the bitter tensions between The Hague and Paramaribo throughout 1983, the political and ideological backgrounds of both governments have to be understood. Whereas in Suriname the numerous cabinets which had led the Republic since the February coup had been predominantly of a technocratic nature, the influence of RVP and PALU had steadily grown stronger. The various internal and external factors contributing to this development will be discussed in more depth in Chapter IV. What should be mentioned here, however, is the strong nationalist and anti-colonialist attitude of the newly appointed Alibux cabinet governing the Republic (following Neyhorst's resignation after the December Murders) from early 1983 until

8 January 1984 (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:177). In particular the dominant PALU, which was represented by five ministers (including Errol Alibux himself), against the RVP (with two positions in the cabinet), was an important contributory factor in Paramaribo's hardening stance towards The Hague (*Suriname schijnonafhankelijkheid* 1985:23). Whereas the Dutch were deeply angered by the events of December 1982, the Alibux cabinet, the most radical regime to rule Suriname to date, was thus ready and willing to withstand the anticipated diplomatic assault from across the Atlantic.

In the Netherlands a new CDA-VVD coalition under Lubbers had taken office in November 1982. This cabinet, therefore, was merely a few weeks in office when it was confronted with the December Murders. While attempting to gather information about the circumstances leading to the executions in order to formulate a response, the majority of the sizeable Surinamese community in the Netherlands – numbering around 180,000 by the end of 1982 – exerted strong pressure on the Dutch Prime Minister to denounce Bouterse's latest move swiftly and harshly (*NRC Handelsblad*, 23-12-1982:3). On 12 December several thousand Surinamese protested against the Murders and burned an effigy of Bouterse in front of the Surinamese embassy in The Hague (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 18-12-1982:3). Similar demonstrations continued through the month and, as illustrated by the occupation of the Surinamese consulate in Amsterdam by the opposition group Herstel Democratie Suriname (HDS, Restoration of Democracy in Suriname), not all protests were expressed by peaceful means (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-12-1982:3).

Whereas the outcry by Surinamese migrants against the killings in Paramaribo had so far mainly been asserted by groups and associations speaking primarily for the interests of the various ethnic and religious communities, the pressure on Lubbers mounted as leading multi-ethnic organizations began to express their opposition to the Bouterse regime. For instance, the principal alliance representing the socio-economic affairs of Surinamese residing in the Netherlands issued a statement condemning the massacre.

The National Federation of Welfare Associations for Surinamese expresses its horror and indignation with regard to the manner in which influential personalities of Surinamese society have been robbed of their lives. It believes that by perpetrating this action the current rulers in Suriname have seriously violated human rights and hence, have forfeited any form of respect and dignity. (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 18-12-1982:1.)

With an overview of the political climate on both sides of the Atlantic, the deteriorating Dutch-Surinamese relations can now be analysed. It must be noted that initially it was the Netherlands taking steps that would further deteriorate bilateral links. Besides suspending its aid programme, The Hague

introduced a variety of measures which were clearly aimed at opposing Paramaribo on a broad range of political and socio-economic fronts. Just over a week after the executions, the Dutch government unilaterally terminated a series of treaties signed with Suriname in 1975 and 1976, including those relating to diplomatic representation of the Republic where needed and to the provision of legal advice and organizational support in the field of foreign policy (*Het Parool*, 18-12-1982:3).

Another decision taken by the Lubbers cabinet was to immediately terminate the *suppletiebetalingen* (supplementary payments) which had been paid to officers of the NL. This action was justified as the 'brutal and exceedingly harsh treatment' of the opposition by the Surinamese military indicated, according to the Dutch Foreign Ministry, that the officers feared a return to democracy – thus making it unlikely that they would hand over power to a civilian government in the near future (*NRC Handelsblad*, 16-12-1982:1). Consequently, The Hague was unwilling to continue supplementing the salaries of 59 Surinamese officers who so far had received around Nf 113,000 in monthly wages on top of their Surinamese salaries, as guaranteed by an agreement signed at the end of 1975 (*NRC Handelsblad*, 18-12-1982:3). This affected the wages of all sixteen officers leading the February 1980 coup.

In a similar vein, the cooperation between the Dutch and Surinamese armed forces was suspended on both a personal and a material level. All Dutch military officers working as instructors in the Republic were recalled by The Hague and Surinamese soldiers attending training and educational courses in the Netherlands were asked to return to their home country (Bouterse 1990:126-7). Following on from this, an embargo was announced on the sale of military equipment to the Republic (*NRC Handelsblad*, 18-12-1982:3) and on the practice of coordinating the purchase of weapons from third parties (*Het Parool*, 18-12-1982:3). To complete the end of military cooperation, Bouterse retaliated by demanding the withdrawal of Dutch Military Attaché Colonel Bas van Tussenbroek and his assistant from Paramaribo by 31 January 1983 while simultaneously recalling his own Military Attaché from The Hague (*Trouw*, 8-1-1983:1).

One of the more drastic steps considered by The Hague was the plan to evacuate the 4,700 Dutch citizens residing in the former colony. This plan had been drawn up just days after the December Murders (*NRC Handelsblad*, 14-12-1982:1). Although it was unlikely that this could be achieved by Dutch marines copying the tactics of their American colleagues, it is understandable that the Lubbers cabinet was concerned about protecting its citizens still residing in Suriname, especially given the unstable political climate at that time. From a Surinamese perspective, it can also be argued that the plan to evacuate Dutch nationals, many of whom occupied important positions, was clearly a provocative move, attempting to undermine Suriname's socio-

economic stability, which to some extent depended on Dutch professional skills.

While the Alibux regime regarded these initial retributory policies as harsh but not necessarily threatening to the military's influence in Paramaribo – the suspension of aid at this stage was only a temporary measure – The Hague's next steps, in contrast, were interpreted as a clear sign of open 'hostility'. This included the Dutch support, as Bouterse interpreted it, of the Raad voor de Bevrijding van Suriname (Council for the Liberation of Suriname, the main, non-violent exiled opposition group). Following the executions in 1982, and a purge of the officer corps early in 1983, many Surinamese decided to flee this increasingly authoritarian rule. Among these refugees were several high-ranking dignitaries from the civil and military administration, including Director of the Central Bank and former Prime Minister Sedney (*Het Parool*, 18-1-1983:1), Air Force Commander Vasilda (*NRC Handelsblad*, 13-1-1983:4) and the leaders of the Military Police, Captain Ramon Abrahams and Lieutenant Polak (*Trouw*, 24-1-1983:1). Most of these refugees, often after difficult journeys through the Caribbean or Latin America, sought asylum in the Netherlands. Several joined their compatriots who had left the Republic at an earlier stage, thus transforming the Liberation Council into a strong opposition movement (*de Volkskrant*, 5-1-1983:5).

One of these dignitaries and earlier refugees in the Council was former Prime Minister and President Chin A Sen, under whose leadership the group had been organized. Chin A Sen defined the Council's main objective as being the Republic's redemocratization. It must be emphasized that to obtain this goal, the Council denounced the use of violence and refrained from portraying itself as a government in exile. According to Chin A Sen:

It is our task to bring the military dictatorship to an end. We, in the Netherlands, cannot decide what is best for the country; afterwards, the people of Suriname will have to do that themselves. As a result of our membership of the Council we will not lay any claim to positions of power later in Suriname (*Trouw*, 14-1-1983:1).

Instead, the Council perceived itself as a pressure group operating on the global stage with the purpose of providing information to foreign governments and international organizations in an effort to forge a worldwide anti-Bouterse alliance.

Predictably, Paramaribo reacted with outrage to the establishment of the Council in Amsterdam on 4 January 1983. Although unable to take direct action against the Council, Foreign Minister Glenn Sankatsing¹ accused Lub-

¹ Minister of Social Affairs and Education Sankatsing (a RVP politician) took over the portfolio of Foreign Affairs in the absence of a minister responsible for Suriname's foreign relations.

bers of not only failing to outlaw the Council's activities but also of actually supporting the dissidents (*Trouw*, 9-2-1983:1). Several Surinamese leaders, including Bouterse, were concerned that the Council, despite its public declaration to the contrary, might still attempt to set up a government in exile and become involved in military-style operations aimed at overthrowing the authorities (Bouterse 1990:141).

The Hague, still furious, was in no mood to swallow any accusations hurled at it by the regime. Although Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek totally rejected Sankatsing's claims and pointed out that all anti-Bouterse organizations operating in the Netherlands were bound by Dutch law and therefore prohibited from planning or carrying out any military operations against Paramaribo, this issue added to the already tense bilateral relations. All the more so since Van den Broek had also stressed the Council's freedom to use all legal, diplomatic and political means available in the Netherlands that could contribute to bringing about the Republic's redemocratization (Meel 1990:87).

The fear that the anti-Bouterse movement in the Netherlands might be a threat to the authorities in Paramaribo was understandable in view of the fact that other opposition groups were now being founded. Among these were the *Amsterdams Volksverzet* (AVV, Amsterdam People's Resistance Movement) led by former Foreign Minister Haakmat (Verschuuren 1994:138), the HDS, founded by Rob Wormer (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-12-1982:3) and the *Moederbond Nederland*, the exiled Dutch branch of the *Moederbond*, organized by exiled union members under Ben Kohinor (*Het Parool*, 25-3-1983:9). Although these groups generally promoted similar goals to those of the Council, they differed in their methods, with some, for instance, openly advocating the use of violence (*NRC Handelsblad*, 11-10-1982:3). In view of the series of countercoups since February 1980 and their possible links to external support, the Surinamese government was highly concerned about the activities of these groups, doubly so as they were convinced that they often enjoyed direct or indirect support from The Hague.

At a press conference in Paramaribo in January 1983, Suriname's Ambassador to the Netherlands Herrenberg had already warned that 'the new government must be able to beat off all hostile attacks from abroad. If we do not realize this, we will not survive the onslaught of mercenaries' (*Trouw*, 31-1-1983:1). Herrenberg also referred to recent reports of an attempted invasion by a group of Surinamese dissidents residing in the Netherlands and in the United States. At the beginning of 1983, with the help of Belgian and American mercenaries, this group had planned to overthrow Bouterse in a military-style operation. Fearing further coups and invasions, the Paramaribo authorities began to question the Dutch position on such activities while, once again, accusing The Hague of failing to restrict the scope of action of

exile movements in the Netherlands (*Trouw*, 31-1-1983:1). This criticism was repeated in March 1983 at the meeting of the UN Commission for Human Rights in Geneva, where Surinamese diplomat Ronald Kensmil detailed Paramaribo's claims that The Hague provided support for numerous anti-Bouterse groups: 'certain Dutch authorities provide moral support to movements in the Netherlands that are now threatening our country with an armed invasion, possibly utilizing mercenaries' (*Trouw*, 2-3-1983:10).

Suriname's accusations proved difficult to shrug off following the failed attempt of another invasion in the summer of 1983. In mid-July it became public that with the support of 150 mercenaries, several hundred exiled Surinamese (some of whom were former soldiers) had planned an operation to overthrow Bouterse. This operation was suspended after it had become apparent, according to the leader, that the Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst (BVD, Dutch homeland security, now AIVD) had gathered detailed information of the plan. As a result, the leader argued: 'I found it impossible to bear the responsibility for human lives once I heard that the BVD knew about it. I thought it was possible that the Netherlands would inform the Bouterse regime of this type of action, as the government had claimed it would' (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 23-7-1983:1). In other words, despite Suriname's claim that The Hague supported anti-Bouterse groups, dissidents in the Netherlands acted on the assumption that the Dutch government would uphold its own laws.

Nonetheless, the alleged Dutch assistance to exile groups continued to put strain on bilateral relations. In November 1983 Surinamese Defence Minister Wilfred Meynard reported that his government had again handed a protest letter to the Dutch Ambassador, accusing The Hague of supporting yet another planned invasion. Meynard claimed that the Liberation Council – which was believed to be responsible – had attempted 'to create chaos in order to prepare Suriname for an invasion by mercenaries' (*Trouw*, 2-12-1983:7). He also claimed that this latest assault, which was to be carried out from bases inside French Guiana, had been assisted by Dutch homeland security and their French colleagues who had some knowledge of the Council's undertakings. The response from The Hague was predictable as the Foreign Ministry published the statement that 'the Dutch government would under no circumstances directly or indirectly support an action such as the one described by Suriname. In no way is the government involved in such an undertaking' (*Trouw*, 2-12-1983:7). Yet this statement did not ease Paramaribo's anxiety, particularly as, at the same time, it became known that the Dutch Foreign Minister had circulated an order to all departmental staff to decline any official invitations issued by the Surinamese embassy to celebrate the Republic's independence day.

Another factor contributing to the deterioration of bilateral relations was the negative way in which the Republic's politics were reported and discussed

in the Dutch media. This development prompted Paramaribo to strongly object to what it perceived to be a deliberate attempt to create a 'hostile' atmosphere towards Suriname within Dutch society. Even though former Prime Minister Arron had already frequently complained about the extensive media coverage of his government's involvement in corruption scandals (*de Volkskrant*, 23-10-1978:2), the negative tone adopted by Dutch journalists had become more extreme following the February 1980 coup. To counter this trend, former Surinamese Foreign Minister Naarendorp organized regular meetings with the international press throughout 1982, during which particular attention was paid to the Dutch media in a bid to positively influence the coverage of Surinamese affairs (Oltmans 1984:40).

However, Naarendorp's strategy failed and the uneasy relationship between Paramaribo and the Dutch media continued to sour. One reason for this was that amongst the victims of the killings had been several local journalists: Jozef Slagveer, Abraham Behr, André Kamperveen, Leslie Rahman and Frank Wijngaarde (Lagerberg 1989:125). Fuel was added to the fire during the controversial arrest, in January 1983, of Major Horb, second in command to Bouterse. He was accused of conspiring with the Council and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in a plot against the regime (*Trouw*, 2-2-1983:7). Following what Paramaribo described as the 'suicide' of Horb while in military custody, the condemnation of the regime in the Dutch media reached new heights as journalists questioned Paramaribo's suicide finding, claiming that the Major had in fact been executed (*NRC Handelsblad*, 4-2-1983:1). They portrayed Horb as a popular and moderate leader who had paid with his life for opposing Bouterse's increasingly authoritarian rule (*Trouw*, 4-2-1983:7).

This in turn provoked further outrage. In late January 1983, the Surinamese cabinet ordered the state-controlled Nationale Voorlichtingsdienst (NVD, National Information Service) to provide Dutch journalists with no information whatsoever since 'in the Netherlands only rumours, half-truths and lies are published about the situation in Suriname' (*Trouw*, 28-1-1983:1). In addition, Herrenberg expressed his anger about reports of the December Murders and the Horb affair and invited the journalists concerned to the Surinamese embassy in February. He seized this opportunity to give a damning critique of the Dutch media under the pretext: 'I am qualified to judge. I have also been a journalist, educated in Algiers' (*Trouw*, 3-2-1983:3). The objective of the press conference, modifying the viewpoint of the Dutch media while accusing it of reporting 'colonial bullshit', unsurprisingly backfired as newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations in the Netherlands honed their criticism of developments in Suriname.

The best example of Herrenberg's failure to 'tame' the media can be seen in Cartoon 4, published in *Trouw* a few days after the press conference. The Ambassador himself is made the target of the media as he is shown attempting

to 'choke' any journalist reporting on the Horb affair. Paramaribo reacted promptly by accusing The Hague of failing to put an end to the 'hostile' atmosphere created by the Dutch media. Again, the Dutch response was quick: Van den Broek completely rejected Paramaribo's claim that The Hague indirectly supported the Dutch media in its attacks on the regime. As the Dutch Foreign Minister pointed out, the Lubbers cabinet had no authority to intervene in the editorials of newspapers, magazines or in radio and television programmes (Meel 1990:87).

The increase in tension certainly came at an inconvenient moment for Paramaribo, flaring up as Bouterse had just decided to bring Herrenberg back to Suriname in order to help establish a new cabinet following Neyhorst's resignation (*Het Parool*, 19-1-1983.:3). Herrenberg's harsh criticism of the Dutch media seemed particularly unprofessional as he left behind an even more antagonistic atmosphere. Furthermore, Herrenberg only added to the turmoil by announcing that, before returning to Suriname, he would take a holiday in Algeria. In doing so he fuelled the already heated political climate as this suggested that he found the present bilateral problems of minor importance. On his return from North Africa, on 19 February, Herrenberg inflamed relations further by declaring that for the duration of his trip to



Cartoon 4. Henk Herrenberg and the Dutch media (*Trouw*, 4-2-1983:10)

Paramaribo, until 9 March, he would simply close the Surinamese embassy in The Hague and the consulate in Amsterdam (*NRC Handelsblad*, 21-2-1983:3).

The Ambassador's strong stand soon generated media speculation on both sides of the Atlantic, as the press attempted to gauge the risk of a complete diplomatic breakdown (*Trouw*, 11-1-1983:8). These speculations gained credence as voices in Surinamese government circles argued that official relations with the Netherlands should at least be downgraded. Notably, Herrenberg's party colleague Arthur ten Berge (an influential ideologist within the RVP) declared that if The Hague had not suspended the Aid Treaty, the regime would have rejected Dutch financial assistance of its own accord because, according to Ten Berge, 'independence from this type of aid is the basis of our revolutionary view' (*Trouw*, 22-1-1983:5). That the Surinamese leadership was at this point indeed prepared to accept the challenges posed by the Dutch media and government can be deduced from the regime's decision to arrest Ruud de Wit, a Dutch journalist stationed in Suriname, on a rather dubious pretext.

To be able to understand Paramaribo's aggressive position it is important to consider the extent of the anger felt in the Republic towards, in the first place, The Hague's announcement of terminating its aid and, secondly, the decision to allow both the Liberation Council and the media to unleash their scathing attacks against the regime. It should also be recognized that since the resignation of the Neyhorst cabinet, Suriname's Foreign Affairs Department had been operating without any clear directives. Thus when Foreign Minister Naarendorp, who had significantly shaped Suriname's foreign relations in the last one and a half year (see Chapters IV and V) withdrew from his post, this resulted in a power vacuum within the department. The Ministry was temporarily deprived of strong leadership at the critical moment of having to deal not only with strained relations with the Netherlands, but also with the United States and several Latin American and Caribbean countries.

The problem of how to respond to international condemnation of the December Murders eventually led to Bouterse calling a meeting of his most senior diplomats and foreign affairs experts. A fresh global foreign policy approach was urgently needed, even though by Christmas 1982 Naarendorp had already introduced a regional strategy aimed at informing Caribbean and Latin American governments about the 'real' events that had led to the executions. Therefore, in late February and early March 1983, besides Herrenberg, Heidweiler and Arnold Halfhide – Suriname's Ambassador and Consul General in the United States – also arrived in Paramaribo to discuss with Bouterse, Naarendorp and other influential politicians the launch of a diplomatic offensive to counter the risk of becoming internationally isolated (*Trouw*, 20-1-1983:1).

The issue dominating these discussions was the deterioration of relations

between The Hague and Paramaribo. Whereas consensus was soon reached about a diplomatic offensive aimed at defending and strengthening Suriname's international position, the relationship with the Netherlands proved to be more complex. Herrenberg's belligerent stance was no secret and Bouterse also expressed his anger towards The Hague by accusing the Lubbers cabinet of using the unilateral suspension of aid as 'economic blackmail with the sole aim of creating socio-economic chaos in our country in order to reimpose its political rule over our destiny' (*Trouw*, 10-3-1983:1). In contrast, career diplomat Heidweiler adopted a more conciliatory tone while calling for a dialogue with The Hague: 'Suriname is still far too dependent on the Netherlands. Consequently, there is not enough room for an intensive policy directed at countries in our own region' (*Trouw*, 10-3-1983:7).

At the end of the conference a compromise – somewhere between the viewpoints of Herrenberg and Bouterse on the one hand, and Heidweiler on the other – was agreed upon and subsequently accepted by the new Alibux cabinet. This essentially entailed the adoption of a pragmatic foreign policy which would leave the 'door open' for further developments. In other words, although Alibux recognized the potential economic and financial benefits of an improvement in Dutch-Surinamese relations, the dominant party in his cabinet, PALU, saw the main cause of the deteriorating links primarily in the stance taken by The Hague. It was thus believed that the first step towards improved relations should come from the Lubbers cabinet. If The Hague was to revise its decision to suspend the aid, it was considered possible that relations could normalize. This non-committal position was clearly reflected in two successive statements made by Alibux. In the first, the Prime Minister noted:

Relations [between the two states] are disturbed. We are not to blame for this. By suspending development aid the Netherlands has committed a wrongful act which has already led to considerable international condemnation. It is a hostile action taken against the Surinamese people. With this, the Netherlands has shown what it really wants to achieve with the development aid: rather than helping the people, it wants to strengthen its own political and economic interests. (*Trouw*, 24-3-1983:7.)

However, on 1 May 1983, during his inauguration speech, Alibux (also Foreign Minister) noticeably moderated his tone in an attempt to persuade the Dutch cabinet to reopen the flow of financial assistance. He claimed that 'It is very likely that the Netherlands and Suriname still harbour animosity for one another. However, they can work together positively if the interests of the people of both countries are respected' (*Trouw*, 2-5-1983:1). These contrasting views must not be interpreted as an ideological shift, but as an expression of the ambivalence existing within the ruling party with regard to its policy towards the Netherlands.

The nationalist and anti-colonial position of PALU was clearly represented

in the first statement, while the second expressed the recognition that the 'Revolution' could only progress if funds could be gained from external sources, including the Netherlands. In other words, although the intention to propose a normalization of relations with the former colonial master by the left-wing regime may have come as a surprise to many political observers, the understanding that the revolutionary process was based on Suriname's ability to raise financial assistance primarily from the treasuries of the industrialized world, contributed to the moderate stance adopted by Alibux in his dealings with the Netherlands.

Yet, the Lubbers cabinet showed no interest in responding to Paramaribo's overtures, rejecting instead any attempt to allow the normalization of bilateral ties. At this point it should be remembered that, mirroring the situation in Suriname, the new Lubbers cabinet included several newcomers who attempted to introduce new policies (Gladdish 1991:63). Among them Minister for Development Cooperation Eegje Schoo, who would become notorious in Paramaribo after her announcement of the indefinite suspension of all aid to the Republic. In addition, she ensured to withdraw thirty Dutch technicians who were still working on development projects by 1 March 1983.

In other words, in view of the December Murders, the purge of the officer corps, the suspicious death of Major Horb and the rise in power of PALU, accompanied by the escalating conflict between the Dutch media and the Bouterse regime, The Hague effectively ruled out the possibility of re-establishing financial and technical assistance to Paramaribo in either the short or medium term. This position was reflected in Schoo's statement that 'any other destination for that money is out of the question. But certainly after the events of this week we must take into account that the development aid will be suspended for a long time to come' (*Trouw*, 5-2-1983:5). The attitude adopted by the Dutch Foreign Minister, who dismissed the call for a fresh start in bilateral relations as outlined in the inauguration address of the Alibux cabinet, must likewise have been extremely frustrating for Paramaribo. In Van den Broek's view, which was widely supported by both government and opposition parties in the Dutch parliament, as long as no serious steps were taken by the regime to introduce a redemocratization process, the Netherlands would firmly uphold its decision to suspend financial and technical assistance to the former colony (*NRC Handelsblad*, 3-5-1983:3).

In Suriname the Dutch rejection of Alibux's programme led to a reorientation of PALU's position. As it became clear that the reopening of Dutch assistance had been ruled out, the party's nationalist and anticolonial ideology significantly affected Suriname's foreign policy towards The Hague – resulting in abandoning what might best be described as a cautiously pragmatic approach. As a first step, Alibux once again recalled the Surinamese Ambassador from the Netherlands for consultations (*Trouw*, 11-5-1983:7).

Returning to The Hague one month later, a sharp intensification was recognizable in Herrenberg's accusations levelled at the Dutch media and government, alleging culpability in attempting to overthrow the Bouterse regime: 'As a result of the Dutch position we now stand opposite each other as enemies. And I shall behave as such' (*Trouw*, 15-6-1983:7).

Thus, while The Hague had made it very clear that no compromise with Suriname was possible unless steps were taken towards the Republic's redemocratization, Paramaribo began to prepare for a long diplomatic conflict. It is in this context that Herrenberg's choice of the word 'enemy' must be understood. A few days later he reiterated his perception of the Netherlands as the enemy, adding threateningly that the regime would treat The Hague accordingly. A spokesperson for Herrenberg stated: 'Here in the Netherlands they think that the Surinamese do not have a clue of what they are doing. But when we say that the Netherlands is our enemy, we will bear the consequences. This will become clear before long' (*Trouw*, 18-6-1983:1).

Herrenberg's remark was certainly no empty threat. In fact, as agreed during the final meeting between Alibux and Herrenberg in May, even if the Netherlands did reopen the flow of aid, the Bouterse regime would insist on redrafting the Aid Treaty. The purpose of this was to give more weight to the Republic's interests with regard to which development projects were to be carried out and how to distribute the funds. Furthermore, the Alibux cabinet decided to downgrade the diplomatic status of Dutch-Surinamese relations to the level of a *chargé d'affaires*² and also proposed a significant reduction of staff at both missions in The Hague and Paramaribo (*Trouw*, 18-6-1983:1).

No bilateral agreement on the reduction of embassy staff was needed, however, as both countries soon began to expel each other's diplomats. Alibux took the first step with demanding the withdrawal of the Dutch diplomat Ronald Schermel from Paramaribo, accusing him of proliferating negative images of Suriname's domestic situation in the Dutch media (*de Volkskrant*, 22-7-1983:1). The Netherlands reacted swiftly by expelling – in the same week – Glenn Alvares, the First Secretary of the Surinamese embassy in The Hague, simply stating that he had become a *persona non grata* (*Trouw*, 22-7-1983:1).

The gloves are off

The intensifying conflict between the Netherlands and Suriname was expressed in a variety of political manoeuvres conducted by both governments with the specific aim of weakening the opponent's internal and external positions. In this diplomatic conflict the Netherlands obviously enjoyed a wide range

² Not an Ambassador represents the country, but an official of a lower rank.

of foreign policy options to pressurize Suriname, whereas Paramaribo was largely although not entirely powerless, as can be observed in its dealings with the opposition movement in exile.

At the height of the diplomatic conflict in May and June 1983, Bouterse approached some of his opponents in the Netherlands. By mid-May, special agents had convinced two leading members of the HDS, Wormer and Evert Tjon, to travel to Paramaribo to gain first-hand information about the 'real' developments in Suriname (*NRC Handelsblad*, 18-4-1983:2). Upon their return to the Netherlands a week later, the two men declared to have changed their position. Wormer called upon The Hague to improve relations with the regime 'to prevent Suriname from following a path it does not want to follow' (*Trouw*, 28-05-1983:3), while Tjon questioned the Liberation Council's decision to elect Chin A Sen as chairman of the movement. Nevertheless, the idea of negotiating with opponents was not new as Bouterse had used a similar – although less successful – approach in September 1982 as he and Haakmat signed the so-called Akkoord van Katwijk (Katwijk Agreement), outlining democratic reforms and setting the stage for his opponent's possible return to Suriname (Verschuuren 1994:131).

Besides the strategy of dividing the exile movement – a special task force was assembled to this end – Bouterse also decided to support a pro-regime organization in the Netherlands. For this purpose, a delegation under Sergeant Major Carlo Doedel travelled to Amsterdam in June 1983 to meet with representatives of the Liga van Surinaamse Patriotten (League of Surinamese Patriots), a pressure group only recently established with Paramaribo's backing. One of the League's main objectives was to voice its protest against the 'intervention politics of the Netherlands' (*Trouw*, 8-6-1983:3). According to its chairman Waldi Breedveld

it is about time that we counterbalance the one-sided information about our country. We must demonstrate that there are also Surinamese people who have a balanced view of the revolution. A great deal has happened in the last few months. Internally, the process has stabilized within Suriname. However, the threat from abroad still exists. (*Trouw*, 8-6-1983:3.)

Nonetheless, Suriname's foreign policy options were relatively few and weak when compared with those available to the Netherlands. One of the most powerful tools used by The Hague was the service of Radio Nederland Wereldomroep (Radio Netherlands Worldwide), the official overseas broadcasting station in Hilversum transmitting programmes around the globe in several languages, including Dutch, Indonesian, Papiamentu and Sranan Tongo (*Europa year book* 1982, I:944). Prior to the December Murders Radio Wereldomroep had two fifty-minute programmes daily transmitted

to Suriname and as of January 1983 this service was doubled (*Trouw*, 27-1-1983:7).

Although two hundred minutes per day of foreign-radio transmission may not necessarily be seen as being sufficient to endanger the internal political stability of another country, in the case of Suriname it is important to remember that over the period of the December Murders, the NL had arrested, tortured and executed some of the Republic's leading journalists and deliberately set fire to local radio stations and newspaper publishers. Ironically, these drastic actions had resulted in strengthening the influence of Radio Wereldomroep, particularly as all Surinamese FM radio stations had ceased to operate. With only two newspapers in print at the time, *De Ware Tijd* and *De West*, both heavily censored by the regime, the Dutch radio programme provided many Surinamese with an alternative source of information.

Even though it is difficult to estimate the actual influence exerted by Radio Wereldomroep at this critical juncture, its programmes certainly served as an important instrument of communication. For instance, the Surinamese National Liberation Army (SNLA, a guerrilla front active in East Suriname) founded at a later date, received valuable information about the policies of the Liberation Council and other anti-Bouterse organizations operating in the Netherlands, thus allowing a certain degree of cross-Atlantic cooperation between the regime's opponents. In addition, the movement's leader, Ronnie Brunswijk, used the radio service to address the local population and the NL about the activities of the Jungle Commando, as the SNLA was also called. His voice could be heard on Radio Wereldomroep at politically crucial moments such as in August 1986, during a violent conflict between the NL and the SNLA in Albina:

With this, the Jungle Commando demands that Desi Bouterse withdraw all his extra troops from Albina. If this demand is not met, the Jungle Commando will strike again. Furthermore, the Jungle Commando demands that before 21 August all political prisoners and citizens unjustly arrested be freed. (Van der Beek 1987:51.)

Consequently, Paramaribo saw Radio Wereldomroep as a neocolonial instrument for Dutch intervention in Suriname's domestic affairs. According to claims made by the Bureau van Volksmobilisatie (Bureau of People Mobilization), the station was broadcasting 'false and misleading information' with the intention of swinging public opinion against the Paramaribo authorities (*Trouw*, 27-1-1983:7). Bouterse was even more outspoken, as he accused the radio station of operating on behalf of the Dutch government. During an interview with the Dutch journalist Oltmans (1984:69), for instance, Bouterse expressed his anger about what he considered the Wereldomroep's inaccurate interpretation of a government reshuffle in early 1984.

Also aggravating are the campaigns through Radio Nederland Wereldomroep, according to which Prime Minister Errol Alibux would have resigned and Iwan Krolis have gone into hiding. How does the Dutch radio benefit from continuously creating unrest among the Surinamese? The divide and rule principle of the colonial Netherlands seems to have taken firm root. The government in The Hague knows precisely what we are doing. Of course it is not concerned with democracy and human rights, it just wants to restore its former stranglehold [on Suriname]. (Oltmans 1984:69.)

Indeed, Suriname's claim that the programmes were generally biased against the regime was well-founded since the news items aired were primarily supplied by the Dutch media. Victor Hafkamp, director of the Caribbean Section of Radio Wereldomroep, not only publicly admitted his biased sources but also justified this by arguing that the Surinamese authorities refused to provide the Dutch media with any official information. In other words, since the Surinamese cabinet had taken the decision to exclude Dutch journalists from official press conferences, the news was necessarily one-sided. Accordingly to Hafkamp:

our goal is to provide a Dutch perspective. In our press review we do nothing more than quote what has appeared in newspapers and on radio and television. We always clearly indicate that we have read the report in this or that newspaper. We only point things out; the responsibility for the truth of the report lies with the respective newspaper (*Trouw*, 27-1-1983-7.)

Confronted with this powerful instrument, Paramaribo attempted to disrupt and counter Radio Wereldomroep's transmissions. Bouterse called upon all Surinamese residing in the Netherlands who supported the Revolution to take legal action against the radio station and to occupy its offices in Hilversum. In addition, from September 1984, Radio Suriname International began to broadcast in Western Europe, where it endeavoured to provide 'alternative' information specifically targeted at Surinamese people in the Netherlands (*NRC Handelsblad*, 3-9-1984:3). These actions only had a limited effect. While the local police in Hilversum increased its security around the offices of Radio Wereldomroep to safeguard the continued operation of the station, the programmes of Radio Suriname International were plagued with reception problems, which actually raised questions about the effectiveness of this costly service (*De Ware Tijd*, 5-9-1984:1).

A successful strategy of swaying public opinion both in the Netherlands and in Suriname was followed by the Lubbers cabinet as it demanded an independent commission to inquire into the events surrounding the December Murders. In February 1983 the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation argued that to resume the flow of financial assistance, Paramaribo 'has at

any moment the opportunity to take concrete steps in the direction indicated by the Dutch government' (*Trouw*, 5-2-1983:5). Besides redemocratization, these measures included the launch of an independent investigation into the executions of the opponents of the regime. According to Schoo:

We must certainly cast severe doubt on the position of the Surinamese authorities that the death of fifteen people in December was an incident. There is reason for great concern. We must take into account the possibility of a more systematic violation of human rights. (*Trouw*, 5-2-1983:5.)

In May 1983 Dutch politicians renewed their demands for an inquiry into the December Murders. Particularly Bert De Vries (CDA), Frans Weisglas (VVD) and Henk Knol (PvdA) expressed their disappointment that Alibux, in his inauguration speech, had not distanced himself from the executions nor called for an investigation. Consequently, the Dutch parliament rejected any possibility of re-establishing the aid programme (*Trouw*, 3-5-1983:1). This position was reaffirmed a few days later – following the publication of a book in which it was claimed that besides Bouterse, Alibux had also been present at the executions – when the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs once again called upon Paramaribo to carry out an 'independent and impartial investigation' (*Het Parool*, 18-5-1983:7).

As was expected, Bouterse repeatedly rejected these demands. In a Dutch television interview in July 1983 he argued that 'the Netherlands has nothing to investigate here. On the other hand, Suriname has nothing to hide. Therefore we have accepted investigation commissions from the Red Cross and the United Nations' (*Trouw*, 20-7-1983:4). As a result of this deadlock and at the instigation of Foreign Affairs, The Hague eventually decided to establish its own commission. Its findings, published in June 1984 under the title *Advies Commissie Mensenrechten; Hulp voor mensenrechten – Suriname en de rechten van de mens* (Advice Human Rights Commission; Help for human rights – Suriname and the human rights) was a detailed account of violations carried out by the NL since the February coup. Based on investigations by the Inter-American Commission, ILO, UN Commission for Human Rights Abuses and several Surinamese religious organizations (*Advies Commissie Mensenrechten* 1984:10-20), the allegations raised in the report proved an influential tool in publicizing Suriname's human rights violations and increasing the political burden on Paramaribo.

However, prior to the publication of this report The Hague itself came under pressure as yet another commission presented its findings on the coup carried out in 1980 which implicated Dutch officers. In July 1983 an investigation had been ordered by Dutch Defence Minister Jacob de Ruijter. Chairman Den Uyl (the former Prime Minister) described – foreseeing its conclusion – the

inquiry as a 'painful affair' (*Trouw*, 29-7-1983:1). On the basis of information provided by former SKM personnel living in the Netherlands, the commission confirmed Colonel Valk's involvement in the February coup. To compound things further, it became known that The Hague had purposely prevented an initial investigation immediately after the military takeover which probably would have implicated the Dutch officer. Revealing this information to the government, Den Uyl's request for further independent hearings was, unsurprisingly, rejected by Minister De Ruiter (*Het Parool*, 1-9-1983:5).

Instead, Lubbers ordered the Foreign Ministry to set up its own inquiry into the Valk affair. On 28 February 1984 the Ministry presented its report to the House of Representatives. According to its introduction

as has emerged from the answer to questions put to the commission by us, it has not appeared that the leader of the Dutch Military Mission in Suriname, Colonel Valk, has participated in the preparation or execution of the [military] takeover. Neither does this seem likely to the commission. Nor has it appeared that members of the mission were involved. What does become clear from the commission's conclusions is that the actions of Colonel Valk on a number of points are open to serious criticism (*Rapport Buitenlandse Zaken* 1984:1).

The Dutch government thus tried to distance itself from the consequences of the February coup despite evidence pointing at Colonel Valk's involvement in the military takeover.

As these investigations continued another point of friction developed with regard to scheduled flights between the two capitals. This time it was Paramaribo's turn to put pressure on The Hague by reiterating its earlier threat to suspend KLM's licence for its *goudlijntje* (golden line) to Zanderij in June 1983, a scheme the regime had already tried once before, at the end of 1982 (see Chapter II). This threat was finally carried out in October 1983, thus effectively terminating the *Luchtvaartovereenkomst* (Civil Aviation Treaty) of 1975. Even though Bouterse recognized that SLM would lose its licence to serve Schiphol, he refused to extend the treaty regulating the air traffic between the two states (*Het Parool*, 3-10-1983:1). This action becomes understandable since the Surinamese authorities had already negotiated with British Caledonian for an alternative Paramaribo-London-Amsterdam service (*Trouw*, 4-10-1983:1).

However, Suriname's strategy did not pay off as at the last possible moment the Dutch Civil Aviation Authority retaliated against the regime and dismissed the British Caledonian request for a new service licence, citing as a reason 'the exceptional circumstances' (*Trouw*, 15-10-1983:3). This clearly indicated that the application had been rejected simply due to Suriname's initial cancellation of KLM landing rights in Paramaribo. Meanwhile, the hundreds of passengers stranded at Zanderij and Schiphol were the real victims of this latest stage in

the Dutch-Surinamese conflict. Following tense negotiations between British and Dutch officials, the Dutch Civil Aviation Authority eventually allowed British Caledonian to use four smaller aircrafts to transport passengers on the Amsterdam-London leg before embarking onto a larger DC-10 for the other leg between London-Paramaribo. The catch in this arrangement was that the additional costs caused by the four extra flights between Amsterdam and London were to be covered by SLM. Consequently, this option failed to provide a permanent solution (*Trouw*, 26-10-1983:6).

In other words, Paramaribo's strike against one of the Netherlands' most prestigious companies had badly backfired as The Hague retaliated vigorously. Unfortunately for Bouterse, the need for a regular flight service was more urgent for Suriname than for the Netherlands in view of the significant commercial position held by Dutch companies in the Republic and the large number of Surinamese expatriates in the Kingdom – including Bouterse's own relatives (Oltmans 1984:47). Vice versa, the Republic constituted only a small proportion of the total overseas market of the Netherlands while hardly any Dutch citizens resided in the former colony. As a result, the onus to resume a scheduled service between Zanderij and Schiphol lay with Paramaribo rather than with The Hague – a political development which had not been anticipated by Bouterse when rejecting the renewal of the Civil Aviation Treaty.

As an alternative to the transatlantic route via London, SLM approached the Belgian carrier Sobelair with the objective of operating direct flights between Paramaribo and Brussels. Again the Dutch authorities responded by pressurizing their Belgian counterparts to withdraw the airline's licence for this particular route. In a bid not to upset Dutch-Belgian relations and recognizing the obvious importance The Hague attached to its 'mission' of isolating Paramaribo, officials in Brussels gave the airline permission for just one single flight which took place in November 1983 (*Trouw*, 2-11-1983:11). Meanwhile, KLM's attempt to redirect its service to Caracas and connect with a Venezolana Internacional de Aviación (VIASA, International Airline of Venezuela) flight to Paramaribo was fruitless as, in their turn, the Surinamese authorities also denied the Venezuelan airline landing rights (*de Volkskrant*, 18-10-1983:3).

Following the disappointing outcome of the negotiations with Sobelair, SLM was once again forced to search for a partner. Eventually, the American carrier Arrow Air emerged as a suitable alternative to link Suriname with the Netherlands via San Juan in Puerto Rico (*Trouw*, 12-11-1983:3). The Dutch Aviation Authority was unable to prevent Arrow Air from serving this route, stymied by the liberal US-Dutch treaty regulating civil air transport between the two countries. As a result, regular flights were introduced in November 1983 on the Amsterdam-San Juan-Paramaribo service. In the meantime, this foolish conflict had cost both national airlines, KLM and SLM, dearly both in

terms of prestige and financial losses, not to mention considerably disrupting private and commercial links in the process. Recognizing the damage, in March 1984 The Hague and Paramaribo entered into negotiations to reopen the traditional direct service between Schiphol and Zanderij (*NRC Handelsblad*, 3-3-1984:1). Four months later, the service was finally resumed with the first direct flight to Paramaribo leaving Amsterdam (*de Volkskrant*, 13-7-1984:1).

The vigour with which the Netherlands used the transmissions by Radio Wereldomroep and defended KLM's landing rights must have issued a sharp warning to the Surinamese leadership: The Hague did not only condemn the December Murders but was utterly opposed to the political influence of the military. The severity with which the Lubbers cabinet objected to the perceived undemocratic rule in Suriname could also be found in the use of other diplomatic tools to obstruct the Republic's political and socio-economic development despite the knowledge that, as had been illustrated during the civil aviation conflict, it was not only the Paramaribo authorities who had to 'pay a price', but also the general public.

The following two cases illustrate how the Surinamese community experienced hardship due to the Dutch policy of opposing the Republic on all 'fronts' – both ensuing from The Hague's decision to withhold any form of intellectual and professional assistance to Suriname. In the educational field, in December 1982, the Lubbers cabinet issued a decree preventing all universities in the Kingdom (including the University of the Netherlands Antilles) from cooperating with the Anton de Kom Universiteit, the former 'University of Suriname', renamed by the regime in the early 1980s (*Trouw*, 17-1-1986:7). This decree followed the initiative of several Dutch universities to halt all educational assistance to Suriname in protest against the fact that, besides the aforementioned journalists, a number of lawyers and business people (some of whom had been educated in the Netherlands) had been amongst the victims of the December Murders: John Baboeram, Kenneth Gonçalves, Eddy Hoost, Gerald Leckie, Sugrim Oemrawsingh, Harold Riedewald, and Somradj Sohansingh (Lagerberg 1989:125). For linguistic reasons, to a significant degree the Republic's educational sector relied on Dutch scholars and on literature published in the Netherlands. Therefore the continued operation of higher educational institutions was severely hindered and hence both the government and the students – many of whom, ironically, in the past had participated in anti-Bouterse demonstrations – paid the price.

Even though closer contacts between the Anton de Kom Universiteit and a number of higher educational institutions in the Caribbean and Latin America had been established in the early 1980s, these universities taught either in Spanish, Portuguese, English or French. Consequently, a language barrier restricted the cooperation between tertiary educational institutions in Suriname and those in neighbouring countries. The Republic's educational

dependence on the Netherlands was only eased after the Vrije Universiteit van Brussel (Belgium) agreed to exchange Dutch-(Flemish) speaking academics and postgraduate students with the Anton de Kom Universiteit at the beginning of 1986 (*Trouw*, 17-1-1986:7).

In addition to this educational boycott, The Hague followed a strategy of discouraging its officials from providing Paramaribo with professional advice, as was illustrated by the so-called Albeda affair which commenced when the Dutch Professor Willem Albeda received an invitation from the regime to work as a socio-economic advisor to President Misier in mid-1985. Albeda's request to be allowed to take up this position was dismissed by The Hague since he, himself a former Dutch Minister of Social Affairs, was still employed as Chairman of the Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid (Scientific Council for Government Policy) and in that capacity served as an advisor to the Lubbers government. In this context Van den Broek stated that, 'under those circumstances I do not think it would be wise for him to assume such a position' (*Het Parool*, 24-5-1985:3). Albeda was subsequently forced to decline Misier's offer. Clearly, Dutch antagonism towards the officers was so absolute that the possibly moderating influence Albeda may have exercised on Paramaribo was overlooked or intentionally disregarded by politicians in The Hague.

Yet it would be wrong to argue that the Lubbers cabinet was not concerned about the well-being of the Surinamese public. Just over a year after the suspension of Dutch aid, at the start of 1984, the cabinet, supported by the main opposition parties, decided to provide its embassy in Paramaribo with Nf 100,000 for small humanitarian projects involving less than Nf 10,000 in costs each – the only stipulation being, according to Weisglas, that 'not a cent of the 100,000 Dutch guilders ends up with the Surinamese rulers' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 8-2-1984:2). In other words, some financial support was made available as long as the recipients were not linked with the regime.³

In May 1984 additional funds were offered to NGOs operating both inside and outside of the Republic. One of these was the Surinamese Student Union in the Netherlands, which received Nf 2 million from the Dutch authorities since many parents in Suriname were unable to support their sons and daughters studying overseas. Accepting some responsibility for the socio-economic difficulties experienced by the parents of these students, Minister Schoo justified these payments while arguing: 'I think that in the coming half year part of the Surinamese population will experience hardship. I believe it is our duty to time and time again behave in a compassionate way towards the Surinamese people. These funds are a means of achieving this' (*NRC*

³ These projects did not need to be approved by the Dutch cabinet or the Ministry of Development Co-operation.

Handelsblad, 21-5-1984:3). Despite these noble sentiments, it must be noted that these financial measures also seemed to have an ulterior motive. The money conveniently contributed to strengthening a positive public image of the Netherlands, since the Surinamese were able to request funds directly from The Hague. By contrast, the Alibux regime was increasingly perceived in a negative light as its social expenditure was severely restricted.

These various Dutch initiatives aimed at undermining Bouterse's rule were not only introduced within the closed framework of the bilateral relationship. The Hague also became active on a wider global level in a bid to reinforce the effects of its policies against Paramaribo. These activities included raising allegations at the UN Human Rights Conference in Geneva in February-March 1983, where the Netherlands accused the Surinamese military of gross human rights violations. The Dutch initiative – to the dismay of the regime – paid off handsomely. In the final document of the conference (see Chapter IV) human rights abuses in Suriname were cited and UN delegates designated special reporters to investigate the December Murders (United Nations 1983:5). In other words, The Hague successfully managed to direct the international spotlight onto the Republic which, in turn, led to Bouterse's claim that the Dutch government was following a strategy designed at isolating Suriname on the global stage: 'The Netherlands had found a reason to isolate the Surinamese revolution, to pursue economic aggression and boycott, and to launch international smear campaigns' (Bouterse 1990:133).

Bouterse's claim gained in validity as it became obvious that The Hague had indeed introduced initiatives aimed at preventing any external support for the regime. This became apparent when, in the summer of 1983, the Dutch Prime Minister and his Foreign Minister visited Brasilia to seek information about the nature and extent of Brazil's relations with Suriname. During the discussions Van den Broek and Lubbers attempted to influence the policy of the Figueiredo cabinet towards its small neighbour. According to Lubbers, they attempted to persuade their Brazilian counterparts to implement 'concrete steps that would lead to the restoration of freedom and human dignity in Suriname' (*Trouw*, 2-6-1983:6). These 'concrete steps' included the wish that Brasilia refrain from supplying the NL with military equipment.

Shortly before the official trip of Lubbers and Van den Broek, Suriname's Prime Minister, in a cunning move, had visited Brazil personally to secure cooperation between the two nations. Alibux's anxiety about the Dutch delegation possibly influencing Brasilia's position was probably the main reason for this rather pre-emptive appearance in Brazil. Upon his return, the Prime Minister publicly declared that General João Baptista de Oliveira Figueiredo had assured him of considerable support in a wide range of fields. This declaration forced somewhat embarrassed Brazilian cabinet members to explain to the Dutch delegation that the level of cooperation with

Suriname should not be exaggerated. Ultimately, The Hague's attempt to cut off its former colony with the help of the Brazilians failed as Figueiredo, as will be analysed in Chapter IV, decided to cooperate to some extent both militarily and economically. What must be pointed out here, nonetheless, is the remarkable lengths to which The Hague was willing to go in order to accomplish Paramaribo's isolation.

Evidence that the Dutch initiatives carried out at the UN conference and in Brazil were not isolated incidents revealed itself as The Hague focused its attention on financial aid allocated to Suriname by the European Community. In December 1983 Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation Schoo expressed her opposition to the Nf 19 million the European Community provided the regime with, arguing in the House of Representatives that 'during negotiations within the EC the Netherlands has objected, if only for technical reasons, to this plan. Consequently, we have abstained from voting, which means as much that the Dutch government does not agree with providing this aid' (*Trouw*, 9-12-1983:7). Once again, the Dutch initiative failed and the European Community ratified its Nf 12.3 million in aid and Nf 6.6 million loan to Suriname (*NRC Handelsblad*, 10-1-1984:3).

The termination of Dutch aid and its socio-economic consequences

Unquestionably, the most potent policy implemented by The Hague to weaken the regime's position, was the withholding of aid. Since the effect of this policy can be best analysed from a long-term perspective, this section evaluates the Republic's economic performance following the suspension of Dutch assistance in December 1982 until the end of Bouterse's reign in November 1987. As such it must be realized that terminating the Aid Treaty had direct consequences not only for the Republic's numerous development projects and the government budget, but also for the general economy. Thus, Suriname's overall economic performance needs to be discussed in order to understand the enormous pressure on the regime in seeking alternative financial and technical resources to compensate for the loss of Dutch assistance.

As a direct result of the Aid Treaty's termination, the Paramaribo authorities were faced with severe budgetary problems since government expenditure for development projects had traditionally played an important role. This can easily be observed in Table 7, outlining government revenue and expenditure for the period 1981-1984 (with preliminary data for 1984). Of a total expenditure of Sf 754 million and Sf 829 million for 1981 and 1982, development expenditure accounted for Sf 175 million and Sf 189 million respectively. In other words, almost a quarter of all expenditure was allocated to projects in the field of socio-economic development.

The funds for these projects were almost exclusively provided as Dutch grants. Under the heading 'Development Account', the paramount position of Dutch aid is overwhelmingly evident, amounting to *Sf* 167 million and *Sf* 172 million out of a total of *Sf* 169 million and *Sf* 173 million in grants received in 1981 and 1982. Consequently, following the termination of Dutch aid, the lack of development funds led to a sudden rise in the deficit of the development account from a mere *Sf* 6 million in 1981 and *Sf* 17 million in 1982, to *Sf* 109 million and *Sf* 69 million for the next two years. That these deficits did not expand any further was only possible by drastically cutting development expenditure to *Sf* 114 million and *Sf* 76 million in 1983 and 1984 respectively.

Despite these cuts, the regime's overall budget was thrown into shambles. Whereas the data in Table 7 (presented by the Surinamese Finance Ministry) demonstrate a 'slight' increase in the fiscal deficit from *Sf* 226 million and *Sf* 273 million for 1981 and 1982 to *Sf* 316 million and *Sf* 287 million for the following two years, these figures must be disputed. In fact, considering that the development account deficit for 1981 amounted to *Sf* 6 million and adding this to the current account deficit of *Sf* 51 million, the actual fiscal deficit for that year came to *Sf* 57 million. Similarly, the fiscal deficit for 1982 amounted to only *Sf* 100 million. Without substantial Dutch aid, the actual fiscal deficit for 1983 and 1984 'exploded' to *Sf* 311 million (*Sf* 202 million on the current account and *Sf* 109 million on the development account) and *Sf* 280 million (*Sf* 211 million plus *Sf* 69 million), respectively. Obviously, the Finance Ministry tried to 'play down' the effects of the withheld Dutch aid.

The dramatic impact of the termination of the Aid Treaty on Suriname's budget deficit was emphasized in a report compiled in 1984 by the UN's Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. According to its introduction:

The suspension of Dutch aid meant for Suriname the loss of external resources equivalent to about 9% of the gross domestic product or some 90% of total net capital inflows. The continued suspension of this aid, together with the decline in the fortunes of the bauxite sector in 1982 and 1983 and a relatively poor performance in 1984, resulted in a situation where 'hard-core' government expenditure could not be financed from revenues. (United Nations 1984:187.)

To avoid bankruptcy the Alibux cabinet began to finance its 'hard-core' expenditure, including costs for ongoing development projects, mainly by drawing on assets held by the Central Bank of Suriname. One favourite method was to appropriate loans from this bank which had been supplemented by credits from domestic commercial banks. Whereas in 1980 and 1981 government debts to these financial institutions amounted to *Sf* 24 and *Sf* 72.4 million respectively, these credits rose sharply to *Sf* 172.5 million in 1982 and *Sf* 481.3 million in 1983, before reaching *Sf* 739.4 million in 1984. According to the UN

Table 7. Government revenue and expenditure, 1981-1984

| | Millions of Surinamese guilders | | | | Growth rate | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|------|------|------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 |
| Current income | 528 | 557 | 509 | 487 | 9.7 | 5.3 | -8.5 | -4.4 |
| Direct taxes | 135 | 130 | 128 | 162 | -3.2 | -4.1 | -1.0 | 26.3 |
| Indirect taxes | 200 | 204 | 189 | 176 | 12.8 | 1.6 | -7.3 | -6.7 |
| Bauxite levy | 96 | 69 | 68 | 48 | 4.1 | -28.7 | -1.7 | -30.1 |
| Profits from Central Bank | 30 | 66 | 53 | 39 | 5.6 | 120.7 | -19.3 | -27.9 |
| Other non-tax revenue | 66 | 88 | 71 | 63 | 52.9 | 33.1 | -19.3 | -12.3 |
| Current expenditure | 579 | 640 | 711 | 698 | 23.7 | 10.5 | 11.1 | -1.9 |
| Wages and salaries | 265 | 320 | 355 | 379 | 18.8 | 20.5 | 11.1 | 6.8 |
| Subsidies and transfers | 88 | 90 | 127 | 121 | 5.0 | 1.9 | 41.6 | -4.7 |
| Interest payments | 9 | 10 | 24 | 28 | 58.9 | 12.0 | 131.1 | 17.2 |
| Goods and services | 217 | 220 | 206 | 170 | 70.9 | 1.5 | -6.6 | -17.5 |
| Deficit / surplus | -51 | -83 | -202 | -211 | ... | 63.5 | 142.3 | 4.5 |
| Development account | | | | | | | | |
| Grants received | 169 | 173 | 5 | 6 | 29.1 | 2.3 | -97.4 | 26 |
| Netherlands | 167 | 172 | 4 | - | 31.1 | 3.1 | -98 | - |
| EC Develop. funds | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | -37.5 | -75 | 80 | - |
| United States | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other grants | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Development expenditures | 175 | 189 | 114 | 76 | 47.8 | 8.4 | -40.1 | -33.4 |
| Deficit / surplus | -6 | -17 | -109 | -69 | ... | 184.5 | 506.6 | -36.4 |
| Total expenditure | 754 | 829 | 825 | 774 | 28.6 | 11.4 | -0.5 | 6.2 |
| Total deficit / surplus | -226 | -273 | -316 | -287 | ... | 20.8 | 15.9 | -9.3 |

Source: United Nations 1984:198

report cited above, the Alibux cabinet also resorted to what is known as pre-financing

in order to finance development projects, [...] the sum of *Sf* 50 million was advanced to the State for a period of six months commencing in January 1983 through the issue of Treasury bills, and by the end of 1983 a total of *Sf* 109 million had been advanced under these terms. Up to the end of October 1984, *Sf* 170 million had been advanced to the State. (United Nations 1984:195.)

The adoption of these strategies was alarming since they contributed to the rapid depletion of foreign reserves administered by the Central Bank (*World Bank* 1988:59). Commenting on these controversial practices, the UN Economic Commission remarked that

largely as a consequence of the government deficit, net foreign assets fell from *Sf* 163 million at the end of 1983 to *Sf* 57 million at the end of 1984, despite an upward revaluation of monetary gold holdings by *Sf* 31 million. Without the revaluation, the foreign reserves in 1983 would have stood at only *Sf* 131.8 million. In 1984, the continuing government deficit was the main cause of the depletion of monetary reserves. (United Nations 1984:198.)

Table 8, relating to the gold and foreign exchange reserves of the Central Bank, clearly indicates the fall in reserves as of 1982 – although it should be noted that the data published by the Central Bank differ slightly from those quoted by the UN Economic Commission. This dangerous trend would continue throughout the Bouterse era; in 1987 reserves had reached an all-time low even when compared with the level held in 1975, the year of independence, or in 1980, at the time of the coup.

The main impact of these declining foreign reserves on the overall economy was that many local companies experienced serious difficulties in financing their imports. The first signs of this alarming trend appeared in mid-1985, as imports with a total value of *Sf* 35 million had accumulated in warehouses at Paramaribo harbour and, despite urgent demands from the local industry, no transference of goods took place since the Surinamese companies did not have the foreign currencies necessary to pay for them (*Het Parool*, 23-8-1985:7). Consequently, processing activities were reduced with the upshot that the Republic's small manufacturing sector became even more depressed (United Nations 1984:187).

The severity of this crisis was made glaringly apparent in March 1987, when one of the two daily newspapers, *De Ware Tijd*, was forced to halt production as it was unable to pay for printing paper, a bitter irony in a country primarily covered by forest (*Het Parool*, 10-3-1987:3). The newspaper's temporary suspension came after the directors had already reduced its print run from

40,000 to 35,000 copies and the content from twelve to four pages. The decision of the well-established trading company Kersten to cut its workforce by 20% due to the firm's inability to sustain its normal level of business was, similarly, attributable to the lack of imported goods and highlighted the severe impact of the shortage in foreign reserves (*Het Parool*, 27-4-1987:9).

Table 8. Gold and foreign exchange reserves, 1974-1987

| Year | Gold reserves | Foreign reserves | Total reserves |
|------|---------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1974 | 11.0 | 132.9 | 143.9 |
| 1975 | 11.0 | 194.7 | 205.7 |
| 1976 | 11.0 | 231.5 | 242.5 |
| 1977 | 11.0 | 200.4 | 211.4 |
| 1978 | 4.0 | 273.6 | 277.6 |
| 1979 | 4.0 | 327.2 | 331.2 |
| 1980 | 4.0 | 379.4 | 383.4 |
| 1981 | 4.0 | 408.1 | 412.1 |
| 1982 | 4.0 | 330.8 | 334.8 |
| 1983 | 35.0 | 127.8 | 162.8 |
| 1984 | 26.6 | 34.8 | 61.4 |
| 1985 | 28.3 | 23.8 | 52.1 |
| 1986 | 33.5 | -1.8 | 31.7 |
| 1987 | 42.5 | -10.2 | 32.3 |

Source: *Gedenkboek Centrale Bank 1992*

The decision of Alibux to finance the government's deficit largely by drawing on assets held by the Central Bank forced the succeeding Udenhout administration (inaugurated in February 1984) (*De Ware Tijd*, 4-2-1984:1) to create alternative policies in an attempt to stabilize the country's fiscal problems. However, the new cabinet had only a limited amount of time to introduce fresh policies, which became apparent when in February 1984 the newly appointed Minister for Transport, Trade, Industry, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Forestry Dr Imro Fong Poen circulated a secret report amongst his cabinet colleagues in which he outlined the imminent threat of the Republic's financial bankruptcy (*NRC Handelsblad*, 16-2-1984:1).

As a solution, Fong Poen put forward a variety of policies directed at

promoting the acquisition of foreign currencies. Measures were taken to stimulate the country's exports, including a reduction in the levy on bauxite shipments and the liberalization of trade regulations on forestry products. At the same time the imports of luxury goods were severely curtailed so as to keep the scarce foreign reserves within the Republic. By July 1985 these austerity measures had created such drastic effects, according to an article in *The Economist* (20-7-1985:38), that 'the government [had] banned imports of cars, radios, videos and other luxury products'. Eventually, in the bauxite and forestry sectors at least some increases in export sales were noticeable by the end of 1984, largely as a result of export-stimulating policies. Despite such glimmers of hope, it is of critical importance to realize that the outcome of these strategies eased the difficult financial situation only temporarily and to a marginal degree.

In May 1984 Fong Poen adopted even stricter measures, primarily focusing on the prevention of capital transfers by commercial banks to overseas accounts, including the prohibition of remittance payments on profits, dividends on shares and interests on debts to individuals residing, or companies registered, outside Suriname (*NRC Handelsblad*, 26-5-1984:1). Then in September, the regime forced each international visitor arriving at Zanderij Airport to exchange 'hard' currencies for at least Sf 500 and those crossing the border by land at Albina or Nickerie to do so for at least Sf 200 (*De Ware Tijd*, 24-9-1984:1). Again, these policies must be questioned as the limits placed on the transfer of funds to overseas accounts and the 'entry fee' may well have discouraged business men and holidaymakers from engaging in any kind of economic or tourist activities in Suriname.

During the second Udenhout cabinet (from January to June 1985), some international loans were obtained, as will be discussed in Chapters IV and V, easing the delicate financial situation somewhat. However, the impact of these external credits on the economy was again only short-term, as it was only a matter of time before this practice created its own new problem: that of debt service obligation. A 1988 report published by the World Bank on the economic situation of the Caribbean emphasized this dilemma, commenting with regard to Suriname that

the country's external debt climbed steadily from the equivalent of 3% of GDP in 1983 to about 19.5% of GDP in 1987. Likewise, the debt service ratio has risen steadily from under 1% in 1985 to nearly 6% in 1987. Debt service obligations amounted to about 8% of central governments revenues in 1987. As of end 1987, external payments arrears stood at US\$ 88 million, or about 9% of GDP. (*World Bank* 1988:59.)

It was only to be expected that, as a result of the growing repayment commitments and the drop in foreign exchange reserves, the regime would increas-

ingly experience difficulties in meeting its financial obligations. In June 1985 the first signs of this problem had already appeared with the government being forced to suspend repayments on a Nf 50 million loan received from the ABN in 1975 (*De Ware Tijd*, 26-6-1985:1). Yet financial institutions in the Netherlands were not the only ones affected, as might be assumed in view of the severe tensions marring Dutch-Surinamese relations. As illustrated by the case concerning loans received from the Brazilian government – which Suriname was unable to repay either on time or in full – Paramaribo failed to meet its obligations on a wider range of financial advances made to the Republic.

In other words, the Surinamese administrative and economic sectors experienced enormous difficulties which were primarily caused by the suspension of the Aid Treaty. This naturally trickled down to the general population, which often held the regime directly responsible for the fall in the standard of living. The financial crisis indeed had a negative impact in this respect, which becomes clear when comparing the per capita GDP for different years. Whereas in 1983 GDP stood at Sf 2,293, it fell to Sf 1,980 in 1985 and to Sf 1,820 in 1987 (Thorndike 1989:107). More compelling were the first-hand accounts made by Surinamese people, relating difficulties experienced in daily life. In an interview conducted in Paramaribo at the end of 1983 by journalist Armand Costes for the Dutch magazine *Elseviers Weekblad*, a Surinamese lawyer complained that:

Well, you can say that social life here is virtually dead on its feet. We dare not say anything anymore. As soon as the waiter brings your drink, I stop speaking because I do not know which side he is on. At present it is fairly quiet in Suriname, but what will happen if the development aid is not reinstalled? I already now have to plead with the Central Bank to transfer money to my son at the HTS [Higher Technical School] in Zwolle [the Netherlands]. Last month they refused to transfer five hundred guilders, now I'm trying again. If the Dutch development aid stays away, it is definitively over. Then I will have to call my son back to Suriname even though his specialist topic is not taught here. Or I will buy guilders on the black market. In my opinion they should devalue the Surinamese guilder to the level of the Dutch one and reintroduce the free exchange of currencies. (*Elseviers Weekblad* 5-11-1983:8.)

Another interviewee, an accountant employed by Kersten, stated: 'If I can no longer support my son and daughter in the Netherlands because I am not allowed to transfer money, then I will quit my job and move to the Netherlands for good. I have arranged this with my wife. I have SPD 1 and 2 [Dutch accountant's diplomas] and I should not have much trouble to find a job in the Netherlands.' He continued: 'When I arrive at Schiphol and show them this (waving his Dutch passport), the customs officer will say "Good morning, Sir"' (*Elseviers Weekblad*, 2-11-1983:8). A third interviewee, an office clerk with Suralco, was rather outspoken in his criticism of the military leader:

'I think that man is a disaster for our country and a cowardly killer. My entire family thinks the same, but my brother-in-law is an acquaintance of Desi's [Bouterse] wife Ingrid and therefore he drops in from time to time' (*Elseviers Weekblad*, 5-11-1983:8-9).

To make matters worse, the financial crisis deepened as the bauxite industry continued to decline. Table 9 and 10 demonstrate the significant reduction in value and volume of bauxite and aluminium exports during the Bouterse era (the figures for 1987 are estimates).

Table 9. Bauxite exports in value (US\$ in millions) and in volume ('000 Tons)

| | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 |
|--------|-------|-------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|
| Value | 73.6 | 63.0 | 28.9 | 24.9 | 39.9 | 34.9 | 27.2 | 3.9 |
| Volume | 1,775 | 1,268 | 500 | 448 | 988 | 1,037 | 874 | 132 |

Source: *World Bank* 1988:74-5

Table 10. Aluminium exports in value (US\$ in million) and in volume ('000 tons)

| | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Value | 279.4 | 264.0 | 232.2 | 217.0 | 198.7 | 173.6 | 176.4 | 66.8 |
| Volume | 1,329 | 1,165 | 1,055 | 1,143 | 1,096 | 1,265 | 1,342 | 483 |

Source: *World Bank* 1988:76-7

Bearing in mind that throughout the early 1980s bauxite mining and processing accounted for about 70% of Suriname's export earnings, the drastic decline in revenue, as illustrated in the statistics, exerted additional strains on the economy and budget. The reasons for this disappointing development can be found in the fall of world prices and shrinking global demand for aluminium since the late 1970s. Moreover, production costs in Suriname were relatively high compared with other bauxite-mining countries (United Nations 1984:191). Although the data reveal that the reduced bauxite levy, as introduced by Fong Poen at the beginning of 1984, stimulated the industry to some extent, the effects were only temporary; by 1985/1986 production had once again started to decline. Eventually, these difficulties drove Billiton and Suralco to combine their resources; early in 1984 their Surinamese operations merged into a joint venture with the aim of increasing global efficiency and competitiveness (*De Ware Tijd*, 15-3-1984:1).

Unfortunately, other economic sectors failed to compensate for the loss in royalties previously received from the mining companies. In fact, these sectors were experiencing their own problems with regard to stagnating activities.

Table 11 illustrates that by 1985 exports in the wood and agricultural sectors, second in importance to the mining industry, had also fallen in monetary terms when compared with 1980, even though their share of total exports had increased during the same time period.

Table 11. Exports of major products and product groups in millions of Surinamese guilders and as a percentage, 1980-1985

| Product | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Bauxite | 132 (14%) | 112 (13%) | 52 (7%) | 45 (7%) | 71 (11%) | 62 (11%) |
| Alumina | 508 (55%) | 474 (56%) | 412 (54%) | 358 (59%) | 354 (55%) | 310 (52%) |
| Aluminium | 114 (13%) | 87 (11%) | 124 (16%) | 62 (9%) | 76 (12%) | 54 (9%) |
| Total bauxite | 754 (82%) | 673 (80%) | 588 (77%) | 492 (75%) | 501 (78%) | 426 (72%) |
| Wood prod. | 21 (2%) | 19 (2%) | 21 (3%) | 12 (2%) | 10 (2%) | 6 (1%) |
| Agric. prod. | 143 (16%) | 154 (18%) | 156 (20%) | 151 (23%) | 130 (20%) | 160 (27%) |
| Total exports | 918 (100%) | 846 (100%) | 765 (100%) | 655 (100%) | 641 (100%) | 592 (100%) |

Source: Chin and Buddingh' 1987:153

In other words, the regime's hope of an increased output in forestry and agricultural activities – largely through government incentives relating to operation and management – so as to become an alternative economic pillar that could reduce the Republic's dependence on mining, failed to materialize. Although this was partly a result of the fall in global prices for farming products, there were also incidental causes, such as the Tristeza disease affecting citrus harvests and the fire destroying one of Bruynzeel's main sawmills (United Nations 1984:189-91).

As mining, forestry and agriculture formed the basis for activities in the manufacturing sector, these difficulties inevitably resulted in the stagnation of Suriname's local industries.

Prospects for further growth in the manufacturing sector appear to be clouded by the trend in fairly recent times towards greater government control. The 1983 legislation that prohibited laying-off workers, even in the event of contraction of economic activity, has further added to the tendency to approach new investment in the manufacturing sector very cautiously. In addition, the sector's potential as a major foreign exchange earner is adversely affected by the country's distance from major markets and its high production costs. (United Nations 1984:192.)

This fall in Suriname's overall economic production brought about a reduction in direct and indirect taxes, including the bauxite levies. As demonstrated in

Table 7, when combined with the almost complete absence of development funds, these losses had a significant impact on government revenue. At the same time, government expenditure continued to rise. In fact, under the Alibux administration, wages and salaries, subsidies and transfers, plus interest payments would continue to grow steadily. In anticipation of these financial problems just days following The Hague's termination of its aid programme, Neyhorst warned that there would be a severe shortage in funds. In a letter addressed to the military leadership dated 4 January 1983 he expressed his fears that 'the budget year 1983 will go down in history with a budget deficit which up until now had never reached such a staggering amount'. Furthermore, Neyhorst, who had meanwhile resigned as Prime Minister, stated that 'at least within the administration the principle should exist that expenditure will be guided as far as possible by revenue' (*Trouw*, 21-3-1983:1).

Acknowledging these concerns, the regime was forced to implement policies designed at reducing the fiscal deficit, including a sharp decrease in expenditure on development. Other government expenditure was subjected to cuts whereby reduced spending on goods and services helped to bring about a noticeable decrease in overall current expenditure from Sf 711 million in 1983 to an estimated Sf 698 million in 1984 (United Nations 1984:189). Among the government services most affected by these cuts were, from the very beginning, the funds assigned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As early as January 1983 it was decided to reduce diplomatic staff at Surinamese missions. This included, for instance, cutting five staff members from the consulate in Amsterdam (*Trouw*, 12-1-1983:1). A year later the Ministry's budget was once more subjected to cuts, this time necessitating a reduction in staff at various diplomatic missions. Cuba was especially affected, with the post closing for both financial and political reasons (*NRC Handelsblad*, 16-2-1984:15; see Chapter IV). Since these savings were still insufficient, in May 1985 Prime Minister Wim Udenhout recalled Suriname's Ambassador to the Netherlands Heidweiler to allow him to participate in restructuring the Foreign Affairs Department and thus save additional funds from its budget (*De Ware Tijd*, 25-5-1985:1).

In 1986, as in previous years, Foreign Affairs was faced with a diminishing budget. Senior officials claimed that attempts were made to cut costs by drastically restructuring the Ministry, which included the introduction of a smaller yet more professional diplomatic corps. This programme also meant the temporary suspension of the planned expansion of diplomatic posts abroad, including the urgently needed increase in missions in the Caribbean and Latin America. Instead, the fields of activity of existing diplomatic posts were broadened. For instance, Suriname's Ambassador to the United States was now also responsible for Canada, where no embassy existed, while the

Ambassador stationed in Belgium was accredited to France, Czechoslovakia and Romania. On top of this a reshuffle of positions took place in which, most importantly, Ambassador to the UN Henry Guda was replaced by Suriname's former Ambassador to the Netherlands, Herrenberg. Finally, once again, the number of diplomatic personal was further reduced (*Trouw*, 8-1-1986:7).

Ironically, although the Foreign Affairs Department was saddled with the enormous responsibility of solving Suriname's monetary problems, the repeated cuts in its budget ultimately reduced the possibility of it being able to source alternative financial openings abroad. Consequently, Bouterse realized that re-establishing Dutch aid was of the utmost importance if the survival of his regime was to be secured. In December 1982 a Surinamese commission of international lawyers had already publicly questioned 'from where did the Netherlands derive the moral right to express in bilateral relations its supposedly moral responsibility by suspending the execution of the treaty' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 23-12-1982:3). Adopting the scholars' advice, Bouterse vented his anger at the termination of Dutch aid. In an interview with Oltmans, the Lieutenant-Colonel pointed out:

the so-called CONS Treaty does not even have or acknowledge any suspension regulations. The treaty does not allow for a suspension. Therefore, when The Hague urges us to respect and take into account the 'rule of law' of the constitutional state, we think that in the first place the Netherlands should take into account the rule of law. (Oltmans 1984:67.)

As a result, the Surinamese government threatened their Dutch colleagues that they would bring this issue before the International Court of Justice, ironically located in The Hague. Bouterse stepped up pressure on the Netherlands in a speech at the UN's Annual General Meeting in October 1983, arguing that 'the relationship between the two countries has been damaged due to arbitrary and unilateral measures of the Dutch government, steps that affect the foundations of the international system – and I may say the structure itself on which the United Nations is based' (*Trouw*, 13-10-1983:8).

However, Suriname's strategy of threatening the Netherlands with legal actions did not pay off. The Dutch government emphasized that 'it is widely known that the Netherlands tends to fully respect its treaty obligations' (*Trouw*, 13-10-1983:8), while citing the so-called *fabula rebus sic statibus* clause in Article 62 of the Treaty of Treaties,⁴ according to which unforeseen circumstances, severely altering the very nature of the agreement, could make it possible for a country to revoke the treaty (Meel 1990:86). According to a spokesperson

⁴ The Treaty of Treaties sets out some internationally recognized rules regarding treaties signed between countries.

of the Dutch Foreign Affairs Department, the Netherlands reserved the right to decide on the Aid Treaty's suspension since, with a direct reference to the December Murders, 'the circumstances under which the treaty must be carried out have changed fundamentally' (*Trouw*, 13-10-1983:8). This position severely weakened Suriname's legal stance and eventually limited Paramaribo's chances of forcing the Netherlands to re-establish its aid programme through a ruling from the International Court of Justice.

1983 proved to be the most decisive year for the Surinamese Revolution. Following the December Murders, Suriname's traditional political and socio-economic links with the Netherlands were in turmoil. The Dutch government's position clearly indicated its absolute opposition to the regime. Nothing less than the redemocratization of the Republic was demanded. To achieve this, the Lubbers cabinet implemented a wide range of foreign policy tools. Undeterred, Suriname, at the time led by its most left-wing regime to date, took up the challenge and tried to counter The Hague's moves by displaying a similar level of antagonism. Within a short time, tensions between the two nations reached a new breaking point.

During this process, particularly strong pressure was exerted on Paramaribo as, following the suspension of Dutch aid, Suriname's political and socio-economic life was disrupted to a considerable degree. Throwing the regime's budget into chaos, Bouterse was forced to cut government spending, including the withdrawing of funds for development projects and expenses for the Foreign Affairs Ministry. In addition, to cover government costs, the regime increasingly relied on withdrawals from the Central Bank, thereby reducing its foreign reserves. This, in turn, led to a recession in the country's manufacturing activities, accompanied by difficulties in the mining and agricultural sectors. In other words, without Dutch assistance, the survival of the Bouterse regime was in jeopardy.

CHAPTER IV

Standing amongst giants

Write down my name in the world I am Suriname. In my womb a people searching to become one breath the people of Suriname. Write down my name and look at the scars left to us by slavery I am Suriname look at me well and you'll see a soft sun rising to shine on freedom and peace write down my name in the world as a country of Surinamer. (Tjoe-Nij 1987:4.)

As the suspension of Dutch aid threatened to disrupt the political and socio-economic stability of the Republic, the Bouterse regime was forced to search for alternative sources of financial, technical and advisory assistance. At the beginning of 1981, as a first step towards reducing the country's dependence on the Netherlands, the government had launched a programme to redefine its foreign policy objectives and to train its diplomatic corps with the aim of promoting Suriname's long overdue integration into the Caribbean and Latin American region. Bouterse particularly emphasized the country's ties with Cuba and other regional socialist states in an effort to enhance the revolutionary process. However, the United States could not help but notice the tightening of Cuban-Surinamese relations and – caught up in the anti-communist rhetoric of the Reagan administration – interpreted developments in Suriname exclusively in the context of the Cold War. Only after the expulsion of Cuban advisors from Suriname following the American invasion of Grenada at the end of 1983, did relations between Paramaribo and Washington begin to improve. A further relaxation of the situation was noticeable when Brazil began to have a moderating influence on the regime.

This brief honeymoon proved merely an intermission. The Western powers were once again put on alert as the Republic pursued relations with Libya in order to gain wider access to financial and military support. As relations with Colonel Muammar Al-Qaddafi became more intimate, this time it was the turn of France to view developments in Suriname with suspicion. As a result, Paris urged Paramaribo to restrict Libyan influence. Suriname was subjected to additional pressure as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and locally operating multinational corporations also intervened in domestic policies, undermining the Republic's 'revolutionary' course even more drastically. In

the end, Paramaribo had little option but to abandon its attempts to attract Cuban and Libyan support.

The push towards regional integration

The NCOs responsible for the February coup deliberately initiated a break with the 'old order' of the post-independence period. Their aim was twofold: to reform domestic political and socio-economic structures and to direct the country's foreign policy away from its traditional reliance on the Netherlands. To achieve more regional integration, the government implemented a comprehensive programme for redefining its foreign policy objectives and reorganizing the Foreign Affairs Department. But before analysing these reforms, the reasons for introducing a new foreign policy course should be discussed.

The first point to be noted is that the proclamation of Het Manifesto van de Revolutie (Revolution's Manifesto) in May 1981 marked the end of the initial stage of the Revolution. The regime had consolidated its power base and honed its ideological foundations while promoting a nationalist-orientated socio-economic development to reduce the Republic's political reliance on external powers (*Suriname schijnonaafhankelijkheid* 1985:15). This process was exemplified by the departure of several moderate politicians, including Ferrier and Haakmat, from the government and the inclusion of radical left-wing officers such as Sital, Mijns and Joeman in the ruling apparatus.

Second, although in the beginning the Netherlands had cooperated with Bouterse (see Chapter II), Dutch criticism of the military coup had resulted in severe diplomatic clashes between The Hague and Paramaribo (see Chapter III). Consequently, it was of the utmost importance for Bouterse to reduce the Republic's dependence on the Netherlands so as to restrict Dutch influence on domestic affairs.

Third, despite Guyana's early recognition of the new regime just days after the coup (*de Volkskrant*, 3-3-1980:2), other regional countries were more cautious. Georgetown's acceptance of the Bouterse regime may have come about because Guyana itself was perceived as an isolated nation in the region due to Burnham's specific style of socialism and authoritarian rule, which was met with reservations, particularly in Venezuela (*South America* 1992:346). As was to be expected, Caracas initially also reacted with disapproval. The February coup, as Venezuelan Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Asdrúbal Aguiar pointed out, had taken place just weeks before Suriname's second post-independence elections were scheduled. As a result, Foreign Minister José Velasco threatened to suspend financial and technical assistance to Suriname despite his aid programme having been only recently inaugurated (*de Volkskrant*, 27-2-

1980:7). Thus it was vital for the new regime to initiate fresh attempts at establishing and improving links with countries located in its direct geopolitical environment.

The main force behind this new direction can be found in Haakmat's successor, the newly appointed Naarendorp who, as a supporter (but not a member) of the RVP, set out to integrate the Republic regionally. Aware of the country's isolated location on the South American continent, its lack of population and its economic assets controlled by foreign-owned companies, Naarendorp ordered the Foreign Affairs Department to evaluate Suriname's current international relations and to specify areas where improvements were necessary.

As a first step, Foreign Affairs identified the harmonization of bilateral links with Guyana as significant, particularly since both states shared comparable positions within the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Group of 77 (G-77)¹ and the UN (primarily because of their common need for a New International Economic Order) (*Foreign service training* 1981:46). Importantly, bearing in mind the proposed hydroelectric Kabalebo Dam (close to the Coeroeni River, in West Suriname), Paramaribo acknowledged that a 'no objection' clearance from Georgetown was crucial, even though there was a risk of this reinforcing the Guyanese bargaining position in the ongoing border dispute. Despite this potential point of friction, friendly relations with Georgetown were given high priority. To engender this, the upgrading of the ferry service or the construction of a bridge across the Coeroeni were considered essential in facilitating the interaction between the two states. In addition, ratification of the Fishery Agreement and of the Agreement of Cultural and Scientific Cooperation were seen as vital for strengthening relations.

In contrast, relations with Suriname's other neighbour, French Guiana were deemed less significant because only limited cross-border traffic had developed since independence (*Foreign service training* 1981:47). Although the appointment of a non-resident Ambassador in Paris was being considered, Foreign Affairs remained sceptical about the future outlook. This negative appraisal was primarily based on Suriname's attempts to revise a recently signed draft agreement between both governments dealing with the border demarcation, as it was thought to overly favour French claims. Moreover, as Paramaribo intended to exert pressure through various international organizations with regard to the decolonization of this French dependency, a clash of interests was to be expected.

¹ An organization initially founded by 77 developing nations in 1964 with the goal of coordinating its member states' policies prior to meetings of the UN General Assembly and other international agencies.

With Brazil the Friendship, Cooperation and Trade Agreement, the Cultural Agreement and the Basic Agreement on Technical and Scientific Cooperation were all signed in September 1977, followed by a bilateral Air Transport Agreement ratified in January 1980. These were thought to be adequate to serve as a foundation for the consolidation of friendly relations with Latin America's largest nation. Even though foreign policy strategists contemplated the idea of closely integrating both markets – which would have opened up enormous export possibilities for Surinamese products – they warned that 'Brazilian influence might become so significant that Suriname could lose its own identity and become isolated, dependent on Brazil, in international politics' (*Foreign service training* 1981:48).

Bilateral relations with Venezuela were evaluated in a similar vein, although Paramaribo felt less threatened by Caracas, probably because it was felt that Venezuelan influence would be easier to resist as the countries shared no border. In fact, Paramaribo hoped that close links with Caracas could offset Guyana's claim to Surinamese territory. Thus friendly relations with Caracas were to be founded on treaties regarding Friendship and Cooperation, Technical and Scientific Cooperation, Cultural Cooperation, Economic Cooperation and the Bauxite Agreement (all of which had been signed during the Arron era). Paramaribo also regarded Venezuelan support as essential to the advancement of its economic integration into Latin America since Caracas enjoyed a strong position among the Andean Pact² nations. With regards to its association with Caribbean organizations, Venezuela's influence, based on technical and financial assistance provided to the small islands, was viewed as an important factor in achieving regional acceptance for the regime (*Foreign service training* 1981:48-9).

Besides these bilateral objectives, Foreign Affairs also emphasized the importance of multilateral interactions to promote Suriname's membership of local organizations. In the Caribbean context, the regime particularly favoured full membership of CARICOM, since this

gives, in relations with other states, 'equal rights' in the organization; Suriname's membership will minimize regional support to Guyana in the border dispute with Suriname; we will be able to develop our small industries (wood, fishery); we will be able to develop a cultural policy with our Caribbean frame of reference; [and] we will be able to participate in projects concerning the Caribbean (*Foreign service training* 1981:37).

² The Andean Pact has been founded in 1969 with the objective to coordinate economic policies and encourage the formation of an inclusive free trade zone. Its members are Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela (Chile left the Pact in 1976).

The wish to join Caribbean organizations was primarily based on economic considerations since

we could use this area for instance as a trial market for many of our products. By increasing our production to settle demands of the people of this region, we could also obtain a good insight for the purpose of production increase for other larger markets. (*Foreign service training* 1981:57.)

However, also political reasons were mentioned, as

the Caribbean Area is of importance to us for the purpose of solidarity, in order to counterbalance the influence in the region of the superpowers. Especially the present foreign policy of the USA has as an objective to gain more influence in the region. (*Foreign service training* 1981:57.)

And finally, cultural reasons were cited because, in the light of their common historical experience and geographical location, the cultural identity of the small and vulnerable Caribbean states was thought to be nurtured through 'multicultural manifestations like the Carifesta' (*Foreign service training* 1981:57).

Examining the subject of Suriname's integration into Latin America, Foreign Affairs argued for an intensification of those links already established by the Republic with regional organizations.

If we consider the question how Suriname could benefit from the Latin American countries, we refer in the first place to the several regional organizations like ECLAC, SELA, Amazonian Pact or OLADE. Suriname has been party in all these bodies for about 5-8 years. We cannot say our partyship [membership] in these organs has provided us with the best positive results. A reason for that could lay in the fact, that we have no experts at our disposal who are constantly concerned with the developments within these regional bodies. (*Foreign service training* 1981:58.)

To achieve these objectives, including the establishment of a body of experts, Paramaribo trained a new group of diplomats to propagate the country's foreign policy goals. Given its restricted human and financial resources, the regime acknowledged the need for assistance from educational institutions in the fields of international relations and international law located outside the Republic. Whereas Arron had relied heavily on the Netherlands, Naarendorp now travelled to Brazil and to Trinidad and Tobago, to ensure participation of the Rio Branco Institute in Rio de Janeiro and of the Institute of International Relations in St. Augustine.

Furthermore, with the help of the Foreign Ministries in Brasilia and Port of Spain, along with the United Nation's Institute for Training and Research

(UNITR) and the Anton de Kom Universiteit, a new crash programme for Surinamese diplomats was designed (*Foreign service training* 1981:2-3). Its main aim was to strengthen political, economic and cultural interactions with other Caribbean and Latin American countries, while deliberately weakening Dutch-Surinamese links. The programme was specifically targeted at junior diplomats although senior ranks were also affected by the Department's reorganization. Several senior officials were dismissed from their positions, notably Van Eer, who since the transfer of sovereignty had served as Suriname's Ambassador to the Netherlands (*de Volkskrant*, 11-4-1980:5); his prestigious and influential post was temporarily taken over by Hans Prade in February 1981 (*Het Parool*, 26-2-1981:4), before Herrenberg would take his place.

Within the framework of this new regional approach Paramaribo soon began to translate its objectives into political actions. Naarendorp's speech to the UN General Assembly in October 1981 was a clear attempt to explain Paramaribo's new foreign policy direction to the other Caribbean and Latin American delegates (Bouterse 1990:103). The Foreign Minister also seized the opportunity to address Brazilian and Venezuelan concerns. Although Brasilia and Caracas continued to regard the Surinamese military with some suspicion, they refrained from further criticizing the coup and relations with both countries began to improve.

Comparable progress was also noticeable in Suriname's dialogue with other Latin American countries. At the end of 1980 the Republic, along with seven other Latin American states, signed the Amazon Accord on Development designed to improve economic cooperation in the Amazon basin (*The New York Times*, 30-10-1980:A5). Furthermore, Suriname was able to boost its image in the region during the Falkland/Malvinas War between Great Britain and Argentina. Naarendorp interpreted this dispute in the context of the North-South conflict, accusing the Thatcher administration of trying to deny developing nations access to the rich resources in the South Atlantic. In this conflict, according to Naarendorp, 'our position is without doubt in favour of the Third World' while assuring Buenos Aires Suriname's support in the UN, the OAS and the NAM (*De West*, 22-5-1982:6). For this, Paramaribo could count on Argentina's gratitude. During a visit to Buenos Aires in August 1982 by the Surinamese Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Eric Tjon Kie Sim the Bignone administration promised to assist Suriname in the areas of agriculture and oil exploration. On that same occasion, the visiting Minister felt confident enough to lobby Buenos Aires to substitute Australian bauxite imports (which had been suspended since Australia's support for Great Britain in the Falkland/Malvinas War) for Surinamese imports (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-8-1982:13). Finally, Paramaribo's decision at the end of 1982 to send trade attachés to Mexico City and Brasilia must be seen as a positive step

to underline the regime's commitment to intensifying economic relations with Latin America (*NRC Handelsblad*, 9-11-1982:13).

Similar progress was noticeable with regard to cooperation with Caribbean nations. The improvement in Grenadian-Surinamese relations was particularly striking, stimulated to a great extent due to the friendship between Bouterse and Bishop; the small island was even granted Nf 10 million in Surinamese aid (*NRC Handelsblad*, 13-11-1982:1). Furthermore, on several occasions the Paramaribo government expressed its reservations about what it perceived as outside interference in regional affairs, criticizing NATO's Caribbean exercise 'Safe Pass 1982' as primarily 'warning signals to countries in this region to not veer too much off course' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 1-3-1982:4). There were more protests during the American invasion of Grenada in November 1983, when Suriname, along with other Latin American countries including Brazil, Uruguay and Bolivia, condemned this military operation as outright interference with the internal matters of a Caribbean nation (*The New York Times*, 16-11-1983:A3).

Many of these positive developments in the Republic's foreign policy encountered serious problems following the December Murders and the subsequent resignation of the architect of Suriname's regional integration policy, Naarendorp. In fact, after the departure of this accomplished Foreign Minister in early 1983, the department underwent a period devoid of strong leadership. It took Suriname over a month to send a telegram to the OAS to 'explain' the December Murders and to inform the governments of neighbouring Caribbean and Latin American nations about recent developments in Paramaribo. In a telegram dated 11 January 1983 Foreign Minister Sankatsing declared:

With regard to the reports on the executions in Suriname I wish to inform you that these reports do not reflect what really happened. An official declaration of the military authorities formally states the following: 'On 8 December 1982 a number of people were killed. These people were held in custody in connection with their involvement in activities aimed at overthrowing the government by violent measures. These people, while being held in custody, tried to flee and were regrettably killed in the process. The National Army and the government will ensure that such incidents will be prevented in the future.' (*De Ware Tijd*, Nederland 9-12-2005:A1.)

As may have been expected, many Caribbean and Latin American governments reacted with disappointment to Paramaribo's account of the December Murders. And unfortunately, with this a great deal of recent progress towards regional integration would come to a halt, as will be discussed later in this chapter and Chapter V.

Suriname feels the heat of the Cold War

At this point it is essential to examine the most striking advance in Suriname's foreign policy in the early 1980s, prior to this salient break in the country's approach towards regional integration: the intensification of Cuban-Surinamese relations. Even though at an earlier stage Arron and Fidel Castro had signed a treaty relating to the establishment of formal diplomatic relations, no Ambassadors had been exchanged, since the agreement had never been ratified by the Staten (it was of low priority for the former civilian government) (Haakmat 1987:115). Furthermore, despite receiving a Cuban delegation in Paramaribo in March 1980 to evaluate the situation following the coup, Bouterse, who generally held strong sympathies for socialism, feared that the Republic might fall under Cuban influence and therefore decided against exchanging Ambassadors in the immediate post-coup period (Cardenas 1988:13-4; Bouterse 1990:43-4).

Bouterse's fear of Cuban domination can be traced back to the February 1980 coup, when a political vacuum was created by the NCOs rejection of direct military rule and, instead, establishing the National Military Council to 'overlook' the Chin a Sen cabinet. It is not surprising that this government structure led to a political conflict between the cabinet and the military, particularly when the Military Council, chaired by Sital and Mijns (both RVP members), proposed a more radical left-wing course (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:38-41).

The reason for the revolutionary tendency among many NCOs is to be found in the education and training they had received in the Netherlands where, according to a study in the early 1970s by Sedoc-Dahlberg (1971:122), most students and officers revealed a great admiration for the socialist achievements of countries such as Cuba and Tanzania. Upon their return to Suriname many would join left-wing parties such as the Volkspartij (VP, People's Party), from which the RVP later split, to apply the socialist model and build a truly independent Republic. Once in power and 'orchestrated by RVP leader Michael Naarendorp, the left gradually gained ascendancy in the NMR and began to impose itself on government policy' (Thorndike 1990:40).

Alarmed by this growing left-wing influence, Bouterse staged a coup in August 1980. This allowed him to remove the RVP members from the NMR and simultaneously suspend parliament and the Constitution. Havana had maintained close contacts with the RVP in the light of the party's goal of modelling Suriname on Cuba, but now lost another opportunity to establish diplomatic relations. Nonetheless, several months later, in a bid to strengthen regional links, Suriname attempted to ratify the by now ageing treaty relating to the exchange of Ambassadors. This time a strong verbal warning by American Secretary of State Edward Muskie – who met with Foreign Minister

Haakmat in the UN General Assembly of October 1980 – led to the continued postponement of establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba due to fear of a backlash by the United States (Haakmat 1987:114-5).

The reason for Washington aiming to prevent direct links between Paramaribo and Havana is easy to ascertain within the wider East-West conflict. Traditionally, the Caribbean was perceived as the vital ‘underbelly’ with regard to North American security concerns; therefore, in accordance with the Monroe Doctrine, any serious ‘disturbance’ in the region was met with direct or indirect American intervention.

However, following the Cuban Revolution of 1959, American hegemony over the Western Hemisphere was challenged. Due to the socialist nature of the Castro regime and its links with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the East-West conflict finally spilled over into the Caribbean region. In the words of the Guyanese career diplomat Lloyd Searwar (1992:15):

intervention in the era of the Cold War [...] was triggered not so much by a threat to US financial interests, but in reaction to the perceived influence or intervention of the other superpower in a region considered of major geo-strategic significance to the United States and within its sphere of influence. Governments, fairly elected, or opposition groups espousing ideas or systems associated with the USSR were considered to be ‘moving East’ and were accordingly adjudged hostile and therefore legitimate targets for pressure, subversion, or removal.

Washington justified its intervention, according to Lars Schoultz (1987:145), to secure American access to strategic raw materials, to provide American forces with military bases and allies, to protect important shipping routes and to contain the Soviet’s presumed desire for a ‘foothold’ in the Caribbean Sea. As a result, the United States intensified attempts at controlling the Caribbean, which naturally involved destabilizing perceived left-wing regimes. This had been demonstrated in Washington’s invasion in 1965 of the Dominican Republic to oust the Bosch regime (Barnet 1972:168-79) and by the White House’s covert measures to unseat the Manley administration in Jamaica (Colleoni 1984:83-4). Try though it might, Washington’s ability to oppose revolutionary governments was limited and

by 1981, when Reagan assumed the presidency, the USA perceived the Caribbean as penetrated by an axis of Marxist activity. This emanated from Cuba and stretching west to Nicaragua in Central America, where President Anastasio Somoza had been ousted by the Sandinistas in 1979, and east to include Grenada and possibly Suriname, where a coup had taken place in 1980. (Clarke 1993:37.)

American suspicions of Suriname’s internal developments were primarily based on the new foreign policy course implemented by Naarendorp, who had

assumed office at the same time as President Ronald Reagan, early in 1981. Whereas the relationship between Jimmy Carter and Arron had been friendly, following the February coup and Washington's 'natural' condemnation of the unconstitutional government change, the White House gradually grew concerned about Suriname's political direction (Brana-Shute 1990:191-2). This anxiety was largely a reaction to the influence gained by representatives of left-wing parties such as Ruben Lie Paw Sam from the VP and Herrenberg from the SPS (Cardenas 1988:21), and in particular Michael Naarendorp of the RVP and PALU-member Iwan Krolis, who served as an advisor to the NMR and whose party favoured stronger ties with Libya (Thorndike 1990:44). The arrest of several radical members of the NMR during the August coup and Chin A Sen's subsequent declaration that 'we do not wish to import any revolution; not a Chinese revolution; not a Russian revolution and not a Cuban one' (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:46), assured the United States, at least for the time being, that the Republic intended to implement a moderate foreign policy.

As time would tell, this repudiation of a revolutionary course was merely temporary. After their release, in March 1981, the three former left-wing NMR members returned to power. And at the Revolution's first anniversary, on 25 February 1981, Harvey Naarendorp (a cousin of RVP leader Michael Naarendorp) had already invited delegates of the Partido Comunista de Cuba (PCC, Communist Party of Cuba) to attend the festivities in Paramaribo (Cardenas 1988:23). This invitation followed a visit to Havana by a Surinamese delegation under NMR Sergeant Emile Cairo just a few weeks earlier. On his return to Paramaribo, Cairo argued that Suriname could learn from the Cuban model, citing for instance the 'great discipline in the Cuban society; respect for the leadership and enthusiasm for work' (*Caribbean Contact*, February 1981:5). The influence of more radical elements in the regime gained ground as Krolis and Harvey Naarendorp were appointed to the Policy Centre – the highest political authority in the Republic – while Sital was appointed Minister of Public Health. Eventually, by the end of August 1981, the formation of the Revolutionary Front government was announced under Bouterse's leadership and supported by the unions C-47, CLO, Progressieve Werknemers Organisatie (PWO, Progressive Workers Organization) and FAL, as well as by the parties PALU, RVP and PNR (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:48).

This shift towards socialism had immediate consequences for Suriname's foreign policy, particularly with regard to its relationship with Havana. Although Cuba, as Raymond Duncan (1982:8) claims, had already appointed a non-residential Ambassador to Suriname by March 1980, in mid-1981

the Cubans [...] opened an office in Paramaribo for their *chargé d'affaires* – the direct result of Naarendorp's own initiative in his role as Minister of Foreign Affairs. The RVP in particular maintained regular contacts with the Cuban diplomatic mis-

sion, with the Cubans providing advice on the development of a revolutionary organization. At an earlier stage, Naarendorp had abolished the visa requirement for Cubans, allowing them to enter and leave Surinam as they pleased. In this way, tiny Surinam threatened to become a bone of contention between East and West. (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:48.)

The danger of slipping into the Cold War conflict was highlighted with the inauguration of the Revolutionary Front cabinet in December 1981; delegations were invited from Nicaragua, Grenada and Cuba along with deputies from the El Salvadorean Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN, Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) and the Guyanese PPP and Working Party Alliance (WPA) (Cardenas 1988:25).

Aware of the risk of being classified as a Soviet satellite, the Surinamese Foreign Minister was dispatched to neighbouring countries as well as to the Netherlands. During the meeting with American Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Naarendorp made assurances that Paramaribo would not implement a communist course (Brana-Shute 1990:192). However, following Chin A Sen's 'resignation' in February 1982 and the failure of the Rambocus and Hawker counter-coup in March 1982 (Paramaribo assumed that Washington and The Hague had a hand in its planning), the regime now clearly favoured closer ties with other socialist Caribbean countries (Thorndike 1990:41). It must be emphasized that in the new Neyhorst cabinet the influence of PALU was restricted to just one minister (*NRC Handelsblad*, 31-3-1982:4), whereas the RVP maintained its strong advisory role with regard to several members of the Policy Centre, which, by early 1982, included the entire military authority. The Prime Minister and President had to submit their policies to its chairman Bouterse (Meel 1990:84-5).

In other words, the road towards closer relations with Cuba was paved and in May 1982, following Bouterse's visit to a conference of the Socialist International (SI) in Grenada, the military commander flew to Cuba for unofficial talks. According to the memoirs of the Cuban politician Cardenas (1988:34), present at the meeting, 'the contact between Commander-in-chief Fidel Castro and Lieutenant Colonel Bouterse was smooth, very easy and frank'. The visit spanned several days, during which the two leaders agreed to exchange formal diplomatic representations in the form of residential ambassadors. Eventually, in July 1982, the Cuban embassy, opened by Jorge Risquet (Chairman of the PCC's Politburo), was established under the ambassadorship of Cardenas.

Plenty has been written and even more has been speculated about the influence of Cuba (and behind it the USSR) on Surinamese affairs. What has become clear, is that due to the sensitive and secretive nature of this relationship, it has been difficult to assess the actual Cuban impact on developments in Suriname. As Cardenas (1988:46) pointed out, only twelve Cubans were

stationed at the Paramaribo embassy, including spouses and children. And although the USSR had established its own diplomatic mission in Paramaribo, led by Igor Bubnov since 1982, no single political or military pressure group in the Surinamese government favoured closer ties with Moscow, nor did the Soviet Union offer any aid to the Republic (Searwar 1992:35).

In fact, during Suriname's darkest hour, following the December Murders, the Soviet Union would not support Bouterse, in an anxious attempt not to strain relations with the Netherlands as long as Dutch society was divided over whether or not to allow American Pershing missiles to be based in the Kingdom (*NRC Handelsblad*, 24-11-1984:1). Just a scattering of news articles issued by Tass (the official news agency of the USSR) at the end of January 1983, accusing Washington of deliberately destabilizing Suriname's internal order (*Trouw*, 29-1-1983:7), may possibly be interpreted as an attempt by Moscow to assist Paramaribo, although these press releases hardly suggested that the Republic was in any way a Soviet outpost. Moreover, since only the Vietnamese daily *Nhan Dan* argued strongly in defence of Bouterse's decision to prevent an 'imperialist inspired coup' (*Het Parool*, 15-12-1982:9), it became obvious that Suriname had few if any significant ties with communist regimes outside the Western Hemisphere.

While dismissing the notion of being assisted by the Soviets, attention must be given to the possibility of Havana supporting the regime. Indeed, considering the Cuban wish to break the US-initiated attempt at regional isolation and to establish friendly relations with other Caribbean and Central American countries – primarily by providing educational, public health and technical cooperation – the possibility of improving ties with Suriname surely involved more than just sending a few civil servants to its Paramaribo mission (Domínguez 1992:64). Cardenas' own appointment, transferring from his influential position as Director of the Caribbean-Central American Department of Cuba's Communist Party to Cuba's Ambassador in Paramaribo speaks for itself as an indication of the significance Havana placed on relations with Suriname (Cardenas 1988:7).

Be this as it may, the traditional Cold War battlers argued (as they still do) that the Cubans exerted considerable influence on the regime, especially since they acted as henchmen for the Soviet Union. It is therefore not surprising that authors such as Leiken (1984:463) warned that – on the basis of unconfirmed reports – 'Soviet and Cuban soldiers are organizing a civil guard inside Surinam'. In a similar fashion, McColm (1984:70) claimed that 'there are reports that Cuban and Nicaraguan advisers entered Surinam to help create a popular militia to protect Bouterse's regime against possible threats from Surinam's 2,000-man army'. Furthermore, with reference to Moscow's 'foothold' in Nicaragua, Grenada and Cuba, McColm (1984:70) described Suriname as 'a subsidiary target of the Soviet Union' while pointing out that

'this first pro-Soviet government on the mainland of South America since the fall of Allende in Chile has publicly pledged to send an international brigade to fight in Nicaragua'.

Suriname may have gained some Cuban support with regard to establishing and training the elite unit of the Echo Brigade and the People's Militia, the brigade's restricted size and the militia's limited combat value imbued both with no more than a strong defence character aimed at protecting the regime against possible internal disturbance rather than dealing with external interventions and certainly not with destabilizing the wider Latin American and Caribbean region, let alone with fighting in Nicaragua. In other words, this Cold War rhetoric was good propaganda, helping to justify President Reagan's heavy-handed attempts at containing the so-called communist threat in the Western Hemisphere (Ambrose 1991:328-32). Although the February coup and the regime's subsequent political course contributed to a general dissolution in the region due to the very nature of the military takeover (the neighbours saw the development in Suriname as giving the entire region a negative image), to perceive Suriname as a Cuban or even Soviet satellite clearly indicates a lack of understanding of the internal dynamics of the Republic.

Thorndike and Sedoc-Dahlberg have given a more realistic account of Cuba's influence. Whereas the latter has discussed Cuban advisors in the context of assisting the regime with internal security, military training, propaganda, forestry and health care issues (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1990a:178), Thorndike (1990:44-5) has emphasized Cuban influence on the political mobilization of the people. The task of the Surinamese Volksmobilisatie (People Mobilization) was carried out by a specially formed Bureau, set up in mid-1980 with the aim of securing broadly based support for the regime. To achieve this, the idea of organizing People's Committees, originally formulated by the RVP, was given high priority and consequently, by the end of 1982, over a hundred of these bodies had been established throughout the country.

The prime objective of the committees was to monitor the implementation of the national government's policies in their respective areas, to decide on local issues and to develop their own community while being coordinated, funded, equipped and advised by the Paramaribo authorities (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1990a:181-3). When analysing the structure and goals of the committees and taking into account the RVP's close ties with Cuba, Thorndike (1990:45) concluded that 'there was a clear similarity to the Cuban model of *poder popular* (popular power)'. A similar view was expressed by Chin and Buddingh' (1987:82), who argued that

the Bureau of People Mobilization, as the political arm of the revolution, was absorbed in the attempt to promote a revolutionary mass movement. In Popular Mobilization's view, people's committees would necessarily play a major role in

this, somewhat after the model of Cuba's CDR [Comités de Defensa de la Revolución].

Also in other, less controversial fields, the ties between Havana and Paramaribo were strengthened. According to the sugar-rice trade agreement concluded in the summer of 1982, Suriname would export rice to Cuba while importing sugar from the island (Leiken 1984:463). In view of the narrow domestic market and Suriname's own sugar production, this economic agreement can only have been of a modest nature and Leiken's claim that it was an example of Cuba's political influence on Suriname must be questioned. Some additional treaties were signed in May 1983, outlining bilateral cooperation in economic, scientific, educational and cultural fields, as well as an agreement on civil aviation (Cardenas 1988:58). Again, the overall significance of these contracts can only have been limited since they were concluded just several months before the breakdown in Cuban-Surinamese relations.

Cuba's main involvement in Suriname thus generally related to providing advice on popular mobilization and on the organizing and training of military and civilian units. To regard Paramaribo as an ally of Cuba, to perceive Suriname's small NL as a military threat to the Caribbean, or to argue that the Republic could be used as a base for communist guerrilla activities in neighbouring countries, would place far too much emphasis on Havana's influence on Paramaribo and interpret Suriname's development restrictively in the context of the Cold War.

Yet this was exactly what Reagan was doing. Whereas the former Carter administration had evaluated developments in Nicaragua, Grenada and Suriname as mainly arising from the specific internal dynamics of these countries (Allen 1990:159), Reagan watched Paramaribo's political course with great concern. In the wake of Cardenas' appointment as Cuban Ambassador to Suriname, Washington reacted swiftly by recalling Richard LaRoche from the embassy in Santiago de Chile and appointing him chargé d'affaires in Paramaribo. LaRoche was accompanied by Public Affairs Officer Edward Donovan and both diplomats were occupied with underlining Washington's interests in strengthening its position in Suriname as of mid-1982 (Branas-Shute 1990:193).

Realizing the danger of being unwittingly caught up in the Cold War, Bouterse pointed out that Suriname's relations with Cuba were born of both governments' opposition to the exploitation of the Republic by industrialized nations. In a speech delivered during Freedoms Day on 1 July 1982 Bouterse (1990:116) stated:

The enemies of the revolution also talk much about 'isms' and try to conjure up the anti-communist ghost. About this I want to say the following. We are indeed

opponents of capitalism and the imperialism it ushers in, because this system, with all its supposed freedom, has enslaved our people in poverty and dependency for many years. This system has provided Europe and the United States with wealth. However, history has made it more than clear that this wealth and progress has been at the cost of the workers and of other people in the world.

This neo-Marxist clarification of Suriname's foreign policy merely contributed to increasing Washington's fears. LaRoche and Donovan were instructed to establish a communication network with the leaders of pro-democracy forces, including Derby and Daal (Brana-Shute 1990:193). The regime, put under pressure due to strikes and demonstrations organized in support of the Association for Democracy, threatened to expel LaRoche and Donovan in November 1982, on the grounds of what Neyhorst perceived as their involvement in Surinamese domestic affairs (*The New York Times*, 7-1-1983:A5). Naarendorp even went so far as to accuse LaRoche of having had a hand in organizing the overthrow of the Allende government in Chile a decade earlier.³ Posters appeared on Paramaribo's streets depicting Daal and Haakmat while receiving funds from, and working as agents for the CIA, thus underlining Suriname's claim of American interference.

Already severely strained, US-Surinamese relations worsened following the December Murders, to which the State Department reacted swiftly, stating that 'in the light of these events our entire relationship with Suriname is under review, including our aid program' (*The New York Times*, 15-12-1982:A5). A few days later, after summoning Ambassador Heidweiler to the State Department, Washington decided to suspend its US\$ 1.5 million aid package (*The New York Times*, 18-12-1982:A5). Suriname reacted to this by informing American Ambassador Robert Duemling that LaRoche and Donovan would have to leave the Republic due to their alleged involvement in inciting anti-government strikes, to which the White House shrewdly retaliated by expelling not career diplomat Heidweiler (who tended to have a moderating influence within the Foreign Affairs Department), but instead the diplomat Rudy van Bochove, second in command at Suriname's embassy in Washington (*The New York Times*, 7-1-1983:A5).

These harsh measures turned out to be only a prelude to subsequent tensions between Washington and Paramaribo. On the Surinamese side, Bouterse hardened the regime's position while announcing, during an interview with *Le Monde* that

³ NRC *Handelsblad*, 30-10-1982:1. Even though it has to be acknowledged that, despite Washington's destabilization efforts, its intervention was not the deciding factor in Allende's downfall, see Skidmore and Smith 1992:140.

Having crippled the counterrevolution, the time has now come to accelerate the revolutionary process. Up until 8 December we have had a quiet revolution, without violence. But we lacked a hub to coordinate our efforts and direct our political activities. Because we allowed our opponents too much freedom, they have been able to profit from this by regaining some of the territory they had lost. This is why the army has become more alert and intends to promote civilian mobilization. There will be room for all who want to participate in the Revolution, but, in the interests of the people, those of you who are privileged must abstain. (*Le Monde* 7-1-1983:5.)

The most prominent victim of this post-Murders purge was Major Horb, who, along with Daal and Haakmat, was suspected of working for the American government.

On the American side, the House of Representatives confirmed the suspension of aid by April 1983 as the Reagan administration began preparations aimed at overthrowing Bouterse. To achieve this, one idea put forward suggested making use of Surinamese exiles residing in the Netherlands (Branas-Shute 1990:193). In fact, several hundred thousand dollars were spent on CIA activities directed at gathering important information and offering the necessary assistance to allow the Surinamese opposition 'forces' to bring an end to the left-wing regime in Paramaribo. Another idea discussed by Reagan,⁴ was to provide Venezuela and Brazil with American naval and air support while troops from both Latin American countries were to invade Suriname (Reagan and Brinkley 2007:142-3).

These implicit plans aimed at dealing with the situation in Suriname must be viewed as part of a foreign policy which two years later would become widely known as the Reagan Doctrine. With regard to Central America the President justified indirect military intervention in a speech to Congress as 'support for freedom fighters is self-defence and totally consistent with the OAS and UN Charters. It is essential that the Congress continue all facets of our assistance to Central America. I want to work with you to support the democratic forces whose struggle is tied to our own security' (Paterson 1989:683).

Despite the persistent Cold War rhetoric, the Senate Intelligence Committee questioned rather patronizingly 'why [...] the Reagan Administration [is] considering a coup in a country that has no significance. The Surinamese people [are] primitive and gentle, much like Tahitians in the South Pacific' (Woodward 1987:265). Similarly, in the relevant House Committee, the coup plans were received with criticism, especially since information gathered by the CIA indicated that a mercenary invasion was unlikely to succeed

⁴ As it turned out having no knowledge of the actual location of the Republic, as became apparent during a meeting between the President and US officials, see Haakmat 1987:203-4.

(Woodward 1987:266). In fact, former CIA Director Admiral Stanfield Turner opposed the plans as unjustifiable while disputing Reagan's easy use of the term 'important to national security' (Turner 1985:174). Moreover, Caracas and Brasilia rejected the idea of an invasion. While Venezuela strongly repudiated the notion of militarily occupying another Caribbean or Latin American state, Brazil had already defined a different strategy to deal with the 'Surinamese' problem (Reagan and Brinkley 2007:142-3).

Even though the idea of an intervention sponsored by the Americans was eventually relinquished, Washington's pressure to weaken Cuban influence on Suriname persisted. In July 1983 US National Security Advisor William Clark met with Suriname's Ambassador Heidweiler. At this meeting, Clark demanded the expulsion of Cardenas, the reduction of Cuban embassy staff and the removal of pro-Cuban politicians from government (notably former Foreign Minister Naarendorp, still acting as an advisor to Bouterse), before US-Surinamese relations could improve (Brana-Shute 1990:194). Meanwhile, Reagan continued to publicly attack Bouterse, as illustrated in a speech delivered at the United Nations in September 1983. According to the President

during the past year alone, violent conflicts have occurred in the hills of Beirut, the deserts of Chad and the Western Sahara, in the mountains of El Salvador, in the streets of Suriname, the cities and countryside of Afghanistan, the borders of Kampuchea and the battlefields of Iran and Iraq (*The New York Times*, 27-9-1983:A16).

A possibility of ending Suriname's controversial involvement in the East-West conflict presented itself through an offer made by Brazil, at the beginning of 1983, to support the unpopular Paramaribo regime by replacing Cuba's assistance. The reasons behind Brazil's new approach have never become entirely clear. Some scholars, including Brana-Shute (1990:194-5) and Sedoc-Dahlberg (1990a:179), suspected the Brazilian government of acting as an American proxy. This theory is supported by Bob Woodward (1987:284), who argued that

after the CIA's plan to overthrow the leader of Suriname proved unfeasible, the Brazilian intelligence service had drummed up its first covert operation. Brazil and Suriname shared a border of about 100 miles. With Motley's [Ambassador to Brazil] encouragement and with slight assistance from the CIA, the Brazilian services had sent intelligence agents into Suriname posing as teachers, to wean the Surinamese government away from the Cubans.

Yet Payne (1984:135) has pointed out that the engagement with Suriname was largely based on President Figueiredo's interest in preserving the security of Brazil's own political system. That is, Suriname's continuous instability, exemplified by the December Murders and combined with the presence

of Cuban advisors in the country, had raised Brazilian concerns since the escalating violence in the small Republic could also have a disturbing influence on Brazilian politics. This theory is supported by Brazilian Foreign Minister Saravia Guerreiro, who, referring to the December Murders, emphasized that recent events in Suriname had had a direct effect on Brazil's homeland security. Alluding to the presence of Cuban advisors, Guerreiro warned his Surinamese counterpart that developing nations could not move forward while still being caught up in the East-West conflict (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 8-1-1983:2). Finally, it must be noted that Reagan himself seemed unaware of the Brazilian initiative. The reason why Brasilia rejected the American invasion plan in early April 1983 was because it had already defined a strategy aimed at replacing Cuban assistance with Brazilian support (Reagan and Brinkley 2007:143).

Thus a combination of both theories might best explain Brazil's interest in Surinamese affairs: American pressure on Brasilia to help expel Cuban advisors from the South American mainland, coupled with political instability in Paramaribo, seems to have resulted in a considerable amount of disquiet within the Figueiredo cabinet. These Brazilian concerns would, in fact, increase following the moderate Neyhorst cabinet's resignation (*Europa year book* 1983, II:1517) and the establishment of a new left-wing cabinet under Alibux, which quickly announced its prime foreign policy objective to be, as described by the Surinamese student organization Redi Doti, 'trying to escape from the dependence on foreign countries while domestically also getting a better grip on our own development' (*Suriname schijnonafhankelijkheid* 1985:23).

The government's attempts to limit Suriname's dependence on outside powers proved illusionary. In April 1983, after rejecting the American idea of a military intervention, the Brazilian President sent his top security official and advisor, General Denilo Venturini, to Paramaribo to help stabilize domestic developments (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 23-4-1983:3). This visit, which occurred so unexpectedly that Alibux neither issued an official invitation nor undertook any ceremonial preparations, reflected the urgency felt by Brazil in restricting Cuban influence. To achieve this, an arrangement was proposed by which Paramaribo would scale down its ties with Havana, while in return, the Brazilians would help to equip, train and finance the NL (*Caribbean Insight* 6-9(1983):1).

Following more visits to Brasilia by Alibux in late May and early August (*Trouw*, 26-5-1983:12, 5-8-1983:7) the two governments eventually signed a cooperation agreement and in due course a barter deal was struck through which Suriname exchanged rice and aluminium for Brazilian military equipment (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1986:96-7). According to MacDonald (1988:116-7), Brazil also granted Suriname US\$ 70 million worth of credit, allowing Bouterse to finance the purchase of eleven Brazilian amphibious trucks and

Armoured Personnel Carriers (APC), in addition to substantial quantities of ammunition and uniforms. Other reports spoke of 21 APCs, all delivered by Brazil, supplemented by technical and economic assistance in areas such as agriculture and communication (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:174-8).

In view of the absence of Dutch aid it is not surprising that Paramaribo considered these emerging links with Brasilia important with Alibux calling Brazil 'a friend in the region' (*Trouw*, 26-5-1983:12). Bouterse also expressed his satisfaction with the warming of Brazilian-Surinamese relations. In an interview with the Brazilian magazine *Veja* in October 1986, the Lieutenant Colonel stated that 'our relations with Brazil are very good and we hope they will continue that way' (*Veja*, 22-10-1986:76). The Brazilians tended to be somewhat more restrained about their relationship with Suriname, realizing that it was primarily based on their willingness to provide military aid to Paramaribo.

In sharp contrast, and as a direct result of emerging relations with its new Brazilian 'friend', Cuban-Surinamese ties appeared to cool down. In May 1983 Alibux announced that in military matters his cabinet was to cooperate with Brazil rather than rely on Cuban assistance (*Trouw*, 26-5-1983:12). Alibux also intentionally delayed the ratification of various agreements that had recently been signed with Havana (*Caribbean Insight* 6-9(1983):1). President Figueiredo's decision to reinforce the Brazilian military in the north-east of the country, including the construction of a new air force base near Suriname in April 1983, may also have gone some way towards convincing Paramaribo that it should not ignore concerns expressed by its powerful neighbour (*Trouw*, 20-4-1983:7). In other words, whereas relations with Cuba had previously been pursued by Bouterse and Naarendorp without being aware of the full ramifications of this policy for the East-West conflict, Suriname now began to wise up to the interests of major regional players.

The reason for Suriname's willingness to adapt its foreign policy from a pro-Cuban course towards closer ties with Brazil can be found in both the Republic's internal and external realms. Domestically, political differences between RVP and PALU became increasingly visible, particularly after the latter party was able to regain its strength within the Alibux cabinet. By contrast, the power of the RVP had severely declined. The party lost even more influence as Minister of Popular Mobilization Sital was once again dismissed from office in June 1983 (he went into exile on Cuba), largely because Alibux feared Sital's close relationship with Cardenas (*Trouw*, 22-7-1983:8). The Cuban Ambassador, with the support of the RVP, had earlier emerged as a well-informed and influential source in Paramaribo. According to Thorndike (1990:44) this was illustrated by the fact that 'confidential government documents regularly arrived on Cardenas' desk before they did that of Alibux, and it had been reported that Cardenas had officially informed

his staff that civil servants were to provide the embassy with any information it might require'. Furthermore, Don Bohming of *The Miami Herald* speculated that the Cubans had intentions of replacing Bouterse with their protégé Sital (Dew 1983:30). Whilst weakening the RVP's position, and hence Cuba's influence, Alibux was not only able to strengthen his own standing, but also to launch a fresh attempt at rebuilding some of the strained foreign relations with industrialized nations.

This wish to improve ties with the West led to the regime's decision to redirect its foreign policy objectives. Confronted with the continuing absence of Dutch aid, Paramaribo intended to search for alternative sources on the international financial market. The IMF was identified as the main source (*Trouw*, 11-10-1983:7), but because this financial organization was essentially under the control of the industrialized countries, in particular the United States, the government sought to erase the negative image held by many First World nations, primarily by reducing its links with Castro. To achieve this, in October 1983 Alibux flew to Washington and met with State Department officials to discuss the possibility of a warming of American-Surinamese relations. A similar diplomatic move was taken by Bouterse, who, shortly after the Prime Minister's official visit, gave a speech at the UN General Assembly in which no reference was made to Cuban-Surinamese relations. Instead, to the relief of the Reagan administration, Bouterse called for the removal of all foreign (that is, Soviet) troops from Afghanistan (Dew 1983:30).

Furthermore, the murder of Bishop (Bouterse believed that Castro had ordered the execution and feared the same could happen in Suriname) and the subsequent invasion of Grenada by a US-led Caribbean contingent at the end of 1983 (which, in turn, resulted in anxiety amongst Surinamese officials who believed their country might be the next target) provided Paramaribo with a strong motive to expel Cardenas. In addition, Suriname demanded diplomatic relations with Cuba be downgraded.⁵ Castro was offended by what he saw as Bouterse's betrayal of the Surinamese Revolution; Cuba chose to withdraw its mission from Paramaribo altogether and to maintain contact with the Republic simply through a non-residential Ambassador situated in Havana (Cardenas 1988:72-5). With the departure of all Cubans within a matter of days, and without any attempts made by Paramaribo to reverse Havana's decision, the short period of Cuban influence on Surinamese affairs came to end.

⁵ See Appendix V for Alibux's official letter to Cuban Ambassador Cardenas, dated 25-10-1983.

Paramaribo under pressure from intergovernmental organizations and multinationals

As was pointed out earlier, an important reason for Alibux to downgrade relations with Cuba was to redress Suriname's negative image in the industrialized world and thus improve the chances of negotiating a US\$ 100 million loan from the IMF. This loan was urgently needed to shore up Suriname's faltering economy because, as stated in Chapter III, the country did not only have to contend with the loss of Dutch aid, but also with a reduction in revenues from the mining, manufacturing and agricultural sectors.

To make matters worse, Paramaribo failed to take advantage of the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) announced by Reagan in February 1982, to 'improve the economic well-being of the Caribbean area' (Deere and Antrobus 1990:153). In fact, the White House had classified Suriname, as it had done with Cuba and Nicaragua, as a 'non-designated' country when the President introduced the aims and structures of the CBI. The reason for this seemed obvious since at least part of the objective behind the CBI was a strategic move designed at 'containing communism' in the region by providing trade stimulus, development aid and investment incentives as outlined in the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA), signed by Reagan in August 1983 (Deere and Antrobus 1990:153-6).

Bouterse claimed that Suriname had deliberately been excluded from the American proposal due to the country's left-wing course. In his own words: 'Despite the failure of the CBI of President Ronald Reagan, intended as a model for this region, the American government has succeeded in forming a bloc within the Caribbean region' (Oltmans 1984:54). Although the overall economic effect of the CBI must be questioned – Caribbean exports to the United States actually fell from 3.5% in 1982 to 1.4% in 1988 of total American exports, for which petroleum and sugar products were mainly responsible⁶ – the Republic may have benefited from the CBI in the long term since bananas and bauxite (Suriname's prime exports) did comparatively well (Deere and Antrobus 1990:158-61).

The CBI was not the only regional initiative from which Suriname was excluded. Paramaribo was severely humiliated by CARICOM's decision to defer Suriname's application for full membership in November 1982 (*Europa year book* 1984, II:2455). The organization came to this decision after Jamaica and Barbados rejected the Republic's request on the grounds of the Bouterse regime's undemocratic nature. Although there is no proof that the White House was behind this rejection, it should be noted that it came at the peak of US-Surinamese tension and the two Caribbean nations opposing Suriname's

⁶ Thus, Bouterse's initial and general assessment of 'the failing of the CBI' was correct.

application enjoyed particularly close links with Washington. The governing Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) under Edward Seaga severed diplomatic relations with Cuba in October 1981; it received significant American financial assistance while promoting close cooperation with the White House on a wide range of issues (*Europa year book* 1984, II:1787). Similarly, the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) led by Tom Adams sought a strong alignment with the United States – the island’s most important trading partner by far (*Europa year book* 1984, I:1158-60).

During the Grenada invasion a year later it became plainly apparent that the White House also perceived both countries as close regional allies. According to Reagan’s official announcement of the American-led military operation in October 1983:

We acceded to the request to become part of a multinational effort with contingents from Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the United States. I might add that two of those, Barbados and Jamaica, are not members of the organization but were first approached, as we later were, by the O.E.C.S. [Organization of East Caribbean States] and asked to join in that undertaking. And then all of them joined unanimously in asking us to participate. (*The New York Times*, 26-10-1983:A16.)

Barbados and Jamaica thus not only ‘requested’ that Washington intervene in Grenada, they also contributed troops to the operation. Furthermore, Barbados served as an important base for the American military, for instance as the assembly point for 700 Army Rangers (whom were part of the 1,900 strong multinational contingent) and as a supply station to maintain the occupation force in Grenada (*The New York Times*, 26-10-1983:1).

Failing to gain regional support and taking into account Suriname’s unfavourable socio-economic circumstances, it was only to be expected that Bouterse, previously known for his ‘anti-imperialist’ rhetoric, eventually turned to international financial institutions for help. By mid-1983, Paramaribo approached the World Bank for an unspecific credit, suggesting that this would be repaid with 3% interest. The World Bank rejected the request, pointing out that Suriname’s relatively high GDP per capita could not justify such low interest repayments. Even though the World Bank was willing to negotiate a higher interest rate, Suriname then withdrew its initial application (*Trouw*, 11-10-1983:7).

Bouterse was left with little choice but to approach the World Bank’s alter ego and subsequently requested the IMF for a US\$ 100 million loan. Negotiations took place from mid-1983 but were somewhat clouded since the IMF demanded a substantial reduction in government spending. In fact, it advised Alibux, among other suggestions, to cut social services, devalue the currency, abolish import restrictions and reduce the public sector (*Suriname*

schijnonafhankelijkheid 1985:25). These economic rationalist suggestions were rejected by the cabinet, which instead announced a massive increase in taxes – income tax by 22%, import duty by 59% and motor vehicle tax, excise duty and sale tax by 44% (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:146).

Drastic though they were, measures taken by the Alibux cabinet failed to impress the IMF delegates visiting the Republic in October 1983. They were seen as counterproductive since it was feared that these measures would usher in a further deterioration of the business and investment climate. More importantly, the Surinamese public was also opposed to the proposed tax increases. By the end of 1983 strikes were taking place throughout the country, starting with the miners of Suralco and Billiton but soon spreading to other economic sectors (*Trouw*, 23-12-1983:8). Although these strikes had mainly been organized with the objective of claiming higher wages in response to the planned tax increases, political demands, such as the right to vote by secret ballot, were promptly added (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:62).

The most interesting aspect of these industrial actions was that they had neither been authorized nor organized by the country's unions. C-47 leader Derby – the only one to survive the December Murders – warned the strikers of any possible political consequences (*Het Parool*, 28-12-1983:1). Taking into account the economic importance of the bauxite industry – strikes resulted in a loss of around US\$ 60 million worth of production (Thorndike 1990:46) – the danger of a violent backlash by the military was certainly not unrealistic. However, Bouterse decided not to move against the miners but to dismiss the unpopular Alibux government instead: Alibux 'resigned' on 8 January 1984. In a speech broadcasted on the Surinamese television, Bouterse accused the former cabinet of having made 'mistakes' in its dealings with the working class, particularly by announcing the tax increases (*De Ware Tijd*, 9-1-1984:1).

The crisis was by no means over. Despite the military's promise to abandon all tax increases, strikers would continue to press for political reforms, notably free elections (*Strikers challenge Bouterse* 1984:1, 6). As a result of the ongoing dispute at Suralco and Billiton, Bouterse eventually called out his troops to enable miners who wanted to work to return to the mines and processing plants (*De Ware Tijd*, 12-1-1984:1). This was, however, rejected by the multinational corporations; Suralco took swift action, ordering the evacuation of family members of its American staff and announcing the temporary closure of its mining and processing plants (*NRC Handelsblad*, 11-1-1984:1, 12-1-1984:1). Thus, besides being confronted by angry workers who increasingly participated in nationwide industrial actions,⁷ the regime was

⁷ Including bank and insurance clerks, high school students and bus drivers, see *De Ware Tijd*, 17-1-1984:1.

now also challenged by the bauxite-based multinational corporations. By closing the mines, it threatened to deprive Suriname of its prime industrial sector. Various attempts by Bouterse to discuss the reopening of the mining and processing sites for those employees willing to work were all rejected by the Suralco management (*de Volkskrant*, 13-1-1984:1-5).

As Washington expressed its concern about Suriname's deteriorating internal stability, Bouterse accused Suralco of deliberately playing into the hands of the Reagan administration by attempting to provoke external intervention. According to Bouterse (1990:148-9)

the Americans have misjudged the situation, instead of resuming work, they close the plant to deliberately create a national disaster, in doing so setting the stage for outside intervention. It is at this point in particular that speculations about possible invasion plans by the Netherlands and the United States are rife.

Even though the military leadership judged this to be a combined strategy by Suralco and the White House, the regime's room for political manoeuvres was severely restricted. Consequently, Bouterse also agreed to discuss issues relating to the Republic's redemocratization. As a compromise, a new cabinet was installed in February 1984 under Udenhout,⁸ whose cabinet of nine ministers included two representatives of the unions and two delegates from the employers' association.⁹

Although the new cabinet ended the unpleasant episode with the IMF – negotiations were finally broken off by the Udenhout cabinet in the summer of 1984 (*NRC Handelsblad*, 4-7-1984:1) – relations with Suralco and Billiton remained problematic. More than once the military leadership had to acknowledge the limits of its power in dealing with the multinational corporations. Tensions between Suralco and the regime, for instance, worsened dramatically early in 1986 when, in spite of an earlier agreement with the Ministry of Labour not to reduce the workforce without authorization, the management of the US-based company defied the government and unilaterally laid off five hundred workers (*De Ware Tijd*, 14-3-1986:1). Despite threatening Suralco, Bouterse was unable to challenge its decision and consequently experienced another embarrassment at the hands of this multinational corporations. Furthermore, Paramaribo was exposed to additional pressure by large firms when in the beginning of 1987 the Dutch company Minetech International took advantage of the country's dire financial situation by proposing a deal which entailed the depositing of two

⁸ Udenhout represented the Militaire Gezag, see Chapter VI.

⁹ *De Ware Tijd*, 4-2-1984:1. For more on the redemocratization process and the Udenhout cabinet, see Chapter VI.

million tons of chemical waste in Suriname annually, for which it would pay Nf 140 million per year (*Het Parool*, 29-4-1987:3).

The Libyan connection

Even though Udenhout, like his predecessor, had been largely unsuccessful in his dealings with the IMF and the multinational corporations, it was hoped that the new Prime Minister – who also served as Foreign Minister – would continue to try and improve Suriname's international image. With this in mind Bouterse had chosen the moderate Udenhout to head the new government. Nevertheless, this new cabinet, in which the influence of PALU was considerably restricted (the power of the RVP had already been broken following the inauguration of the Alibux cabinet), experienced equally serious problems internationally. These difficulties stemmed from the strengthening Libyan-Surinamese relationship, which would result in Washington raising new objections and Paris viewing these links with great suspicion. At this point it must be noted that, as with Cuba, Bouterse seemed to have underestimated the impact of seeking closer ties with Libya on the Republic's relations with other powers in the region.

The origin of Libyan involvement in Suriname dates back to the late 1960s and early 1970s, when representatives of Suriname's Muslim community established contacts with the recently formed Qaddafi regime to obtain funds for the construction and maintenance of religious buildings (MacDonald 1988:115). Bouterse followed this course as he, under severe pressure to find alternative financial sources, asked Tripoli for support. The first face to face meeting occurred when Bouterse, on his return from a NAM conference in New Delhi in March 1983, stopped in Tripoli to meet the Libyan leader (Bouterse 1990:138). Although this meeting can be considered a courtesy visit and no specific agreements were signed, it led to a series of further contacts between the two states.

Whereas MacDonald (1988:129) suggests that it may have been Castro and Bishop who recommended Bouterse to approach Libya for financial support, it should not be ignored that Herrenberg was a personal friend of Qaddafi's. Thus it may well have been Herrenberg who initiated Bouterse's visit through his personal contacts in the region, dating back to his student days in Algeria in the 1960s, when he had also travelled to Libya (Brana-Shute 1987:5). This possibility is perfectly plausible since Herrenberg, first as an advisor to the NMR, then as Suriname's Ambassador to the Netherlands and later as Foreign Minister, enjoyed an influential position enabling him to determine the country's foreign political course to some degree.

It was also Herrenberg, accompanying Chief of staff Graanoogst, who

visited Tripoli in February 1985 (following a visit of Qaddafi's representatives to Paramaribo) to give Libyan-Surinamese relations a more concrete basis. During this visit the delegation expressed interest in signing a trade agreement allowing Suriname to export rice and wood products in exchange for oil. At the same time, Libyan Foreign Minister Jadeillah Azouz At Tali was invited to attend celebrations for the fifth anniversary of the 25 February coup (*Het Parool*, 2-2-1985:7). The significance of these bilateral relations burgeoned following an official visit by Bouterse and Udenhout to Tripoli in March 1985. The Surinamese delegation seized the opportunity to conclude an economic treaty and agreements on cultural, political, technical and information cooperation (*De Ware Tijd*, 8-3-1985:1).

As a direct result of these treaties, the Libyans were allowed to establish a People's Bureau in Paramaribo and provide Surinamese Muslims with religious education, either in local institutions or by sending students to North Africa (Brana-Shute 1990:196). More importantly, in May 1985 a Libyan delegation granted the Surinamese government an urgently needed loan of US\$ 100 million and came to an agreement whereby Libyan advisors began to train the NL, the secret police and the People's Militia (MacDonald 1988:115; *Suriname Libyan connection* 1986:7). To understand the reason for this evolving relationship, it is important to recall Brazil's hesitation to financially support the regime any further due to the dire economic problems besetting Suriname (*The Latin American Times* 7-9-1986:30). This uncertainty forced Bouterse to once again search for a strong external 'partner'.

Libya's involvement in Suriname's domestic affairs was considered disruptive to the regional balance and therefore eyed with great suspicion by the United States and France. The significance of the military assistance provided by Qaddafi in particular must be understood in the context of the civil war which broke out in Suriname in mid-1986. The guerrilla raids by the Jungle Commando seriously threatened the Paramaribo regime (see Chapter VI). In this light, Libyan willingness to train the NL in counter-insurgency tactics had, as Cuba had attempted, the purpose of protecting Bouterse from internal adversaries rather than building up a credible threat to neighbouring countries.

Nevertheless, Libya's wider objectives must not be overlooked. Ronald St. John (1987:45-93) has argued that Libyan foreign policy was primarily aimed at encouraging Arab nationalism and unity in order to oppose Zionism and secondly at treading a course of positive neutrality between the two superpowers, even though resenting the former colonialists' position. Thirdly, Libya focused on strengthening Tripoli's ties with the sub-Sahara region. To enhance these objectives, besides following conventional diplomatic means, Libya was willing to sponsor 'revolutionary violence' – interpreted as sponsoring terrorism by Western governments – which Qaddafi regarded

as an acceptable foreign policy tool. These external ambitions and strategies brought the North African state on to a direct collision course with several Western powers, notably the United States and France.

The Caribbean became one of the areas where the global US-Libyan conflict was played out. Therefore Suriname once again attracted the attention of the White House as it was feared that the country could serve as a basis for Qaddafi's attempts at destabilizing the region. Yet Paramaribo's relationship with Tripoli was considered less of a threat in the eyes of the State Department than its links with Cuba. Libyan ties with other Caribbean nations were, however, sharply condemned in an article in *Caribbean Insight* (6-9-1983:3), which, on the basis of allegations by the Bureau of Public Affairs (the information office of the State Department), criticized the financial assistance it believed was given by Qaddafi to several guerrilla organizations, including the Progressive Labour Party (PLP) in St. Lucia, the Dominica Liberation Alliance (DLA), and the Antigua Caribbean Liberation Movement (ACLM). Yet Suriname's relations with Libya, following Bouterse's visit to Tripoli in March 1983, were not mentioned in this article. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Elliot Abrams merely accused Suriname of sheltering 'dangerous Libyan elements' (Brana-Shute 1990:196).

This restrained American stance can be explained by the fact that most foreign policy strategists in Washington began to realize that Bouterse, despite his rhetoric about the 'Revolution', was not a Marxist dictator. Instead, the resignation by the Alibux cabinet and the anticipated return to democracy helped to improve US-Surinamese relations (*Pragmatism Paramaribo* 1985:5). The circa two hundred Libyan officials stationed in Suriname were matched by an increase in American personnel at Washington's mission in Paramaribo. Whereas a Lieutenant Colonel of the American armed forces was posted to the Surinamese capital to establish links with the NL and deal with matters such as 'logistical improvements and general matters of professionalization' (Brana-Shute 1990:196), another career diplomat was appointed as Ambassador to Paramaribo with the task of enhancing contacts with the Udenhout government. A meeting on the possibility of resuming aid even took place in the White House, as a result of which Congress authorized US\$ 50,000 in International Military Education and Training funds for the Republic by mid-1985 (*Pragmatism Paramaribo* 1985:5) and allowed Surinamese air traffic control and narcotics interdiction officers to receive training in the United States in 1986 (Brana-Shute 1990:198).

A further improvement in American-Surinamese relations occurred in July 1986 when the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) arrested fourteen mercenaries in New Orleans who had been hired to overthrow Bouterse (*De Ware Tijd*, 29-7-1986:1). While pretending to be on a business trip, the mercenaries had planned to take the military leadership hostage during a

meeting in Paramaribo about possible investments in the Republic (*De Ware Tijd*, 30-7-1986:1). Eventually, the group was brought to court and convicted of attempting to topple the Surinamese government. Even though, in Brana-Shute's words, these 'ne'er do well mercenaries, survivalists, and Ku Klux Klaners' (Brana-Shute 1990:197-8) carried American passports, they did not receive funding or any other form of assistance from the White House (as might have been speculated) but rather seemed to be linked to the Ansus Foundation in Amsterdam (organized by Surinamese in exile) (*Trouw*, 30-07-1986:1).

Despite warming bilateral links Libya remained a major thorn in US-Surinamese relations (Brana-Shute 1990:196) as global developments were reflected in regional issues. This was precisely the case as, besides opposing world communism, President Reagan had also 'pledged to elevate the fight against terrorism' (Schulzinger 1990:337). According to a report by the State Department published in January 1986, Libya was regarded as a sponsor of international terrorism, supporting groups such as Abu Nidal (Tessler 1988:99) and being held responsible for the hijacking of the Italian cruise liner the 'Achille Lauro' in October 1985 (Beres 1987:104-5). These highly publicized accusations of supporting terrorism, combined with the confrontation of US-Libyan war planes over the Gulf of Sidra early in 1985, led to growing tensions between Washington and Tripoli, which finally resulted in an American air strike against Libya in April 1986 (Smith 1994:298). The consequences of this escalation were immediately felt in the distant Caribbean.

It comes as no surprise that, despite the earlier authorization by Congress for funds to be used for educating and training the NL, in the summer of 1985 a spokesperson for the State Department indicated that it was unlikely that the money would actually be forthcoming. With regard to a resumption of American aid to Suriname the spokesperson was also 'sceptical', considering the status of current relations (*Pragmatism Paramaribo* 1985:5). Instead, by March 1986 the President established a special task group, called 'Committee 208' (after the room number in the White House where the meetings took place), to discuss the situation in developing countries which were at risk of becoming bases for 'communist' and 'terrorist' activities. Among the issues raised at these discussions Libya's connection with Suriname was also mentioned (*Trouw*, 11-3-1986:7). The Republic thus continued to be perceived with suspicion by Washington.

The sometimes tense French-Surinamese relationship must be understood in a similarly broad international context since Paris also strongly objected to the Libyan presence in the Republic. French and Libyan interests clashed violently throughout the 1980s, notably in Chad, where Qaddafi backed the local rebels of the *Gouvernement d'Union Nationale de Transition* (GUNT, Transitional Government of National Unity) in a civil war against the Habre

government supported by France. In 1983-1984, during operation 'Manta', and in 1986-1987, during operation 'Epervier', French troops halted advances by Libyan-GUNT coalition forces in North Chad (Rouvez 1994:155-62). Libyan-sponsored coup attempts elsewhere in 'former' French West Africa, such as in Mauritania in 1984 and in Togo in 1986 (*Europa year book* 1988, II:1807, 2601), along with Qaddafi's repeated warnings that he would retaliate against the interests of France due to its assistance to Chad (Aldrich and Connell 1989:13), contributed to strained links between Paris and Tripoli. Furthermore, considering Libya's support for radical independence groups in Guadeloupe and New Caledonia – as illustrated by organizing a 'Conference of the Last French Colonies' in Tripoli in 1986 (Connell and Robert 1989:162) – compounded by the location of European Space Agency (ESA) rocket launch facilities at Kourou in French Guiana, it is not surprising that 'any Libyan involvement in Suriname, no matter how small, certainly received French attention' (MacDonald 1988:114).

In fact, French-Surinamese relations had already deteriorated following the coup of February 1980, partly as a consequence of Paramaribo's wish to encourage French Guiana's decolonization. This situation was further aggravated by the December Murders, when Paris demonstrated its disapproval not only through a protest letter issued by the European Community, but also by the French Foreign Affairs Ministry (Quai d'Orsay) expressing its concerns about recent developments in the Republic in a separate statement (*Het Parool*, 15-12-1982:9). The following years were marked by more bilateral tensions because of Bouterse's occasional accusations that France supported countercoups in Suriname. In December 1983 (*Trouw*, 2-12-1983:7) and again in March 1984 (*NRC Handelsblad*, 2-3-1984:1), the authorities in Paramaribo charged their counterparts in Cayenne with having provided assistance to mercenaries operating out of the safe environment of French Guiana. With Libyan-Surinamese ties strengthening after 1985, bilateral relations with Paris deteriorated still further.

The final straw came in the summer of 1986, when the Jungle Commando's increased activities put the regime under enormous pressure. As will be discussed in Chapter VI, large parts of East Suriname now fell under the control of the SNLA, causing disruption of the all-important bauxite-mining activities (Brana-Shute 1987:7, 26). The guerrillas then also expanded their field of operation into the centre of the country, where they weakened the military's authority (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1990a:185). Unable to defeat the Jungle Commando's leader Brunswijk, the regime, once more, began to accuse The Hague and Paris of sponsoring the guerrillas. In November 1986 Suriname's consul in Cayenne complained that 'Dutch citizens pretending to be tourists abuse the free travel regulations of the European Community by entering French Guiana with the intention of carrying out hostile actions against the

Surinamese state' (*Trouw*, 29-11-1986:5). More important was the attempt by Paramaribo in December 1986 to have France condemned by the UN Security Council 'in connection with an imminent invasion of Suriname being prepared in French Guiana by French mercenaries' (*Trouw*, 11-12-1986:1). Rejecting this diplomatic move, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared the following on 10 December 1986:

it is with surprise that the French authorities have read the statement by the Supreme Political Council of Suriname regarding the possibility of a French military invasion of that country. They remind with the utmost clarity that, within the framework of good neighbourly relations, they will maintain an attitude of strict neutrality and non-interference in the domestic affairs of Suriname. (*Le Monde*, 11-12-1986:8.)

Despite such assurances, Paramaribo continued to regard the French neutrality declaration with great suspicion (Bouterse 1990:209-10), specifically in view of the large numbers of Surinamese refugees in French Guiana (who were often perceived as supporters of the Jungle Commando) and the frequent and unhindered crossing of the Marowijne by SNLA forces.

The seriousness of this diplomatic conflict became apparent when on several occasions Surinamese and French armed forces confronted each other at the border. For instance, on 17 November 1986 the SNLA began to fire on the Surinamese town of Albina from French territory while the NL sent a naval vessel to end the attack. Following the arrival of a French patrol boat, ordering the guerrilla movement to halt its operations, the situation was brought under control before the Surinamese could engage the SNLA (*De Ware Tijd*, 17-11-1986:1). Several months later, in February 1987, a Surinamese patrol boat did actually fire at a small French naval vessel on the Marowijne near the French town of St. Laurent (*Het Parool*, 10-02-1987:3). Although no one was injured this incident did highlight the deep suspicion harboured in Paramaribo that their French counterparts were assisting the Jungle Commando.

Evidence that these Surinamese accusations were not without foundation can be found in Brana-Shute's evaluation (1987:27) of bilateral relations.

France allowed French Guiana to serve as a staging ground for an aborted invasion force of mercenaries in 1983 and 1984. It is clear that they allow Brunswijk and his rebels to enter French Guiana at will and allow the passage of journalists, messengers, and stores to pass over their border and into Brunswijk-held territory. Their help to Brunswijk is justified by French propagandizing the 'Libyan-scare'.

Furthermore, French troops on the Marowijne were strengthened by reinforcements from Martinique and Guadeloupe (Brana-Shute 1987:26), allegedly to deter a Libyan-inspired terrorist attack on Kourou (*De Ware Tijd*,

19-12-1986:1). Paramaribo had little choice but to use diplomatic channels to fight the Jungle Commando in French Guiana. Eventually, with the Republic's redemocratization, the hostile French-Surinamese relationship also began to show signs of reconciliation.

With the military takeover in February 1980 the Republic's foreign policy gradually began to shift its focus from close links with the Netherlands towards an approach which emphasized the importance of building up relations with the Caribbean and Latin America. Even though this reorientation of Suriname's external relations must be judged as a step in the right direction – the young Republic's integration into its geopolitical environment – this new policy faced severe difficulties. Primarily due to Paramaribo citing cordial relations with Cuba as the corner stone of its regional integration policy Suriname was unable to join CARICOM or be considered for the CBI. Furthermore, Bouterse's efforts to encourage relations with Havana resulted, largely unwittingly, in Paramaribo's unintended 'participation' in the Cold War, which, in turn, caused severe tensions in bilateral relations with the United States. A degree of stability in the Republic's regional policy was only achieved when Brazil became involved in Suriname's domestic affairs.

Rebuffed by the West, Bouterse's attempts to strengthen ties with Libya in order to gain access to urgently needed funds and train the NL against the SNLA's guerrilla warfare, destabilized the Guyana region even more. The United States and France viewed Libyan activities in the Caribbean with great suspicion and Suriname was once more confronted by strong external pressures not to ally itself too closely to Tripoli. Finally, its dealings with the IMF and the locally operating multinational corporations were also marked by an uneasy relationship since the regime was, in the first case, unable to find any common ground on which to reach an agreement, and, in the second, failed to challenge decisions made by the management of the multinational corporations affecting the economic foundation of the country. It can therefore be stated that Paramaribo experienced great difficulties in charting a stable foreign policy course.

CHAPTER V

The quest for international solidarity

We are not waging an isolated war. Ours is no different from the one waged by other people in Asia, Africa and Latin America. We must do everything possible to connect ourselves with this international battle. Our foreign policy is focused together with other developing countries on fighting for a new international order both on the level of liberation movements and on the level of governments. (Bouterse 1990:117.)

While attempting to bolster Suriname's integration into the region and gaining Cuban and Libyan support, the Bouterse regime continuously emphasized its wish to improve political and socio-economic relations with other developing countries. Participation in international organizations aiming specifically at problems experienced by developing nations was thus deemed to be of the utmost importance. However, up until the end of 1982 this campaign produced only modest results due to the dominant political and commercial position the Netherlands continued to occupy. This situation only changed in the wake of the December Murders and the termination of Dutch aid; establishing relations with other developing states would then become a compelling necessity for Suriname. Considerable socio-economic hardship significantly furthered the destabilization of the Republic's political structure. On top of this, following the dramatic events of late 1982, regional integration largely failed as Caribbean and Latin American countries responded with reservation to Suriname's requests for support.

As a consequence, the Republic's foreign policy focused primarily on seeking international solidarity with other Third World nations in a bid to obtain alternative aid sources and diplomatic backing in its stand-off with The Hague. Despite strong efforts, the possibilities open to Paramaribo's succeeding administrations remained limited; the military's responsibility for human rights abuses and involvement in the global drug trade had greatly damaged Suriname's international standing. Furthermore, no developing country or Third World organization was willing or able to compensate Paramaribo for the loss of Dutch aid. Thus it must be concluded that Suriname's foreign policy course in the mid-1980s fell short of its goals. Yet the tendency towards interaction with nations and organizations throughout

the world was a positive development, the long-term effects of which should not be underestimated.

A Surinamese perspective on world politics

Parallel to the new initiative aimed at integrating Suriname into the region, the regime attempted to strengthen the Republic's relations with other developing countries outside the Western Hemisphere. The *Foreign service training programme for junior diplomats from Suriname* (1981) provides a valuable indication of Paramaribo's objectives in this field. According to its introduction, 'the foreign policy of the Republic of Suriname should be directed towards the promotion of the political and economic welfare of the country and safeguard the external security within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations' (*Foreign service training* 1981:2). In other words, the fundamental goals of Suriname's foreign policy were, firstly, to protect the Republic's existence as a sovereign entity and, secondly, to provide the nation with opportunities in the international system which would help domestic socio-economic development. While the reference to the UN Charter was intended to accomplish the first aim on a political level, the second goal was to be attained through the establishment of economic relations with trading partners in the region as well as elsewhere in the world.

To achieve the latter objective, emphasis was placed on economic cooperation in international organizations furthering the interests of the Third World since other developing countries often faced similar problems. This desire to strengthen South-South relations was expressed as early as February 1981 in a speech delivered by Foreign Minister Naarendorp at a NAM conference:

A new international economic order is unthinkable without fundamental changes in our own developing world. The efforts towards the restructuring of the international economic order have in the past been concentrated almost exclusively on the North-South relationship. In trying to force a change in the political will of the rich countries to bring about a more equitable order, we seriously omitted to reassess the economic relationship between ourselves. Though we have the potential of becoming a major economic force, no serious and systematic efforts were made in order to establish a continuing South-South dialogue. (*Foreign service training* 1981:40-1.)

In the context of discussing Suriname's foreign policy initiatives aimed at promoting solidarity within the Developing World it is important to recognize that the general outlook on the international economic system held by the Revolutionary Front government since the end of 1981 was heavily influenced

by the neo-Marxist dependency theory (Bouterse 1990:87). This position claimed that:

In this world system, i.e. imperialist system, the founders have always played the role of winners. The wealth of the colonies was used to establish a new international division of labour, converting the conquered lands into a resource for a dynamic and expanding industrial capitalism. There is no doubt that the colonies have contributed significantly to the mounting of the Industrial Revolution in Europe. In the imperialist system we cannot speak of an egalitarian 'family of nations'; it is essentially a wealth poverty system. The power of the imperialist system as a whole is founded on the necessary inequality of the component parts. (*Foreign service training* 1981:101.)

The regime argued that the Republic 'was [and still is] not merely dependent on foreign enterprises, foreign capital and foreign labourers, but it was also dependent on foreign overseas markets' (*Foreign service training* 1981:104). As Jan Lachmi Sing pointed out in the training programme, the country's exports consisted primarily of either raw materials (largely bauxite), the prices of which on the world market had begun to fall since the late 1970s, or agricultural products (such as rice), whose exports had been negatively affected by a 13 to 15% tariff in addition to import levies and non-tariff barriers imposed by the European Community and the United States. Consequently, the Republic's economic structures continued to be determined by market trends in the industrialized world in the same way as they had been during the colonial period. Furthermore, given the high freight costs on Surinamese exports to distant buyers in Europe and North America, the regime viewed the international economic system as one continuously disadvantaging the country (*Foreign service training* 1981:77-8). Local industries were prevented from operating more cost-effectively due to the limited domestic market.

To create a New International Economic Order which would specifically take into account the concerns of developing countries, Paramaribo embraced the idea of cooperating with other developing states. The regime outlined the need for an active participation in organizations designed to further the collective interests of the developing world such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP), G-77 and the NAM. Before analysing Paramaribo's particular foreign policy course towards these organizations, their general objectives and how they related to those of Suriname must be examined.

UNDP's principal purpose has been to support developing countries in working towards self-reliance while assisting them in the transfer, adoption and mobilization of skills and technology in areas such as agriculture,

industry, education, transport, housing and public administration (*Foreign service training* 1981:113-4). This goal naturally found wide acceptance in Paramaribo

since the supreme objective of the Surinamese Government [was also] to build self-reliance; to carry out projects at our own initiative; to use our own resources; to establish bi-lateral and multi-lateral relations, based on mutual profit, in order to develop our country, it is advisable to examine all the possibilities of UNDP for technical assistance, especially in view of our lack of expertise in several fields (*Foreign service training* 1981:125).

To accomplish this, the regime's aim was to have its own UNDP field office in Paramaribo rather than communicating through a Surinamese liaison officer accredited to the field office in Port of Spain. This wish for its own office is understandable in view of the numerous educational and training projects organized by UNDP since Suriname's membership in 1972 (as shown in Table 12), including an instruction course for diplomats in 1979-1980. However, the financing of such an office proved a great hurdle since establishment and maintenance costs were deemed rather high (*Foreign service training* 1981:123).

Similarly, Suriname's participation in UNCTAD was considered vital in boosting the country's economic performance. The reason for Paramaribo's interest in UNCTAD is rather obvious since the general objective of this organization can be summarized as 'to promote international trade with the view to accelerating development, initiate multilateral trade agreements and harmonize the trade and development policies of governments and regional economic groups' (Hadjor 1993:289). As Third World countries cited this objective as a main argument for changes in the current international economic system, it was only to be expected that UNCTAD resolutions and policies often called for a New International Economic Order. This blended in perfectly with Paramaribo's perception that:

Developing countries must remain a critical concern of the United Nations system and of UNCTAD in particular. Ways need to be found that will enable developing countries to discuss amongst themselves and pursue cooperative arrangements within the framework of UNCTAD and other parts of the United Nations System (*Foreign service training* 1981:92).

In other words, Suriname viewed UNCTAD as a useful foreign policy tool since it allowed developing countries to form a block. In this way, they could make a collective attempt at influencing the set-up of the international economic system in their favour.

Paramaribo expressed a similar position towards organizations outside

Table 12. UNDP projects in Suriname, 1972-1982

| Project | Date | Agency |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Technical and vocational training | 1972 | ILO |
| Integration data system | 1972 | UN |
| Telecommunication training | 1972-1973 | ITU |
| Water supplies and sewerage | 1972-1975 | WHO |
| Public service improvements | 1972-1977 | UN |
| Forestry development | 1972-1982 | FAO |
| Social planning | 1973 | UNCTAD |
| Economic relations | 1973 | UN |
| Study of hydroelectric development | 1973-1979 | IBRD |
| Orientation course | 1977 | UNDP |
| Public administration improvement | 1977-1981 | UNCTAD |
| Strengthening of veterinary services | 1977-1981 | WHO |
| Vocational training scheme | 1977-1982 | ILO |
| Gold mining advisor | 1978 | UNDP |
| Economic planner | 1978-1980 | UNDP |
| Telecommunication advisor | 1978-1980 | ITU |
| Assistance to Ministry of Education | 1978-1981 | UNESCO |
| Workers' education | 1978-1982 | ILO |
| Advanced training in meteorology | 1979 | WMO |
| National council for women | 1979 | UN |
| Training in diplomacy | 1979-1980 | UNCTAD/UNITAR |
| Reorganization of postal service | 1979-1981 | UPU |
| Assistance in housing | 1981 | HABITAT |
| Transport policy and planning | 1981 | UNCTAD |

Source: *Foreign service training* 1981:123-4

the UN framework, such as the ACP – a forum which allowed African, Caribbean and Pacific nations to discuss trade and economic cooperation with the EC – and G-77. Unlike the former Arron government, which had been accused of ignoring the ACP's potential to form a collective pressure group and of failing to attend G-77 meetings, the Bouterse regime stressed the importance of both organizations in promoting reform and change in the current international economic system (*Foreign service training* 1981:99, 134). The 1979 Lomé II Treaty of the ACP was perceived in a particularly positive light due to Western Europe increasing its imports of Surinamese sugar and rum, and implementing measures to counter the high tariffs on Paramaribo's rice exports; in addition it was agreed to provide preferential trade terms for the country's banana shipments and to introduce financial aid directed at stimulating commercial and industrial development in the Republic (*Foreign service training* 1981:96-7). More significantly, representatives of the Surinamese government held several leading positions within the ACP, which allowed the Bouterse regime to successfully counter Dutch pressure on the European Community to reduce aid to Suriname (Schalkwijk 1994:66-7). In addition, the point was raised that 'for Suriname the ACP is a very important source to establish diplomatic relations with the third world' (*Foreign service training* 1981:98). Considering the limited number of diplomatic missions maintained by Paramaribo around the globe, the importance of this last argument could not be ignored.

A similar priority status was given to the G-77. Although the regime was aware that this organization had initially been set up by developing countries as merely a loose association to present their views at UNCTAD, the G-77 nevertheless gained importance for Suriname due to its capacity to lobby worldwide on behalf of the Third World. The Bouterse government emphasized the G-77's ability to represent the interests of developing nations at international conferences of, for instance, the IMF and the World Bank (*Foreign service training* 1981:129). Moreover, as Middellijn outlined in the training programme

within the Group of 77 the South-South dialogue has opened new perspectives. Many models of development have been tried out in many 'brother-countries' and it will be up to our diplomatic workers to establish the contacts on the basis of the needs and aspirations of Suriname. (*Foreign service training* 1981:135.)

Finally, the NAM, which Suriname had joined in 1979, was viewed with particular interest. Whereas the aforementioned organizations gave high priority to achieving economic cooperation among developing nations, the NAM, in contrast, displayed distinct political characteristics. Officially founded by

developing nations in 1961,¹ with the aim of protecting the newly gained sovereignty against attempts by the superpowers to draw them into the East-West conflict (Gunson and Chamberlain 1989:203), the NAM had emerged as an influential organization, representing the position of the non-aligned developing countries with regard to global events and trends. Not surprisingly, realizing the NAM's potential, Suriname made use of this organization and included it as an important foreign policy tool for applying pressure on the Netherlands.

The priority Suriname gave to the NAM was clearly reflected in Naarendorp's address at the organization's conference in New Delhi in February 1981. According to the Foreign Minister:

Suriname had joined the Movement because of:

- a. the firm belief in the fundamental principles, namely, respect for national independence, territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states;
- b. its record of accomplishment. The N.A.M. had played an important role in the process of decolonization and in the fostering of better international relations, especially among the developing countries;
- c. the moral and political influence attained by the N.A.M. in a world that had previously been dominated by the two Superpowers and their allies, indeed made this Movement one of the very few instruments for its members to act as a balancing force against the continuing superpower rivalry;
- d. through its sheer presence the N.A.M. had become an independent Non-bloc force in World-affairs, which notwithstanding its limitations, had prevented the Superpowers to go unchecked in their strive for World hegemony. (*Foreign service training* 1981:220.)

Another reason for Suriname to join this association is to be found in the circumstances that 'for a number of small states the Non-Aligned Movement [...] is one of the few international organs where they feel they can participate as equal partners'. Furthermore, it was pointed out that the NAM allowed 'countries that had border disputes and other disagreements, [to] settle them by bilateral negotiations' (*Foreign service training* 1981:219, 224). As a direct result of Suriname's enthusiasm for participating in the NAM, other member states had elected the Republic's UN Ambassador as rapporteur at the NAM Havana Conference in 1979 (*Foreign service training* 1981:224), an important

¹ Despite popular belief that the Non-Aligned Movement was the direct result of the 1955 Bandung Conference, this gathering of almost all independent African and Asian countries was not the origin of the organization, which was founded later. However, the importance of the Bandung Conference should not be overlooked in bringing together, for the first time, most former colonies in order to express their sovereignty, while explicitly excluding direct representation from any First World power, see Willetts 1978:3.

occasion considering that Surinamese diplomats were seldom, if at all, appointed to influential positions within international organizations.²

In sharp contrast to this policy aimed at intensifying relations with other developing nations, Paramaribo was highly critical of the prospect of strengthening links with the First World. Interaction with industrialized countries was to take place only in the economic realm, in order to bring about agricultural and industrial self-reliance and to complement political sovereignty with economic independence. To achieve this, the regime stressed the importance of financing the country's socio-economic development with the help of revenues gained from Suralco and Billiton. It also instructed its diplomats stationed at missions in the First World to concentrate on finding new export markets, to promote the Republic as a tourist destination and to attract foreign investments for industrial development – all of this in addition to the traditional task of fostering bilateral relations (*Foreign service training* 1981:162, 170).

Although recognizing the necessity of bolstering Suriname's socio-economic progress through commercial interactions with industrialized nations, the Republic's rejection of its dependence on an 'imperialist' economic system was clearly visible throughout the entire training programme.

At independence we achieved political control but all important industries remain in foreign hands. This is a situation which no nation can be expected to enjoy [...] If we really want to stand on our own feet i.e. to be self-reliant, there can be no final peace with an alien imperialism. After the military coup of February 1980 the military leaders have decided that the only way in which national control of the economy can be achieved is through the economic institutions of socialism (*Foreign service training* 1981:109).

A distinct anti-imperialist foreign policy course was also viewed as desirable in the political and cultural realm. In particular Dutch and American influence on Surinamese values were sharply criticized.

In the imperialist system the (neo-)colonies are subjected to political and cultural domination. In most cases they copy the political system of the mother-country [...] This political system functions in such a manner that it does not harm the economic interest of the western imperialist powers or in other words, the political situation is not unfavourable for those (intern and extern) who have the best positions in the economy. With regard to the cultural domination, the values, rules and behavioural patterns (the western way of life) of the industrialized countries are transformed to the third world countries through a variety of mechanisms; these mechanisms

² Bouterse stressed the importance of the ACP and NAM, and as such, representatives of the Bouterse regime were elected to these organizations. Arron did place less significance on these organizations and no or seldom did a Surinamese representative get elected to the governing council of these organizations; a notable exception was the the 1979 Havane NAM conference.

are education, films, television, newspapers and magazines (*Foreign service training* 1981:102).

The essence of Surinamese foreign policy in its interaction with the North was thus concentrated on gaining maximum economic benefit while limiting external political and cultural influence on the internal structure of the Republic.

Faced with international isolation

Initially, despite its strong anti-imperialist rhetoric, the Bouterse regime did not make any well-directed attempts at implementing a more aggressive foreign policy towards the industrialized world.³ In fact, considering the heavy reliance on Dutch aid, on the northern export markets and on the tax revenues and royalty payments received from Suralco and Billiton, there was little successive cabinets could do to achieve economic and financial self-reliance in the short term. Even though in the immediate post-coup period Suriname's foreign policy was primarily focused on enhancing regional integration so as to reduce dependence on the industrialized countries, the intensification of socio-economic relations with the Caribbean and Latin America failed to achieve this aim.

Only with the radicalization of the Revolution towards the end of 1981 did an alternative approach emerge, directed at developing states outside the Western Hemisphere in order to gain broader political and socio-economic support. Nevertheless, Suriname's interactions with African, Asian and Oceanic nations remained infrequent and of no consequence – with the exception of the contentious Pyongyang visit in October 1982 by Major Horb and Minister of Defence and Police Graanoogst to propose the opening of diplomatic relations with North Korea in the hope of procuring military hardware (*NRC Handelsblad*, 18-10-1982:4).

Inevitably, there was an abrupt change in this situation following the December Murders, as The Hague and Washington decided to suspend their aid while many other nations and international organizations condemned the executions. Notably the European Community expressed its disapproval as it authorized Dutch Ambassador Hoekman to hand over a letter of protest in which it was stated that the organization was 'extremely shocked by the execution of a number of prominent people, including journalists, lawyers and union leaders, without any form of legal process'. The letter went on to state that the members of the European Community wished to 'appeal to those

³ Except towards the Netherlands, see Chapter III.

currently in power in Suriname to respect human rights and to re-establish a real democracy as soon as possible' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 15-12-1982:5).

A strong protest was also expressed by chairman of the International Media Association Peter Gulline, who called upon Bouterse to respect the UN Universal Declaration of 1948 granting freedom of the press (*NRC Handelsblad*, 14-12-1982:2). The human rights organization Amnesty International (AI) requested UN General Secretary Javier Pérez de Cuéllar to form an independent commission to investigate the recent executions (*NRC Handelsblad*, 15-12-1982:5). A few days later chairman of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) Lane Kirkland harshly denounced the December Murders as the worst butchering of workers (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 25-12-1982:1).

Although the European Community did not suspend its aid package amounting to Nf 50 million for 1980-1985, Suriname began to lose significant goodwill among many industrialized countries. Within two weeks of the December Murders, the Republic was perceived as a 'pariah' state among many First World nations, particularly by the Netherlands, the United States and Belgium.⁴

This threatening development was exacerbated when critical voices could also be heard in the Caribbean and Latin America. Leader of the Congress of Caribbean Unions Joseph Burns Bonadie asked the International Association of Free Unions in Brussels to investigate the operating conditions faced by Surinamese unions since the recent stand-off with the government. The execution of union leader Daal in particular raised concern among delegates from Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, who met at a conference in Bridgetown on Barbados shortly after the December Murders (*de Volkskrant*, 20-12-1982:3). Furthermore, by March 1983, Surinamese unions in exile in the Netherlands called upon the Caribbean Maritime Association Council (CMAC) to boycott ships transporting bauxite from the Republic and lobbied the Central Latinoamericano de Trabajadores (CLAT, Confederation of Latin American Workers) to commit themselves to unspecified industrial actions opposing the Paramaribo regime (*Trouw*, 25-3-1983:3).

Similar protests came from Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles. Even though Betico Croes, chairman of the Aruban Movimento Electoral di Pueblo (MEP, People's Electoral Movement), argued that the Dutch had to bear some responsibility for the political turmoil in Paramaribo – Suriname had been largely unprepared when granted independence – he sent telegrams to the SI, the OAS and the Latin American Parliamentary Association (Parlatino) to demand an official inquiry into the December Murders (*Weekkrant Suriname*,

⁴ Which terminated its Nf 35 million in development assistance and recalled its technical experts from Suriname by Christmas 1982, see *Trouw*, 23-12-1982:7.

1-1-1983:2). The Antillean government's reaction was even more outspoken as the Council of Ministers issued a statement strongly condemning the executions and categorically rejecting any form of restrictions on political freedom and human rights in Suriname (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 1-1-1983:5).

Indeed, even Cardenas, Cuba's Ambassador to Suriname, questioned Bouterse's decision to carry out the executions, arguing that by the end of 1982 the government had had several alternatives for dealing with political opponents other than shooting them. This rejection of the December Murders is clearly reflected in Cardenas' memoirs (1988:48):

Therefore the killing in cold blood of prisoners and the execution of political opponents cannot be justified and these events had nothing to do with the behaviour of revolutionaries. At the time of these events the right was on the defensive and their actions had failed. Therefore these extreme measures were unnecessary and I believe they were dictated by an emotional and irrational reaction.

Cardenas' critical position was echoed in an article published in the magazine *Africa* (139 1983:60):

the developments in Suriname have left the country without friends. The move by the Netherlands and the United States of America to terminate aid was followed by a move by Cuba to put some distance between itself and the Bouterse regime. The Cubans are reported to be more than slightly upset at the level of brutality which the army has used in suppressing opposition.

This growing international condemnation of the December Murders caught the Surinamese Foreign Affairs Department unprepared. For several weeks following the executions, the regime remained silent and merely issued a statement acknowledging that fifteen opponents had been shot while allegedly attempting to flee a military prison. One reason for this 'silence' was, it must be assumed, that the swift protests from the Netherlands, the United States, the European Community and several regional and international organizations, had come as a shock to the Paramaribo government.

The apparent inability to react to this international condemnation was not entirely surprising since, with the radicalization of the Revolution throughout 1982, the regime had begun to invest valuable time and resources in fostering the internal reform process. In contrast, foreign affairs – despite Naarendorp's attempt to broaden relations with other regional countries and the Third World – were pretty well neglected by the military leadership. The officers' tendency to concentrate on domestic developments intensified following growing popular unrest in late 1982. As a result, the government increasingly underestimated the interest shown by other countries and organizations

for Suriname. Valuable time had elapsed before Foreign Affairs was able to 'digest' the sudden international criticism of the executions and to define and implement a foreign policy aimed at damage control, to prevent the Republic from slipping further into isolation.

Even though the authorities would never openly admit that they had been surprised by the strong global reaction, another, and probably more important reason for Paramaribo's silence was that most civilian politicians in the regime had been unaware of the officers' decision to 'eliminate' the opposition in December 1982. This was particularly true in the case of the Prime Minister: despite his position as government leader and member of the Policy Centre, he had not been consulted or informed about the military's intentions (Cardenas 1988:50). Therefore most ministers, like Neyhorst, had been unable to prepare for the international and domestic backlash to the December Murders. It was only to be expected that within a day of the killings, the entire Neyhorst cabinet would offer its resignation as a sign of disapproval (Bouterse 1990:125).

In other words, while Suriname was facing its darkest hour, the administration not only had to accept the unilateral actions taken by the military on 8 December, but was also forced to defend the killings in a new foreign policy approach aimed at limiting the damage to Suriname's global standing. Taking into account this difficult position, it is obvious that the Neyhorst government would have needed some time, first to accept the murders and second to react to the international criticism, especially in view of the cabinet's interim status.

One interesting aspect in this apparent void between civilian and military government circles was the position taken by the Foreign Minister. In his memoirs, Cardenas testified on two occasions that Naarendorp, like Neyhorst, had not been informed by the officers of the executions and that in protest he also handed in his resignation (Cardenas 1988:47-50). However, this testimony conflicts with the findings of UN's Special Rapporteur Amos Wako (as claimed by Chin and Buddingh' 1987:58), who concluded that, besides Bouterse and Horb, Alibux and Naarendorp had also been present at the murders. Although it is unclear if Naarendorp was in fact informed about the proposed executions and whether or not he had opposed them (as in the case of Horb), it did become obvious that the Foreign Minister was overwhelmed by the international repercussions of the massacre. In fact, Naarendorp resigned as well and hence was heading the Foreign Affairs Department as an interim Minister at a time when it most needed strong leadership.

It was not until Christmas that the regime was capable of formulating a strategy directed at countering the Republic's drift towards international isolation. In an interview with the Brazilian newspaper *Estado do Sul* Bouterse confirmed that on 20 December a Surinamese delegation had left Paramaribo to visit two unspecified Latin American countries. He also confirmed that on

24 December a second mission had left the Republic for another unspecified regional country. Although Bouterse refused to identify the three nations, he indirectly acknowledged that one mission, headed by Herrenberg, was on its way to Bolivia. Moreover, he emphasized that Brazil and Venezuela were of particular interest to Suriname because both countries had the means of providing the Republic with financial and technical assistance (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 1-1-1983:5). The widely expected possibility that one delegation might visit Cuba was ruled out as Bouterse argued that 'that country is clever enough not to get involved in Surinamese affairs' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-12-1982:1). He pointed out that Suriname would intensify its efforts to lobby on a regional, and if necessary, also global level to gain support.

We have good relations with Cuba, but we have more friends in Latin America and in the rest of the world. We will approach ten, maybe fifteen countries for help, and we will only start thinking about alternatives if we do not secure enough funds there. (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-12-1982:1.)

The missions' primary objectives were thus to secure alternative funds (estimated by the government at around US\$ 30 million) to finance current development projects. But the missions were also intended to obviate the growing risk of international isolation. They gave the regime the opportunity to explain the executions and to elicit some regional solidarity in the face of strong Dutch and American pressure. Aware of the possibility that regional support might be insufficient, Bouterse was also prepared to investigate other avenues. He mentioned for example Argentina, which 'during the Falklands crisis had to sell grain to the Soviet Union because there were no other buyers' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-12-1982:1).

Bouterse's fear that Suriname might not receive the desired support from the region became a reality when following the delegations' return an evaluation of the responses was carried out. The Brazilian Foreign Minister, Guerreiro, had been one of the first to express his disapproval of the recent developments in Suriname. Although initially remaining silent in response to Suriname's request for help, in an interview with the Brazilian newspaper *Correio Braziliense*, Guerreiro warned that Suriname's internal problems might result in the Republic's unintentional involvement in the East-West conflict and have repercussions on Brazil's own domestic situation (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 8-1-1983:2). Similarly, concerns expressed by OAS General Secretary Alejandro Orfila to Heidweiler, Suriname's new Ambassador to the organization, were discouraging for Paramaribo as they illustrated that most Caribbean and Latin American nations viewed the developments in the Republic with great anxiety (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 22-1-1983:2).

Bouterse then started to rethink his position towards Havana. In fact,

the only mission which had been mildly successful was the one undertaken by PALU politician Krolis to Grenada and Cuba in February 1983, as both governments declared their solidarity with the Surinamese Revolution. However, on his return Krolis expressed his view that Suriname could not expect more than verbal support from Castro or Bishop (Cardenas 1988:55-6). Considering Grenada's small size and the fact that Cuba already provided technical and ideological support (despite the Cubans generally having a significantly lower standard of living than the Surinamese), it was unlikely for Bishop or Castro to furnish the Republic with the urgently needed financial aid. Krolis' pessimistic remarks, particularly with regard to Cuban aid, must primarily be understood in the domestic sphere of Surinamese politics as PALU attempted to limit the influence of the Cuban-friendly RVP within government. With this in mind, it must be questioned why the Bouterse regime actually decided to send a PALU politician to Cuba, knowing that this party saw the RVP (and thus Cuba) as a competitor in the exercise of governmental power. After all, a delegate not linked to PALU may have been more successful.

The regime was faced with another decisive setback when a tour of the region by the Foreign Minister proved largely unsuccessful. As Suriname's initiatives to gain regional backing had remained generally ineffective, Naarendorp decided to personally lobby neighbouring countries by starting direct negotiations with their respective governments. However, this strategy started off with a debacle. When the Surinamese media reported Naarendorp's plan to visit Venezuela, the Caracas government, according to the Venezuelan newspaper *El Nacional*, turned down the Foreign Minister's request to be received. As reflected in a statement by the governing Venezuelan party Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente (COPEI, Political Electoral Independent Organization Committee; also known as Christian Democratic Party), Bouterse was not only criticized for sending Surinamese students to Cuba, but also for allegedly allowing Russian and Cuban military advisors to train the NL, thus placing the Republic in danger of emerging as 'a new Cuba' (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 19-2-1983:1). COPEI also registered a sharp protest against the December Murders as 'journalists, lawyers and teachers have been killed and agriculture, the country's primary source of income, has been abandoned due to the persecution of farmers who were the first to protest against the bloodbath on 8 December'.⁵

The severity of the Venezuelan reaction is quite understandable since Caracas perceived any Cuban support, according to Payne (1984:120-1), as

⁵ *Weekkrant Suriname*, 19-2-1983:1. The claim of agriculture being the major source of revenue is obviously wrong and may be an indication of the lack of general knowledge in Caracas concerning Suriname.

'ideological and diplomatic competition' aimed at challenging its own position in the Caribbean. This is not to imply that Venezuela followed a foreign policy directed at pleasing the United States but rather that it was interested in promoting itself as an alternative regional power to Washington and Havana (Hellinger 1991:138-40). Forced to bypass Venezuela, Naarendorp's further travel plans included stops in Panama, Argentina and Brazil. Even though this provided the opportunity to address Brazilian concerns (as in Venezuela a shift in Surinamese relations towards Cuba was feared), an official accompanying the Foreign Minister succinctly summarized Naarendorp's failure to gain regional support as follows: 'so far, his mission has had no success' (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 28-2-1983:1).

This failure was highlighted rather painfully as around the same time the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights demanded an investigation into the December Murders (*Trouw*, 5-2-1983:7). Thus most regional governments continued to have strong reservations with regard to Suriname's request for support. Naarendorp's disappointing tour of the regional capitals may well have contributed to his decision to resign; his goal of integrating Suriname into the region had received a substantial blow.

Other reasons for the Foreign Minister's resignation may have had to do with the RVP's influence sharply declining as the country's external standing began to weaken. Within the new Alibux cabinet, dominated by rival PALU, Naarendorp's aim of strengthening relations with Cuba met with considerable objection (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:177). Together with his rejection of the December Murders and the knowledge that the Reagan administration had demanded the removal of all pro-Cuban 'elements' from the government before US-Surinamese relations could improve, Naarendorp most likely realized that his usefulness as Foreign Minister had come to an end. He then took the opportunity to influence the Republic's foreign affairs from outside the cabinet. This was made possible as Bouterse chose Naarendorp as his personal advisor on foreign policy and government representative at international conferences.

Before long Alibux, acting as the new Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, was similarly confronted with the danger of becoming internationally isolated. Following Naarendorp's fruitless search for Caribbean and Latin American support, the new government received at best limited backing from developing countries in its attempt to introduce the former Foreign Minister's strategy on a global level. This became apparent during a conference of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva in late February and early March 1983.

The initiative to accuse Suriname of human rights violations came, as discussed in Chapter III, from the Netherlands. In a memorandum the Bouterse regime was described as a 'reign of terror' while the Dutch delegation stated

that 'the developments of the past three years and in particular the events of the last two months, justify the attention of the commission' (*Trouw*, 11-2-1983:8). The Hague's representative, Peter Kooijmans, then went on to list all occurrences of human rights abuses in Suriname since the February coup. In its conclusion, the Dutch delegation argued that:

it has become increasingly clear that the events of 7 and 8 December were not isolated incidents. In contrast, it has become clear that Suriname is currently in the grasp of a reign of terror, directed against anyone who is suspected of being or becoming a threat to the military leadership (*Trouw*, 11-2-1983:8).

These accusations were supported by Sewrajsingh, the former Surinamese Ambassador to the United Nations, who after having fled to Amsterdam had joined the Liberation Council two weeks after the December Murders. Making good use of his well-established contacts with many other UN diplomats, Sewrajsingh successfully lobbied developing countries in Africa and Asia on behalf of the Surinamese opposition movement to vote in favour of the Dutch motion condemning the Bouterse regime (*Het Parool*, 17-2-1983:9).

In sharp contrast, the Surinamese representative at the conference, Alvares, the First Secretary of the Republic's embassy in The Hague, had the difficult task of defending the executions. Alvares explained: 'My task is to prevent Suriname from being condemned here. We must prevent Suriname from becoming isolated. Because then the revolution will be even worse off' (*Trouw*, 18-2-1983:7). Although counting on support from Suriname's closest allies Cuba, Nicaragua, Algeria and Libya, and in the hope of some Latin American states backing the Republic, Alvares was aware of his difficult position: 'I have been saddled with an almost hopeless task' (*Trouw*, 18-2-1983:7). Indeed, thus far the regime had had little, if any, success in defending itself against the Dutch accusations.

In an attempt at damage control, Alibux decided to send the country's best-known and most experienced diplomat, Heidweiler, to Geneva. Heidweiler's main task was to convince the delegates that, according to the government's official position, the fifteen victims had been 'killed in an unfortunate accident as a result of their attempt to escape custody' (see Appendix VI for full statement; United Nations 1982) and not, as claimed by the Netherlands, 'executed'. Despite his efforts, Heidweiler failed to prevent the Republic from being ostracized at the conference. This became particularly difficult to avoid after the other delegations voted in favour of accepting the report by the Nederlands Juristencomité (Dutch Jurist Committee) which not only confirmed the executions but also allegations that the victims had been tortured before being shot (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 5-3-1983:2).

A similar verdict was expressed in another report, published by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), which had visited Suriname between 25 February and 4 March 1983 following an invitation by Naarendorp in an attempt to improve the country's image (*Trouw*, 7-3-1983:5). The ICJ concluded that 'In most aspects the human rights situation seems to have dramatically worsened since the ICJ's previous mission in February 1981' (*Trouw*, 22-3-1983:3). Finally, and most damaging, was the fact that Suriname was mentioned in the Wako Report, the official UN record detailing human rights violations. This report substantiated accusations of the military torturing and killing its opponents (United Nations 1982:37).

However, international criticism of Bouterse's increasingly authoritarian style, would not diminish once the Wako Report confirmed Dutch claims. Pressure on the regime remained strong, as was illustrated in March 1983, when during its annual conference in Lisbon, the Socialist International called upon the Alibux cabinet to respect human rights, to renounce the use of force and to introduce policies leading to the redemocratization of Suriname. Indeed, these demands found the support of even the most radical socialist parties in the Caribbean and Latin America. For example, Rupert Roopnarain, a delegate of the Guyanese Workers' Party Alliance, harshly accused Paramaribo of hiding behind 'revolutionary' slogans while torturing and shooting its opponents (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 16-3-1983:1). Even more damaging were the concerns expressed by representatives of the European Christian Democratic parties. At their Brussels conference in April 1983, the delegates voted in favour of a motion demanding the European Community to terminate all aid to Suriname (*NRC Handelsblad*, 9-4-1983:1).

Paramaribo's diplomatic counteroffensive

With continuing external pressure, Paramaribo had little choice but to follow a strategy aimed at enhancing the Republic's global reputation while strengthening the country's links with Third World nations. In other words, knowing the strong opinions held in The Hague and Washington, and aware of the weak response received from within the region, the government began to value its interaction with other developing nations. Nonetheless, as noted earlier, despite stressing the importance of Surinamese participation in international organizations such as UNDP, UNCTAD, the ACP and the G-77 to achieve economic cooperation, in the political field the government had thus far barely progressed at all in strengthening South-South relations.

Consequently, it can be argued that the Surinamese leadership began to realize the political potential of improving relations with the South only following the breakdown in its relations with industrialized countries. This

foreign policy shift mainly occurred due to the implications of the December Murders and was not the result of a well-planned strategy. The first public revelation of this 'new' strategy did not come until Bouterse's New Year's address of 1983. In his speech the military strongman indicated that in future the Republic would strengthen its relations with the NAM, in a bid to avoid being regarded as part of either the Eastern or the Western bloc (*Trouw*, 3-1-1983:1). This was a clear attempt to counter Dutch, American and also regional fears that Suriname would increasingly succumb to Cuban influence.

Two weeks later Naarendorp swiftly implemented this new policy course while attending a NAM Ministerial Meeting in the Nicaraguan capital of Managua, where he proposed two motions to be discussed later at the general NAM conference in New Delhi (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 15-1-1983:3). The Managua meeting, in preparation of the March conference in India, accepted both motions, asking, firstly, for solidarity from other NAM members in support of Suriname's Revolution and, secondly, for condemnation of the Dutch decision to terminate the Aid Treaty (*Trouw*, 14-1-1983:1).

This redirection of Paramaribo's foreign policy became increasingly obvious during the following months. The Surinamese leadership accepted the necessity of countering strong international criticism of the December Murders. In a rather humorous comment Bouterse attempted to lead Suriname out of the East-West conflict, in which it had 'accidentally' become involved. According to Bouterse, in response to accusations of shifting Suriname's alliances in the context of the Cold War from 'left' to 'right' and vice versa:

I really do not want to speak in terms of left and right – these are Western designations. It does catch on, of course, left, right, because soldiers march in both directions, left and right, but also forwards. If I visit Grenada they say: he is going left. When I receive an invitation from the President of Venezuela they say: he is leaning to the right. If I visit Cuba: he is turning left again. When I receive an invitation from the Brazilian President: he is going right again. (*Elseviers Magazine*, 24-11-1984:31.)

When the new Alibux cabinet began to distance itself from Cuba early in 1983 emphasis in Suriname's foreign policy shifted towards the NAM. Besides attempting to gain alternative assistance, a primary aim of cooperating with the NAM was using the combined strength of its members to put pressure on The Hague to review the termination of its aid programme. This goal was indirectly expressed in a statement made by Bouterse, who, in an interview with Oltmans (1984:53-4), argued:

As we have taken the conscious decision to be non-aligned, as a non-aligned country we consider each case individually and assess whether we will be able to accept certain alliances or special relations, as a collective, thus jointly with a number of

countries, or as an individual nation. In this, it is especially important to further determine the correct character of a possible relationship. When solving problems, we will thus always carefully consider the political constellation of each specific situation.

To underline this policy shift, after returning from the Managua meeting, Naarendorp and his senior staff agreed to take further actions to improve the Republic's badly damaged international standing. As a first step it was decided to increase the efficiency of the Foreign Affairs Department. A new training course was designed to improve English and Spanish language skills of the officials at both the Department and in foreign missions (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 22-1-1983:8). The hope was to thus enhance Suriname's communications with other countries, in particular with Latin America. Bouterse himself set an example by taking lessons in no less than three languages: English, Spanish and Portuguese.

A more important step was the decision to establish a special delegation with the sole objective of 'polishing' the Republic's international image. This delegation, composed of staff members from the Foreign Affairs Department (including senior diplomat Carol Spier from the embassy in The Hague), commenced its mission in February 1983 in New York where it lobbied various UN agencies and representatives from other countries on behalf of the regime. This diplomatic offensive was further strengthened when Foreign Minister Naarendorp declared his willingness to join the special delegation following his resignation coming into effect later that month (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 12-2-1983:10).

All these measures combined, contributed to Suriname's diplomatic offensive reaching its peak at the NAM conference in New Delhi, held from 7 to 12 March 1983. Bouterse and Bishop accepted Castro's invitation to travel to India with the Havana delegation on board a Cuban plane. Castro helped the Surinamese representatives with establishing contacts with other delegations by introducing Bouterse to the NAM in his well-attended address to the assembly (Bouterse 1990:136-7). Castro's mention of Suriname soon paid off, as Indira Gandhi asked Bouterse to co-chair the conference, a move which put him in the spotlight, as 'many conference delegates leafed through their agendas to find out who I was' (Bouterse cited in Oltmans 1984:52). The military strongman, accompanied by some twenty Surinamese diplomats and officials, including President Misier and former Foreign Minister Naarendorp, used this opportunity to lobby the assembly in favour of the two motions previously introduced at the NAM meeting in Managua (*Het Parool*, 7-3-1983:3).

The New Delhi conference was of the utmost importance to Suriname – a situation clearly reflected in Bouterse's assessment that the support which

might be received at this gathering would substantially boost the Republic's diplomatic offensive against the Dutch. According to the Surinamese leader:

The Netherlands had found a reason to isolate the Surinamese Revolution, to commit economic aggression and a boycott, besides launching international smear campaigns. In this context the Revolution had to be defended in the 'Human Rights Commission Suriname' in Geneva in 1983. And it is against this background that the action of Suriname in New Delhi in March 1983 must be seen. At the conference of the NAM [...] the Revolution received the support of 101 countries, including Cuba and India. (Bouterse 1990:133.)

Suriname's attempt to obtain a condemnation of the Netherlands, in conjunction with Grenada's efforts to obtain a conference protest against the United States, was well received by the other delegations. The final communiqué of the NAM conference specifically expressed the concerns articulated by both Bouterse and Bishop. With reference to Suriname, the document stated:

The heads of state and government leaders of the non-aligned countries have taken notice of recent events in Suriname and the measures taken by certain countries in response. The heads of state and government leaders express their support of Suriname's sovereignty and independence and express their hope that the future development of Suriname will be in accordance with the interests and well-being of its people, free from any foreign interference. (*Trouw*, 12-3-1983:7.)

In other words, the document criticized those foreign countries – a clear reference to the Netherlands and the United States – which had taken unilateral measures against Paramaribo, thereby blatantly disrespecting Suriname's independence.

The final document was widely celebrated in Surinamese diplomatic circles, although The Hague perceived the paragraph on Suriname, which made an indirect reference to the Netherlands, as a significant setback in its efforts to isolate the regime. Suriname's Ambassador to the Netherlands Herrenberg found the conference 'a great diplomatic success for the chairman of the Policy Centre, Lieutenant Colonel Desi Bouterse, the Surinamese government and the whole Surinamese population' (*Trouw*, 12-3-1983:7). Speaking from the opposite point of view, a Dutch diplomat stated:

Suriname's strongman Colonel Bouterse has apparently been able to convince the movement that the fifteen prominent Surinamese who were executed last December, had been part of an organized conspiracy to overthrow his government by violent means. That is an evil business. It undermines the credibility of the movement in general and of this final declaration in particular. (*Trouw*, 12-3-1983:7.)

The Surinamese government certainly had reason to celebrate. Yet when the final document is closely scrutinized, it inexorably emerges that Bouterse had actually been unsuccessful in his efforts to achieve a strong condemnation of the Netherlands.⁶ Similarly, Bishop failed in his undertaking to have the United States specifically mentioned. This was mainly due to Indian pressure on the assembly to remain silent about any country criticized at the NAM conference, particularly with respect to the Netherlands, which was acknowledged and acclaimed as one of the world's most generous aid donors (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:177). Ironically, of all countries, the Caribbean and Latin American states of Jamaica, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago took up the Indian initiative and strongly lobbied the Assembly to not mention the Netherlands or the United States in the final document (*Trouw*, 12-3-1983:7).

Furthermore, considering Cuban influence on the NAM, the organization's claim to 'non-alignment' must severely be questioned. This is not to suggest that given the Kremlin's possible close links with Cuba and, in turn, Cuba's strong position in the NAM, the organization may be classified as a Soviet foreign policy tool. According to Samina Yasmeen (1987:26-8), the White House also exercised some influence over the NAM – although, indisputably, to a lesser extent – through its own proxy states (as illustrated during the 1983 conference). But Castro increasingly recognized NAM's ability to further Cuba's own national interests and, capitalizing on his high profile amongst Third World leaders, he was able to have some say in the organization's agenda.

The dispute between Suriname and Grenada on the one hand and the Netherlands and the United States on the other, thus came at an opportune moment for Cuba. Fought out under the cover of the NAM, this diplomatic conflict particularly strengthened Havana's regional standing. Cuba's assistance in the form of flying the Surinamese and Grenadian delegations to India – thus enabling Bouterse and Bishop to attend the New Delhi meeting in the first place – was thus not surprising. It was also Castro's speech introducing Bouterse which allowed Suriname to play a relatively high-profile role during the conference. And it was certainly in Cuba's interest to 'use' Suriname and Grenada to bring about a condemnation of Western imperialism in the Caribbean region.

The NAM gathering in New Delhi must, ultimately, be judged to have been a success for Bouterse, not only because the final document acknowledged the interference in Suriname's internal affairs by some unspecified nations, but

⁶ Just as the final communiqué of the 1983 conference, NAM's solidarity declaration following its Ministerial Meeting in New Delhi in April 1986 would clearly demonstrate the organization's careful wording so as not to offend the Netherlands; see Appendix VII, *Non-aligned countries* 1986:78.

also due to the personal contacts made with other leaders. In fact, Bouterse would often continue to refer to his experiences in New Delhi, for example in a discussion with Oltmans (1984:53):

I conducted three private conversations with Mrs Gandhi in New Delhi. Suriname has been elected as vice-chairman of the confederation of non-aligned countries and as a member of the permanent coordination bureau of that organization. These types of meetings are a unique forum for maintaining South-South relations. It is a kind of marketplace for exchanging political opinions and experiences. This conference was indeed a breakthrough for Suriname. In India it was the first time that we clearly and concisely expressed our position on non-alignment in world politics. It was also the first time that Suriname made various useful contacts at the highest level. I spoke with President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and with Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, and many others. Government leaders and politicians from the Afro-Asian world sympathized with the Surinamese Revolution and recognized our problems because of their own experiences.

In view of Suriname's small size and remoteness, being elected to two influential positions and being able to talk directly with politicians on a world stage meant that Bouterse had every right to be pleased with the Republic's performance.

While the diplomatic offensive aimed at improving Suriname's international image and its relations with the Third World reached its zenith during the New Delhi gathering, Paramaribo also tried to maintain direct pressure on The Hague. On his way home from India, Bouterse decided to accept Colonel Qaddafi's invitation to visit Libya and approach Tripoli for diplomatic and financial assistance (Bouterse 1990:138). As he met with Qaddafi, another delegation left Paramaribo for a regional conference in Colombia where, finally, several Caribbean and Latin American governments accepted a Surinamese proposal to censure the Netherlands for its economic boycott against the Republic (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 23-4-1983:2).

Thus, following the NAM conference, Suriname's diplomatic offensive not only gained African and Asian backing, but regional nations also pledged their support. Encouraged by this, a delegation led by Naarendorp stopped en route to Cuba in the Guyanese capital of Georgetown, where it was announced that Suriname would try to increase Third World pressure on the Netherlands (*de Volkskrant*, 15-4-1983:4). As Naarendorp explained, the suspension of the aid programme became Paramaribo's main policy tool against The Hague as they considered it a contravention of the Aid Treaty and thus a violation of international law (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 23-4-1983:2).

The same argument was put forward by Surinamese diplomats attending a G-77 conference in Buenos Aires in April 1983. Again, a sizeable delegation, led by Minister for Transport, Trade and Industry Fong Poen, intensely lobbied the other diplomats who were representing no less than 125 developing

countries. As with the NAM's final document, the G-77 declaration included an indirect reference to the Netherlands while criticizing the practice by some First World states of using (or suspending) their financial, economic and technical assistance to the Third World as a political weapon, enabling interference in the domestic affairs of the receiving countries (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 23-4-1983:2).

Following these spectacular results, Paramaribo's globally oriented diplomatic offensive began to lose intensity from mid-1983. One reason for this may have been that at that time the Republic had initiated consultations with various international financial institutions such as the European Development Fund (EDF) and the European Investment Bank (EIB), but most importantly with the IMF. This change in focus is understandable as political support from Third World organizations as expressed in the NAM and G-77 declarations had contributed to increasing international pressure on The Hague, but at the end of the day these tokens of solidarity did not translate into the hard cash so urgently needed (Meel 1990:87-8). Consequently, while from the summer of 1983 the foreign policy course shifted towards negotiating loans with financial institutions, the government deliberately began to present Suriname in a less aggressive light.

Another factor in the weakening of the diplomatic offensive was that the new Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Alibux was simply not endowed with the dynamic style of Naarendorp; many of the latter's initiatives were thus not replaced by fresh strategies. Naarendorp, assisted by the RVP, had followed an international foreign policy course with a strong neo-Marxist tendency, identifying first of all Cuba, second the Caribbean and Latin America and third other developing nations as 'partners' in his efforts to break the country's dependence on the First World. In contrast, Alibux, supported by PALU, adopted a more pragmatic approach. He was willing to counter Dutch and Cuban influence, but also to sacrifice Third World rhetoric by improving relations with those countries and organizations – including the United States, Brazil, Libya and the IMF – that would be able to assist the Republic in its socio-economic development.

Human rights abuses and Suriname's international image

The four moderate governments succeeding Alibux would equally adopt a pragmatic foreign policy course, while, once again, adding the Netherlands to the list of countries and organizations from which to gain financial aid. Udenhout led the first and second of these technocratic-oriented cabinets (February-December 1984 and January 1985 - July 1986), thus replacing Alibux's PALU regime following controversial negotiations with the IMF

and the subsequent workers' unrest which had flared up at the end of 1983. Pretaapnarian Radhakishun, Prime Minister until April 1987, was then replaced by Wijdenbosch, who would rule Suriname until the military's withdrawal from government in November 1987.

During this period Suriname's foreign policy lost most of the dynamics which had been so characteristic for the Naarendorp period and, to a lesser extent, under the Alibux regime. Instead, the main foreign policy objective under Udenhout, Radhakishun and Wijdenbosch can be summarized as the wish to improve Suriname's international standing by repairing its relations with industrialized nations and consolidating relations with Third World states. To achieve the first, the subsequent regimes tried to tackle the problem of addressing widespread accusations of human rights violations within the Republic. Dealing with the second goal, attempts were made to continue engaging Suriname in a wide range of contacts with developing nations. Although the four cabinets followed a similar foreign policy course, to some extent they differed with respect to the pace with which they achieved their targets and the priority given to one objective over another.

With regard to the first aim, it was hoped that relations with industrialized nations – notably the Netherlands and the United States – could improve and thus pave the way for reinstating aid and strengthening traditional trade relations with northern markets. In this context, with regard to human rights abuses, Suriname adopted a remarkably conciliatory tone, by not only acknowledging that violations had indeed taken place, but also attempting to correct the country's record. Interestingly, this strategy, as formulated by civilian politicians in the regime, won the endorsement of the leading officers despite them having been primarily responsible for these abuses.

In November 1983 Heidweiler had already argued at an OAS conference in Washington that 'I can reassure you that the situation has eased considerably since last year'. Although other OAS representatives remained highly critical, stating that in Suriname 'an atmosphere of intimidation and fear has been created', Heidweiler assured the assembly that the human rights situation in the Republic would be corrected while promising a 'fruitful dialogue between Suriname and the OAS' (*Trouw*, 18-11-1983:7).

Indeed, when comparing the *Amnesty International Report 1983* (which mentioned the executions of Hawker and the December Murders) and that of 1984 (commenting on the death of Horb and the imprisonment of several dozen opponents of the regime), with the reports of 1985 and 1986, the situation had clearly begun to improve. In the last two reports, Amnesty International was mainly investigating human rights violations under the Alibux regime as no new accusations had been brought against the Udenhout administration. As a further sign of improvement, Paramaribo established the Nationaal Instituut voor de Mensenrechten (National Institute for Human Rights) at the end of

1984, in an attempt to not only strengthen Suriname's image by bringing its laws in line with UN human rights guidelines, but also to demonstrate Udenhout's commitment to redemocratizing the country (*NRC Handelsblad*, 24-12-1984:5).

This progress certainly did not go unnoticed at the annual UN conference for Human Rights in Geneva. Whereas the 1984 conference had still been overshadowed by Suriname's efforts to frustrate the Wako investigation by refusing the representative of the UN commission access to the Republic (see Appendix VIII; United Nations 1983:6), the 1985 conference, in contrast, recognized the improvements made in Suriname (*de Volkskrant*, 9-3-1985:5). Indeed, the Surinamese delegation, which besides Heidweiler included the chairman of Suriname's Human Rights Commission Philip Akrum, felt confident enough to declare that 'the political situation in Suriname in general and with regard to human rights in particular has noticeably improved since the incidents of 8 and 9 December 1982' (*Het Parool*, 8-3-1985:7). In addition, Udenhout had fully cooperated with the Wako investigation earlier in 1985 (allowing the UN representative to visit the country), which was presented by the Surinamese delegation as another example of recent progress.

Understandably, in Paramaribo any further negative publicity about human rights violations was perceived as damaging. Consequently, the Udenhout cabinet was disappointed when at the end of 1985 a resolution backed by Mexico and Venezuela at the OAS conference in the Colombian city of Cartagena, criticized the regime for being slow to improve the Republic's human rights situation (*Het Parool*, 9-2-1985:7). To make matters worse, despite the apparent progress over the last two years, this resolution, along with a motion calling on General Augusto Pinochet to redemocratize Chile, was supported by a great majority of OAS members.

Thus, the international perception of Suriname's human rights situation remained unsatisfactory and continued to attract some global attention. Additional negative opinion was generated in early 1985, when the Surinamese authorities, in an operation offensively named 'Schoon Schip' (Clean Sweep) expelled around 5,000 illegal workers, mainly from Guyana and Haiti (*De Ware Tijd*, 25-1-1985:1). Immediately, this action once again led to international outrage, especially on the part of the Dutch Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging (FNV, Federation Dutch Labour Movement), which issued a sharp protest and accused Paramaribo of implementing 'a fascist attack on a section of the working class of Suriname with the least rights' (*Het Parool*, 30-1-1985:3).

The Surinamese risked strong regional protest. Fortunately, the Georgetown government, which had been most affected, since almost 80% of illegal workers came from Guyana, refrained from opposing Suriname's action. Instead, shortly after the incident Guyana's Foreign Minister

Rashleigh Jackson described relations between Paramaribo and Georgetown as 'comradely' (*The Economist*, 20-7-1985:38). The reason for Guyana's acceptance of operation Clean Sweep can be found in the fact that both nations were facing severe economic difficulties which, as it was hoped, would be overcome by achieving political and socio-economic stability in the region. Under these circumstances a diplomatic conflict was seen as counterproductive. In *The Economist* (20-7-1985:38) it was stated: 'Surinam and Guyana are outcasts in the region dominated by the United States. They stick together, hoping for something to turn up; even if it is just a case of wine from French Guiana.'

As Suriname's human rights situation rapidly worsened from mid-1986, more damage was done to its image on the world stage. This effectively destroyed the process begun under Udenhout to re-establish regional and global confidence in the Republic and in doing so increasing the chance of attracting aid and foreign investments. The reason for this drastic change lay in the severity of the armed conflict between the NL and the SNLA which broke out in July 1986. As a result of this civil war, a Dutch-sponsored initiative at the UN Conference for Human Rights in Geneva once again directed world attention at Suriname. Dutch representative Kooijmans (who had also been the one to raise the issue of the December Murders at the 1983 meeting), requested a UN investigation into the allegedly abusive treatment of Maroons at the hands of the military, including the executions of apparent sympathizers of the SNLA just outside Paramaribo (*de Volkskrant*, 19-11-1986:1-3).

Once the conflict was made public, the regime, subjected to international pressure, had little choice but to invite the Red Cross to observe the situation in East Suriname, the theatre of the fighting between the NL and the Jungle Commando (*Trouw*, 5-12-1986:8). Fortunately, the French decided not to approach the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in order to provide aid for the approximately 3,500 Surinamese who by then had fled the civil war by crossing the border to French Guiana. This came as welcome news in Paramaribo, as the government was desperate to avoid internationalization of the conflict.

Nonetheless, reports about the civil war became increasingly public, primarily due to international organizations such as Amnesty International and the Red Cross continuing to closely observe the country's human rights situation. The brutality with which the military tried to suppress the SNLA was thus well-documented, ironically leading to the situation that information about the civil war became more easily accessible than, for instance, any general information about the otherwise largely unknown Republic.

For instance, in 1987 the widely read *Amnesty International Report* (1987:201-2) described the situation in great detail:

In July forces led by Ronny Brunswijk, a former army sergeant, began an armed campaign against the military government of Lieutenant-Colonel Desi Bouterse, attacking a number of military targets and reportedly taking over parts of the country. The rebel forces operated mainly in eastern Suriname, an area populated by the ethnic group known as Bush Negroes, many of whom reportedly support the rebel forces [...]. In mid-December Amnesty International received unconfirmed reports that at least 250 unarmed Bush Negroes had been killed by the army since July. It was alleged that government forces had attacked this group in reprisal for its support for Ronny Brunswijk's activities.

Similar accusations of human rights violations were printed in the organization's 1988 publication:

There were new reports of civilian killings by the army, with some 40 such killings being reported from an area south of Paramaribo between 11 and 30 September. Some of the dead may have been members of the Jungle Commando but most were said to have been villagers who had taken no part in the conflict. A more serious incident occurred on 11 September when soldiers travelling by road and river attacked villagers working in fields close to the road between Bronsweg and Pokigron. At least 19 bodies were found in the area by local people. (*Amnesty International Report 1988:135.*)

The situation in the Republic became so critical that in September 1987 Amnesty International published a special report entitled *Suriname; Violations of human rights*, in which detailed information was provided on politically motivated killings by the NL (*Violations human rights 1987*). The organization also called on the government to conduct an independent investigation into these accusations.

Meanwhile, the international media began to join these condemnations, as they increasingly reported on Suriname's civil war and the consequent human rights abuses. By mid-December 1986 media attention eventually dealt a devastating blow to Paramaribo's attempts at improving the Republic's image. This time the British newspaper *The Guardian* (5-12-1986:8) published an article about the killings of sixteen women and children by the NL near the mining town of Moengo. Associated Press reported on the fate of 2,000 refugees living in camps across the Marowijne River in French Guiana (*The Washington Post*, 7-12-1986:A52) and during an interview of Reuters with opposition leader and former Prime Minister Chin A Sen the latter accused Bouterse of following a 'genocide' policy. 'The soldiers go to a village and bring out old people, women and children and shoot them. I have seen the corpses. They have bullet holes in the head' (*The Washington Post*, 7-12-1986:A39).

Similar reports were published in another influential American newspaper, *The New York Times* which printed an interview with Secretary of State

George Shultz in which he revealed that he had received information from Suriname, citing 'brutality, amounting to murder, and other gross violations of human rights' (*The New York Times*, 17-12-1986:A8). In a different interview with a State Department official the situation in Suriname was described as including 'atrocities bordering on genocide' (*The New York Times*, 17-12-1986:A8). Another State Department official was quoted in *The Washington Post* while commenting on the civil war and human rights abuses, saying that the White House was 'seriously concerned' about accusations made against the Surinamese military in its handling of the civilian population (*The Washington Post*, 7-12-1986:A39). Most devastating were three lengthy articles under the headlines: 'Suriname war is devastating a bush society', 'Suriname's bush people are the casualties of war' and 'Suriname's fall from paradise' (*The New York Times*, 18-6-1987:A1, A14, 13-7-1987:D8). These articles, continuing over several pages including the front page and supported by photos and a map, reported the origin and development of the civil war in detail, whilst also drawing attention to economic devastation and human rights violations.

Confronted with this increasingly negative coverage, the new Radhakishun cabinet desperately tried to formulate a diplomatic offensive to improve the Republic's international image. To achieve this, at the beginning of 1987 an Openheidspolitiek (Policy of Openness) was introduced, which, according to Herrenberg (Foreign Minister in the second Udenhout cabinet as well as in the Radhakishun administration), was aimed at countering the deliberately false and damaging news in the media. As a first step, Paramaribo took on the service of a New York based international consulting firm in an attempt to 'inform' the American public and politicians of recent changes in the Republic (*The New York Times*, 25-1-1988:A20).

Another step was the request made to UN General-Secretary de Cuéllar to send a delegation (including Wako, whose name was deliberately mentioned by the Foreign Minister) to Suriname to investigate claims of human rights violations by the military (*De Ware Tijd*, 27-2-1987:1). In accordance with the new Policy of Openness, similar invitations were also issued to human rights offices within other organizations, such as the OAS and the APC (*The New York Times*, 5-9-1987:A22). In order to favourably influence the findings of these various investigations, the government provided international observers with as positive a picture it could muster of Suriname's internal situation. For instance, shortly before the Wako team's arrival, the authorities decided to release dozens of political prisoners, the majority of whom had been accused of supporting the SNLA (*De Ware Tijd*, 15-8-1987:1). To some extent this move paid off as the findings of these investigation teams generally recognized the recent progress made within the Republic.

Meanwhile, Suriname responded directly to the criticism of human rights violations published by Amnesty International. In September 1987 Foreign

Minister Heidweiler (appointed by Wijdenbosch in April that year) continued the Policy of Openness implemented by his predecessor by declaring publicly, that 'I am sorry that we have not answered Amnesty International'.⁷ This was a clear acknowledgement that the policy of ignoring the criticism of the influential human rights organization had failed. Instead, Suriname was now faced with having to establish a dialogue as part of the strategy to improve its international standing. The authorities even accepted Amnesty International's demands for an independent investigation into the killing of civilians by the NL. Referring to its findings, Heidweiler declared: 'It is certain now that during hostilities innocent victims were killed. Things have probably gone wrong. That is why we have called on Wako' (*Het Parool*, 25-9-1987:3).

While Heidweiler was dealing with Amnesty International, another attempt to counter negative reports was undertaken by Suriname's Ambassador to the United States Halfhide, who in contrast to Heidweiler disputed the recently published human rights violation claims in *The New York Times*. In a letter to the editor Halfhide wrote:

There have been no widespread massacres of bush Negro people, or indeed of any civilians by Government forces, as your reporting alleges. My Government has invited the Human Rights Commission and fact-finding teams from the United Nations and the Organization of American States to visit Suriname to verify this. One such team of observers from the European Economic Community – Association of African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries visited Suriname last April and reported that progress is being made towards the establishment of democratic institutions. (*The New York Times*, 5-9-1987:A22.)

The search for funds

Turning to an analysis of the second main foreign policy objective of the Udenhout, Radhakishun and Wijdenbosch administrations – the attempt to strengthen Suriname's relations with the Third World – once again the verdict has to be that results were mixed, to say the least. Following a similar path adopted for improving Suriname's international image in the field of human rights, the strategy of seeking closer ties with other developing nations was suddenly halted by an unexpected obstacle: the NL's involvement in drug trafficking. While the two issues were not directly linked, the sudden need to defend Suriname's international standing severely hampered its policy of intensifying South-South relations. Yet before going into further details it is important to point out the main difference between Naarendorp's approach

⁷ Referring to letters from the organization accusing the government of human rights abuses, see *Het Parool*, 25-9-1987:3.

towards developing nations and that of Udenhout, Radhakishun and Wijdenbosch.

In contrast to the former Neyhorst cabinet (in which Naarendorp had served), the regimes governing the Republic following the December Murders were faced with continuous economic decline. There was thus great interest in obtaining alternative funds to replace the discontinued Dutch aid. As a consequence the neo-Marxist approach towards Third World solidarity, as followed by Naarendorp, was replaced by a policy primarily aimed at gaining access to loans from fellow developing countries. In fact, it could be argued that the success of this policy may easily be measured in financial terms by simply comparing the Surinamese requests for loans with the actual credits received. Suriname's Finance Minister in the second Udenhout cabinet, Norman Kleine, described this policy as follows: 'People are afraid that if we don't become more productive very fast, we will slide downhill. So we are doing what we can to find friends' (*Caribbean Contact*, 11-1985:8).

After the turmoil of 1983 – marked by the termination of Dutch aid, the severing of diplomatic relations with Cuba and controversial negotiations⁸ with the IMF – in 1984 Suriname's foreign policy was characterized by a more cautious approach. Apart from defending itself against further human rights accusations, the Udenhout cabinet's first year was relatively quiet as the Prime Minister sought to restore the regime's domestic power base. In fact, on the global level the Republic followed a passive approach – except with regard to the Netherlands (see Chapter VI) toning down its aggressive 'revolutionary' rhetoric which had dominated 1982 and 1983. Highlights in this period were an official visit to Paramaribo by Ghana's President Jerry Rawlings in June (Uwechue 1986:26) and Bouterse's trip to India, where he paid his last respects to Indira Gandhi in November 1984 (Bouterse 1990:139).

This period of relative calm came to an end as economic pressure continued to build, forcing Paramaribo to search for additional loans. Suriname's general strategy of approaching developing nations, as discussed above, was by no means a strange move considering the breakdown in the earlier negotiations with the IMF and Suriname's hesitance to once again become dependent on Dutch development assistance (*Pragmatism Paramaribo* 1985:5).

Colombia, with which the Republic had maintained diplomatic relations on an ambassadorial level since 1981, was one of the first countries approached, with a Surinamese delegation arriving in Bogotá in January 1985. This delegation paved the way for an official visit by Bouterse the following month (*Het Parool*, 31-1-1985:4). More importantly, a \$ 15 million loan was

⁸ Negotiations were perceived as controversial in Suriname. It led to protests and demonstrations and the fall of the government as the IMF wanted that the Bouterse regime introduced stringent financial measurements.

gained for the purchase of Colombian goods (*Suriname schijnonafhankelijkheid* 1985:49). A short time later, Suriname's Foreign Minister Kie Sim negotiated an agreement with Taiwan, providing the Republic with a Sf 72 million loan (*De Ware Tijd*, 2-5-1985:1, 12). As with Colombia, the loan was tied to Taiwanese imports. Not surprisingly, during a news conference following these negotiations, Udenhout proudly declared that his new policy course aimed at gaining access to international loans was bearing fruit despite what he saw as Dutch attempts to starve Suriname of funds.

1985 saw further cash arriving in the Paramaribo treasury, including US\$ 3.4 million in aid from the EDF (*Pragmatism Paramaribo* 1985:5). Another US\$ 14 million loan was gained from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and 'under the Lomé Convention, Suriname received (from the EC) [US]\$ 25.6 million in the form of grants and soft loans' (*The Latin American Times* 7-9-1986:31). In addition, car manufacturer FIAT agreed to a barter deal, amounting to a total value of Sf 1 million, by which the Italian company exchanged cars and trucks for rice (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1990b:29). Even more spectacular was the aforementioned visit by Bouterse and Udenhout to Tripoli in March 1985, where Qaddafi promised the Paramaribo regime a US\$ 100 million loan (*Pragmatism Paramaribo* 1985:5).

Another country visited was Brazil, which so far had provided loans amounting to US\$ 50 million (*De Ware Tijd*, 14-9-1987:1). The People's Republic of China (PRC) also granted financial support (*Trouw*, 15-8-1986:7) – thus representing a perfect example that Suriname's foreign policy was primarily driven by the search for money if it is remembered that only one year earlier the Republic had signed an agreement with Taiwan according to which the island would offer technical and monetary assistance. However, despite Taipei's offer, Paramaribo continued to implement a One-China policy, diplomatically only recognizing the PRC.⁹ Finally, South Korea and, according to an unconfirmed report in *Caribbean Contact*, 11-1985:8), Iran provided the Republic with smaller loans. Considering the wide range of nations willing to supply Suriname with funds, the description by a Dutch diplomat of the Republic's external relations at that time may be very apt. In sharp contrast to Naarendorp's approach, the Dutch diplomat commented that 'the government's foreign policy is predicated solely on where they can

⁹ Other small states such as Tonga, Swaziland, Haiti and the Dominican Republic recognized Taiwan, primarily because Taipei offered a more generous financial and technical aid package compared to that offered by the PRC. In other words, some small nations in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific made a direct link between political recognition and development aid. It is interesting to note that in 1985 numerous Central and Latin American countries, including Costa Rica, El Salvador and Uruguay, likewise maintained diplomatic relations with Taiwan. This was not so much because of the financial support offered by Taipei but rather based on ideological considerations.

get money from. They have no preference for left or right' (*Caribbean Contact*, 11-1985:8). The 'arbitrary' nature of Suriname's foreign policy was also captured in Cartoon 5. Although published early in 1980 in response to the coup, the cartoonist indicates the various options open to Suriname to seek support from nations in the Americas, Africa, Asia and Europe.

Yet it was not all plain sailing for the Paramaribo authorities as they also experienced some setbacks in their search for funds. In mid-1986, after his departure from the government, Udenhout explained that the reason for the still outstanding Libyan funds

may have to do with the novelty of this type of relation with a country with a completely different tradition. It is the first time that we have travelled so far and have formulated such plans [to request money]. They have experienced much stagnation, but they are not dead. Of course, you are realistic and you are aware of developments in world politics and as you know Libya is undergoing a difficult period. Now that it [Libya] is rather upset, we should be able to sympathize. (*Trouw*, 24-7-1986:7.)

Despite Udenhout's understanding of Libya's difficult situation, the former Prime Minister should have been aware that the Qaddafi regime had a poor record of actually providing loans, particularly to countries outside Africa. St. John's study (1987) of Qaddafi's foreign policy between 1969 and 1987 clearly reveals that this nation was well known for promising more aid than it actually granted. 'Serious discrepancies existed between aid commitments and aid disbursements because many Arab states, particularly Libya, did not translate commitments into disbursements' (St. John 1987:96).

Notwithstanding, as Udenhout has pointed out, Suriname did not give up all hope of eventually receiving the important loan from Libya. In fact, Bouterse, on his way to the 1986 NAM conference in Harare, once again stopped in Tripoli to reopen discussions concerning Qaddafi's promise to support Paramaribo. Subsequently, a Libyan delegation arrived in Suriname to consult with Radhakishun about the US\$ 100 million loan (*Trouw*, 15-8-1986:7). Despite the extensive contact between the regimes, at the end of the day, Libya failed to honour its commitment with finally only transferring US\$ 3 million to the Republic shortly before the military's withdrawal from power (Thorndike 1990:49).

A similarly disappointing situation arose with respect to Brazil. Even though this country had provided Paramaribo with various loans since 1985 – including US\$ 13 million for the purchase of military equipment – it refused an additional request for funds in September 1987. The main reason for this negative response was based on Paramaribo having fallen behind in the repayment of existing loans by US\$ 4 million; as a consequence, Suriname's



„Ach. . . , ik kan nog alle kanten op. . . !”

Cartoon 5. Suriname can go in all directions (*de Volkskrant*, 15-8-1980:3)

ability to administer a new loan was questioned. According to a Brazilian official, ‘the [...] authorities have pointed out that such a credit can only be considered when the ongoing negotiations with regard to the rearrangement of the Surinamese debt to Brazil are completed’ (*Het Parool*, 14-9-1987:3). Indeed, even Bouterse’s personal intervention in this matter, as illustrated by his journey to Brasilia in a bid to persuade the authorities to reconsider, failed to convince the Figueiredo government to change its position.

Despite the cited events, it would be unfair to accuse Suriname of following a foreign policy directed simply at establishing contacts with developing countries willing to provide loans. Although it may be argued that the notion of seeking Third World solidarity was largely abandoned during the first Udenhout administration – with Herrenberg as Foreign Minister from early 1985 – the Republic still sought to expand its various non-financially orientated contacts with developing nations. This was exemplified as diplomatic contacts were gradually extended to Africa and Asia.

Relations with Africa in particular were boosted far beyond the level of

those earlier maintained with Libya and Algeria, along with a variety of social and cultural exchange schemes between Surinamese Creoles and several communities in Black Africa, which had developed since the 1970s (Uwechue 1986:16). In October 1982 Naarendorp revealed Suriname's interest in establishing diplomatic relations with countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. This was eventually achieved when formal relations between Suriname and Ghana were initiated following a visit to Paramaribo by President Rawlings. Relations with Nigeria, Mozambique and (by early 1986) Zimbabwe were also established (Bouterse 1990:131). As stated, in August 1986 a Surinamese delegation led by Bouterse and Herrenberg travelled to the annual NAM conference in Harare, a year later followed by a forty-member team, including the Lieutenant Colonel, visiting Ghana (*De Ware Tijd*, 25-8-1987:1).

Suriname also took an interest in Asia. Apart from loan-seeking missions to South Korea, Taiwan and the PRC, the highlight of Suriname's activities in this field was Herrenberg's long overdue visit to Indonesia in the summer of 1986 (*Trouw*, 15-8-1986:7). Herrenberg was in fact the first Surinamese Foreign Minister to undertake an official visit to the former Netherlands East Indies, despite Paramaribo's acceptance of an Ambassador from Indonesia shortly after the transfer of Suriname's sovereignty in 1975. Even though the Republic boasted a strong Javanese community, with both nations sharing a similar colonial history, that first initiative had not be followed up. On the contrary, prior to Herrenberg's Jakarta visit, Surinamese leaders had not refrained from pointing out to The Hague that, despite human rights violations being committed by Indonesia, the former colony still received aid from the Netherlands (Oltmans 1984:17). The negative tone eased somewhat as Herrenberg and his Indonesian counterpart recognized that both countries were linked by a special relationship. It thus came as no surprise that Surinamese and Indonesian officials seized the opportunity to talk mainly about their respective decolonization experiences (*Trouw*, 15-8-1986:7).

Significant progress in consolidating Suriname's regional position was also achieved during the final years of the Bouterse era. Improvement was particularly noticeable in Venezuelan-Surinamese relations. After meeting with Venezuela's President Jaime Lusinchi during a tour through the region in the summer of 1986, Herrenberg stated 'that conversation was very illuminating because we realize that Venezuela now has more sympathy for the process in Suriname' (*Trouw*, 13-8-1986:7). With regard to Brazil Herrenberg declared that 'we have the best relationship with our neighbour' (*Trouw*, 13-8-1986:7). And the new Colombian administration under President Virgilio Barco Vargas had expressed its intention to continue its earlier good neighbour policy towards Suriname, as the Foreign Minister proudly announced (*De Ware Tijd*, 15-8-1986:1). These comments may not justify the view that the Republic had become an integrated part of the region, but in comparison with

Naarendorp's tour of the Western Hemisphere in 1983 Herrenberg's visits clearly demonstrated the progress made by Suriname in recent years.

In the Netherlands Antilles Herrenberg invited Prime Minister Don Martina to an official visit. Yet more important were the contacts made between representatives of both governments to discuss the possibility of strengthening economic relations through a barter deal. Even though, as Herrenberg acknowledged, bilateral relations were not optimal due to the continuous difficulties experienced in Dutch-Surinamese relations,¹⁰ he commented that the Netherlands Antilles and Suriname 'are siblings' and 'we are one' (*Trouw*, 13-8-1986:7). In fact, Herrenberg expressed the hope that 'when I look at Prime Minister Martina and Vice-Prime Minister Chance I think that we will be able to turn the personal relations that we have established into concrete actions in the field of economic cooperation' (*Trouw*, 13-8-1986:7).

However, the honeymoon would not last. Progress in this field came to a halt when the Surinamese military was allegedly involved in drug trafficking. Similar to the NL's brutal operations against the Maroons, the military's implication in the drug trade managed to destroy much of the credibility Paramaribo had gained through any recent initiatives to foster foreign relations. As early as 1980 Foreign Minister Haakmat had reportedly been approached by Colombian drug barons interested in using Suriname as a transit centre (*Trouw*, 27-3-1986:3). New allegations were circulated in 1982, suggesting that Surinamese officials were involved in talks with Colombian drug traffickers for a deal worth US\$ 50 million, involving the shipping of narcotics to the Netherlands (Brana-Shute 1990:197). Eventually, at the beginning of 1986, fresh revelations were published based on the drug-related arrest in Miami of Captain Etienne Boerenveen, second in the military hierarchy to Bouterse (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:88).

The direct involvement of a high government official was highly damaging to Suriname's international standing. Besides Boerenveen, Miami's SLM representative Ricardo Heymans along with his father Sylvion were detained as part of an undercover operation by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) for offering the possibility of using Suriname as a protected transit centre for South American narcotics on route to the United States. They had also proposed allowing the transport of ether, used to refine cocaine, from North America to drug plantations in Colombia, Bolivia and Peru through Suriname against a 'fee' of US\$ 1 million per shipment. During these negotiations with undercover agents, Heymans, as recorded on a secretly taped conversation, had stated that 'the protection would come from the people at the highest level of Government, like the President' (*The New York Times*, 27-3-1986:B13).

¹⁰ The Dutch government, after all, continued to be responsible for the foreign policy of the Kingdom, including the Netherlands Antilles, as outlined in the Charter of the Kingdom.

Even though this reference to President Misier seemed a ploy to 'sweeten' the offer, it became apparent that other highly placed government officials were indeed involved in the proposed deal.

As expected, Suriname's leadership reacted swiftly and strongly to this unpleasant affair. Following Boerenveen's arrest the Foreign Affairs Department immediately issued a statement, accusing the United States of deliberately harassing the Republic: 'The involvement of the secret agents and the North American intelligent services point in the direction of an attempt by the U.S. Government to destabilize the regime in Suriname and isolate it internationally' (*The New York Times*, 27-3-1986:B13). In addition, Herrenberg ordered the American Ambassador to come to the Ministry and lodged a protest against Boerenveen's arrest, pointing out that the latter had travelled on a diplomatic passport and consequently enjoyed immunity from American law (*De Ware Tijd*, 29-3-1986:1). With regard to recent efforts made by his regime in the field of combating drug trafficking, Bouterse emphasized that 'on the grounds of this policy, the government still believes in the sincerity with which Boerenveen is cooperating in the investigation in Miami' (*Trouw*, 9-4-1986:7).

This personal intervention by Bouterse and Herrenberg was not only motivated by Boerenveen's high position within Suriname's military hierarchy, but also, and much more, by the fear that during the process other Surinamese officials might be implicated. Indeed, during the Miami court hearings in September 1986 the prosecutor accused Bouterse of having given his 'blessing' to the illegal deal negotiated by Boerenveen and of having intended to take, together with the Captain, 15% of the profit while providing another 15% to father and son Heymans. The remaining 70% was then to be transferred into government accounts to help fund the budget deficit (*de Volkskrant*, 11-9-1986:1, 4).

The DEA publicly warned that Suriname could become a major drugs transit centre as the Colombian coast and many Caribbean islands were under close observation by American forces. Washington thus feared that in addition to Central America, the Guyana's could increasingly emerge as an alternative route for drugs into the States. Boerenveen's offer allowing Suriname to be used as a protected transit centre confirmed Washington's concerns and was seen as a severe crime by the jury, which sentenced the Captain and his two companions to twelve years in prison (*Trouw*, 19-9-1986:7).

Clearly, these developments further weakened the Republic's international position. Yet the motive for these high-ranking officers and politicians to become involved in the drug trade must be understood. Even though some profits were to end up in the personal bank accounts of Bouterse, Boerenveen and father and son Heymans, almost two-thirds of the money was intended to cover government expenditure. These illegal activities were justified,

according to the officers involved, because the Netherlands had suspended its aid programme despite this being against international law. Consequently, the drug 'revenues' could be used to partly compensate for the financial losses experienced in the wake of the termination of Dutch aid.

Needless to say, this interpretation of the situation met with no sympathy in The Hague. Instead, the recently reopened Dutch-Surinamese negotiations – initiated to provide the Republic with medical supplies worth Nf 1 million – sustained severe damage. Even before Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation Schoo was able to express her objections against Suriname's involvement in drug trafficking during bilateral discussions in Costa Rica, Udenhout abruptly left the conference. His premature return to Paramaribo prevented Schoo from issuing a formal protest, although Suriname could not escape Dutch criticism expressed in The Hague by Foreign Minister Van den Broek. According to the latter the Nf 1 million medicine deal was – at least temporarily – suspended (*Trouw*, 1-4-1986:3). Fortunately for Paramaribo, the White House reacted in a less hostile way and informed Radhakishun that the slowly improving Surinamese-American relations would not be negatively affected by the Boerenveen affair (*Trouw*, 13-9-1986:7).

This highly embarrassing drug episode would gain a new dimension with the publication of revelations reinforcing the impression of the regime's involvement in drug trafficking. These revelations were based on accusations made by former Commandant of the Echo Company Henk van Randwijk who had defected to the SNLA after his capture by Brunswijk. Van Randwijk confirmed the country's participation in the drug trade and the sanctuary given to smugglers by the military leadership. Despite the growing evidence against Bouterse, the Radhakishun government was unable to convince Bouterse of resigning. Instead, internal tensions mounted between the Prime Minister and most of his cabinet on the one hand, and the Commander-in-chief and his supporters on the other (Branca-Shute 1987:7, 28).

During the crisis that followed it emerged that Herrenberg was equally involved in or had at least been informed about his country acting as a narcotics transit centre. However, unlike Bouterse, Herrenberg was unable to hold on to his position as Foreign Minister. The already tense relations between Radhakishun and Herrenberg reached a head when the latter was asked to resign in order to prevent further damage to Suriname's international standing. However, Herrenberg, with Bouterse's backing, withstood Radhakishun's pressure so instead it became the Prime Minister and his cabinet that were forced to resign on 11 February 1987 (MacDonald 1988:120-1). Yet in the new government under Wijdenbosch, career diplomat Heidweiler took over as Foreign Minister. Herrenberg would retain an influential position as senior advisor, but was generally regarded as too controversial and a rogue element in the new government. Finally he was removed from the Ministry so as to

allow Wijdenbosch to repair some of the international damage caused by the drug scandal.

The Wijdenbosch cabinet would be the final regime to rule the Republic before the military's withdrawal from government at the end of 1987. With the officers' apparent retreat from politics, a controversial era came to an end during which Suriname had certainly made its mark in international relations. Whereas at the outset of the Revolution, the strategy of expanding and strengthening Suriname's relations with other developing nations had been little more than an idea, following the December Murders and the ensuing international condemnation, the regime had had no other option but to seek cooperation with the Third World. Confronted with the termination of Dutch aid, Suriname's deplorable economic situation forced successive governments to seek Third World solidarity in a diplomatic stand-off with their former colonial master and to search for alternative financial sources to replace the assistance previously received from the Netherlands.

Even though Naarendorp's diplomatic offensive gained some success early in 1983, internal tensions between competing government parties would eventually weaken this strategy to a considerable degree. Instead, Suriname primarily concentrated its diplomatic resources on addressing foreign condemnation of human rights violations within the Republic. It was not until Herrenberg became Foreign Minister in 1985 that a strengthening of Suriname's relations with the Third World reached a perceptible level. Right at that moment, the military's harsh treatment of the Maroons and its involvement in drug trafficking gravely impeded Suriname's foreign policy of improving its international image. Nevertheless, despite the Republic's limited foreign successes in the mid-1980s, it was a positive achievement that from 1983 onwards Suriname's foreign policy outlook shifted away from its traditional emphasis on relations with Europe and the United States towards diplomatic ties with a range of Third World countries and organizations.

CHAPTER VI

Suriname on its knees

The most important challenge for Suriname in the next decade is to achieve economic independence. We in Suriname must be able to take decisions on our own. We must be able to reap the benefits of our own resources and the products of our own efforts according to our own priorities. Only then will we be able to provide solutions to the problems which our people meet daily. (Bouterse cited in Uwechue 1986.)

As outlined in the previous three chapters, the events of December 1982 plunged Suriname into severe socio-economic difficulties. These were caused, on the one hand, by the termination of Dutch aid and, on the other hand, by the failure to establish close relations with regional powers or with Third World nations as a collective to compensate, at least partly, for this financial shortfall. Consequently, to secure the regime's survival, Bouterse realized that he had no choice but to improve Suriname's relations with the Netherlands, so as to be able to negotiate the terms for reinstating Dutch aid. In this, Paramaribo was forced to acknowledge The Hague's primary stipulation for reopening the flow of financial assistance: the reintroduction of democracy. Yet the military's gradual shift towards democratic rule clashed with the Dutch demand that aid be provided only after the officers' complete withdrawal from politics.

Within the regime this setback led to frustration. During the transition period of 1984-1987 The Hague was repeatedly attacked for its uncompromising position. Caught in this crossfire were the more moderate former politicians who would regain some influence as a result of the Republic's gradual redemocratization. Yet they were forced into the position of onlookers as their foreign policy strategy of initiating dialogue with the Netherlands was foiled by continued bilateral tension. At the end of the day, the severity of Suriname's socio-economic situation would force the military to hand over rule to an elected cabinet, which was then free to initiate direct negotiations with The Hague.

The Revolution's failure

At the end of 1983 the Republic was confronted with such socio-economic hardship that the domestic situation became volatile. In a bid to alleviate the people's growing dissatisfaction, Bouterse realized the need for a populist political organization to prevent the revolutionary process from collapsing altogether. To this end, on 24 November 1983 – the eve of the eighth anniversary of the transfer of sovereignty – the organization of a political mass movement was given a new impetus with the establishment of the Vijfentwintig Februari Beweging (VFB, February Twenty-Five Movement) (*Trouw*, 25-11-1983:7).

To a large extent the formation of the VFB came about as a direct result of external pressure confronting Suriname throughout 1983, as became evident in the speech delivered by Bouterse at the inauguration of the movement. Whilst addressing a crowd of between 15,000 to 25,000 people, gathered on Paramaribo's Onafhankelijkheidsplein (Independence square), the Lieutenant Colonel warned his listeners of possible new invasion plans being hatched by the regime's opponents, specifically the Liberation Council, which, he claimed, operated with the backing of The Hague and Washington. As an example of the seriousness of this threat, he pointed at the spate of recent arson attacks throughout the Paramaribo district.

In an attempt to put an end to these assaults, Bouterse asked the crowd to trust the authorities and reject the notion, brought forward by external powers, that the military were governing in a cold-blooded manner.

I hope that the people will understand that while so many problems remain to be solved we do not intend to take into account the jokers who want to put the clock back. It has nothing to do with the person of Bouterse, but we, who carry the responsibility for this country, must avoid capitulating without a struggle. We are no bloody-thirsty clique. On the contrary. But our responsibilities towards the people gives us the right to act where we must act. Once again, let us hope that the dark days of December will never be repeated in this country. (*Trouw*, 25-11-1983:7.)

Bouterse then directed his focus to the issue of aid. In a sharp attack he accused the Netherlands of adopting a hypocritical position towards Suriname by continuing its investments in the Republic's economy while suspending the Aid Treaty.

In many companies in Suriname the Dutch government holds important shares. If then, according to the Netherlands, human rights in Suriname are being abused, why only suspend aid while the companies with Dutch government shares are allowed to stay here? (*Trouw*, 25-11-1983:7.)

These harsh words certainly did not come as a surprise. A few days earlier Bouterse had already noticeably hardened his position towards The Hague. Although demonstrating a willingness to negotiate, he had insisted that 'this must take place in a respectable manner without preconditions. We are not visiting the Netherlands down on our knees' (*Trouw*, 21-11-1983:5).

This caustic comment may have originated in the regime's confidence in being able to find alternative financial resources. In his 24 November speech, Bouterse specifically referred to negotiations regarding a considerable international loan which was about to be concluded – a clear reference to the anticipated US\$ 100 million IMF loan. Even if this would fail to materialize, Bouterse's optimism about the country's future remained unbroken: 'If we are unsuccessful in gaining funds we will remain inventive. Up until now there has been no chaos. Suriname may be a poor country, but we are not that poor. Time will tell' (*Trouw*, 25-11-1983:7). Indeed, by comparing Suriname's GDP of US\$ 2,267 in 1983 with Guyana's GDP of US\$ 1,024 or Jamaica's GDP of 2,136 for the same year, the Republic was certainly not among the poorest nations in the region.¹

The most striking aspect of Bouterse's speech was the strong indication that Paramaribo was unwilling to bow to any external pressure. At the inauguration of the VFB a resurgent feeling of confidence in being able to resolve Suriname's problems was apparent. It was thought that the political situation would improve with the formation of the VFB and that the tide would change in the area of socio-economics with the anticipated IMF loan.

Bouterse's optimistic assessment that no popular unrest would occur and that before long IMF negotiations would be successfully concluded, proved to be a gross misjudgement. Within a month of the VFB's inauguration, the Republic was shaken by a series of strikes in the industrial sector, aimed at removing the harsh austerity measures which were implemented by Alibux, to meet the IMF criteria for the loan and at the undemocratic nature of the regime (Thorndike 1990:46; *De Ware Tijd*, 17-1-1984:1). Aware that a repeat of the events of December 1982 was unlikely to achieve the desired effect – it was feared that any further international isolation would be disastrous – Bouterse had no choice but to dismiss Alibux before growing public dissatisfaction could sweep away the entire regime (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:63).

The significance of this dismissal was that it clearly illustrated the defeat of the Revolution or, in the words of Thorndike (1990:47), 'an era had truly come to an end'. The Republic's Marxist-oriented political course as defined by the PALU/RVP coalition was terminated. Even though popular unrest at the end of 1983 and at the beginning of 1984 would not lead to another massacre, its consequences provoked similar change as both Suriname's

¹ United Nations 1984:94 (Guyana's GDP), 110 (Jamaica's GDP), 188 (Suriname's GDP).

internal and external policies underwent another considerable shift. As Chin and Buddingh' (1987:63) commented:

Total political isolation and the escalating economic crisis compelled Bouterse to seek support, or at least cooperation, from organizations with a broader social base. Bouterse turned to organized trade and industry and the trade union organizations, the same group that had offered him such bitter resistance in the fall of 1982. This act can safely be described as nothing less than having come, politically, full circle.

The new Udenhout cabinet would indeed include representatives of trade unions and the employers' associations. Sworn in on 4 February 1984, the cabinet included five left-wing officers and politicians, and two seats each for the unionists and the industrialists (*De Ware Tijd*, 4-2-1984:1). With this, for the first time since the radicalization of the Revolution in March 1981 a cabinet was formed on a broader social and political base – a particularly important change as the ministries granted to unionists and industrialists were not without influence. Union representatives Dr Allan Li Fo Choe and Sigfried Gilds were appointed Minister of Education, Culture and People's Mobilization, and Minister of Public Works, Social Affairs and Housing respectively (*NRC Handelsblad*, 4-2-1984:4). To encourage the unions' rank and file and the employers' associations to support the new administration, Bouterse allowed their representatives a casting vote on any future changes in the cabinet.

However, even more important was the announcement by President Misier that the government's main task was to introduce democratic reforms. To ensure his political survival, Bouterse thus accepted some of the strikers' demands in order to gain support for Udenhout. He also recognized that it was impossible to continue ignoring Dutch requests for redemocratization, especially if the regime was interested in establishing a dialogue with the Lubbers cabinet about financial assistance. That Bouterse had indeed given in to domestic and Dutch pressure became evident in Misier's declaration at the inauguration of the Udenhout government: this was to be merely an interim cabinet until 31 December 1984, at which date the new Prime Minister would present a redemocratization programme (*NRC Handelsblad*, 4-2-1984:4).

With the intention of 'overseeing' these political reforms, Bouterse then decided to organize a think tank, which was formally established on 25 January 1984 (Bouterse 1990:228). This influential advisory committee included representatives of labour and of trade and industry (according to a similar formula as used to compose the cabinet) although it was still being dominated by members of the VFB and the army. Another important shift in the country's power structure was revealed even more clearly as the Policy Centre was dissolved and PALU and RVP were excluded from government –

its members merely holding a few public offices and advisory positions (Meel 1990:88-9).

Since the power of left-wing officers and politicians was now primarily preserved in the VFB, Bouterse attempted to broaden the organization's basis by mobilizing socio-political support through its chief ideologists Naarendorp and Wijdenbosch. At a rally at Zanderij Airport in May 1984 (*De Ware Tijd*, 14-5-1984:1) the objectives of the VFB – by then also known as Standvaste (Persistence), named after a local flower – were more clearly defined in quasi-Leninist terms.

The vanguard within the National Army has, during this phase of history, assumed the task of implementing a Revolution. This revolution is intended to change society, that is, to eliminate repression. To this end, the Revolution must involve itself with the working class. Not only because this class has 'power' and because it must produce for us, but also because it is the lifeblood of the Revolution. (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:83.)

It can be argued that with the formation of the Udenhout cabinet, Bouterse cleverly managed to ease public dissatisfaction and win 'a certain amount of breathing space' (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:64). At the same time he continued to control the nation's development through the VFB. Bouterse, in fact, became the Chairman of the movement while two other high-ranking officers, Boerenveen (later to be convicted of drug trafficking, see Chapter V) and Paul Bhagwands, were elected as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. As a result, the military maintained a predominant position in the party's central decision-making body that communicated directly with the organization's branches representing the grass-root members.²

Yet even though the VFB became an influential pillar in the government, it failed to attract strong popular support. In this context Brana-Shute (1986:95) argued that 'no definition of revolutionary socialism was given other than that social services would be expanded and trade links with socialist countries established', as a result of which 'the movement was unenthusiastically received by the public'. The VFB managed to enrol no more than around 3000 party members, of whom only a few hundred actively participated. Following the strikes in the autumn of 1983 and the collapse of the Alibux cabinet early in 1984, Bouterse's power base had thus noticeably weakened.

² Composed of members of the community, youth organizations, farmer and labour associations, see Chin and Buddingh' 1987:83-5.

The emerging dialogue with the Netherlands

As stated, the new political situation following the Revolution's failure also resulted in a considerable foreign policy shift towards the Netherlands. A new initiative was undertaken to improve relations with The Hague, which had deteriorated to an all-time low in the previous year. Bouterse realized that he needed access to the remaining Nf 1.4 billion in aid promised in the treaty, all the more since IMF negotiations had proved futile. However, apart from the economic importance, he was aware of pressing political reasons for seeking a dialogue with The Hague. In January 1984 Bouterse had had to accede to the condition of Moederbond's Chairman Fred van Russel that in exchange for the union supporting Udenhout, a serious attempt would be made at restoring relations with the Netherlands (*NRC Handelsblad*, 30-1-1984:4).

Additional pressure to initiate a dialogue with The Hague came shortly after Udenhout's inauguration with Minister Schoo publicly expressing her view that some of the funds earmarked for Suriname should be used to help other developing nations (*de Volkskrant*, 10-2-1984:3). The situation grew even more tense when, a few days later, the Lubbers cabinet questioned Bouterse's promise to introduce democratic reforms, declaring that he must first withdraw from politics before the aid flow could begin again. As Schoo stated, 'the government doubts whether Bouterse is really willing to introduce democratic structures in Suriname' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 15-2-1984:3). The Dutch government, in its turn, had come under pressure at home to stand firm against Bouterse following the Liberation Council's public call to send in marines to restore democratic rule (*Trouw*, 3-2-1983:21).

The Hague's harsh reaction to Udenhout's inauguration and its reluctance to accept the promise of a redemocratization programme came as a great disappointment to Bouterse. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, he decided to personally try and repair links with the Netherlands. In contrast to the aggressive speech delivered to the VFB in November, this time he declared that 'we remain prepared to initiate a dialogue with the Netherlands on the condition that the Netherlands recognizes and respects our status as a sovereign and independent nation' (*De Ware Tijd*, 27-2-1984:10). To underline his quest for a dialogue, Bouterse emphasized that the regime was currently initiating wide-ranging reforms. Consequently, The Hague's rejection of what he called the 'new phase' was perceived as unjust.

While Bouterse indicated his willingness to engage in discussions with The Hague, C-47's President Derby also announced his intention to talk with Dutch officials about aid and redemocratization. Yet this double-track strategy did not achieve the desired objective. Even before Derby's departure to Amsterdam, Dutch politician Weisglas (VVD) succinctly expressed the Dutch coalition's position with regard to contacts with the regime: 'They all

know the conditions set by the Dutch government' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 5-3-1984:3) – implying that Bouterse must step down before any meaningful bilateral discussions were undertaken. In a similar manner the international spokesperson of the Dutch union movement, Johan van Rens, declared that neither the FNV nor the Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond (CNV, Confederation of Christian Trade Unions) would be willing to lobby on behalf of the Surinamese unions for the reinstatement of aid. Confronted with such an unwelcoming environment, Derby decided to cancel his visit.

Suriname's attempts at improving relations were further frustrated when in March 1984 another invasion plan by mercenaries operating from French Guiana was revealed. The French authorities, who had uncovered the operation, arrested sixteen exiled Surinamese guerrillas (almost all of whom carried Dutch passports) and deported them to the Netherlands Antilles (*De Ware Tijd*, 26-3-1984:1). Led by a high-ranking member of the Liberation Council, these exiled guerrillas declared that they had been trained by American mercenaries who claimed to have fought the Sandinistas³ in Nicaragua (*de Volkskrant*, 3-4-1984:1).

Neither the connection with the Council nor the involvement of American mercenaries angered Bouterse more than the announcement by the Dutch Justice Department that the sixteen men were allowed to return to the Netherlands without being prosecuted (*De Ware Tijd*, 28-3-1984:1). The Council's Secretary, Sewrajsingh, was merely summoned to the Ministry, where he was told that 'the Council must strictly abide by the Dutch legal order' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 30-3-1984:3). Bouterse remained silent but his anger became apparent when – probably with the regime's blessing – a crowd of 2,500 demonstrators gathered in front of the Dutch and French embassies, eventually occupying the Dutch diplomatic mission, in protest against the apparent involvement of The Hague and Paris in this affair (*De Ware Tijd*, 18-4-1984:1).

As in the previous year, there was an emerging risk of further confrontations with the Netherlands. While Suriname accused the Netherlands of indirectly supporting the attempted invasion, The Hague soon found a counterargument with which to denounce Paramaribo, while investigating an assassination attempt on Humphrey Somohardjo, brother of the exiled Surinamese politician Paul Somohardjo, in March 1984 by the Dutch police and BVD. The authorities also investigated arson attacks on the houses and offices of other exiled Surinamese politicians, all of whom were active in the anti-Bouterse movement. It was alleged that these terrorist activities were linked to a secret group of Surinamese agents operating from the Republic's embassy in The Hague (*NRC Handelsblad*, 23-3-1984:1). These accusations were taken

³ Members of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, a socialist political party named after Augusto César Sandino, a hero of Nicaraguan resistance.

so seriously that a round-the-clock police protection was provided for the Council's President, Chin A Sen.

Fortunately, despite the invasion attempt and terrorist incident this time the Surinamese and Dutch governments displayed less mutual antagonism. This somewhat less hostile atmosphere allowed the regime to continue its cautious attempts of thawing the relations. Bouterse's decision in June 1984 to replace Ambassador Herrenberg with Heidweiler was another important landmark. Other than Herrenberg, who throughout 1983 had largely been responsible for escalating diplomatic tensions, Heidweiler had regularly emphasized the need for Suriname to maintain good links with the Netherlands. At his appointment, he commented that:

In Paramaribo I have been told that I should try to bring relations back to a reasonable level. In fulfilling my task I will be guided primarily by the interests of the Surinamese people. Even though The Hague is a very difficult post, I am aware that large sections of the Surinamese and Dutch people want the relationship to improve. This is also the wish of the Surinamese government. (*NRC Handelsblad*, 19-5-1984:3.)

Another diplomatic tool used by Bouterse to influence The Hague was to publish statistics 'confirming' that the majority of the Dutch public favoured providing Suriname with financial assistance. A representative survey among 1,000 Dutch citizens by NATCOM⁴ revealed that 57% of the respondents wished to give the former colony the funds promised in the Aid Treaty (*NRC Handelsblad*, 23-6-1984:3). Even though NATCOM did not publish the actual survey questions, which could have ruled out any accusations that the questionnaire had been 'organized' to ensure a positive response, this initiative illustrated Paramaribo's determined attempt to influence The Hague's position.

These initiatives indeed appeared to bear fruit. Two months after having instigated contacts between high-government officials of both countries, The Hague confirmed that its Director of European Affairs, Willem van Eekelen, had met with Minister Fong Poen at an international conference in April 1984. It was also acknowledged that Udenhout had personally approached Van den Broek at a UN forum in Washington in May, while The Hague admitted to having conducted additional talks at an ILO convention in Geneva, where Minister Gilds had requested a meeting with his Dutch counterpart De Koning (*Het Parool*, 5-7-1984:3).

⁴ Ironically the abbreviation for Nationale Commissie ter Preventie van Buitenlandse Inmenging in Suriname (National Commission for the Prevention of Foreign Interference in Suriname).

In all three cases Suriname employed the same tactic of approaching Dutch politicians and officials in a neutral environment. Although these talks would not result in any definite aid agreement – they had not, however, been initiated with this in mind – they were nevertheless an important manoeuvre to gauge official Dutch attitudes. Whereas The Hague continued to demand, according to Foreign Affairs, that ‘on the Surinamese side concrete steps are taken in the fields of legal security and democratic relations’ (*NRC Handelsblad*, 4-7-1984:1), from a Surinamese perspective it was emphasized that, when looking at the composition and purpose of the Udenhout cabinet, these ‘concrete steps’ had already been implemented.

The main characteristic of these talks was that, despite their opposing views, both sides interacted in a calm and diplomatic manner. Under these more favourable conditions, in August 1984 Derby eventually decided to travel across the Atlantic for consultations with Dutch parties and unions (*De Ware Tijd*, 22-8-1984:1). However, he would fail to convince these parties that reforms were being introduced as his warning went unheeded that ‘if the principles of our thinking are not recognized, the workers will not give us permission to participate in a new government’ (*NRC Handelsblad*, 24-8-1984:3) – a clear reference that without Dutch aid to improve Suriname’s socio-economic status, Surinamese politics would certainly not improve. Meanwhile Dutch union leaders continued to emphasize that the regime had to introduce a comprehensive redemocratization programme before funds could be made available (*Trouw*, 21-8-1984:3).

Nonetheless Suriname continued to engage The Hague in informal talks. For instance, in a speech to the OAS in August 1984, Heidweiler predicted that his country’s strong historical and socio-cultural ties with the Netherlands would soon be followed by a durable political and economic friendship (*NRC Handelsblad*, 6-8-1984:3). One month later he presented a similar message to the Dutch Senate and the Tweede Kamer (House of Representatives). At the same time Udenhout suggested a meeting with his Dutch counterpart as he felt that bilateral relations had sufficiently stabilized (*De Ware Tijd*, 12-9-1984:1). Although Lubbers did not share this opinion, he agreed to a meeting between Udenhout and Van den Broek at the UN in New York, where the issue of economic aid was once more brought forward by the Surinamese Prime Minister (*De Ware Tijd*, 28-9-1984:1). The same theme was also raised a few days later by Udenhout, in his address to the UN General Assembly. While emphasizing that Suriname was currently implementing a redemocratization programme and that the main Dutch precondition for reinstating economic aid had thus been fulfilled, he argued that ‘Suriname has recently approached the Netherlands to discuss a normalization of relations and cherishes the hope that the dialogue, for which the basis has been laid, will lead to a new arrangement with regard to the Aid Treaty’ (*De Ware Tijd*, 6-10-1984:1).

Still, The Hague failed to respond on the grounds that a redemocratization programme had not even been initiated. This uncompromising position frustrated the Surinamese leadership so much that it began to lose patience. Following talks with Van den Broek in New York, Udenhout expressed his disappointment in an interview with the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*.

Responsibility for Suriname's well-being, including the formation of democratic structures in our country, lies first and foremost with the Surinamese themselves. The Netherlands is no longer responsible for Suriname. We consider it oppressive and colonial that the Netherlands still claims that responsibility. [...] The Netherlands seems to have little insight into internal relations within Suriname nor is it capable of following the progress that has been made in every field. (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-9-1984:3.)

A similar response was expressed by Bouterse in an interview with *Elseviers Magazine* in November.

The Netherlands must sit down at the table on the basis of equality. We have certain agreements with the Netherlands, we have certain agreements with international organizations, and the Netherlands must respect the agreements it has made with us, particularly within the framework of development cooperation, which has been suspended in a disputable fashion. (*Elseviers Weekblad*, 24-11-1984:33.)

Yet Bouterse was not willing to abandon Suriname's foreign policy initiative altogether. In the same interview he reiterated his interest in continuing dialogue with The Hague for the sake of economic aid. To the question as to whether he still felt a positive bond with the Dutch, Bouterse's surprising answer was: 'As with all Surinamese. It is a consequence of colonialism, that we still have warm feelings for the Netherlands.' In fact, Bouterse even admitted to be at least indirectly responsible for the December Murders, as he explained that 'the events of December were based on the principle of saving one's own life. We had to take action. It was either them or us. We acted first. That is the problem with a revolution: which revolution occurs without a fight?' (*Elseviers Weekblad*, 24-11-1984:35). It was remarkable how Bouterse was willing to answer these controversial questions by Dutch journalists almost to the point of self-abasement. Even though it is unclear to what degree his answers reflected his 'true' position towards the Netherlands they did demonstrate that, despite his nationalist and socialist convictions, in order to receive economic aid, he was willing to say whatever he felt the Dutch public and politicians liked to hear.

This strategy, at last, seemed to soften The Hague's position. Within the ruling coalition voices could be heard suggesting that redemocratization efforts be bolstered by providing some aid. The CDA, the main governing

party, supported Van den Broek's 'quiet diplomacy' of including the possibility of transferring funds to Suriname once the redemocratization process had started, although its smaller coalition partner the VVD threatened to block these attempts as it insisted on Bouterse's removal from power first (*NRC Handelsblad*, 28-9-1984:3). Udenhout's hope that the CDA would pressure its junior partner into rethinking its position was shattered towards the end of 1984, when CDA Minister Schoo's suggestion of visiting Paramaribo for a discussion on possible financial assistance was called 'premature' by the CDA leadership (*de Volkskrant*, 3-12-1984:1).

The Republic's redemocratization, so insistently demanded by The Hague, came one step closer in December, when the think tank installed by Bouterse presented Udenhout with its report on the issue. The report stated the need for the formation of a National Assembly comprising 31 members (appointed by the country's main political and socio-economic groups), 14 of whom were to come from the VFB/military, 11 from the union movement and 6 from the employers' organizations. The parliament's main task was to draft a new Constitution within a period of 27 months (*De Ware Tijd*, 6-12-1984:1).

In the following days Udenhout accepted these recommendations and, as agreed earlier in the year, dissolved his cabinet. On Bouterse's request, on 1 January 1985 Udenhout's second administration was inaugurated, including eight ministers who had served in the previous cabinet and with Udenhout retaining Foreign Affairs. Only Marcel Chehin of the Suriname Trade and Industry Association, the VSB, refused to participate in this redesigned cabinet in a protest against the apparently strengthened position of the Association of Surinamese Manufacturers, the ASFA (*Het Parool*, 2-1-1985:9). Still, despite the VSB's withdrawal, the new cabinet would continue on a relatively broad base. Expanded to twelve members, it comprised five representatives from the VFB/military, four from the union movement and three from the ASFA (Meel 1990:89).

Considering the composition of both parliament and government, the redemocratization process finally appeared to have taken some concrete form. It was now hoped that it would merely be a question of time before Dutch aid reached Suriname. As Meel (1990:89) commented on recent developments in Paramaribo: 'The Assembly and the cabinet can be characterized as extraordinary since the military did not command a majority in either of these bodies', while pointing out that the military remained firmly in control of the country's political affairs through the Supreme Council, a corporatist-styled body comprising eighteen delegates (mainly from the VFB/military although some representatives from the unions and the employers' organizations were included) with the task of nominating ministers and formulating policy programmes. Despite the Supreme Council's limited formal powers in ensuring that the government would follow the desired direction, its influence was significant.

It must be noted that Bouterse, as he had done at the beginning of 1984, once again cleverly managed to remain fully in control – this time through the VFB representation in parliament and the cabinet, as well as through the military's dominant position in the Supreme Council. The officers' hold on power was generally accepted by the other government partners, whose main criticism was restricted to complaints from some unionists who rejected the RVP's influence within the Labor Ministry as well as to the withdrawal of the VSB from the government in protest of the apparent stronger position of the ASFA within the cabinet (Thorndike 1990:48-9).

Whereas these modest reforms were well received in Suriname, the Netherlands reacted quite differently. When on 7 December 1984 the Lubbers cabinet learned about the changes in Suriname, it critically analysed the redemocratization programme and on 18 December Foreign Affairs informed the public that the reforms were judged to be insufficient (*NRC Handelsblad*, 18-12-1984:1). Criticism centred on two issues in particular: neither free nor secret elections had been conducted to determine the parliament's composition and the military's influence had not diminished in any significant way. Consequently, Lubbers rejected the possibility of providing aid in the short term. Despite his conciliatory offer to continue the dialogue with Suriname and to discuss alternative reform possibilities, this rejection of the redemocratization programme came as a severe blow to Paramaribo, bringing Bouterse back to square one.

Going around in circles

While the year 1984 had seen some consensus arising on both sides of the Atlantic with regard to the need to discuss one another's position, 1985 was characterized by a worsening of bilateral relations. Obviously, the main bone of contention remained The Hague's uncompromising stand on the issue of aid. When Lubbers also rejected the Surinamese invitation to attend the Revolution's fifth anniversary it became painfully obvious that transatlantic ties were still utterly unstable, despite the recent dialogue. Van den Broek, in a diplomatic letter to Heidweiler, outlined the Dutch position, arguing that 'the present state of relations between the Netherlands and Suriname still does not make it expedient to accept the invitation' (*Het Parool*, 12-2-1985:1). Instead, Ambassador Dirk Jan van Houten would represent Lubbers at some of the festivities organized by the regime on 25 February 1985 (*de Volkskrant*, 25-2-1985:6).

Not surprisingly, during these celebrations, Bouterse abandoned his strategy of seeking closer contacts with the Netherlands. In a speech made on 25 February he accused Dutch politicians and journalists of making use of

'new lies and slander' in order to create a negative image of the regime in the Netherlands and, through Radio Wereldomroep, also in Suriname (*Het Parool*, 26-2-1985:4). Bouterse went on to accuse Lubbers of allowing Dutch companies to invest in the Republic while refusing to allocate aid. Referring to a possible US\$ 100 million loan from Libya, he angrily spat in The Hague's face, stating in a rather undiplomatic tone: 'To hell with your money. I will do it on my own' (*de Volkskrant*, 25-2-1985:6). Equally acrimonious words could be heard in the new parliament, where a motion was carried demanding the reinstatement of financial assistance. Mijns even went so far as to accuse the Netherlands of 'misdeeds against our people and against the people of Indonesia.' Interesting to note is that since Indonesia received Dutch aid despite human rights abuses, Paramaribo would also complain about The Hague's double standards (*De Ware Tijd*, 26-2-1985:1; Oltmans 1984:17).

Heidweiler was the only prominent Surinamese official still holding out for a diplomatic breakthrough. While addressing the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva in March 1985, he again emphasized that Suriname had started to reintroduce democracy. Since the findings of the Wako report had also been taken to heart Heidweiler argued that The Hague should rethink its position – in particular considering that other countries with a worse human rights record actually did receive Dutch assistance. In addition, Heidweiler warned that 'the Netherlands has enough experience to know that economic sanctions in the first place hit the people and that sanctions actually have a hardening effect' (*Het Parool*, 9-3-1985:3). Unfortunately, his comments were overshadowed by the death of three Surinamese musicians in an office of the Liberation Council in Rijswijk. They were, according to the Dutch police, mistakenly assassinated after having been confused with leading Council members by the same terror commando unit which had carried out earlier attacks in the Netherlands (*de Volkskrant*, 9-3-1985:3).

Lubbers was in no mood to compromise and following Bouterse's decision to abandon further talks with Dutch officials, The Hague also hardened its stance. What followed were several weeks of a wait-and-see approach until, by the end of May 1985, Udenhout decided to force the issue by recalling Suriname's two senior diplomats from The Hague. Although according to the official explanation both diplomats were to be consulted on the reorganization of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister confirmed that the decision was in fact a protest against the Dutch uncompromising position (*de Volkskrant*, 28-5-1985:1).

As if Suriname's unilateral action was not damaging enough in itself (particularly because Heidweiler was one of the two diplomats recalled), transatlantic ties experienced another setback as, a few days later, Schoo asked Paramaribo to unilaterally terminate the Aid Treaty. The Minister thus demanded Suriname to release the Netherlands from its commitments to pay

the remaining aid (*Trouw*, 10-6-1985:1). The reason for this drastic 'suggestion' was, according to Schoo's implausible explanation, that only if this were to happen would her Ministry be able to provide independent aid organizations operating in Suriname with some of the frozen funds. Udenhout, without hesitation, rejected this proposal. However, in the Dutch House of Representatives Schoo's proposal had not even won a majority as most parliamentarians had become so 'paranoid' that they even feared that funds for independent aid organizations could end up in the regime's treasury.

Following Udenhout's decision to reduce the level of diplomatic representation and Schoo's suggestion to unilaterally terminate the Aid Treaty, tensions reached a climax in the summer of 1985. Just how far the situation had deteriorated within a short time became obvious in a speech made by Bouterse to the VFB in July. Expressing his outrage at the present condition of Dutch-Surinamese relations, Bouterse argued that 'perhaps the time has come to advise the Netherlands to downgrade its embassy in Suriname to the level of chargé d'affaires, until the Netherlands is prepared to really maintain friendly and non-hypocritical relations with Suriname' (*Het Parool*, 15-7-1985:3). The military strongman confirmed that Suriname would not maintain an Ambassador in The Hague and asked the Dutch government to withdraw Van Houten from Paramaribo. The Lubbers cabinet had no choice but to also recall its Ambassador for 'consultations'.

To fully understand this deterioration in Dutch-Surinamese relations, it should be noted that within the Udenhout cabinet a crisis had emerged, which actually had a negative effect on bilateral relations. In April the unions had withdrawn their support for the government in protest against the refusal of Minister of Labour Edmond Dankerlui to resign in connection with an ongoing dispute about the RVP's influence in his Department. Only at the end of July did Udenhout manage to reorganize his cabinet by convincing at least the Moederbond and the CLO (but not the C-47) of supporting the government (*Het Parool*, 29-7-1985:7). One of the main changes in this new, enlarged cabinet entailed Erik Tjon Kie Sim taking over from Udenhout as Minister of Foreign Affairs. In the meantime, as most moderate politicians attempted to resolve the government crisis, Bouterse was free to express his anger and frustration with the Dutch.

A new twist in the worsening of transatlantic ties became patently visible with threats being made against Dutch citizens and offices in Suriname by unidentified gangs. At the request of First Secretary of the Dutch embassy, Eric Klipp, the NL started to patrol the embassy, consulate and KLM offices (*De Ware Tijd*, 30-8-1985:1). In fact, the threat to Dutch citizens did not only come from unidentified gangs but also from the Surinamese authorities themselves as demonstrated by the expulsion of Roman Catholic priest Martin Noordermeer, who was ordered to leave due to his 'anti-Surinamese'

activities, despite having lived in the Republic for over fifteen years (*NRC Handelsblad*, 30-8-1985:3). In other words, Bouterse began to rely on similar hostile tactics in his dealings with the Netherlands as he had done in mid-1983, by sharply attacking the Lubbers cabinet, downgrading diplomatic relations and expelling Dutch citizens.



Cartoon 6. Progress towards democracy and aid (*Het Parool*, 19-10-1985:3)

Unfortunately, the Dutch media also remembered the old strategy of portraying Bouterse as a barbarous dictator. *Het Parool* published a caricature (Cartoon 6) of the Lieutenant Colonel requesting Dutch economic aid for having introduced the redemocratization process, despite continuing to oppress the people. A similar message, suggesting that Bouterse was planning to flood Paramaribo by destroying the Afobaka Dam near the capital in the event of an invasion or coup, was published a few days later in the same newspaper (*Het Parool*, 23-10-1985:7). Such images only contributed to fuelling anti-Bouterse – and most likely also anti-Surinamese sentiments – among the Dutch population. As such they put additional public pressure on the Lubbers cabinet to remain firm in its dealings with the former colony.

Deadlocked relations

As relations with the Netherlands deteriorated, internally important progress towards Suriname's redemocratization was achieved. This process, which Meel (1990:89) judged to be 'a real watershed in Suriname's history', experienced a significant boost as on the tenth anniversary of Suriname's independence the former coalition parties signed an agreement with the Udenhout cabinet on the further implementation of democratic structures. Secret talks between Lachmon (VHP) and Arron (NPS) on the one hand and the regime on the other were initiated at Bouterse's request in May 1984, whereby the former political leaders had suggested that they come to a new power-sharing formula. This plan was, however, at first rejected by the officers since it would have reduced their influence. Nonetheless, despite this initial setback, secret talks continued and were later expanded to include Soemita of the KTPI (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:65).

With the aim of concluding these talks before the tenth anniversary of independence, Bouterse had put himself under enormous pressure to reach an agreement with the civilian parties. But as Lachmon, Arron and Soemita insisted on the original plan of 1984, Bouterse's room for manoeuvre diminished as he was forced to accept some major aspects of the initial redemocratization plan (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:65-6). Eventually, on 25 November 1985, the Lieutenant Colonel publicly confirmed that an agreement had been signed between the VHP, NPS and KTPI about far-reaching political reforms (*De Ware Tijd*, 26-11-1985:1). The Udenhout cabinet would remain in office until April 1987. A new Constitution was to come into force following free and secret elections.

Furthermore, Lachmon, Arron and Soemita were invited to take part in the Supreme Council, where they monitored the agreement and also participated in political and administrative matters (Chin and Buddingh' 1987:66). That the agreement had been the outcome of tough negotiations and many compromises was evident from the many unenthusiastic comments. While Arron stated that it was 'the best result that could have been achieved under the present circumstances' (*de Volkskrant*, 27-11-1985:6), Lachmon caustically commented: 'Perfection does not exist anywhere [...] I cannot really say that the entire document comes up to our expectations, but in a dialogue it is give and take' (*De Ware Tijd*, 26-11-1985:1).

If Bouterse thought that this agreement, which was intended to invigorate the previously introduced redemocratization programme, would have a positive influence on The Hague's position, he had again misjudged the situation. By the end of 1985 bilateral relations still remained tense and, the day following the agreement profound doubts were expressed in the House of Representatives. Knol (PvdA), for instance, argued: 'I do not understand why

the old political leaders have signed that agreement. Bouterse is completely unreliable, which has repeatedly become clear in the past' (*Het Parool*, 26-11-1985:3). Although Weisglas (VVD) was less critical, he also declared that the agreement constituted no reason to reinstate aid.

In contrast to these harsh tones in the House of Representatives, Dutch ministers acknowledged that the latest reforms represented some progress. A spokesperson for the Department of Foreign Affairs confirmed The Hague's willingness to re-establish dialogue with Paramaribo and Lubbers invited the three leaders of the now legalized political parties to The Hague. This time it was Bouterse's turn to reject the offer. After discussing the invitation with Lachmon, Arron and Soemita in the Supreme Council it was decided that as long as the military would not be accepted in the dialogue, no delegates would attend the planned talks (*De Ware Tijd*, 14-12-1985:1). Dutch-Surinamese relations thus remained deadlocked, despite the reforms.

Bouterse, in fact, felt comfortable enough to resume his sharp attacks on the Netherlands. In January 1986, in his New Year's Address, he told the Lubbers cabinet to respect Suriname's sovereignty and treat the nation as an equal entity within the international system. He commented that 'a sincere friendship can only be based on the actual acceptance of Suriname's sovereignty' (*De Ware Tijd*, 2-1-1986:1). Bouterse went on to criticize The Hague for its double standards on economic aid: 'One for the rest of the world and one for the former colony of Suriname, which continues to hinder the normalization of relations between both countries' (*De Ware Tijd*, 2-1-1986:12). Finally, he snarled at the Netherlands while stressing the importance of the recent domestic reforms, describing them as 'a real and durable democratic order which is no copy of the structures of former colonial masters, but which meets the ideals of the people' (*De Ware Tijd*, 2-1-1986:12).

Whereas throughout 1985 Bouterse had formulated Suriname's approach regarding the Netherlands, following the agreement with NPS, VHP and KTPI, the Udenhout cabinet attempted to take on a more active role. In February 1986 Fong Poen (acknowledging the progress made through dialogue with The Hague in 1984) sought to revive the earlier strategy and asked for a meeting with Van Eekelen at a conference in Mbabane, Swaziland (*Trouw*, 18-2-1986:1). Fong Poen's initiative was given an additional impulse as Bouterse lifted the state of emergency – in force since August 1980 – on the sixth anniversary of the February coup (*De Ware Tijd*, 26-2-1986:1). This ushered in an attitude change in The Hague, where parliamentarians again debated the possibility of supporting the redemocratization process with financial assistance. The stance adopted by Schoo and Van den Broek in particular must have pleased Suriname. While Schoo announced the possibility of providing medicine and food, the latter confirmed that he had received no new reports about human rights abuses and was in favour of providing some restricted

aid (mainly medical support) to Suriname (*Trouw*, 28-2-1986:1, 12-3-1986:4).

A nerve-racking period began as Surinamese politicians anxiously awaited The Hague's decision on aid. Their optimism intensified as Schoo announced she would be sending ministerial experts to Suriname to investigate recent political developments while the House of Representatives revealed its interest in sending a delegation with the aim of seeking contacts with members of the National Assembly. However, during the debate in the House of Representatives on 6 March 1986 it became painfully obvious that these latest initiatives found no support amongst the majority. Weisglas criticized Schoo and Van den Broek for weakening the Dutch position towards the aid issue, because Bouterse was still firmly being in control. The Dutch Foreign Minister impressively defended his policy as he argued that if the Netherlands wanted to influence the redemocratization process 'we must have complete respect for the independence of Suriname' (*Trouw*, 7-3-1986:4). His warning that it would make no sense to 'wait until everything in Suriname has been organized' indicated the cabinet's interest in supporting recent developments in the Republic (*Trouw*, 7-3-1986:4).

In addition to the still vehement criticism within the House of Representatives, the official change in the Liberation Council's stance towards the regime must have been received as discouraging news in Paramaribo. With the resignation of Chin A Sen as Chairman in March 1986, the Council's new leader, Glenn Tjong Akiët, declared that he would not be a second 'Gandhi' in his dealings with Bouterse (*Trouw*, 19-3-1986:1). Even though Council members had been involved in previous invasion and coup plans, Tjong Akiët's comment threatened to throw a spanner in the works of Udenhout's attempts at stabilizing relations with The Hague.

It thus seemed merely a question of time before Dutch-Surinamese relations would plunge into a new round of difficulties. But when this finally did occur, it was not so much the result of criticisms expressed within the House of Representatives or of threats made by the Council, but mainly spurred on by events within Suriname itself. Following the embarrassing arrest of Boerenveen on drug-related charges in March 1986, the Dutch parliament demanded the suspension of discussions on medical aid to Suriname (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-3-1986:5). Even the two Ministers previously tending to offer a helping hand, Schoo and Van den Broek, expressed their disappointment, particularly as it was speculated that other high-ranking officers were also involved in drug trafficking.

Once more, the regime felt betrayed as, despite the agreement with VHP, NPS and KTPI and the renewal of the dialogue with the Netherlands, The Hague had again rebuffed Paramaribo's initiatives. Bouterse reverted to familiar tactics of antagonizing the Dutch as much as possible. When Foreign Minister Kie Sim resigned in February, Bouterse asked Herrenberg to replace

him (*Trouw*, 1-3-1986:1), thus ensuring that the confrontation with The Hague would be fierce. The situation worsened when another cabinet reshuffle took place. After Udenhout's resignation in July 1986 a new government under VHP politician Radhakishun was formed. Maintaining the support of the VFB/military, union movements and the employers' organizations, the new cabinet had a unique character with, for the first time since the February coup, direct government participation by VHP, NPS and KTPI (*De Ware Tijd*, 17-7-1986:1). And while most of these politicians were involved in intense negotiations about the composition of the cabinet, Bouterse used their preoccupation to act against the Netherlands.

His tactics once again included the arrest and expulsion of Dutch citizens. On 11 June 1986 two journalists, Pieter Storm and Gerard Wessel, were detained by the military on accusations of espionage (*De Ware Tijd*, 14-6-1986:1). International backlash was immediate as not only The Hague and the Dutch Association of Journalists, but also the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Organization of Journalists (in Prague) and the Committee for the Protection of Journalists (in New York) opposed to Bouterse's latest 'stunt' (*Trouw*, 17-6-1986:7). As expected, by the end of June both journalists were expelled (*De Ware Tijd*, 26-6-1986:1). Bouterse then decided to further downgrade diplomatic links with the Netherlands by ordering Klipp to leave Paramaribo 'on the grounds of unlawful interference in the internal affairs of Suriname' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 9-7-1986:1). The Netherlands retaliated a day later by equally expelling the First Secretary of the Surinamese embassy, Marciano Jessurun, on the accusation of unlawfully carrying a weapon and of insulting Dutch parliamentarians, whom he had called 'the dumbest in the world' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 10-7-1986:3).

The civil war

Before continuing the analysis of Dutch-Surinamese relations, it is necessary to discuss Suriname's ever-deteriorating socio-economic situation caused by the civil war. The origin of this internal conflict is to be found in mid-1986, when Bouterse's former bodyguard and personal friend Brunswijk established the SLNA to overthrow the regime. Brunswijk, a former officer, decided to oppose Bouterse primarily due to a dispute with his superiors about rank and wages and was thus not based on political conviction. Withdrawing to East Suriname, he initially began to oppose the regime as a 'lone guerrilla' (Van der Beek 1987:25). This alerted the NL, which started to search for Brunswijk in his home region, in the process of which they began to harass the local Maroon population of which Brunswijk was a member (Lagerberg 1989:142).

The 'hunted' opponent eventually decided to seek asylum in the Netherlands. Realizing the political and military potential of the growing turmoil in East Suriname, opposition groups in the Netherlands convinced Brunswijk of establishing a guerrilla force to fight the NL. During a short stay in Amsterdam, Brunswijk was particularly influenced in his decision to form the SNLA by Haakmat and Michel van Rey, a former Minister of Defence under Bouterse (Van der Beek 1987:36).

With the exiled organizations promising to raise funds to buy weapons, Brunswijk returned to East Suriname and began to recruit a force, for which he mainly commissioned Maroons (Van der Beek 1987:100). This Jungle Commando was soon engaged in a series of spectacular assaults, including a raid on the military barracks in Albina and on an armed post guarding a bridge across the Commewijne River on the Paramaribo-Albina road, where, besides weapons, food, vehicles and ammunition (Brana-Shute 1987:7) the SNLA also captured the commander of the Echo Brigade, Van Randwijk (who would later join the guerrilla movement). In addition, Stoelmanseiland, located between French Guiana and Suriname in the Marowijne, was occupied and turned into the Jungle Commando's main base. Making use of small boats, further raids were organized throughout eastern Suriname (see Map 3), a region of substantial socio-economic importance.

Meanwhile Brunswijk had gained enormous publicity by raiding a bank in Moengo on 8 August 1986 and distributing the money among his fellow Maroons; an action earning him the nickname of 'Robin Hood' (Van der Beek 1987:26). Yet he attracted even more public attention by calling on 'all Surinamese, wherever in the world, to offer resistance to the corrupt and criminal military regime in order to gain a durable restoration of the democratic constitutional state' (*Trouw*, 26-7-1986:5). Even though most of his political messages were directed at elevating his standing within the Surinamese community in the Netherlands and among Maroons living in the areas under his control, the occasional transmission of his speeches by Radio Wereldomroep was also used to communicate directly with Bouterse and to inform the Surinamese population of his operations.

By this time Brunswijk could count on some support from The Hague and Paris. Both governments had an interest in removing Bouterse from power. For the Netherlands, in Payne's assessment (1984:106-7) of the situation prior to the civil war

the executions at the end of 1982 [had] finally persuaded the Hague to act and break off the supply of aid. In these circumstances, the Netherlands [could not] avoid continued involvement in the tense internal situation in Suriname, no matter how embarrassing it finds it, but generally it has no taste for geopolitical action in the Caribbean.

With this in mind, some assistance to the SNLA (such as allowing Brunswijk the use of Radio Wereldroep) was perceived as a convenient way of intervening in Suriname's domestic affairs without becoming directly involved. Referring to French involvement, Brana-Shute (1987:5-6) argued that

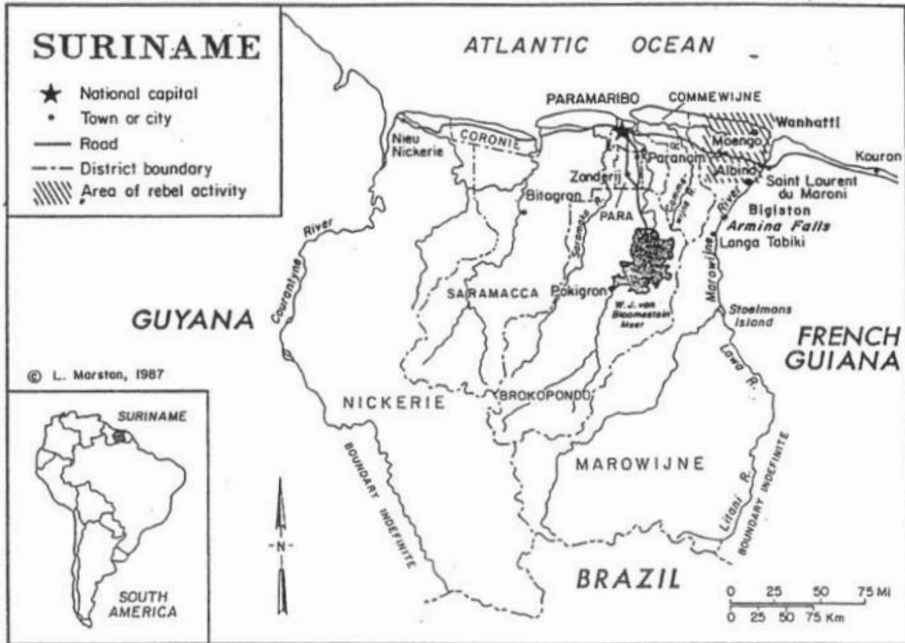
There is little doubt that Brunswijk also enjoyed the complicity of the French authorities who were growing increasingly irritated with Bouterse's radical regime on their colonial border, and with his working relationship with Libyans with whom the French, for lack of a better term, were at war in Chad. On several occasions Brunswijk, with military in hot pursuit, crossed the Marowijne river [known in French as the Maroni] to safety in the border town of St. Laurent du Maroni. The Suriname army, generally poorly trained and riddled by internal factions, was not prepared to take on the French Foreign Legion. If this was a wink and nod by the French, by late 1986 the relationship had developed into a hearty handshake.

Failing to contain SNLA's attacks on army installations or to protect the settlements outside the capital, the armed forces began to terrorize the local Maroon population. As a result, comparisons were drawn between the eighteenth-century Maroon's Boni Wars against the Dutch and the Jungle Commando's fight against Bouterse. The first sign of a more aggressive military campaign came as Bouterse proclaimed the state of emergency in East Suriname at the end of August 1986, thus providing the NL with wide-ranging powers. In the following months the army's counter-attacks resulted in a steady stream of Maroons and Amerindians fleeing the fighting. They sought shelter in French Guiana, where local authorities had established several camps around St. Laurent and Aquaruni. Particularly the NL's attacks on the Maroon villages of Sabana, Moiwana and Moengo-Tapoe, where at least twenty women and children were killed in late November and early December 1986, resulted in a rapid increase in the flow of refugees.⁵

Despite the military's tactics aimed at breaking local support for the SNLA, which by now numbered between 300 and 600 guerrillas,⁶ Brunswijk continued to disrupt socio-economic life in eastern Suriname as well as in the central districts. In November 1986 the Jungle Commando destroyed two electricity lines supplying the capital with power, just thirty kilometres south of Paramaribo (*De Ware Tijd*, 20-11-1986:1). One day later the SNLA forced Suralco to close its mine in Moengo following heavy fighting in the region and the closing off of the main road linking the eastern districts with the capital by

⁵ Lagerberg 1989:145. In the village of Moiwana alone 39 people were killed by the NL on 29-11-1986. The military explained these killings on the grounds that it had assumed that the villagers were providing food and shelter for Brunswijk at that time.

⁶ Including three British mercenaries, see Brana-Shute 1987:26.



Map 3. The civil war in eastern Suriname (Brana-Shute 1987:7)

blowing up a vital bridge across the Cottica river (*De Ware Tijd*, 21-11-1986:1). The economic costs of these attacks were enormous. Aware that the army had thus far been unable to bring the conflict to an end, by late 1986 the regime decided to issue new currency notes, in the hope of preventing Brunswijk from buying more weapons with the money accumulated from bank robberies (*The Economist*, 15-11-1986:28).

These desperate actions were largely unsuccessful and the SNLA continued its campaign, with an English mercenary even announcing that control of the capital would be gained by Christmas 1986 (Lagerberg 1989:142). Nevertheless, the SNLA did suffer from the major weakness that it was generally perceived as a Maroon uprising (Lagerberg 1989:143). This provided Bouterse with some public support since other ethnic groups feared the SNLA's rule. To counter this perception and to strengthen the Jungle Commando, in April 1987 Brunswijk met with representatives of various exiled organizations on Stoelmanseiland. During this meeting it was agreed to establish a National Resistance Council with Haakmat,⁷ Somohardjo (Pendawa Lima), Emile

⁷ Amsterdams Volksverzet, AVV, Amsterdam People's Opposition Movement.

Wijntuin (PSV), Tjong Akiët (Liberation Council) and two delegates representing the Jungle Commando as members. Chin A Sen, unable to attend, was represented by Eddy Jozefszoon (*Het Parool*, 4-4-1987:3), who soon afterwards would become an influential advisor and spokesman for Brunswijk in the Netherlands.

The period shortly before and following the meeting on Stoelmanseiland was the highpoint of SNLA's operations. In January 1987 Brunswijk once again severely disrupted Suriname's economic sector by reducing the electricity supply to the Paramaribo region. As a direct result, Suralco was forced to lay off over 600 employees in the areas affected (*De Ware Tijd*, 31-1-1987:1, 2-2-1987:1). Other companies experienced similar difficulties in continuing their production. A bridge was blown up near Brokopondo which cut off access to the Poika region, where timber was sawn for Bruynzeel (*Het Parool*, 4-5-1987:1), whose processing facilities in Moengo had already closed down in October 1986, after the SNLA gaining control of the town. In addition to the pressure placed on the regime through the suspension of Dutch aid, further financial losses were thus suffered as a result of the economic disruptions caused by the civil war.

Fortunately for Bouterse, by the second half of 1987 the SNLA's success came to an end. Although the guerrillas continued their operations, including the capture of a SLM plane (Van der Beek 1987:96-7) and the shooting down of an army helicopter, it became clear that the various groups comprising the Nationale Verzetsraad (National Resistance Council) were merely interested in using Brunswijk as a military tool to overthrow Bouterse (*Het Parool*, 11-7-1987:1). Brunswijk himself soon became aware of the dubious nature of the support which had been pledged to him, as he stated in a speech delivered to the National Resistance Council on Stoelmanseiland:

Sometimes we ask ourselves here if the people in the Netherlands understand that we have a very serious task at hand which can, and has, cost human lives. Instead of helping us, we are attacked by these people and they abandon us. I find unity within the resistance very important. The Jungle Commando has done everything possible to achieve this. We have invited the people to come to Stoelmanseiland, after which the National Resistance Council for Suriname was formed. But once again the differences (which are often personal) appeared so great that before long the unity crumbled. (Van der Beek 1987:93.)

Another diplomatic breakdown

Unquestionably, the ongoing civil war had a devastating effect on the country's fragile socio-economic situation. Furthermore, as Bouterse claimed, it also threatened to have an impact on the redemocratization process and the

problematic Dutch-Surinamese relations. On 27 August 1986 the Lieutenant Colonel clarified his viewpoint in a speech delivered to a crowd protesting outside the Dutch embassy against The Hague's apparent support for the SNLA. Warning that Dutch attempts to undermine Suriname's political stability would stall the redemocratization process (*De Ware Tijd*, 28-8-1986:1), Bouterse cited The Hague's inactivity with regard to the media's promotion of the Jungle Commando and its failure to prevent anti-Bouterse organizations from recruiting SNLA 'terrorists' as the main factors responsible for Suriname's volatile domestic situation. To emphasize the seriousness with which Paramaribo judged these accusations, over 7,000 protesters then presented a petition to the Dutch embassy demanding the 'immediate halt of all assistance to the terrorists and the calling back of the mercenaries' (*Het Parool*, 28-8-1986:3).

On the other side of the Atlantic Dutch Foreign Minister Van den Broek rejected these accusations, emphasizing that the media enjoyed the constitutional right of press freedom and, although it was illegal to organize military activities for the SNLA in the Netherlands, sympathizers of Brunswijk could not be prevented from travelling to Latin America and joining the Jungle Commando (*Trouw*, 29-8-1986:5). Moreover, Van den Broek, assisted by the new Minister for Development Cooperation Piet Bukman pointed out that the Netherlands had just provided Paramaribo with medical aid amounting to Nf 1 million, to demonstrate that The Hague was not anti-Suriname (*NRC Handelsblad*, 1-9-1986:3).

This conciliatory tone had a positive effect on the new Radhakishun cabinet. Having settled into its new role, the administration now began to steadily expand its influence on the country's foreign policy. Radhakishun in fact went on a 'family visit' to the Netherlands in September, during the course of which he accepted an invitation by Van den Broek for a meeting (*De Ware Tijd*, 16-9-1986:1). To what extent this so-called 'family visit' (in order not to provoke Bouterse) was prearranged by the two governments has been difficult to determine, but it certainly provided both sides with an excellent opportunity to exchange views on the civil war and on the redemocratization process. Around the same time the Surinamese Finance Minister met with Bukman at an IMF conference in Washington, where the latter promised further financial support 'as soon as a positive step in the direction of a restoration of democracy has been taken' (*Trouw*, 2-10-1986:1). With the renewed participation of NPS, VHP and KTPI in government it became clear that The Hague was eager to bring the latest row with Paramaribo to an end.

While in civilian political circles around Radhakishun there was a desire to restart dialogue with the Netherlands, Bouterse and his supporters continued their attacks on The Hague. At the NAM conference in Harare in September 1986, Herrenberg introduced a motion condemning Dutch interference in

Suriname's domestic affairs (*Trouw*, 16-9-1986:3). A month later, it was Bouterse who repeated his earlier accusations against the Lubbers government in a speech delivered at the UN General Assembly, in which he referred to 'terrorist groups, that are generally based in the Netherlands and currently provide support to a group of bandits who are terrorizing the eastern part of our country'. Bouterse asked the Dutch government 'to take more action against these terrorist groups, particularly since they are largely recruited and financed in the territory of that country [the Netherlands]' (*De Ware Tijd*, 4-10-1986:1). He also accused the Netherlands of, on the international level, 'creating the impression that Suriname is a military dictatorship that arbitrarily exercises its power without taking into account the legal order or respecting elementary human rights' (*De Ware Tijd*, 4-10-1986:2).

Across the Atlantic (and despite Bouterse's and Herrenberg's recent attacks) Lubbers, acting on Radhakishun's gesture of goodwill, approved the initiative of Van den Broek and Bukman to provide an additional Nf 2.5 million in medicine and food to Suriname by the end of November (*Trouw*, 26-11-1986:1). The Hague, in fact, assured Paramaribo that this aid would primarily be distributed in war-torn areas under government control. Only aid provided by charity institutions, collecting their funds directly from the Dutch public, would be allowed to help those living in SNLA-held districts (*de Volkskrant*, 12-12-1986:5).

Suriname was not the only place where strong differences of opinion existed between the various strata of government regarding what policy to adopt. In the Netherlands the cabinet continued to be critically monitored by the House of Representatives. The Ministry of Development Cooperation's decision to distribute aid in government-controlled areas was strongly rejected by many parliamentarians. Members of the governing coalition such as Harry Aarts (CDA) and Weisglas (VVD) forced Bukman to reconsider his position and, eventually, also to make funds available for assistance in territories held by Brunswijk (*NRC Handelsblad*, 9-12-1986:3). Even more worrying for Radhakishun were remarks made by opposition politicians such as Knol (PvdA), who called on Lubbers to abandon the dialogue with Paramaribo and to support the SNLA since 'Ronnie Brunswijk's fight in Suriname [can be] compared with that of the Netherlands during the Eighty Years' War and during the Second World War' (*Trouw*, 10-12-1986:4).

This unfortunate demonstration of rebellion – and, it might be argued, the odious comparison – in the House of Representatives, favouring the SNLA as a military tool to oppose the officers' influence in Paramaribo, led to further attacks by Bouterse on the Netherlands. In December the Lieutenant Colonel not only repeated his earlier accusation that The Hague assisted the SNLA 'morally, financially and materially' but he also claimed that due to Dutch interference the Netherlands were responsible for the devastation caused by

the civil war; the costs of which were estimated at Sf 94.6 million (*De Ware Tijd*, 13-12-1986:1).

As if these attacks were not enough, Bouterse also claimed that Lubbers had secretly offered him money to leave the country (*De Ware Tijd*, 13-12-1986:1) but he could not be bought off: 'I have nowhere to go' (*Trouw*, 13-12-1986:1). Indeed, according to the Brazilian journal *Veja*, a Dutch delegation had not only approached the Lieutenant Colonel in November 1986 in a bid to convince him to go into exile in exchange for a handsome pay-off, but representatives of Lubbers had also visited Brasilia. During talks with their Brazilian counterparts, the Dutch delegation had explored the possibility of gaining asylum for Bouterse, in case he accepted the money (*de Volkskrant*, 19-11-1986:3).

Even though Lubbers never admitted to having made such an offer, it was not the first claim made that the Netherlands had attempted to remove Bouterse through 'financial persuasion'. In November 1985, for instance, an article had been published in *The Washington Post* stating that according to 'highly placed Dutch officials', The Hague was willing to increase its economic aid from almost US\$ 600 million (or Nf 1.4 billion) to US\$ 1 billion if Bouterse was to be ousted from power. One of the Dutch sources described this 'initiative' as 'the highest price ever set on a head of state' (*The Washington Post*, 25-11-1985:D16). Although it must be recognized that the objective was not to attract bounty hunters since the additional funds (provided the House of Representatives really would be willing to pay the extra money) would be reimbursed as part of the aid commitment, it certainly illustrated the Dutch desire to seek alternative methods of removing this thorn from its side.

In fact, an even more radical idea of dealing with the 'Bouterse' problem emerged, which involved sending in marines. Well aware of the logistical limitations faced by Dutch armed forces in the Western Hemisphere, in December 1986 The Hague approached the Reagan administration about the possibility of transporting to Suriname around 700 Dutch soldiers, currently stationed on Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles. With the support of the American navy, the Dutch marines aimed to topple the Bouterse regime. To discuss how this might be achieved, high-ranking offices from both countries met before Christmas (Reagan and Brinkley 2007:458). However, at the end of 1986 The Hague withdrew its proposal for military intervention in Suriname. Van den Broek stated that the meetings between Dutch and American officers had merely been a 'precautionary measure' (*Antilliaans Dagblad*, 9-6-2007:14).

Instead of leaving the Republic for money or even being taken prisoner by Dutch marines, Bouterse responded to these bribes and the threat of military invasion with another attack on The Hague, which was carried out by the Surinamese Foreign Minister in January 1987. In a letter handed over to Ambassador Van Houten, Herrenberg questioned The Hague's attempt

to preserve diplomatic relations on an ambassadorial level, considering that 'maintaining the level of the Dutch embassy in Paramaribo has not led to an improvement in the plight of Suriname' (*De Ware Tijd*, 2-1-1987:1). Herrenberg pointed out that Suriname had already withdrawn its Ambassador from The Hague in the summer of 1985, whereas the Netherlands (which shortly afterwards had recalled its own Ambassador) had unilaterally reinstated Van Houten following Radhakishun's inauguration. The Dutch government reacted with surprise and irritation. Van den Broek emphasized his interest in maintaining diplomatic relations at an ambassadorial level as this was 'in the interest of both countries, which share so many common ties' (*Het Parool*, 6-1-1987:3). Indicating his willingness to continue the dialogue with Radhakishun, he declared: 'Should the Surinamese government think differently about this, then we can only interpret this as Suriname not giving the same priority to initiating a dialogue aimed at normalizing relations' (*Het Parool*, 6-1-1987:3).

As long as Radhakishun was unable to take control of the country's foreign policy, the Dutch-Surinamese dialogue was doomed to be determined by radical officers and politicians, who so far had managed to retain their influential position. Then, on 10 January 1987, Herrenberg ordered Suriname's chargé d'affaire in The Hague, Spier, to deliver a letter to the Dutch government, requesting the withdrawal of Van Houten by 25 January on the grounds of his interference in domestic politics. The Dutch Foreign Ministry responded accordingly and immediately declared that Spier must also leave the Netherlands by the same date (*Bad to worse* 1987:15).

Following this tit-for-tat expulsion, both sides were absolutely adamant in their refusal, at least in the short term, to come to a compromise. Bouterse specifically ordered Herrenberg to follow 'an aggressive policy in a positive sense' towards the Netherlands 'to clean up this relationship at the highest political level' (*De Ware Tijd*, 16-1-1987:1). Although Bouterse did not elaborate upon the phrase 'in a positive sense', his failure to consult the civilian politicians about his move to expel Van Houten indicated that he was likely to persist in following a hostile course, ignoring the government's attempts at establishing a dialogue. In response, the Dutch hardened their position as well and dismissed the idea of replacing Van Houten. According to Van den Broek: 'We must avoid the impression that the Netherlands could function as a diplomatic target for political arrows fired by radical elements in Suriname' (*Het Parool*, 23-1-1987:3).

Return to democracy

Following the expulsions of Van Houten and Spier, the last phase of the democratization process began as Radhakishun and other moderate politicians

resigned in protest of Bouterse's continued attacks on The Hague. In fact, since the formation of the Radhakishun cabinet, a widening gap could be observed between the civilian and military wings of government. While the civilian politicians attempted to repair relations with the Netherlands, their ventures were continuously disrupted by Bouterse's unrelenting attacks on The Hague and his foreign policy initiatives without consulting the Prime Minister. Bouterse's increasingly nationalistic stand was not only based on his frustration that despite all redemocratization efforts, Lubbers persisted in his refusal to grant the so urgently needed financial assistance. As the ongoing civil war continued to erode the Republic's internal stability, the Lieutenant Colonel also held The Hague primarily responsible for the NL's failure to defeat the SNLA.

Their criticism of Bouterse's foreign policy was the main reason prompting the moderate politicians to resign. As MacDonald (1988:120) has argued, Radhakishun described his Foreign Minister as a disruptive element in his administration and 'publicly stated that Herrenberg, a close adviser to Bouterse, should resign, on the grounds that he was an unsuitable candidate to reopen talks with the Netherlands regarding restoration of relations and resumption of development aid'. Furthermore, in view of Herrenberg's links to drug trafficking and his support of Bouterse's decision to expel Van Houten without notifying the cabinet, Radhakishun and four other Ministers of the civilian parties had little option but to resign (*De Ware Tijd*, 13-2-1987:1).

With Radhakishun's resignation on 11 February 1987, it appeared as if the military, through the VFB, had once again asserted its absolute domination of the Republic's affairs. Bouterse even attempted to strengthen his position as he invited VFB member Wijdenbosch to lead the new cabinet (Thorndike 1990:50). However, the times when Bouterse could simply determine political developments in the country seemed to have passed. The resignation was followed by violent anti-Bouterse demonstrations in Paramaribo that lasted for several days (*De Ware Tijd*, 19-2-1987:1). This public backlash threatened to undermine the military's position and Bouterse was forced to compromise and replace Herrenberg as Foreign Minister.

Although the controversial Herrenberg had to resign, he would continue to upset Dutch-Surinamese relations. Within a year following his resignation, Herrenberg (1988) wrote the book *Suriname cocaïneverhaal in de Nederlandse pers; Een grote leugen* in which he argued that the accusations of drug trafficking published in the Dutch media were part of a conspiracy plan directed against him 'to severely damage the revolutionary process in our country' (Herrenberg 1988:10). The former Foreign Minister also used his book to attack his political opponents in the Netherlands, including Aarts, Knol and Weisglas, as well as Haakmat, Chin A Sen and Sedney.

In the meantime Bouterse was confronted by a growing number of protesters. Eventually realizing that he had to appease the population by breathing

fresh life into the redemocratization process and by easing diplomatic tensions with the Netherlands, in September 1987 he promised to organize a referendum about a new Constitution to be introduced the next month (*Het Parool*, 21-2-1987:3). Bouterse also ordered Heidweiler to meet with Van den Broek to discuss the status of relations. Both goals proved difficult to achieve. The demonstrations were stopped only through the massive deployment of military and police on the streets of Paramaribo (*de Volkskrant*, 21-2-1987:7). And in answer to the request for negotiations, Van den Broek told Heidweiler that The Hague simply did not trust Bouterse (*NRC Handelsblad*, 12-3-1987:2).

However, the Surinamese public and The Hague would finally cease their opposition with the introduction of a new Surinamese Constitution on 30 March, which primarily confirmed the regime's continuation of the redemocratization process. According to Article 61 a National Assembly comprising 51 members was to be elected in 'general, free and secret elections'. Articles 71 to 73 stated that this parliament was to serve as the primary legislative body. Its supreme position was reinforced as the Assembly, under Article 91, was to elect the President and the Vice-President, who, in contrast to the 1975 Constitution, enjoyed considerably greater powers, as outlined in Articles 99 to 109 (Fernandes Mendes 1989:315-8).

A closer look at the Constitution reveals that the position of the officers was accommodated within its apparently democratic structure. A State Council was created, whose members were to represent political parties, various socio-economic interest groups and, significantly, the military. Its task was to supervise the President and government, as defined in Articles 113 to 115 (Fernandes Mendes 1989:319). Besides the armed forces' influence in this State Council, the officers gained additional political weight as a National Security Council and a Military Authority were to be established according to Articles 128 to 130 and 177 to 178 (Fernandes Mendes 1989:320-4). In particular the last two articles broadly defined the military's duties within Surinamese society: 'to protect the highest rights and freedoms of the country and its people in serving the legal order, peace and security. [...] Apart from this, the National Army works towards national development and pacification of the nation' (Fernandes Mendes 1989:324). In other words, the military would continue to play a decisive role in the Republic's political affairs. Rather than directly intervening, the officers could use legal means within their now constitutionally vested powers.

Bouterse maintained the momentum of political change when announcing, in March, that the first general elections since the February coup would be held on 25 November 1987 (*De Ware Tijd*, 2-4-1987:1). A few days later Wijdenbosch introduced his new cabinet. Although the VHP, NPS and KTPI continued to boycott the government (despite remaining in the Supreme Council), the cabinet won the broad support of the unions and employers' organizations;

including that of the C-47, represented by Minister of Justice Gilds. Another reassuring appointment was that of Heidweiler as Foreign Minister (*De Ware Tijd*, 8-4-1987:1).

Despite the apparent shortcomings of the Constitution and the boycott by the VHP, NPS and KTPI, recent developments to bolster the redemocratization process and the positive findings of an ACP-EC delegation visiting Suriname in April 1987, strengthened the voices within the Lubbers cabinet in favour of the normalization of ties. The ACP-EC's delegation's final report strongly recommended that the Netherlands improve diplomatic relations and provide financial assistance. Although Van den Broek continued for the time being to reject the idea of providing economic aid, he announced his intention of resuming normal diplomatic relations and sending an Ambassador to Paramaribo (*NRC Handelsblad*, 6-5-1987:1). His Surinamese colleague reacted with relief, hoping that bilateral links would soon be on an even keel. Despite sustained criticism in the House of Representatives, the Dutch government did not stipulate any conditions on the reintroduction of ambassadors.

Yet it was a different story in Suriname, where Bouterse managed to surprise The Hague and his own Foreign Minister by stipulating conditions for the resumption of diplomatic relations and by simply rejecting the 'Dutch candidate Van Houten as Ambassador', stating that he would 'not through the front door nor through the back door and neither down the drainpipe' be allowed to re-enter Suriname (*Het Parool*, 25-5-1987:1). With this, the Lieutenant Colonel not only demonstrated, once again, his influential position, but also betrayed his chronic suspicion of the Netherlands, especially of Van Houten, whom he accused of having interfered in Suriname's domestic affairs.

Bouterse thus created an extremely awkward situation despite being well aware that the public did not support his sustained attacks on The Hague. By June almost 10% of Suriname's remaining population had requested visas for the Netherlands, primarily due to the Republic's political and socio-economic difficulties (*NRC Handelsblad*, 10-6-1987:3). It was equally certain that the military was hesitating in supporting the redemocratization process, as became clear when Captain Olfer presented Bouterse with a petition signed by leading officers, expressing their discontent with VHP, NPS and KTPI. In fact, the officers saw themselves forced to 'lodge a strong protest against the insults and threats voiced by the political leaders of VHP, KTPI and NPS' (*De Ware Tijd*, 4-8-1987:1). The pressure on Bouterse was so great that the following day he, along with Graanoogst and Ernie Brunings, announced his withdrawal from the Supreme Council (*De Ware Tijd*, 5-8-1987:1). The fear that that the entire redemocratization process might come to a halt just weeks before the referendum and that elections would not materialize was founded as other VFB members did remain in the Supreme Council.

Nonetheless, shortly after resigning, Bouterse signed the Leonsberg Akk-

oord (Leonsberg Agreement) with the VHP, NPS and KTPI, in which the military confirmed its commitment to a return to democratic rule and the civilian politicians accepted a certain degree of intervention by the NL following the November elections (Thorndike 1990:52). In other words, Bouterse realized that his best option for continuing to shape Suriname's affairs was through the influential position allocated to the military in the new Constitution; for this reason he pressed on with the redemocratization process. Moreover, Bouterse sought contact with NPS, VHP and KTPI to ease recent tensions between officers and civilian politicians while also attempting to communicate with Brunswijk, in order to facilitate a peaceful referendum in eastern Suriname (*Het Parool*, 24-8-1987:1). Under these more favourable conditions, on 30 September 1987 the referendum on the new Constitution was held, with over 60% of the electorate participating. Of these, 95% voted in favour of the Constitution, clearly a result of the civilian parties as well as the military having thrown their weight behind the 'yes' campaign (Meel 1990:91). With this overwhelming acceptance of the new Constitution, the return to democratic rule seemed to be only a question of time.

Yet the path was still not free of obstacles. The remaining eight weeks until the general elections were characterized by intense conflict between the various groups. The SNLA continued to be active and its position with respect to the elections was unclear, so it remained doubtful whether in eastern Suriname voting could even take place (*Trouw*, 2-10-1987:5). More importantly, the political confrontation between VHP, NPS and KTPI on the one hand and the VFB on the other, which had been reorganized and suggestively renamed Nationale Democratische Partij (NDP, National Democratic Party), escalated to a dangerous level. Yet the biggest threat to Bouterse's future involvement in politics came from a political block called the Front voor Democratie en Ontwikkeling (FDO, Front for Democracy and Development) which became popularly known as the Front. This group, combining the VHP, NPS and KTPI, had been established in August 1987 to provide voters with an alternative to the Republic's military domination. Although Thorndike (1990:51) regarded the block simply as a broad, pro-business oriented electoral alliance without a coherent political philosophy, its political power was enormous as it gained the support of many Surinamese. The Front's first election rally in August was attended by over 60,000 people, about one-sixth of the entire population.

Rather than remaining passive the military became increasingly involved in the election campaign. After the transformation of the VFB into the NDP (led by Prime Minister Wijdenbosch), left-wing officers and politicians attempted to establish a modern mass-based and multi-ethnic political organization.⁸

⁸ Unlike most other political parties, the NDP attempted to be multi-ethnic while including many people from other ethnic backgrounds, although it must be acknowledged that the Creols were still the dominant group within the party.

Bouterse was convinced of his ability to influence political affairs both through the constitutional rights granted to the military and through direct participation in the National Assembly. Aware of the lack of public support of the NDP, however, the party seemed to become heavily reliant on methods designed to disrupt the opposition's campaign (for instance, by playing loud music at Front rallies), rather than on articulating their own political programme (Thorndike 1990:51-2). The NDP's negative campaign was exacerbated by Bouterse himself as, just days before the elections, he accused the opposition of 'treason' and 'collaborating with the terrorists of Brunswijk' (*Het Parool*, 23-11-1987:3).

Finally, on 25 November, the Surinamese people regained the right to determine the composition of their government after more than seven years of authoritarian rule. Almost 90% of the electorate participated in the elections, which were declared free and fair by the international observers who had been invited, including five Dutch parliamentarians (*De Ware Tijd*, 27-11-1987:1). The results were a huge slap in the face for the military as the NDP won only 3 seats out of a total of 51, against the Front winning 40 seats while another 4 were obtained by Pendawa Lima, a political party representing Javanese interests. Even PALU managed to beat the NDP, capturing the remaining 4 seats. Hence, the NDP emerged as the Assembly's smallest party. The 40 Front seats, in turn, were divided between the VHP (16), the NPS (14) and the KTPI (10) (Meel 1990:91).

These results were a clear signal that the Surinamese public strongly favoured a return to democracy and rejected the military's interference in politics. Since the NDP generally associated itself with the Creoles (Thorndike 1990:53) – whereas the VHP, NPS and KTPI continued to rely heavily on the support of their respective ethnic communities – and since a more multi-ethnic based Surinaamse Partij van de Arbeid (SPA, Surinamese Labour Party) formed by Derby had failed to win any seats, the results were also an indisputable indication that Surinamese democracy was to continue from where it had been crushed in February 1980.

The period from late 1983 until the end of 1987 was characterized by enormous fluctuations in Dutch-Surinamese relations. The two major causes of these fluctuations were the Dutch decision to suspend aid (and the consequent deterioration of the Republic's socio-economic situation) and the failure to find alternative financial sources enabling Paramaribo to fund its budget and various development projects.

Bouterse's frustration about the Dutch rejection of his political reforms persistently strained the relationship, which continued in its cycle of verbal attacks, the expulsion of diplomats and the harassment of ordinary citizens. The efforts of moderate politicians – who increasingly regained influence in

Suriname's foreign policy due to the accelerating redemocratization process – to involve The Hague in a series of dialogues were sabotaged by Bouterse. Nevertheless, in the end also he had to accept The Hague's key condition that a return to civilian rule was the only option of gaining access to Dutch funds. When after the overwhelming acceptance of a new Constitution by all parties, free and fair general elections were held in which the military failed to make a significant impact, the new civilian government had finally become an acceptable negotiation partner to The Hague.

CHAPTER VII

Return to the patron-client relationship

The Netherlands and Suriname agree to disagree (Pronk, following an orientation visit to Paramaribo in July 1990 aimed at re-establishing financial assistance, *NRC Handelsblad*, 26-7-1990:3).

Following the elections of 25 November 1987 the efforts of civilian politicians to regain control in Suriname and re-establish democratic rule were hampered as the inauguration of the new Shankar government signalled a return to *apanjahtism* (see Chapter I). Thus, Surinamese politics just threatened to continue where it had been so violently interrupted in February 1980, with the important difference that this time the military played a profound role in determining domestic affairs. The officers' persistent involvement in political matters, along with human rights abuses, the ongoing civil war and drug trafficking, inexorably generated serious tensions between the Front and the NL, while also having severe repercussions on the Republic's external standing. With the exception of some regional countries and organizations, most nations and international financial institutions cast a disapproving eye on developments in Suriname and, consequently, refused to provide any meaningful aid which would assist the civilian politicians in changing Suriname's economic fortune.

Paramount in this was the Dutch decision to transfer no more than a portion of the outstanding funds under the Aid Treaty, which greatly angered the Shankar government. The Hague's refusal to accept the NL's autonomous position and the direct pressure on Paramaribo to curb Bouterse's influence, gave rise to new diplomatic tensions between the Netherlands and Suriname. Unable to solve these transatlantic disagreements, the Shankar government came under additional domestic pressure as the Dutch refusal to honour the Aid Treaty had severe consequences for the socio-economic situation and hence for the Republic's political stability. Confronted with the Front's failure to solve these problems, the military once more staged a coup, on Christmas Eve 1990.

Suriname under civilian rule

Despite the victory of civilian politicians in the November 1987 elections and the army's withdrawal to the barracks, the internal and external structure of the Republic remained fragile. One reason for this domestic fragility was that the election results reflected, as stated, a return to *apanjahtism*. Most noticeably, the politicians now taking over from the officers were the same ethnic leaders removed by the military in the beginning of 1980. The upshot was the emergence of a political situation all too similar to that of the pre-Bouterse era, aptly described by Brana-Shute (1990:201) as 'back to the future'.

Proof that such an evaluation of the post-1987 period was justified becomes glaringly obvious when taking a closer look at the composition of the new cabinet. In the interests of the largest ethnic communities, former NPS Prime Minister Arron was elected Vice-President (thus ignoring the unimpressive record of his post-independence cabinet) and KTPI chairman Soemita (despite his conviction for corruption in the first Arron cabinet) became Minister of Social Affairs as well as Deputy Vice-President. VHP leader Lachmon, who had been expected to take the position of the Assembly's President, chose instead to become Speaker of the new Parliament; the presidency went to his party colleague Ramsewak Shankar (Thorndike 1990:53; Dew 1994:163). The remaining cabinet posts were divided according to the strength of each party, with Edwin Sedoc (NPS) being appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs (Schalwijk 1994:114).

After its inauguration on 25 January 1988 the Shankar cabinet received the Assembly's unanimous support, including that of the NDP. Considering that the new Front government had failed to honour the Leonsberg Agreement – according to which Essed (NPS) and Wijdenbosch (NDP) would share power as President and Vice-President respectively and a State Council would be formed (assuming the functions of the Supreme Council) – Bouterse and his colleagues felt cheated and consequently, as Dew (1994:163-4) observed, 'the NDP and the military prepared for battle'.

In other words, besides the return to *apanjahtism*, the unpredictable attitude of the officers towards their new civilian rulers did little to improve the Republic's political stability. Leading magazines such as *The Economist* (5-12-1987:47) questioned: 'Will Surinam's winner win?' while *The New York Times* (13-1-1988:A13) quoted diplomats stating: 'There won't be a complete overhaul of the political structures overnight. [...] The military will have a diminished role, but it will still be part of a picture, at least initially'. Likewise Brana-Shute (1990:201) warned that 'the examples of other military regimes in Latin America and Africa have informed us that the military does not surrender power quickly or easily'.

Indeed, Bouterse lost no time in contributing to this political uncertainty as

he repeatedly criticized the government. One of his sharpest warnings came as the cabinet attempted to limit the constitutional position of the officers. The Lieutenant Colonel not only rejected the proposed restrictions, he also threatened the cabinet with unspecified actions:

This government has failed very badly, particularly when looking at the state of the armed forces. Perhaps not the whole government, but in its ranks there are at least some habitual opponents of the army who openly, in a very reprehensible and demonstrative manner, relate that they want to finish with the army. We play it cool. We definitely won't be led to the slaughter by twaddle, no way. We respect democracy and maintain order in the country. But when they touch us physically, the situation will of course become very difficult. (Bouterse 1990:176.)

Besides these rather blatant threats, the military also made use of its legal powers to influence domestic developments. In particular following the NDP's disastrous election results, the Military Council emerged as a primary tool to 'guide' the Republic. The Council, formed on 4 December 1987, consisted of many familiar faces, including Bouterse, Sital, Mijns and Graanoogst to represent the army's interests (*Caribbean Insight* 11-1(1988):15). In view of this body's composition and its broadly defined powers, Thorndike (1990:53) commented: 'Fears that the military council would frustrate the civilian government were to an extent justified.'

In fact, the Council's first action entailed criticizing the government government's proposal to honour the victims of the December Murders in an annual public ceremony. Instead, the officers held a military parade to acclaim the 'genuine national heroes' (referring to the executioners, not their murdered opponents) on 8 December (*Caribbean Insight* 11-1(1988):15). Similarly, when in January 1988 The Hague offered Shankar to mediate in the civil war, the Military Council once more demonstrated its influence by bluntly rejecting this proposal. According to Bouterse: 'There is nothing to mediate. Nowhere in the world does one negotiate with terrorists and this will thus also not happen in Suriname' (*Haagsche Courant*, 14-1-1988:3).

The position of the army was strengthened by the 'advisory' nature of the State Council. Since the new Constitution did not specify the Council's exact composition, Shankar attempted to minimize the officers' influence by excluding them as much as possible, which, however, led to widespread disagreement between the various interest groups. The result was a lengthy formation process, lasting until early 1989; more than a year after the elections. When the Council was summoned for its first meeting, it consisted of three representatives from both the VHP and the NPS, two from the KTPI, two from the trade unions, as well as one delegate each from Pendawa Lima, the NDP and the employers' organizations. The NL too, was represented by only one officer. Bouterse's nomination of Sital, however, was generally perceived as 'a

move calculated to cause maximum consternation to the centre-right civilians' (Thorndike 1990:53-4).

Besides political confrontations with the NDP and the military, the new government was facing other serious problems. First of all, Suriname's deteriorating economic state had to be urgently addressed. Consequently, this was one of the leading themes in Shankar's official address to parliament on 11 March 1988 (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1990:186). The other important issue was the ongoing violent conflict between the military and the SNLA, despite Suriname's redemocratization. Shortly before the inauguration of the Front cabinet, it became public that on New Year's Day 1988 a group of civilians had been killed by the NL near the village of Pokigron.¹ A few days later Wako presented further allegations of human rights abuses perpetrated by the NL. Between June and August 1986 alone, the UN Special Rapporteur estimated that the army had killed around 200 civilians, which threw a dark shadow over the new civilian government.²

Dutch-Surinamese rapprochement

Whereas peace between the NL and SNLA and stable relations between the government and the military were regarded as long-term goals, it was Paramaribo's hope that at least the pressing socio-economic difficulties could be tackled in the near future once Dutch funds began to flow again. The anticipation of the outstanding *Nf* 1.4 billion led to great expectations among Suriname's political and business circles as a fortnight after the November elections Van den Broek announced that The Hague would not impose new conditions on granting financial assistance. He rejected concerns expressed by other Dutch politicians about the officers' influential position, arguing that 'it is not right for us to demand that the military return to the barracks. And who can guarantee human rights? It is about our trust in the intentions of the new government' (*Het Parool*, 16-12-1987:3).

Despite this positive statement, only slow progress was made in the recovery of Dutch-Surinamese relations. A clear example demonstrating the wide gap still existing between both nations was The Hague's decision to send 'merely' a member of the Dutch Senate, Bas de Gaay Fortman, to the Shankar cabinet's inauguration. Schalkwijk, a senior official in the Surinamese Foreign Affairs Department at the time, summed up the anger felt in Paramaribo:

¹ *NRC Handelsblad*, 6-1-1988:2. The NL mistook these civilians for a group of SNLA fighters and opened fire.

² *Haagsche Courant*, 27-1-1988:1. A more detailed discussion on the socio-economic situation and the civil war will be provided later in this Chapter.

'The Netherlands not being represented by a minister or the Prime Minister at the inauguration was of course remarkable, because it was certainly an opportunity to thoroughly discuss future relations in the margin of the ceremonies' (Schalkwijk 1994:121).

This initial disappointment was alleviated as both countries agreed to open discussions on financial aid and diplomatic representation. On the first issue, progress was made by February 1988, with Bukman's announcement that Nf 17 million worth of medicine and food would be provided to ease the suffering caused by the civil war. This money was to be given independently of the remaining development aid (*De Ware Tijd*, 6-2-1988:1). Nevertheless, considering that at an earlier stage Schoo had also assisted the Republic with medicine and food, Bukman's initiative could hardly be classified as a sign of trust or support of the newly elected government.

Yet it was not only The Hague hesitating to normalize relations as became clear in the 'ambassadors issue'. While it took the Netherlands four months after the November elections to send Hoekman back to Paramaribo, the Front coalition needed ten months before it was able to agree on a candidate for The Hague. In the end, Cyrill Ramkisor, a former politician with no diplomatic experience, was chosen to lead the Republic's primary overseas mission (Schalkwijk 1994:146). Despite the emphasis on closer relations with the Netherlands, ethnic-political quarrels about positions within the administration were given a surprising amount of valuable time.

Confronted by such self-inflicted delays in the aid negotiations, the Surinamese Foreign Affairs Department decided to establish a special commission, called 'Nederland', under Van Eer's³ supervision, to improve transatlantic ties (Schalkwijk 1994:122). The commission thus began to prepare for a 'fact finding' mission to which the Dutch Foreign Minister was invited in the hope of convincing the Lubbers cabinet to make financial assistance available (*De Ware Tijd*, 14-3-1988:1). But when Van den Broek arrived in the Republic on 28 March 1988, there was no friendly welcome as he and the embarrassed commission members were confronted with a strong anti-Dutch atmosphere reminiscent of De Koning's visit in 1980. Along the road from the airport to Paramaribo protesters were carrying signs stating 'Van den Broek Murderer' and 'Van den Broek Mercenary' (*De Ware Tijd*, 28-3-1988:1). Nails were scattered on the road to try and stop his car while arsonists burned down the KLM office in Paramaribo (*Het Parool*, 30-3-1988:5). It has never been fully disclosed to what extent these protests were initiated by either the NDP or the NL, but that this is certainly a possibility has never been ruled out.

³ Van Eer was Suriname's Minister Plenipotentiary in The Hague during the last years prior to independence and had continued to serve as Ambassador to the Netherlands in the immediate post-independence period, see Chapter II.

Discussions between the Dutch Minister and the Front government did not ease the tension as they merely highlighted the different positions of the two countries. Whereas Van den Broek intended to speak on the issue of whether all Surinamese refugees residing in the Netherlands without legal documents should return to Suriname, Sedoc's attention was focused on the topic of financial assistance. According to the latter, the Netherlands should honour the promise made in the diplomatic letter of December 1982 (announcing the Aid Treaty's suspension) to reopen the flow of aid once Suriname's democratic structures would be re-established. Otherwise, according to Schalkwijk (1994:122), 'the slow Dutch pace in reinstating the aid was perceived as a delaying tactic in order not to resume the treaty's obligations'.

Dutch hesitations were not the only problem confronting the government. To make matters worse, during Van den Broek's visit it became clear that The Hague wanted to 'internationalize' the Aid Treaty. This was to be achieved through a consortium composed of delegates from the World Bank and/or the Inter-American Development Bank, along with, possibly, representatives from regional powers such as Brazil and Venezuela, besides Dutch and Surinamese delegates. Paramaribo refused to go down this road. In February 1988 in Willemstad Suriname's Minister for Transport, Trade and Industry Wilfred Grep had already explained that his government expected The Hague to honour the spirit of the agreement without introducing new conditions – as Van den Broek had promised in December 1987. Grep had stated: 'If they want to talk about more money, that is OK, but not about changing the treaty. Perhaps we can speak of a different consultation process' (*Haagsche Courant*, 8-2-1988:1). Surinamese delegates were willing to discuss ways of improving the decision-making procedures in the agreement, but they utterly refused to discuss a reinterpretation of the treaty.

There were several reasons for Paramaribo to reject the Dutch proposal of internationalizing the aid. Most importantly, the cabinet feared that once The Hague would be able to renegotiate the treaty, it may well seize the opportunity to dismantle the entire programme. According to Schalkwijk (1994:125): 'within the Surinamese ranks, widespread disapproval was expressed with regard to the internationalization attempt, primarily because it was believed that the Netherlands wanted to use this as a way of breaking open the treaty or changing it'. This could result in the loss of further revenues and, as Paramaribo feared, create severe tensions in other (trade) aspects of bilateral relations, thus complicating the normalization process.

Surinamese officials not only objected to the idea of internationalizing the aid, but also to the manner in which the proposal had been brought forward, namely in the domestic setting of the Netherlands itself, with the governing party CDA advocating the idea as part of its programme for the forthcoming general elections. Considering the corruption scandals within

the former Arron government, it was understandable that the Dutch public was interested in not 'wasting' any funds. Yet the Front government was angry that the idea was outlined to the Dutch electorate rather than being communicated to Paramaribo (Schalkwijk 1994:124-9).

Finally, the cabinet objected to internationalizing the aid as it was feared that this could upset the fragile internal political situation. If, for instance, the World Bank was accepted as a supervisory body with a say in how the funds should be spent, Surinamese politicians were concerned that programmes in the social sphere might be evaluated as being of secondary importance, which, it was feared, would make the government unpopular (Caram 1993:296-7). Bouterse's earlier dealings with the IMF, at the end of 1983 and the beginning of 1984, had clearly illustrated the political consequences of implementing socio-economic reforms according to the demands of international financial institutions.⁴ In contrast, at the time of independence Suriname's delegates in the CONS may have experienced considerable Dutch pressure when it came down to investing the aid, but Paramaribo had been free to use some funds as it desired – a telling example being, despite The Hague's opposition, the construction of a railway in West Suriname which 'runs, as they say, from nothing to nowhere' (Lagerberg 1989:134).

The Republic's recent efforts to regain access to Dutch assistance were at least partly successful as the States General began to debate the Aid Treaty on the instigation of Van den Broek, who had lobbied his colleagues to reinstate aid and submit this proposal to parliament (*de Volkskrant*, 30-3-1988:1). Suriname's initiative to invite Van den Broek for a 'fact finding' mission had thus paid off, despite the hostile demonstrations and differences of opinion on the issue of internationalization. More good news for the Shankar government followed when Van den Broek was supported in his campaign by Hoekman, who publicly asserted that Suriname's redemocratization process had undergone positive developments (*Haagsche Courant*, 25-3-1988:3).

Despite this wave of approval, the Lubbers cabinet remained uncommitted and merely agreed to send another delegation to Paramaribo in May 1988, this time led by Minister for Development Cooperation Bukman, who declared that his visit was to be 'informative and orientational' (*Haagsche Courant*, 5-5-1988:3). Yet subsequent talks between him and the Front government accomplished little beyond highlighting the wide gap between the two parties. First Bukman rejected Suriname's request to finance a Sf 1.5 million urgency programme formulated by the Shankar cabinet to speed up economic recovery (*De Ware Tijd*, 12-5-1988:1), followed by the dismissal of Paramaribo's request for an additional Nf 260 million to compensate for costs incurred by the Republic with regard to development projects financed by

⁴ For the political consequences, see Chapter VI.

Suriname following the suspension of aid. Finally, the Dutch Minister insisted on the internationalization of aid while pressurizing Shankar into accepting a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), to be formulated with the 'help' from the World Bank (*De Ware Tijd*, 13-5-1988:1).

The talks would ultimately fail, much to Suriname's disappointment, realizing that the recent ground won by Van den Broek might be lost. During a debate in the Assembly Finance Minister Subhas Mungra accused the Netherlands of fostering an 'evil mentality' while pointing out that the country's economy would continue to experience difficulties primarily due to the absence of Dutch development assistance – thus shifting responsibility for Suriname's socio-economic misery to the Netherlands (*De Ware Tijd*, 14-5-1988:1). Economic recovery, according to the Minister, could only be achieved if The Hague agreed to provide the necessary funds.

During the same parliamentary debate, Sedoc vehemently dismissed Dutch claims that the urgency programme presented to Bukman had been hastily drawn up on two sheets of paper. Instead, he insisted that the additional funds requested had been well researched. Unfortunately, Surinamese union and business circles not only confirmed that the Sf 1.5 million request had indeed been hastily formulated, but they also accused the Front cabinet of not consulting them when preparing the urgency programme (Dew 1994:166).

The Bukman visit certainly underlined The Hague's continuing uncompromising stance, which must have frustrated Shankar just as much as it had done Bouterse. It also exposed the ongoing disorganization within the Surinamese cabinet, exemplified by the slapdash preparations. It was obvious that the urgency programme had been formulated in great haste, reflecting disagreement between the VHP and NPS regarding the Republic's foreign policy towards the Netherlands. Although Lachmon and Mungra were willing to accept Dutch preconditions for financial assistance, Arron categorically rejected The Hague's demands (Dew 1994:166).

Following the failure to reach an agreement during his first visit, Bukman organized a second trip in July 1988. As an 'olive branch', the Dutch Minister now announced an increase in the aid promised in February to Nf 50 million. The Surinamese side also changed tactics. Whereas during his first visit, Bukman had mainly negotiated individually with several Surinamese representatives, this time Vice-President Arron intended to discuss the outstanding aid package directly with the Dutch delegation and thus improve communications between both governments while consolidating Suriname's foreign policy position (Schalkwijk 1994:145). In addition, as will be outlined later, Paramaribo had just fulfilled one of the primary Dutch demands for reinstating the aid by signing the Kourou Akkoord (Kourou Agreement) with the SNLA. This, it was hoped, would bring an end to the civil war.

Under these more favourable conditions the second Bukman visit became

a success. Both sides finally agreed on a relaunch of the Aid Treaty by specifying the new terms under which the Netherlands would provide a total of Nf 1.5 billion. In the first instance, The Hague was to grant Paramaribo Nf 100 million in financial and technical assistance for 1988, which was to be increased to Nf 200 million in annual aid up until 1996 (Dew 1994:166). Suriname, in its turn, agreed to introduce an Adjustment Policy and Restoration Programme in consultation with the World Bank by 1 October 1988. It also consented to submitting a MOP outlining the specific use of Dutch funds. Finally, the Republic agreed to purchase all imports related to Dutch financed development projects through the Rijksinkoopbureau (RIB, Dutch Central Purchasing Agency) (Dew 1994:166).

Undoubtedly, comparing the outcome of these negotiations with Paramaribo's earlier position, it becomes obvious that Suriname had again bowed to Dutch pressure. Not only did Arron agree to consult with the World Bank, he had also conceded to the Dutch demand for a MOP and, on top of that, to import all development-related goods and services through the RIB. These concessions subsequently allowed The Hague to 'supervise' the Republic's socio-economic progress more closely than ever before. The main 'sweetener' for Suriname was that both sides had also agreed to meet twice yearly to stimulate bilateral trade (*De Ware Tijd*, 22-7-1988:1). On his return, Bukman expressed his satisfaction with the agreement and claimed that Suriname had given in under the pressure he had exerted. Paramaribo also reacted with relief. Shankar spoke for many Surinamese when he expressed the hope that, after many years under Bouterse and several months of tense negotiations, the redemocratization process and socio-economic development would now finally gain significant strength.

However, the widely anticipated belief that bilateral relations would stabilize proved wrong. The Hague's repeated threats of expelling thousands of Surinamese to a country torn by civil war⁵ and of stringently restricting the number of visa applications for the Netherlands, were only two of the many issues generating transatlantic friction. Another, more contentious issue was the interpretation of the aid agreement. By the end of August Lachmon expressed his dissatisfaction that so far Suriname had received hardly any Dutch funds. He also argued that Paramaribo should play a more decisive role in the decision-making process with regard to which products the RIB was to purchase (*De Ware Tijd*, 21-8-1988:1-2). Lachmon's main concern – which was entirely justified, considering Paramaribo's extensive reliance on aid from The Hague during the pre-coup period – was that local and regional goods and services would be ignored by the Dutch agency.

The Lubbers cabinet promptly countered that products purchased by the

⁵ A Dutch court eventually ruled that it was unsafe to resettle the refugees, see Dew 1994:167.

RIB were not necessarily manufactured within the Netherlands (Thorndike 1990:59). Furthermore, the new aid framework was justified by stating that it would limit the misuse of funds since Suriname would thus be unable to draw cash directly from the Dutch treasury. Instead, the Republic had to provide a list of goods and services to be acquired by the RIB, which in preparation had established an office in Paramaribo (*De Ware Tijd*, 21-9-1988:1). Subsequently, the expenditure of the RIB was covered by the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation.

These arrangements actually enabled The Hague to more easily raise objections to Surinamese requests than had been possible within the pre-1982 framework. The Hague also increased its leverage, as MOP funding was directly linked to political objectives such as progress in the redemocratization and peace process (Dew 1994:167). Suriname's failure, for instance, to honour the Kourou Agreement – the civil war continued – at the time of the Dutch parliamentary debate on the first Nf 200 million in aid (in November 1988), resulted in the House of Representatives once again putting the aid programme on hold (*De Ware Tijd*, 16-11-1988:1). It would take another month before the States General finally ratified the July agreement and allowed the transfer of financial assistance for 1989 (Dew 1994:167).

Suriname's descent into obscurity

In contrast to The Hague's hesitant approach towards Suriname, other countries reacted more swiftly to the Republic's return to democratic rule. At the inauguration of the Shankar cabinet, Brazil had already promised a credit of US\$ 36 million to be used to advance Suriname's industrialization and telecommunications. Another US\$ 6 million was granted to buy food and medicine for the victims of the civil war (*Haagsche Courant*, 30-1-1988:3). In the same vein, Venezuela offered help to establish and manage the local oil industry (Thorndike 1989:108). To show their support and appreciation of Suriname's redemocratization, Brasilia and Caracas decided to send their respective Foreign Ministers to witness the inauguration of the new civilian cabinet (Schalkwijk 1994:115).

Other Latin American and Caribbean states also welcomed the recent political changes within the Republic, with several nations sending cabinet members to attend the inauguration (Schalkwijk 1994:115). More importantly, additional regional funds were made available. The Inter-American Development Bank provided US\$ 2.2 million in technical aid to modernize the country's power supply installations (Thorndike 1989:108), while on Aruba more than Nf 100,000 was collected for Suriname during a televised fund-raising event (*Haagsche Courant*, 28-3-1988:5). Even Washington announced

the release of the remaining US\$ 500,000 in financial assistance, which had been suspended following the December Murders (*NRC Handelsblad*, 26-1-1988:1).

Yet the American decision to reinstate the former aid programme reflected a perilous new trend. While officially welcoming the new Constitution, free elections and the formation of a civilian cabinet – Washington's three main conditions for normalizing diplomatic ties (*Haagsche Courant*, 26-1-1988:1) – the US\$ 500,000 reflected the limited importance of the small Republic to the White House. Once the Cuban ambassador had been expelled and the strength of the Libyan mission had been reduced to five diplomats (Thorndike 1989:108), Paramaribo began to disappear from the political map. With this, Washington once again adopted its pre-coup position, declaring that 'Suriname is a problem for the old mother country, Holland' (Brana-Shute 1990:201).

In other words, with the notable exception of some regional nations, other countries, particularly in the industrialized world, began to lose what little interest they originally had in the Republic's affairs. And it comes as no surprise that this re-emerging belief of Suriname somehow having remained part of the Dutch 'orbit' contributed to intensifying Paramaribo's dependence on the Netherlands. To make matters worse, this 'push' into a patron-client relationship with The Hague occurred at a time of much hesitation within the Lubbers cabinet about embracing the Shankar government. Consequently, most of the foreign policy ground gained during the Bouterse era – exemplified in Suriname's increased interaction outside traditional Dutch-Surinamese relations – began to ebb away.

Even though Shankar naturally appreciated any support for the country's fragile economy, the short list of donors was disappointing. By the end of 1988 no additional funds worth mentioning had been received, except the aforementioned aid along with some financial assistance received from India (Thorndike 1989:108). This situation would not significantly improve in the following years. It was not until April 1989 that the European Community began to consider expanding its long-standing aid programme (*De Ware Tijd*, 1-4-1989:1).

One reason for this policy change may have been the pressure exercised by ACP states at a meeting with the European Community in March 1988. In a similar fashion to the mid-1980s, developing nations had carried a motion calling on the Netherlands and other European states to support Suriname (*De Ware Tijd*, 29-3-1988:1) – a rare occasion of Third World solidarity with the Republic. However, there certainly was another reason behind the European Community's new approach, namely the EC Commission for Development Cooperation's positive evaluation of Suriname's redemocratization process. Unlike the Dutch government, this Commission (ironically chaired by Dutch

CDA politician Wim Vergeer) did not want to wait until Paramaribo had fulfilled all political and economic prerequisites before increasing its aid payments. Instead, Vergeer warned: 'You have to ask yourself how long a young democracy can survive economic stagnation' (*de Volkskrant*, 1-4-1989:7). Moreover, the Commission disputed the Dutch position that the NL still had too much power in the Republic's political affairs. 'Compared with other South American countries that are recovering from a military dictatorship Suriname is making great progress in the democratization process', according to Vergeer (*de Volkskrant*, 1-4-1989:7).

In 1990 additional aid was received from Belgium and the PRC. Besides the 25 Belgian aid workers already active in the Republic, Brussels signed a development cooperation agreement worth Nf 17 million for Suriname's fishery industry and electrical power supply installations. The Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Liu Huaqui agreed to furnish Nf 1.7 million in aid and a further Nf 11 million as an interest-free loan (*NRC Handelsblad*, 20-2-1990:7, 27-2-1990:2).

There can be no doubt that this limited financial assistance was insufficient to bring about a reversal in Suriname's stagnating, or rather deteriorating socio-economic fortunes. Due to the Front's limited success in attracting external development funds, the economy continued to experience severe difficulties in the late 1980s and, as *The Europa world year book* (1993:2677) commented, 'at the beginning of the 1990s it was thought to be unlikely that there would be any significant improvement'.

The virtually imperceptible economic advancement is demonstrated in the following three tables. The first table enumerates Suriname's primary export commodities, which continued to be dominated by the mining and processing of bauxite. While the exports of shrimps, rice, rice products and bananas remained fairly stable, there is a visible growth in the exports of alumina and aluminium between 1988 and 1989 – as a result of the mining companies and the government agreeing to end export levies and to introduce a special exchange rate (applicable only to Suralco and Billiton) of Sf 3.1 to the US dollar.⁶ Under these more favourable conditions, in the summer of 1988 multinational corporations reopened some processing facilities (which had been forced to suspend production during the civil war) and even began to import bauxite from the Dominican Republic for processing into alumina. Moreover, in order to ensure a regular supply of electricity for mining and processing activities Shankar ordered the military to attack the SNLA in the Brokopondo area in October 1988 in a bid to break the deadlock (*Haagsche Courant*, 29-10-1988:7).

⁶ The official rate was Sf 1,79 to the US\$ whereas the black market rate stood at Sf 8 to the US\$, see Thorndike 1989:107.

Table 13. Suriname's main exports in millions (Sf), 1985-1990

| Main exports | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Alumina | 309.9 | 314.0 | 344.7 | 522.5 | 780.5 | 631.4 |
| Aluminium | 54.3 | 61.9 | 6.3 | 26.2 | 91.7 | 90.5 |
| Shrimps | 43.8 | 80.2 | 79.4 | 55.8 | 57.1 | 61.2 |
| Rice & rice products | 82.8 | 58.6 | 70.5 | 71.1 | 56.7 | 45.2 |
| Bananas | 18.3 | 22.1 | 17.7 | 20.2 | 27.5 | 18.4 |
| Bauxite | 62.3 | 47.6 | 18.9 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

Source: Central Bank of Suriname, in *Country profile* 1995:46

By 1990 alumina and aluminium exports had once again declined, the consequences of which are revealed in Table 14. Whereas from 1988 until 1989 the value of the trade balance had grown by over Sf 100 million to a Sf 218.3 million surplus, the following year it fell to Sf 91.5 million. A further reduction led to a trade deficit of Sf 1.2 million in 1991 – despite a decrease in the value of imports. The only reason for the Republic to once again achieve a trade surplus was due to a faster reduction of imports than exports.

Table 14. Foreign trade trends in millions (Sf), 1988-1993

| Foreign trade trend | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 |
|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Exports | 358.4 | 549.2 | 465.9 | 345.9 | 341.0 | 298.3 |
| Imports | -239.4 | -330.9 | -374.4 | -347.1 | -272.5 | -213.9 |
| Balance | 118.9 | 218.3 | 91.5 | -1.2 | 68.4 | 84.4 |

Source: IMF, in *Country profile* 1995:45

The ongoing civil war was the main stimulus of this unfavourable economic trend. In the summer of 1989 the NL was forced to again attack the Jungle Commando at the Afobaka Dam (after Brunswijk had re-established control of the hydropower plant) and the conflict in the Brokopondo area would continue for another year before the electricity supply was eventually secured on a permanent basis in May 1990 (*De Ware Tijd*, 5-6-1989:1, 8-5-1989:1). Moreover, the multinational corporations suffered from the SNLA occupation of important mining facilities in Moengo. Not until June 1990, following an appeal by Shankar to 'liberate' the town, was the NL able to expel the Jungle

Commando from the region (*NRC Handelsblad*, 8-6-1990:3). However, despite the army's 'victory', Suralco was still unable to start production. Instead now Bouterse used his control over Moengo to put pressure on the Front cabinet to take a stronger stand against the SNLA. In other words, the 'liberators' became the new 'occupiers'.

In a bid to shift the bauxite industry away from the war-torn eastern region around the Afobaka Dam, the idea re-emerged to build an alternative hydroelectric dam in West Suriname (*De Ware Tijd*, 31-1-1989:1). Shortly after the transfer of sovereignty the former Arron government had already invested large amounts of Dutch funds in the construction of a dam across the Kabalebo river. The fly in the ointment was that The Hague, haunted by memories of the financial fiasco during the post-coup period, was highly critical of this 'new' scheme. Yet without Dutch support Paramaribo was unable to finance the project.

The reason for this inability becomes clear in government revenue and expenditure between 1987 and 1991 as revealed in Table 15. Although revenues increased slightly, from Sf 639.4 million in 1988 to Sf 708.4 million in 1991 (a year in which a small decrease actually occurred compared with 1990), expenditure grew steadily from Sf 951 at the end of the Bouterse era to Sf 1303.6 million in 1991. This gap caused a significant budget deficit, rising from Sf 485.2 million in 1987 to Sf 595.2 million in 1991.

Table 15. Trend in revenue and expenditure in millions (Sf), 1987 and 1991

| | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 |
|-------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Tax | 317.8 | 479.0 | 502.4 | 511.5 | 549.7 |
| Non-tax | 148.0 | 160.4 | 238.0 | 22.4 | 158.7 |
| REVENUE | 465.8 | 639.4 | 740.4 | 733.9 | 708.4 |
| Recurrent | 922.4 | 1,108.2 | 1,081.0 | 1,150.6 | 1,181.1 |
| Capital | 28.6 | 41.7 | 62.5 | 103.0 | 122.5 |
| EXPENDITURE | 951.0 | 1,149.9 | 1,143.5 | 1,253.6 | 1,303.6 |
| Balance | -485.2 | -510.5 | -403.1 | -519.7 | -595.2 |

Source: Central Bank of Suriname, in *Country profile* 1995:44

The implications of these economic and financial developments were immediately felt by the general population. While unofficial unemployment stood at around 36% in 1988 and remained high in the subsequent years, inflation accelerated from 8% in 1988 to 26.5% in 1991 (*Country profile* 1995:39), primarily due to the government's practice of simply printing new bank notes

as a means of covering deficits (*de Volkskrant*, 5-7-1989:7). These compound problems inevitably led to labour unrest throughout the post-election period. In the spring and summer of 1989 the four leading unions – united in the Raad van Vakcentrales in Suriname (RAVAKSUR, Council of Trade Unions in Suriname) – called for a strike in protest against the civil war, the military interference in politics, the high prices and the Dutch refusal to provide direct financial assistance (*Trouw*, 5-5-1989:5).

To help alleviate public dissatisfaction, the Front coalition introduced measures regulating the price of basic commodities (*de Volkskrant*, 30-5-1989:3). But before these could take effect the country was deeply shocked by a Suriname Airways DC-8 aircraft crashing on 7 June on its return from Amsterdam near Zanderij Airport with 182 passengers on board; among the dead were several of Suriname's top football players (*De Ware Tijd*, 8-6-1989:1). Only a few passengers survived. Dew (1994:174), linking the crash to Suriname's overall deteriorating socio-economic conditions, commented that

later reports indicated that more lives might have been saved had equipment been summoned more rapidly to the scene, and the rescuers had been less interested in looting the site. Financial scandals had plagued Suriname Airways' operations over the years. [...] The crash investigation revealed dangerous cost-cutting methods. The control tower's guidance system was not working, and members of the crew, including the pilot, were beyond retirement age and working at below scale.

As the only other DC-8 was stranded in Luxembourg awaiting major repairs, Suriname Airways had no option but to cancel its vital line to Amsterdam altogether (*de Volkskrant*, 8-6-1989:7).

The public mood turned to one of despair. General poverty bred corruption and crime, accelerating particularly at the end of 1989. Combined with political violence, the period was characterized by

drive-by shootings at police stations, armed robberies along the Zanderij road, and destruction of a courthouse by arson. These events provoked a round-up of suspects (mostly Amerindian) by the police, and in apparent retaliation, a policeman was assassinated in Paramaribo in December. Arson destroyed three old colonial residences located behind an aggressive anti-Bouterse news agency when fire grenades launched at the agency went astray [...] Over the New Year's holidays, a grenade was hurled at the home of Finance Minister Subhas Mungra (without causing any damage). (Dew 1994:175-6.)

Following the killing of a Soviet diplomat by three youngsters (without a political motive) during a robbery attempt in April 1990 (*Het Parool*, 11-4-1990:3), crime became such a common feature in Paramaribo that many citizens tried to avoid leaving their homes at night.

One month later the Front came under additional public pressure as unions

once again called for a strike in protest of the socio-economic situation. In May students organized a demonstration against high public transport prices (*NRC Handelsblad*, 15-5-1990:7) and in June RAVAKSUR announced another strike following the government's failure to accept several demands previously presented by the unions, including higher wages, the military's withdrawal from politics, the combating of widespread corruption, the curbing of the flourishing black market and the ending of the country's involvement in drug trafficking (*Het Parool*, 22-6-1990:1). As a result of the Front's failure to tackle these issues, Paramaribo's harbour and airport were affected by industrial actions which soon spread to other economic sectors.

A new problem threatening Suriname's domestic stability emerged as a minor clash between an officer of the Military Police (MP) and a member of the general police force in a Paramaribo bar led to severe tension between the two agencies. Following the arrests of several MP officers by the police, the military attacked police headquarters in Paramaribo in August 1990. Its chief, Inspector Herman Gooding, subsequently met with Bouterse but was killed after leaving the Lieutenant Colonel's office (Dew 1994:180). The police force, supported by the public, now openly accused the NL of shooting Gooding, and its union, the Surinaamse Politie Bond (SPB, Police Union of Suriname) called for a strike. As the government refused to arrest the responsible army officers, 300 of the country's 1,200 police officers applied for visa at the Dutch embassy, leaving the Republic with a severely compromised law enforcement capacity (*NRC Handelsblad*, 28-8-1990:1).

The civil war and its international impact

The misery did not end there. In the field of foreign policy, Paramaribo enjoyed only infrequent achievements. A rare moment of success came exactly one year after the November 1987 elections, with the Liberation Council dissolving itself. Ignored by the civilian politicians after the country's return to democracy, it had gained little influence in Surinamese affairs (*De Ware Tijd*, 30-11-1988:1). With its disintegration, a once powerful exile organization disappeared from the political scene. Another positive occurrence was the agreement concluded with the Netherlands Antilles in May 1989 to intensify bilateral trade relations. By increasing its rice exports to the Antillian islands, Paramaribo was able to pay off some of its debts to Willemstad (*De Ware Tijd*, 18-5-1989:1). And the Surinamese swimmer Anthony Nesty winning a gold medal at the Olympics in Seoul in September 1988 contributed to improving Suriname's badly damaged international image (*De Ware Tijd*, 22-9-1988:1).

However, despite Bouterse's apparent withdrawal from politics, the international perception of the Republic would remain tainted, primarily

because the ongoing civil war and its associated human rights violations continued to embarrass the government. In fact, the fighting between the SNLA and the military had flared up following the November elections due to Brunswijk's deep mistrust of the influential political position of the NL. According to the Jungle Commando's leader, 'elections will have no effect whatsoever if the situation does not fundamentally change with the military remaining the boss [...] I will continue to fight until freedom and democracy are truly restored' (Van der Beek 1987:138). For its part, the NL showed no desire to end the conflict, which was underlined by Bouterse's reference to Brunswijk as a 'terrorist' and his rejection of the aforementioned Dutch mediation offer. The return to democratic rule thus had no effect on the positions of neither the SNLA nor of the army. There was no end in sight to this dismal situation as, according to Brana-Shute (1995:88), 'the military was unable to effectively fight the insurgents while the Jungle Commando was unable to hold territory'. The sad result of this stalemate was that over 10,000 Surinamese had meanwhile been forced to flee to French Guiana.

Nevertheless, Dutch pressure on the Front to end the civil war had increased to such an extent by the summer of 1988 that a government delegation led by the Director of the Foreign Affairs Department, Van Eer, met with the SNLA to discuss a peace settlement. During this meeting, initiated by the Comité Christelijke Kerken (CCK, Committee of Christian Churches), both sides considered the deployment of an international peacekeeping force – composed of troops from OAS states – in the war-torn region as the best option for ending the conflict. However, on his return to Paramaribo Van Eer was peremptorily informed that this arrangement was unacceptable. While Bouterse dismissed the idea as this would effectively result in reducing the NL's influence in eastern Suriname, it was also rejected by Shankar as he was trying to limit international exposure of the civil war (*De Ware Tijd*, 6-7-1988:1). Instead, the Prime Minister believed that the Republic 'is capable of solving its own problems through dialogue' (*Haagsche Courant*, 6-7-1988:7).

Two additional reasons, it should be noted, bore heavily on Shankar's negative response. First, the cabinet obviously feared an open confrontation with the military once Bouterse had made his view known (*Haagsche Courant*, 5-8-1988:2). Second, in a letter from the Surinamese government to the OAS (which was investigating human rights abuses under the former regimes), the Front was clearly reluctant to be held accountable for the clash between the SNLA and the military, stating in response to concerns raised about specific human rights violations:

The Government which took office on January 26th 1988 is not to be blamed for the occurrence at issue. [...] The Government deplors that the peace process has been deadlocked for the time being and that the eagerly desired peace still seems to be

far away. In passing, the Government wonders if it can be held responsible for that. (Price 1995:451.)

Notwithstanding, the main reason for Shankar's rejection was, as stated, his fear of the conflict becoming an international issue. It is in this context that Graanoogst's blunt warning to Paris in August 1988, that it must not endanger Suriname's security by supporting Brunswijk, should be evaluated. The French authorities dismissed this warning and reiterated their neutral position (*De Ware Tijd*, 3-8-1988:1, 5-8-1988:1). But neutrality did not imply silence, especially as Paris spent about 6 million francs (about Nf 2 million guilders) per month on food, medicine and shelter for the numerous refugees (*Het Parool*, 10-12-1987:10) – leading the French Ministry for Overseas Territories to issue an international appeal aimed to attract over one hundred Dutch-speaking teachers willing to educate Surinamese children living in French Guiana (*Het Parool*, 19-10-1988:5).

Although this French appeal angered the Front as it drew international attention to the Republic, in the end the Surinamese authorities themselves attracted the most regional and global interest through their clumsy efforts to prevent human rights violations from being publicized. On returning home from the fortieth anniversary celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Washington in December 1988, Stanley Rensch, the Surinamese chairman of Moiwana '86 (a Surinamese human rights organization founded after the NL massacre of Maroons in 1986), was arrested at Zanderij Airport. Soon after the military took several more Moiwana '86 activists into custody (*De Ware Tijd*, 12-12-1988:1, 14-12-1988:1).

Within days the OAS sent a delegation to Paramaribo, led by Oliver Jackman, to discuss the Rensch affair along with general human rights issues. During the subsequent meeting with the Surinamese Foreign Minister, Jackman pointed out that since Shankar's inauguration, the Inter-American Human Rights Commission had not received any reports about human rights violations in Suriname yet this positive record was now called into question (*De Ware Tijd*, 15-12-1988:1). In addition, Van den Broek instructed his Ambassador to express The Hague's concern about the recent arrests. Feeling the pressure, the Front government, embarrassed by the NL's unilateral actions, released Rensch and his colleagues before Christmas (*De Ware Tijd*, 22-12-1988:1).

Yet the damage was done. International interest in the civil war increased with the UNHCR now beginning to provide support to the refugees. With the approval of the French and Surinamese authorities, offices were established in Paramaribo and in St. Laurent. Moreover, in cooperation with the Front and financed by Dutch development aid, the UNHCR intended to repatriate the refugees from French Guiana (*de Volkskrant*, 7-2-1989:6), although this

was unlikely to occur as long as the civil war continued. The conflict became increasingly complex as the support for both sides was less than clear-cut. This was demonstrated by events in the village of Pokigron, which was attacked by the NL in September 1987 and in January 1988 for its apparent support of Brunswijk, while in April 1989 it was the SNLA that burned down over fifty houses in retaliation for the villagers' refusal to cooperate with the Maroon *guerrillas*.⁷

Following the unsuccessful peace efforts in the summer of 1988, representatives of the Front and the SNLA met at the end of that year in the Netherlands and, from February 1989, in French Guiana. This time Lachmon took over the initiative from the Committee of Christian Churches and on account of his personal intervention, both parties came to an arrangement, which was signed by Brunswijk and Lachmon in Kourour (French Guiana) on 21 July 1989. With this, the government agreed to lift the state of emergency in the war-torn region (thus terminating the NL's special powers), to allow eastern Suriname to be represented in the government, to provide development aid, to resettle refugees, to reconstruct areas affected by the war and to integrate the SNLA into the police force. In return, the Jungle Commando agreed to demilitarize its units (*De Ware Tijd*, 3-8-1989:1).

Yet the agreement would not restore peace. Bouterse was extremely critical of any arrangements with the Jungle Commando and the SNLA's proposed integration into the police force in particular fuelled his opposition. When he called the peace treaty totally unacceptable, this consequently increased tensions between the military and the cabinet (*De Ware Tijd*, 24-7-1989:1), which added to the strains resulting from the Assembly passing a general amnesty law in April 1989 for all civil war related violence except human rights abuses (which were predominantly carried out by the NL). Bouterse had warned the government to reject this law; otherwise he could not guarantee that the furious officers would refrain from taking action. Indeed, the military unequivocally expressed its discontent when the military police stormed a public jail and released two members of the *Volksmilitie* (People's Militia) who had been accused of participating in the killing of Maroons (Dew 1994:170).

Besides the NL opposition, the government was also faced with armed Amerindian resistance protesting against the Kourou Agreement. In September the Tucayana Amazon Indians hijacked a ferry and a small aircraft in West Suriname and blocked the road to Zanderij Airport with the objective of rejecting, according to a pamphlet, 'the privileges and the special position' apparently gained by the SNLA (*De Ware Tijd*, 2-9-1989:1). Although a repre-

⁷ Dew 1994:169. The NL and the SNLA regarded the village of Pokigron, close to the Afobaka Dam, of strategic importance.

sentative of the organization Yarowato (representing the interests of Amerindians in Suriname and the Netherlands) Wolfjager initially asserted that the violence was the outcome of the government's neglect of Amerindian welfare (*de Volkskrant*, 2-9-1989:6), it soon became clear that the NL was behind the uprising. In Brana-Shute's words (1993:59-60):

Members of the National Assembly and representatives from various human rights groups have [...] testified that the army trained and armed Tucayana Amazon rebels throughout West Suriname and in an enclave along the coast adjacent to French Guiana. It was estimated that by early 1990 there were some 75 to 100 heavily armed Tucayana whose activities were alleged coordinated by a lieutenant of the Surinamese army.

This unexpected development was a serious setback for the Front. Under severe Dutch and international pressure to end the civil war, the government had just signed the Kourou Agreement. According to Paramaribo's calculations, the political and socio-economic situation should now be improving since The Hague had promised more aid once peace was restored (*De Ware Tijd*, 13-7-1989:1-2). All this was now put in jeopardy by the sudden violent attacks by Amerindians on Maroons.⁸

Bouterse's tactics of undermining the peace process seemed to pay off. During the following months additional rebel groups emerged among the Matawai and Saramaka Maroons. As with the Tucayanas, these rebels did not enjoy the general support of their respective communities but rather depended on supplies from and training by the NL (Brana-Shute 1996:479). Yet they were still able to disrupt Suriname's socio-economic sector, which was exemplified in October 1989 by the Tucayanas' attack on Moengo, at the time controlled by the Unie tot Bevrijding en Democratie (UBD, Union for Liberation and Democracy), itself a break-away group from the SNLA (*De Ware Tijd*, 31-10-1989:1). As a result of these coordinated attacks by the NL and other rebel groups on the Jungle Commando, Brunswijk was ready to renegotiate the Kourou Agreement which he described as 'a bad cheque' (*de Volkskrant*, 21-12-1989:8).

This continuing spiral of violence resulted in the wider internationalization of the civil war. Whereas thus far, concerns had primarily been expressed by The Hague, Paris, the UNHCR and the OAS, it was now the turn of the United States to comment on the Republic's domestic instability. In January 1990 Suriname's Ambassador to Washington, former Prime Minister Udenhout, was told by the State Department that Washington was highly dissatisfied with the stagnating peace process and the military's continual interference

⁸ Although it must be pointed out that between Maroons and Amerindians some long-standing animosity had existed born of their competition for territory, see Brana-Shute 1993:60.

in politics (*Het Parool*, 23-1-1990:3). To clarify Washington's position, Sedoc, in turn, asked the American Ambassador to Suriname, Richard Howland, for a meeting. At this occasion the envoy not only verbally repeated American concerns, but also delivered a letter outlining the State Department's criticism (*NRC Handelsblad*, 22-1-1990:3). Obviously aware that Brunswijk had succumbed to renegotiating the Kourou Agreement, the White House put pressure on the Front and the NL not to torpedo the peace agreement.

The American reaction was appreciated by neither party in the conflict. Sedoc recalled Udenhout from Washington for consultations and accused the State Department of interfering in Suriname's domestic affairs. He lost no time pointing out that the Republic, 'according to its own insight and in its own pace, while retaining its own traditions', would establish peace in the war-torn region. Similarly, Arron argued that 'Suriname refuses to be directed from abroad as to how the country should re-establish order'. And Bouterse called the State Department's letter 'the latest in the interminable series of American attempts to intervene in the internal affairs of Suriname' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 1-2-1990:2). Rather than supporting the SNLA, the United States had achieved the opposite by uniting the government and the military.

Yet despite the animosity it aroused, external interference would not be without success. This was revealed as Shankar tried hard to put the peace process back on track by inviting Brunswijk to Paramaribo. Bouterse also invited the SNLA leader to a private meeting but instead of negotiating with Brunswijk, he simply arrested him during a violent clash in which two bodyguards of the rebel leader were killed (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-3-1990:1). This time it was The Hague to react furiously. The Lubbers cabinet put so much pressure on Paramaribo that Brunswijk was released the next day; subsequently, the civilian authorities began to introduce measures to limit the NL's influence.

Whilst the government thus attempted to curtail the army's constitutional rights, the NL and SNLA intensified their military operations with heavy fighting breaking out around Moengo and Brokopondo. Following the Jungle Commando's withdrawal from both regions, Brunswijk retreated to French Guiana and eventually travelled to the Netherlands with the intention of seeking asylum there in the summer of 1990. The Dutch government, although sympathetic to Brunswijk, stressed that it would not grant the rebel leader political asylum. He was thus forced to return to Suriname, where he was confronted with an increasingly active military that meanwhile had attacked the SNLA's headquarters at Langatabbetje (*NRC Handelsblad*, 4-7-1990:3, 14-7-1990:1).

This escalation of the conflict led to Shankar's decision, at an OAS conference in Asunción, Paraguay, to reconsider the idea he had previously rejected, namely the possible intervention of Latin American peacekeepers

(*Het Parool*, 7-6-1990:1). Alternative international intervention was now also sought by Brunswijk, who called upon the Dutch, American and French authorities to restrain the NL's campaign (*Trouw*, 30-7-1990:1). The result of these calls for outside intervention was a new government initiative to seek contact with the SNLA through a mediator, the OAS representative Edgardo Reis.

Dutch-Surinamese relations, 1989-1990

Against the background of these domestic difficulties Dutch-Surinamese relations would only slowly improve. The new aid agreement not merely manifestly demonstrated Suriname's continued financial dependence on the Netherlands, but also its political vulnerability to pressure exerted by the former colonial master. Although the exact amount of annual aid had been fixed (at least in theory), thus giving Paramaribo some form of financial security, this came at the price of strict Dutch scrutiny on issues such as the military's constitutional position and its involvement in drug trafficking. The Hague's 'urge' to be involved in 'advising' Paramaribo would prevail, despite Shankar's desperate plea not to intervene too blatantly. He feared that Dutch criticism, particularly of the armed forces, might well result in a clash between the Front and the NL, with a possibly disastrous outcome for the redemocratization process; or might cause a diplomatic conflict between the Republic and the Netherlands if the cabinet failed to take The Hague's sides against the military.

Aware of this danger, members of the Assembly invited a Dutch parliamentary delegation to visit Paramaribo in November 1988. Even though this meeting indicated a positive step towards improving transatlantic links, the Assembly's initiative to promote closer contact between the House of Representatives and the NL (with the aim of creating a better understanding of the fragile domestic political situation) failed, as the Dutch turned down the invitation to speak with Bouterse (*Haagsche Courant*, 8-11-1988:3).

This rejection clearly signalled that the uneasy relationship between Dutch politicians and Surinamese officers would continue to be the primary point of friction. The Front's fear of a clash between The Hague and the NL became a reality when the following month the military arrested Rob van der Kroon, one of the Dutch diplomats in Paramaribo who, according to the officers, had failed to 'sufficiently' identify himself (*Haagsche Courant*, 31-12-1988:5). The protest letter issued by the Dutch Foreign Affairs Department was answered by an official apology by Shankar, assuring Lubbers that his government would introduce procedures so as to avoid a repeat of the incident.

Yet tensions between The Hague and NL increased once again when early

in 1989 VVD parliamentary leader Joris Voorhoeve renewed allegations that Bouterse and several of his colleagues were involved in drug trafficking. The VVD demanded an investigation and threatened, if the claims were substantiated, to introduce a motion in the House of Representatives calling for the suspension of aid (*De Ware Tijd*, 14-2-1989:1). Paramaribo, understandably, reacted nervously to the risk of once again losing Dutch funding and Justice Minister Jules Adjodhia angrily demanded that 'Voorhoeve should not get involved in Suriname's internal affairs' (*de Volkskrant*, 28-2-1989:3).

The Dutch parliament, however, was in no mood to ignore the issue, particularly since a large part of Surinamese drugs were shipped to the Netherlands. Whereas Dutch customs officers at Schiphol had confiscated 102 kilograms of Surinamese cocaine between the end of November 1988 and early February 1989, by contrast the NL, partly responsible for checking international departures and arrivals at Zanderij, had not seized any illegal drug shipments at all (*NRC Handelsblad*, 11-2-1989:3).

Even though the Front acknowledged the surge in drug trafficking to the Netherlands, it rejected the idea that Suriname was to blame for the cocaine problem. Adjodhia demanded that the Dutch Justice Department share information with their Surinamese colleagues concerning the NL's involvement in the drug trade: 'Our government had to read [about this issue] in the newspapers. We are still hoping to receive all the information but the investigation here has quickly come to a dead end' (*de Volkskrant*, 28-2-1989:3). The Surinamese Minister also questioned Dutch accusations that the Republic was a major source of cocaine for the Netherlands since 'the flights do not always start at Zanderij and there are also calls en route'. Finally, he pointed out that 'also in highly developed countries, where they work with special machines [to detect drugs], smuggling occurs' (*de Volkskrant*, 28-2-1989:3).

Surprised by Suriname's firm rejection of bearing the responsibility alone, the Dutch Justice Department, which initially failed to substantiate its claims (*De Ware Tijd*, 27-2-1989:1), came under pressure to search for evidence confirming Voorhoeve's accusations. Eventually, on 11 April, Chairman of the Commissie voor Inlichtingen en Veiligheidsdiensten (Commission for Intelligence and Security Services) Frits Korthals Altes informed Lubbers of evidence found, linking Bouterse to drug trafficking (*de Volkskrant*, 16-11-1989:3). This information, based on data collected by the Centrale Recherche Informatiedienst (CRI, Dutch Central Research and Information Service), was neither made public nor used to put pressure on the Front as, following a heated debate between Voorhoeve and Adjodhia, The Hague feared it would dangerously strain Dutch-Surinamese relations. Additional investigations by the CRI and the Copa-police team throughout 1989 and 1990 eventually provided The Hague with a comprehensive picture of Suriname's involvement in the cocaine trade.

Following a series of arrests and the tapping of telephone conversations in the Netherlands, the Dutch police used a 140 kilogram cocaine shipment, intercepted in the harbour of Amsterdam in March 1990, to illustrate how drugs were transported from Latin America to Europe. In this case it concerned a shipment organized by the Medellin Cartel, which flew the cocaine from Colombia to the Brazilian town of Santarem, from where it was transported to Paramaribo by ship. In Suriname the drugs were then loaded aboard the Nedlloyd ship the *Kingston* bound for Amsterdam. The profits earned in this specific shipment were enormous, considering that at the Brazilian port a kilogram of cocaine was traded at US\$ 1,600 whereas in Amsterdam the price had increased to Nf 70,000 or around US\$ 41,500.⁹

As a place for transferring drugs from one ship to another, Paramaribo harbour had become known as a 'secure' distribution centre. This was possible since, following a cash payment, military officers allowed this transfer to take place without a customs inspection (*NRC Handelsblad*, 11-9-1990:1). Some of the information thus gathered by the Dutch police revealed that Bouterse maintained direct contacts with leading drug barons. Not only did he allow Suriname to be used as a transfer centre (around one third of all cocaine shipments reaching the Netherlands were estimated to have come from the Republic), but it was also assumed in The Hague that Suriname's rainforest served as a cover to protect local drug plantations and laboratories (*NRC Handelsblad*, 22-3-1990:7).

Some of this information was eventually handed over to the Surinamese Minister of Justice during his visit along with his senior staff to the Netherlands in February 1990. Following Adjodhia's return to Paramaribo, the Surinamese police arrested several cocaine couriers and raided drug plantations. Some 160,000 marijuana plants were burned in the Brokopondo area (discovered by the SNLA) (*NRC Handelsblad*, 19-2-1990:3) and in June a high-ranking officer responsible for the clearance of luggage at Zanderij was arrested (and quickly released on account of his senior military status) (*NRC Handelsblad*, 12-6-1990:1).

The most interesting point in this cocaine trade was that The Hague attempted to exploit the situation to pursue two main objectives. First, it hoped to put pressure on the Front to punish the officers involved in the trafficking and reduce the political influence of the military. Second, the Lubbers government, aware of Suriname's negative image among the Dutch general public, manipulated this situation by using the Republic as a scapegoat for the cocaine problem in the Netherlands. In other words, as the Dutch authorities gathered evidence on the drug trade, this information was handed over to their Surinamese counterparts, who were expected to destroy the transporta-

⁹ *NRC Handelsblad*, 11-9-1990:3. The exchange rate on 31-12-1990 was US\$ 1 to Nf 1.6865.

tion network and prevent narcotics from being shipped across the Atlantic. The possibility that Bouterse was involved in these illegal activities was a convenient coincidence, enabling The Hague to denounce the military strongman vehemently.

For the Front government the situation was very different. After several years of economic hardship, the Surinamese customs service lacked financial and human resources. There were no special dogs to detect cocaine and not enough officers to carry out adequate controls. According to the Chairman of the Surinaamse Douanebond (Surinamese Customs Officers' Union) 'six customs officers have to deal with an entire plane. Luggage is inspected cursorily and air cargo is only checked at random' (*de Volkskrant*, 28-2-1989:3). More worrying were the growing tensions between politicians and officers as the government, under increasing Dutch pressure, was forced to act against the NL – if it failed to do so, it might lose out on financial assistance.

The whole situation was exacerbated by the fact that the Front cabinet had to combat the drug trafficking largely without Dutch support. The main reason for The Hague's 'inability' to assist the Republic in this was that the bilateral treaty on judicial cooperation, addressing important issues such as the coordination of strategies between the two national police forces and the extradition of suspected criminals, had been suspended following the December Murders (*de Volkskrant*, 15-2-1989:6). Adjodhia's visit to the Netherlands in February 1990 was partly aimed at reinstating this treaty. In order not to alarm the NL, the visit was largely kept secret and involved only a few high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Justice. Nonetheless, The Hague rejected the proposal to renew the treaty due to the officers' continued powerful position in Suriname's domestic politics (*de Volkskrant*, 15-02-1989:6).

Also in other areas The Hague was reluctant to lend the new government a helping hand. During negotiations relating to a treaty on bilateral air links the Front, at the request of Suriname Airways, placed great emphasis on renewing the Air Traffic Treaty following its termination by Bouterse in 1983 (*De Ware Tijd*, 6-2-1989:1). To resume transatlantic services, SLM required a long-term lease of a DC-10 to replace the DC-8 which had crashed near Zanderij. KLM, however, was only willing to provide SLM with the required plane following the signing of the treaty. Yet Suriname was unable to sign since, according to the Dutch authorities, SLM could not pay the costs of an expensive short-term lease of a DC-10 from a third party. To complete this catch-22 situation, SLM was forced to undertake the expensive short-term lease as long as KLM refused to provide one of its own planes on a long-term basis (*de Volkskrant*, 2-10-1989:3). In the meantime, KLM seized the opportunity and captured the lion's share on the Amsterdam-Paramaribo route.

These talks on the judicial and the Luchtvaartverdrag (Air Traffic Treaty)

clearly revealed The Hague's unwillingness to cooperate with Paramaribo. Firstly the Lubbers cabinet demanded specific reforms aimed at restricting the military's influence before it was willing to sign a new treaty and secondly, the Surinamese government was unable to come to an agreement with the Netherlands (despite intensive efforts throughout 1989) since SLM failed to pay the debts largely incurred as a result of the absence of a bilateral treaty on transatlantic air links. Only in the non-political and non-economic fields The Hague seemed willing to strengthen Dutch-Surinamese relations, with the signing of a treaty towards the end of 1990 encouraging cultural contacts between both nations (*NRC Handelsblad*, 6-10-1990:3).

Yet the main sign of Dutch reluctance to support Suriname became apparent during the annual negotiations about the allocation of aid. By restructuring CONS so as to promote direct talks between high-ranking officials from both nations, it was hoped that a decision could be made on the specific use of the Nf 200 million in annual assistance in a less formal setting. The first meeting was organized in March 1989; six senior staff members of the Dutch Ministry for Development Cooperation travelled to Paramaribo to negotiate with their Surinamese counterparts (*De Ware Tijd*, 14-3-1989:1).

Despite the relaxed atmosphere, before long the meeting was deadlocked. Although the officials agreed on a list of twenty projects identified by both parties as worth funding, Arron found the outcome of the first round unsatisfactory as these twenty projects first had to be included in a MOP, which was then to be financed by The Hague through the RIB. Taking a slightly different tack, the Vice-President argued for direct funding since no MOP had yet been formulated (*de Volkskrant*, 19-5-1989:8). Unable to find a compromise, the Dutch delegation returned home, despite the previously allocated Nf 100 million for 1988 having been spent – and hence threatening to disrupt all ongoing development projects. Even though the Dutch strategy was intended to prevent corruption (with funds falling into the NL's hands), Paramaribo's argument that its own development experts were in a better position to assess where the aid should be invested, can certainly also be understood.

After two months of further negotiations, Bukman and Arron finally came to an agreement in July 1989 (*De Ware Tijd*, 13-7-1989:1-2). Since this new arrangement only broadly defined how the Nf 200 million was to be spent, it can be argued that this time the Netherlands had made the vital concession, particularly in view of Suriname still not having formulated a MOP. In addition, the Dutch had dropped their earlier insistence that the World Bank be consulted as an advisor to Suriname and, instead, had accepted Paramaribo's wish to cooperate with the European Community in formulating a MOP. Suriname's main concession had been to initiate peace negotiations with the warring factions. The Dutch argument for compromising, it must be noticed, had come about not due to an attitude change towards the Front,

but primarily due to the fear that the Republic's economy would collapse. A shattered economy would have deprived the Netherlands of its strongest tool to influence Suriname's domestic affairs, resulting in enormous social costs to both nations (*de Volkskrant*, 13-7-1989:1).

While the 1989 negotiations had been long and intense, discussions on financial aid for 1990 would prove yet more difficult, even though in the Netherlands Bukman had been replaced by Pronk following the installation of a CDA-PvdA coalition under the continued leadership of Lubbers in September 1989. Recognizing the prolonged talks of the previous year, Pronk invited representatives from both countries to meet in February 1990. Instead of Suriname having to hand in a MOP, Pronk considered it sufficient for the Front to formulate several less complex plans outlining the use of Dutch aid. The Dutch Minister 'merely' specified that Nf 135 million was to be allocated for educational and public health purposes, while the remainder was to be primarily invested in projects supporting rice farming, industrialization and the building sector. He also urged that the various projects be extended, at least to the value of Nf 25 million, to the war-torn countryside (*NRC Handelsblad*, 17-2-1990:3).

Despite these criteria, Pronk's proposal was met with criticism, especially from the Dutch parliament, which only approved funds earmarked for educational and public health projects and refused to finance any other development schemes without a MOP (*Het Parool*, 23-3-1990:3). Pronk's emotional warning that Paramaribo should be supported as otherwise 'they [the military] will return' fell on deaf ears (*NRC Handelsblad*, 15-3-1990:3). When in March 1990 Bouterse arrested Brunswijk during peace negotiations in Paramaribo (*Het Parool*, 27-3-1990:1), the House of Representatives stepped up its opposition to Suriname. The Dutch Ambassador was asked to submit a strong letter of protest, expressing The Hague's concerns about Brunswijk's arrest (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-3-1990:3), while Pronk was forced to compromise somewhat on his earlier announcement. Although humanitarian assistance would continue, all other aid programmes were to be investigated in order to find out who would benefit from the funds and how these would strengthen the Republic's democratic structures (*NRC Handelsblad*, 30-3-1990:2).

In his stand-off with the House of Representatives Pronk received support primarily from Minister of Foreign Affairs Van den Broek, who argued that the Surinamese government was not so much unwilling but rather unable to act against Brunswijk's arrest, given the military's strong domestic influence. The Front, on the other hand, did not realize the critical situation in the Dutch parliament. Instead of assisting Pronk and Van den Broek by lobbying Dutch parliamentarians directly, Paramaribo believed that once an agreement had been reached with Pronk, it was up to the Lubbers cabinet to see the aid package through the House of Representatives.

In April Shankar sent Lachmon to the Netherlands. During his stay, the senior statesman repeatedly asked Dutch politicians not to abandon Suriname but to assist the Republic in its efforts to develop stable political and socio-economic structures through the provision of financial and technical assistance (*Het Parool*, 7-4-1990:3). His efforts were clearly 'too little too late' since many parliamentarians felt a deep resentment towards Suriname, originating from the many corruption scandals under the pre-1980 Arron government and the fierce clashes with the various Bouterse regimes. As a result, by mid-May Pronk was willing to provide only Nf 2.6 million in humanitarian aid despite Suriname's continued critical socio-economic situation (*NRC Handelsblad*, 17-5-1990:7).

Realizing that the overall aid programme was at stake, the Front coalition had little choice but to bow to the concerns expressed in the House of Representatives and to restrict the NL's political influence. Subsequent reforms limited some of the military's constitutional powers, particularly the right to carry out criminal investigations. Despite Bouterse's aforementioned thinly veiled threats, these reforms were accepted in the Assembly with 36 against 6 votes on 1 May. In response, Dutch Minister of Justice Ernst Hirsch Ballin congratulated Shankar with having taken 'a step in the right direction' while crediting the decision with the possibility of finally renewing the treaty on judicial cooperation (*NRC Handelsblad*, 1-5-1990:3).

Despite these reforms and Lachmon's earlier lobbying of members of the House of Representatives, The Hague was still unsatisfied with the developments in Suriname. To the Front's dismay, on 27 June 1990 Pronk wrote a letter stating that Dutch parliamentarians would continue to refuse any release of funds without the formulation of a MOP (*NRC Handelsblad*, 12-7-1990:3). On 2 July Van den Broek informed the States General that he assessed recent reforms in Paramaribo insufficient as the military continued to enjoy a strong position (*Het Parool*, 2-7-1990:3).

This ongoing criticism of Suriname's domestic affairs finally provoked an angry reaction from Arron. While acknowledging that The Hague had provided 'support' in 1989, Arron described the attitude of the Lubbers cabinet in 1990 as one of 'restriction' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 12-7-1990:3). He accused the Netherlands of contributing to the Republic's political and socio-economic stagnation by withholding financial assistance. A few days later Lachmon was even more outspoken in his accusation of Dutch economic paternalism, now that 'political paternalism is no longer possible' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 18-7-1990:3) while dismissing the fear that Dutch money would end up with the military as unfair.

Arron's and Lachmon's frustration was understandable. The questioning of how the Republic's political and socio-economic conditions would improve without the promised funds was legitimate. Similarly, their anger with the

criticism voiced in the House of Representatives relating to the insufficiency of democratic reforms can well be understood, taking into account the need for the Assembly to introduce legal changes without antagonizing the officers. The example of Argentina, where throughout 1987 and 1988 sections of the military had provoked mutinies following President Raúl Alfonsín's announcement that he would charge officers with human rights abuses (*South America* 1992:58), must have been on the minds of many Surinamese politicians. The Front's restrained approach so as to avoid what would become known as the 'Alfonsín effect' (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1990:187) was not only characteristic of Suriname but also occurred in other Latin American countries. For example in Chile, where the Aylwin administration was likewise reluctant to prosecute former officers of the Pinochet junta (*South America* 1992:168).

Predictably, representatives from the larger Dutch parties (CDA, VVD and PvdA) as well as from the Development Cooperation Department rejected the criticism of senior Surinamese politicians. Pronk, in fact, soon had the opportunity to raise the issue personally as he travelled to Paramaribo in June 1990. During a meeting with Arron, Pronk rejected Surinamese accusations that The Hague was contributing to the Republic's growing political and socio-economic instability. He pointed out that 'first there must be a good economic policy before we give aid. Otherwise the money will be misspent', while emphasizing the need for Suriname to establish a SAP, as agreed upon in concert with the European Community (*NRC Handelsblad*, 23-7-1990:3; *Het Parool*, 26-7-1990:3). The same message was repeated during subsequent talks with the President and representatives of Suriname's industry and trade (*NRC Handelsblad*, 24-7-1990:1, 3).

Hence, Paramaribo increasingly felt the pressure of The Hague's attempts to influence Suriname's internal developments. Aware that Pronk was unlikely to change his position, the Front sought to reach a compromise. While Mungra made clear that he intended to substantially reduce the budget deficit, Arron acknowledged that 'I do know that he [Pronk] is aware of Suriname's problems and is kindly disposed towards the country' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 24-7-1990:3). Despite these last minute gestures, the talks with the Dutch Minister must be judged as unsuccessful. Taking into consideration Paramaribo's almost empty treasury, Schalkwijk (1994:186) commented as follows on the Pronk visit:

It is clear that Suriname, pressurized by the lack of time, had to compromise and to a greater extent than before found itself under the supervision of the Dutch government. From the Dutch side time and time again various conditions were formulated for reinstating the aid. Conditions that varied with time.

Thus the Front blamed these new bilateral difficulties primarily on The Hague's specific but shifting amendments with regard to the Aid Treaty,

including Van den Broek's attempt to bring in new players such as the World Bank to oversee development projects in the Republic. Even though at the end of 1987 Van den Broek had announced no new conditions before funds would be made available, a few months later, during a visit to Paramaribo, he introduced the idea of aid internationalization. New demands had also been made by Bukman during his visits in May and July 1989 by requesting the Front not only to prepare a SAP but also to purchase Dutch-financed goods and services through the RIB. Half a year later it was Pronk's turn: even though early in 1990 he had declared that plans for each socio-economic sector could be independently formulated, by the summer the House of Representatives had forced him again to insist on a MOP.

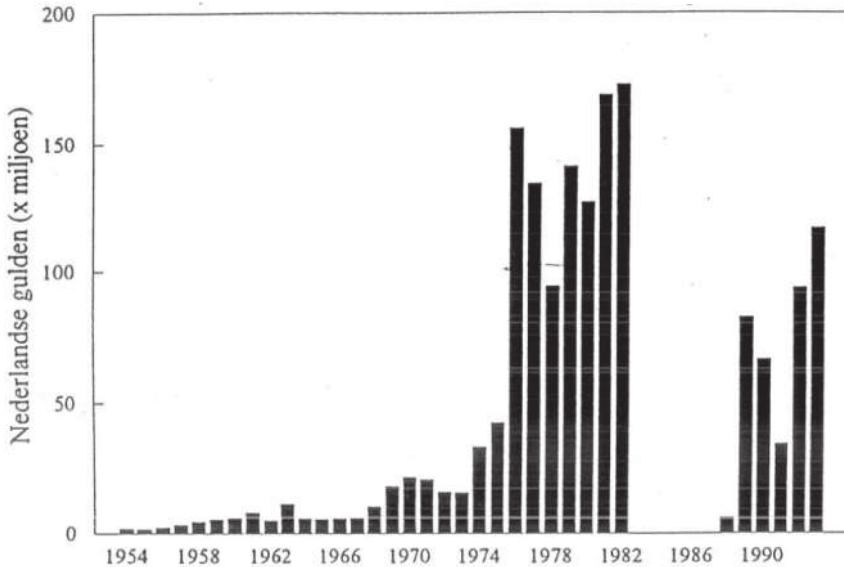
Since the Surinamese authorities were often either unable to respond to the shifting Dutch position or too late or half-hearted in implementing the requests, The Hague repeatedly threatened to reduce the so urgently needed funds. The situation was exacerbated by the Netherlands putting additional and considerable pressure on Paramaribo with regard to a variety of non-aid related issues, including ending the civil war, reducing the officers' political influence, strengthening the democratic structures and combating drug trafficking. Again, The Hague warned Paramaribo that a failure to implement these demands would put aid at risk.

The following table illustrates the restricted Dutch aid payments to the Front compared with the financial assistance made available to cabinets in the pre-December Murders era. Whereas, with the exception of 1978, the Netherlands had provided on average over Nf 150 million in annual aid between 1975 and 1982, funds were made accessible in a less generous fashion after 1987. In 1988 a mere Nf 6 million was received, rising to Nf 83 million in 1989 before falling to Nf 66 million in 1990 – a far cry from the Nf 200 million in annual aid agreed upon at an earlier stage.

With the continual reduction in the flow of funds, the Front coalition became increasingly frustrated with The Hague. After Arron's outburst in July, the usually imperturbable Shankar followed the path of the Vice-President by 'welcoming' the new Dutch Ambassador Pieter Koch in September 1990 with a critical message:

Not only the government, but also parliament has indicated that we must hold on to a strict execution of the Aid Treaty. We thus lament being confronted with a continuous spectrum of conditions with regard to the Treaty's execution. [...] We are convinced that among friendly nations there is an understanding of our idea of sovereignty, which rejects paternalism and an intervention in domestic affairs. Principles which form the basis of international organizations of which we are a member. (Schalkwijk 1994:202-3.)

Table 16. Dutch aid received, 1954-1990



Source: Schalkwijk 1994:188

Surinamese dissatisfaction was also reflected during discussions in the Assembly in November 1990 on the usefulness of sending a delegation to The Hague (*NRC Handelsblad*, 9-11-1990:7). Later that month, following yet another shift in Dutch demands – this time The Hague withdrew the requirement of formulating a MOP, demanding instead a Toekomstvisie (Future Vision), a plan outlining the long-term objectives and processes of the development projects – plans to visit the Netherlands were cancelled (*NRC Handelsblad*, 16-11-1990:7). The intense level of anger felt in Paramaribo became clear in Mungra's threat to take the Netherlands to the International Court of Justice in an attempt to force The Hague to continue supplying aid as agreed in the treaty (*NRC Handelsblad*, 21-11-1990:3).

Realizing the sharp escalation in the conflict and recognizing the Republic's weak bargaining position, Arron and Lachmon sought to defuse bilateral tensions. On 21 November, in a more conciliatory tone, Arron declared: 'I will not make the mistake of completely closing the door on the Netherlands. I will continue to follow the path of reminding the Netherlands to fulfil its commitments resulting from the 1975 treaty' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 21-11-1990:3). Lachmon even travelled to The Hague at the end of November to personally talk with Lubbers, Pronk and Van den Broek.

Disappointingly, during these talks both sides simply reaffirmed their

opposing positions. Whereas the Netherlands made it clear that aid would not be provided without being informed about the specific use of the funds, Suriname continued to hesitate about formulating a detailed MOP or alternative plans outlining the allocation of Dutch money. This stalemate led Arron to warn The Hague that 'developments are being created that will have such large consequences that the Netherlands can easily say that it will once again discontinue development payments' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 19-11-1990:3).

The Christmas coup

Arron's warning would turn into a sad reality only four weeks later. During the closing days of 1990 the situation in Suriname became critical. The stalemate with the Netherlands forced Shankar to announce a revision of the Constitution. Primarily in a bid to satisfy Dutch demands to restrict the military's role in politics, the President asked for a national dialogue in which 'we, who have stayed behind here, must have the courage to ask ourselves what went wrong' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-11-1990:7). He also urged the Netherlands to stay calm: 'We should not be afraid of confrontations, as long as these occur within the bounds of decency, as defined by a civilized society' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-11-1990:7). Although the officers did not react publicly to the President's speech, their anger about further restrictions of their constitutional rights were rising to dangerous levels.

In the socio-economic sphere the situation also remained fragile. One example was the announcement in November 1990 by the Melkcentrale (Central Milk Agency) that it would stop the sale of milk, except for infants and the elderly, whose consumption could be met by local production (*NRC Handelsblad*, 28-11-1990:7). The Milk Agency, responsible for the milk distribution in the country, was forced to take this measure due to a shortfall in foreign exchange reserves combined with a delayed shipment of milk powder. Similar problems were experienced in the educational sector as many teachers failed to return from their holidays in the Netherlands, while books and other teaching materials were becoming increasingly scarce (*NRC Handelsblad*, 29-11-1990:7). These widespread difficulties were soon reflected in parliamentary debates, where sharp criticism of the cabinet's policies was voiced. Indeed, several ministers warned that they would not support the budget for 1991; a warning countered by Arron with the threat to resign (*NRC Handelsblad*, 30-11-1990:3). This in turn led the military to believe that large sections of the population were looking for an alternative to the ruling coalition.

The final straw came when Bouterse felt unfairly treated by Dutch authorities after having been prevented from leaving the transit lounge at Schiphol. In December 1990, on an extensive overseas trip which had been endorsed by

the government, Bouterse had to travel via Amsterdam – Schiphol being Suriname's aviation gateway – to reach his first destination Ghana. During his stopover the Dutch Ministry of Justice had ordered Bouterse to remain in the transit area for 'security reasons', thus preventing him from speaking to the media or meeting relatives (*NRC Handelsblad*, 12-12-1990:2). The same procedure was repeated a few days later on another transit stop before leaving for Switzerland and once again on Bouterse's return to Suriname, although in the meantime he had applied for a visa (*NRC Handelsblad*, 14-12-1990:2).

Bouterse's outrage was all the greater as the Front failed to issue any protest, even though Shankar had travelled to Amsterdam for an official state visit on the same plane. Bouterse was so furious that, on his return, he bitterly attacked Shankar at a press conference.

If I would be President of Suriname and was sitting in the same airplane as the Commander... and I should learn of the treatment to the Commander of the country of which I was President, I would have turned Schiphol upside down, this would not have happened (*NRC Handelsblad*, 24-12-1990:1).

He also was incensed that Shankar had been kept waiting outside Lubbers' office where the media took photos of the President 'lingering' in the rain. Bouterse argued that 'a President should not wait anywhere. Such a photo in a Dutch newspaper is a disgrace both for our President and for our country and people' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 14-12-1990:2). The military strongman publicly called Shankar a 'joker' and 'a man without pride, without honour, without dignity' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 24-12-1990:1).

Tensions between the government and the military escalated the following day as Bouterse resigned as Commander – although not as Chairman of the Military Council. The *NRC Handelsblad* (24-12-1990:3), commenting on this latest development, adopted a minatory tone because

with this step Bouterse has made it even more difficult for the government to control the army than before. The army is no longer under [government] command, because it is highly unlikely that the government will find an officer who is capable of bringing the vultures in that army to heel and who will want or be able to be in command of an army in which the former strongman Bouterse remains an officer.

Even though Graanoogst, taking over command, assured the government that 'the National Army with an unfailing sense of responsibility will continue to fulfil its constitutional tasks', before long there were speculations about another coup (*NRC Handelsblad*, 24-12-1990:3).

After Bouterse's resignation Shankar called an emergency meeting of the cabinet (Dew 1994:181) but, as suspected, the government was unable to

assert control over the officers. While Lachmon, Arron and several ministers were still debating the crisis, in the Presidential Palace late on Christmas Eve, Shankar received a telephone call from officer Mijns, who simply told the President: 'The armed forces have taken over the government of the Republic of Suriname. Do not create any problems. Prevent an escalation and go home quietly' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-12-1990:1). Half an hour later, Graanoogst went on television to inform the public of the coup and to assure the people that the Constitution and Assembly would be respected as they had been following the coup of February 1980, as long as the parliamentarians accepted the cabinet's 'resignation' (*Het Parool*, 27-12-1990:1).

Graanoogst justified the coup by pointing at Article 178 of the 1987 Constitution,¹⁰ which the civilian politicians did not object to although the assumption of the country being in danger could not be validated. The civil war, the Republic's involvement in the global drug trade, the ongoing abuses of human rights, the increased socio-economic difficulties and the problematic Dutch-Surinamese relations may have been reasons to criticize the Front, but it was first and foremost the military that had pushed the government into this difficult position.

The Kerst- or Telefooncoup (Christmas or Telephone Coup), as the military intervention became known, was implemented without a shot being fired and with the public and politicians generally acquiescing in the officers' action. Hardly any soldiers could be seen on Paramaribo's streets and life continued its normal routine. The government handed in its resignation as demanded by Graanoogst, cooperated with the military and even agreed to remain in power until a caretaker cabinet would be formed. In fact, a few days after the coup, a senior politician described the situation as follows: 'What has been announced by the army as a coup has thereafter been channelled within the Constitution' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 28-12-1990:1). Similarly, Lachmon attempted to calm domestic and international anxiety by stating that 'it all remains within [the bounds of] the Constitution' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 28-12-1990:3).

In other words, both the military and the Front portrayed the Christmas Coup simply as a change of government within the constitutional framework. As expected, during subsequent debates in the Assembly, some ministers even admitted that the government had largely failed to achieve its objectives and that Suriname had degenerated into an unruly country (*NRC Handelsblad*, 29-12-1990:3). As attempts, at the peak of the crisis early in December, to reshuffle the cabinet had been largely unsuccessful due to Arron's opposition,¹¹ many

¹⁰ Articles 177-178 specify the creation and duties of the Military Authority, see Chapter VI.

¹¹ The Vice-President feared that the VHP in particular would gain through such a move since primarily Hindustani shopkeepers had profited from the high prices on goods and services in recent years. This new financial wealth, as Arron believed, might be translated into growing political power.

politicians as well as the public saw the coup as paving the way for new elections (Dew 1994:181).

General concern about the military's actions eased as Bouterse 'suggested' the Assembly elect a civilian to the presidency. On 29 December parliament 'accepted' this proposal and elected Johan Kraag, a 77 year old Creole, to be President. In the late 1950s Kraag had served as a parliamentary leader of the NPS, had chaired the Staten until 1963 and had been Minister of Social Affairs in the Pengel government (*NRC Handelsblad*, 31-12-1990:3). His multi-ethnic cabinet included one other NPS member, a few politicians from minor parties without previous representation in the Assembly (*Het Parool*, 8-1-1991:5) as well as some senior civil servants, including Ronnie Ramlakhan from the Foreign Affairs Department, who was appointed Foreign Minister (*NRC Handelsblad*, 7-1-1991:3).

The Front justified its support for this new cabinet 'because it has to organize elections and because we do not want the country to slide down any further' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 7-1-1991:3). In other words, the NPS, VHP and KTPI cooperated in the process of transferring power given that new elections would soon be held. Indeed, Bouterse accepted this condition and announced the inauguration of a new government within one hundred days. On 7 January 1991 free and fair elections were to be organized. However, this time frame was later 'extended' to 150 days to avoid the elections taking place during the Muslim holiday of Ramadan (*NRC Handelsblad*, 5-1-1991:2).

Nevertheless, right from the beginning it was obvious that the military remained firmly in control of the caretaker cabinet. Of the eleven ministers, three were members of the NDP and several were closely linked to the NL (*NRC Handelsblad*, 7-1-1991:3). Moreover, the main centre of power was vested in Vice-President Wijdenbosch (Dew 1994:182). Aware of the military influence on the new government, various civilian politicians decided to boycott the Assembly session in which Kraag and Wijdenbosch were elected to their offices. The number of absentees, however, was too low to stop the proceedings, primarily because Lachmon had appealed to all parliamentarians to 'legitimize' the coup or otherwise face the loss of control over Suriname's development (*NRC Handelsblad*, 31-12-1990:3). Another sign of the military's re-emerging power was Kraag's first decree calling for the reinstatement of Bouterse as Commander-in-Chief (*NRC Handelsblad*, 31-12-1990:3).

Whereas it was relatively easy for Bouterse to force the acceptance of the coup on the domestic front, it was extremely difficult to quell the protests from the international community. The first and harshest condemnation came from the Netherlands. Shortly after the announcement of Shankar's overthrow, Surinamese leaders residing in the Netherlands and opposing to military rule called on Lubbers to send in Dutch marines during a live television debate to which Bouterse was linked via satellite (Haakmat 1996:40). Although

Lubbers rejected this idea, on 25 December Van den Broek ordered Suriname's Ambassador to the Foreign Affairs Department and handed him a diplomatic letter forcefully condemning the coup. The letter also stated that The Hague 'deeply regretted that with this [coup] the consolidation of the democratic order in Suriname has been given a heavy blow' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-12-1990:1). In addition, Finance Minister Mungra was told that once again Dutch aid had been suspended and that the Lubbers cabinet was considering further measures to oppose the new regime.

The Netherlands was not the only country reacting. Immediate protest was received from France, calling upon Bouterse to reinstate the civilian government (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-12-1990:3). Similarly, on Boxing Day, the State Department issued a declaration asserting that

this act, at a time when the entire hemisphere is moving in the direction of democracy, will only isolate Suriname further from the international community, to the detriment of the Surinamese people. We call on the Surinamese military to immediately return the power to the democratically elected authorities of that country.

Washington also decided to suspend the three week old agreement granting Suriname credit of US\$ 15 million for the purchase of food. Furthermore, the State Department urged American citizens to avoid travelling to the Republic due to the unstable domestic situation (*NRC Handelsblad*, 2-1-1991:1, 16-2-1991:2).

More disconcerting to the new regime was the reaction from Latin American and Caribbean countries. At the request of Venezuela, the OAS discussed the situation in Suriname at a meeting in Washington on 28 December, where the member states unanimously condemned the coup and demanded a return to democracy (*NRC Handelsblad*, 29-12-1990:1). Similarly, CARICOM sharply repudiated Shankar's overthrow and threatened to cancel Paramaribo's observer status. Much of the progress made by the successive Bouterse regimes to integrate the Republic into the region was thus annihilated, ironically through the actions taken by the same officers responsible for improving relations with Latin America and the Caribbean at an earlier stage.

The frustration in the region was clearly illustrated by Venezuela's reaction. Caracas was not content to just call on the OAS to discuss the coup, it also threatened to lobby the organization to take further measures should the military fail to hold free and fair elections within the designated time. Venezuela deemed the situation so grave that it cancelled all aid programmes. The most drastic step, however, was the decision to recall the Venezuelan Ambassador from Paramaribo. President Pérez, a personal friend of Arron, denounced the coup as a 'deep insult to the dignity of the whole of America' and threatened that Venezuela might take additional actions 'against this

disgraceful military coup which once again opens the chapter of military dictatorships' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 2-1-1991:1).

The Wijdenbosch regime was overwhelmed by this strong international criticism. It remained silent for weeks, merely pointing out to Washington that the cancellation of credit to buy food might soon result in a greater shortage of bread and milk (*NRC Handelsblad*, 2-1-1991:1). Only in January did the new Foreign Minister recall his Ambassadors from The Hague and Washington (Ramkisor and Udenhout), along with its Consul General from Miami (Dick de Bie), to consider Suriname's diplomatic response and the possibility of making new appointments to overseas missions (*NRC Handelsblad*, 16-1-1991:2). And it was not until April that Ramlakhan sent representatives to several Caribbean countries to stop the 'smear campaigns' against Suriname (*NRC Handelsblad*, 18-5-1991:3). His assessment that 'these missions were not without success' was greeted with laughter by the foreign diplomatic corps in Paramaribo (*NRC Handelsblad*, 18-5-1991:3).

The return to democracy in November 1987 did not usher in the stability Suriname was hoping to gain. Political tensions soon emerged between the government and the military about the NL's constitutional rights. In the socio-economic sphere no improvement was recognizable, primarily due to the devastating effect of the ongoing civil war. To make matters worse, the officers' continued involvement in drug trafficking and human rights violations undermined the internal and external standing of the new civilian administration even more deeply. Since international aid was now reduced to a trickle, Paramaribo expected that The Hague would help solve the various problems by granting considerable financial and technical assistance. However, this expectation remained unfulfilled since the Netherlands refused to support the government until the very same problems Paramaribo hoped to overcome with Dutch assistance, were resolved. In doing so, The Hague contributed significantly to the undermining of the Front's ability to govern and to increasing the tension between the cabinet and the NL. In other words, for most of the post-election period the country seemed to go around in circles, until the internal and external situation had deteriorated to such an extent that, on Christmas Day 1990, the military once again decided to overthrow the elected government.

CHAPTER VIII

Towards a Commonwealth?

It is rather ludicrous when, almost twenty years later, the Netherlands summons Suriname to formulate proposals for a Commonwealth relationship. Who lives to reach an old age, experiences a lot! (Former Prime Minister Sedney in response to the 'Lubbers Plan' in early 1991, cited in Schalkwijk 1994:214.)

As the new regime intended to prepare a diplomatic offensive so as to avoid the Republic's renewed isolation on the international stage, political circles in Paramaribo were unexpectedly confronted with a new Dutch proposal concerning the future of transatlantic relations and, indeed, the very nature of the Republic's existence as a sovereign state. Utterly frustrated with the repeated military interventions in the former colony, Dutch Prime Minister Lubbers introduced the plan to establish a Commonwealth composed of the Netherlands, the two remaining Dutch Caribbean territories – the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba – and Suriname. Within this confederation, Paramaribo would transfer power in essential areas such as foreign policy, defence, monetary and economic affairs to The Hague. Even though the Surinamese public, the State Council, the Democratisch Alternatief 1991¹ and various scholars and journalists acclaimed this proposal as the answer to the Republic's political and socio-economic problems, other intellectuals, commentators, representatives of the civilian parties and members of the NDP denounced the Lubbers Plan as merely boiling down to a form of recolonization. During the subsequent debate the nation plunged itself into some soul-searching deliberations whilst evaluating the past fifteen years of independence.

¹ DA'91, Democratic Alternative 1991. DA'91 has been founded by opponents of the Bouterse-regime and who, at the same time, did not feel 'home' at the traditional parties. The party tends to gain its support from the rather well-educated section of the general public. DA'91 attempts to represent all ethnic groups in Suriname and is a supporter of closer ties with the Netherlands. The party might be best compared with the Dutch D'66.

An idea emerges

The Lubbers Plan, it must be stressed, originated from The Hague's growing frustration with Suriname's political situation. During a parliamentary debate just days following the Christmas Coup, VVD leader Frits Bolkestein introduced a motion aimed at intensifying transatlantic relations. This would allow the Kingdom to play a 'stabilizing role' in the Republic's domestic affairs. As Bolkestein claimed, 'if the Surinamese economy is going to improve at all, this will only be possible through foreign investments. And these will not come about as long as investors do not have the feeling that the Netherlands is helping to stabilize things there' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-12-1990:3). To achieve this, the establishment was suggested of a *Gemenebest* (Commonwealth) relationship between the two states.

Even though this proposal was only an outline, other Dutch politicians from across the political spectrum supported Bolkestein. PvdA member Ad Melkert, for instance, declared to be 'one hundred and eighty per cent' in favour while D66 leader Hans van Mierlo announced to have 'no objections whatsoever' against the motion (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-12-1990:3). Even GroenLinks (GreenLeft) politician Leoni Sipkes asserted that 'we cannot continue to follow a policy of opening and closing the money flow. I would like to call it cooperation rather than Dutch assistance, but if you do it properly, you do not have to worry about paternalism at all' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-12-1990:3).

Recognizing the mood among Dutch parliamentarians, following the May elections Lubbers began preparing a more specific plan to reshape Dutch-Surinamese relations. For this purpose he established a working group including himself, Hirsch Ballin, Van den Broek and Pronk (Dew 1994:182). Despite the working group's failure to reveal to the public or even to Paramaribo the details of what would become known as the Lubbers Plan, Melkert argued that with the Dutch 'willingness' to form a Commonwealth, it was now up to Suriname to respond. In his own words: 'The motto should now be to strengthen communication instead of isolation, assuming that this is supported by all. Fundamentally, the Surinamese political parties will now also have to indicate which orientation takes centre stage' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 28-1-1991:3).

Melkert's call on Suriname to become involved in the discussion raised some eyebrows in Paramaribo. As Schalkwijk (1994:207) rightly pointed out, the Commonwealth was not a new initiative, and certainly not a Dutch idea. As early as the third Round Table Conference in 1961 Pengel had introduced a motion that suggested 'a revision of the Charter in order to provide Suriname with the status of a dominion – such as that of Canada and the British Commonwealth – with full self-determination in defence and foreign affairs

matters'. Under the Sedney administration (1969-1973) several proposals had been brought forward to discuss Suriname's participation in a Dutch Commonwealth, particularly with regard to development aid, defence and judicial cooperation, so as to counter any calls for independence by NPS and PNR (Schalkwijk 1994:209-14). Yet nothing ever came of these plans due to the growing willingness of the PvdA and of the Arron government to fully decolonize Suriname – hence Sedney's witty opening quote of this chapter.

Despite these earlier proposals, it was with great surprise that Paramaribo reacted to the Dutch initiative; it needed time to formulate its position. Eventually, after a month Melkert received a reply – although neither from the politicians nor in the form he had hoped. Instead, Bouterse criticized the Commonwealth as a Dutch plot to influence the forthcoming elections in favour of the old civilian parties. He feared that the parties backing the Lubbers Plan could promise the electorate more Dutch aid as a reward for their support. In an angry yet comic way Bouterse announced that he was in favour of a close association with the Netherlands so 'that everybody receives dual nationality, citizenship, as many foreign currencies as they please and unemployment benefits for everyone'. Moreover, Suriname's navy would get 'a battleship' and 'I myself will be part of the staff of the Allies. [...] Together with General Schwarzkopf I will then make plans against Iraq' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 22-2-1991:2).

While warning the public not to believe that an association with the Netherlands would solve the Republic's problems, Bouterse rightly emphasized that as yet no details had been presented to Paramaribo. Instead (to the outrage of Surinamese politicians), the Dutch Foreign Affairs Department did inform Caracas, Washington, Paris, Brasilia and the OAS about Lubbers' intentions. The primary reason for The Hague excluding Paramaribo had to do with the lack of consensus within the Dutch cabinet about the idea of a Commonwealth. The proposal put together in January 1991 failed to gain unanimous support as several ministers criticized the plan for creating a neocolonial impression (*NRC Handelsblad*, 23-2-1991:1). Fearing a negative regional response, it was requested that the position of the major Latin American countries be taken into account before approving the scheme.

Controversy was also rampant in Paramaribo. The Front coalition refused to give a response to the idea of a Commonwealth prior to the elections as this would highlight the division within the coalition. Whereas the NPS, which had fought hard for Suriname's independence, was naturally critical of the proposal, the Hindustani VHP, initially opposing decolonization, assessed it in more favourable terms. Recognizing growing public support for the Lubbers Plan, the party even saw it as a 'gift from God' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 23-2-1991:3). Derby, however, was angered by The Hague's move. The leader of the SPA rightly claimed that 'the Netherlands does consult the United States

and the Organization of American States but it has failed to present the idea to the country most involved. That is inconsistent' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 23-2-1991:1). Other politicians contacted Ambassador Koch to learn the details of the Commonwealth, but the Dutch representative had to admit that there was 'no finalized plan' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 23-02-1991:3).

Since no specific information was available, even the NDP remained 'neutral', neither condemning the idea nor embracing it. A similar 'non-committal' attitude could be observed during a conference in The Hague on 2 May 1991. While discussing 'The Relationship Netherlands-Suriname, Now and in the Future', Schalkwijk (1994:227) pointed out that within the Paramaribo delegation 'the term Commonwealth had scrupulously been avoided'. What united most Surinamese politicians was their insistence that the Republic's sovereign status should not be compromised. According to a member of parliament 'after fifteen years of independence, this would be a betrayal of ourselves' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 23-2-1991:3).

This indecisive atmosphere in Paramaribo changed when just prior to the elections support of the proposal increased. Mid-March the new party combination DA'91, comprising the Alternatief Forum (AF, Alternative Forum), the HPP, Pendawa Lima and the Bosneger Eenheidspartij (BEP, Bush Negro Unity Party), openly advocated closer relations with the Netherlands (*NRC Handelsblad*, 12-3-1991:3). Including many younger intellectuals from across the ethnic divide, the leadership of this electoral alliance incorporated the Commonwealth in its programme as a means of easing the country's problems.

Only days before the elections, the State Council publicly spoke out in favour of the Lubbers Plan. Following the establishment, in March, of an ad hoc commission to seek consultations with Suriname's main political and socio-economic organizations (including the ASFA, the CCK, RAVAKSUR, PALU and the VSB) chairman Harold Ramdanie presented a report in which it was emphasized that many of these groups would welcome a Commonwealth, although most stressed the need for more information (Schalkwijk 1994:224-6). On the basis of these findings, the State Council's suggestion was for the newly elected government to define the Republic's own position on the issue and initiate negotiations with The Hague before seeking public approval in a referendum. The Council members were particularly pleased with the idea of integrating the NL into the Dutch armed forces, thus 'taming' the officers' taste for political power. Surprisingly, the lack of specific details did not prevent the State Council from promoting the Commonwealth.

In other words, following the coup and the ensuing international condemnation, Surinamese politics would rapidly become dominated by debates regarding the future relations with the Netherlands. Other regional and global issues were perceived to be of lesser importance, which does not mean to

suggest that in the foreign policy sphere there were no developments between Christmas 1990 and May 1991. Suriname, in fact, experienced severe difficulties with Washington in this period, highlighted by Paramaribo's initial refusal to welcome the new American Ambassador, John Leonard, in reaction to the White House's condemnation of the coup (*NRC Handelsblad*, 13-3-1991:7). While this problem was finally solved with President Kraag receiving Leonard in March 1991, a second dispute emerged following American accusations that the NL continued to be involved in drug trafficking. To calm the situation, Kraag announced his intention to seek closer cooperation with Washington in combating the trade in illegal narcotics (*Haagsche Courant*, 23-5-1991:1).

A related problem was Bouterse's objection to the in his opinion large number of OAS representatives to oversee the elections. With the backing of the civilian parties, which sought to repair the Republic's international image, the OAS dispatched forty observers from sixteen Latin American and Caribbean countries, justifying this number by stating that Suriname was 'the last military dictatorship' on the South American mainland (*NRC Handelsblad*, 18-5-1991:3). Whereas the OAS saw the elections as an important step in the democratization process in the Western Hemisphere, Bouterse criticized the large delegation of observers as a sign of the organization distrusting the current regime to carry out free and fair elections.

Finally, on 25 May 1991 the elections took place. Despite some problems in the organizational sphere, including the transport of ballot papers in boats to and from remote areas, the OAS representatives declared the voting valid (*NRC Handelsblad*, 25-5-1991:3). The result, however, came as a surprise to the watching international community and, in particular, to the Netherlands. Of the 51 Assembly seats, the Nieuw Front (NF, New Front; the former Front coalition), this time also comprising the SPA, won 'only' 30 seats – against 40 in the 1987 elections. These, in turn, were divided as follows: NPS (12), VHP (9), KTPI (7) and SPA (2). The DA'91 gained 9 seats, that is, 3 seats each for the HPP and the BEP, 2 for Pendawa Lima and 1 for the Alternative Forum. The other 12 seats went to the NDP – previously represented by only 3 parliamentarians.

Yet if Bouterse thought an increase of the NDP's popularity could be translated into a strengthening of the military's influence, he had misjudged the situation. Just days following the NF's return to government, Van den Broek and his American counterpart (*Trouw*, 27-5-1991:5, 30-5-1991:1) publicly warned Bouterse that a repeat of the 1980 and 1990 coups would not be tolerated. Both countries thus signalled their willingness to consider military interference if the NL was to overthrow a popularly elected cabinet once again. Similarly, Weisglas argued that

if it appears that the armed forces continue to violate the rule of law and are involved in drug trafficking, then it [a military intervention] is permissible. Such a possible intervention is comparable with the Dutch presence in North Iraq. We must be less afraid to violate borders if that can alleviate the fate of individuals. (*NRC Handelsblad*, 27-5-1991:3.)

Unlike Washington, where the American OAS representative Luigi Einaudi reaffirmed the position of the White House that it would intervene in the event of another coup, comments in The Hague by Van den Broek and Weisglas generated a lively debate. Dutch Defence Minister Relus ter Beek, along with parliamentary leaders of the CDA, PvdA, D66 and GroenLinks questioned the option of removing Bouterse through violent means following a possible new coup (*de Volkskrant*, 29-5-1991:1). Eventually, Prime Minister Lubbers was forced to clarify the situation: even if a democratically elected government in Paramaribo were to officially ask The Hague for military assistance, no such proposal would be considered: 'I think that we should in no way interfere with the internal affairs of Suriname' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 1-6-1991:1). This controversy within the Dutch cabinet highlighted the fact that neither in the National Assembly nor in the States General a formal position with regard to the Lubbers Plan had been tabled. Whereas some ministers saw a role for the Dutch armed forces in Suriname, others refused to incorporate defence matters into the Commonwealth debate.

This uncertainty finally ended when Lubbers appeared in the House of Representatives on 5 June 1991 to introduce more concrete ideas with respect to the Commonwealth. On the macrolevel, the Prime Minister foresaw the creation of a Dutch Commonwealth composed of the Netherlands, Aruba, the Netherlands Antilles and Suriname with the objective of coordinating foreign, defence, monetary and economic policies between these four 'partners' (Dew 1994:182). On the microlevel Lubbers' proposal included a series of administrative, judicial, military, political, monetary, economic and social reforms for the Republic to implement. In more detail, the plan contained provisions for Dutch advice and support to strengthen Suriname's redemocratization process, particularly by reorganizing the country's administrative sector. Even though the courts would continue to operate independently, the police force was to be restructured with Dutch assistance. Another cornerstone of the plan was that both countries would coordinate their defence policies, a step which Lubbers clearly intended to use as a check on Bouterse's activities. Moreover, the proposal argued for close economic cooperation and a monetary union with the aim of restoring international confidence in the Republic's domestic stability. In addition, freedom of movement between the two countries was to be guaranteed, which would allow Surinamese to travel to the Netherlands without visa requirements. Finally, a coordinated foreign policy would be implemented by both countries following close consultation (*Het Parool*, 6-6-1991:3).

The case for a Commonwealth

What the Lubbers Plan presented came close to what might indeed be described as a recolonization of Suriname. The suggestion of close 'cooperation' in foreign, defence, monetary and economic policies in particular, must be understood as providing The Hague with legal powers to determine Surinamese affairs. Whereas close cooperation between two countries with similar political interests and characteristics, or of comparable economic and military strength, may well function as a pact between equals, the contrast between the wealthy, democratic, industrialized and homogenous Kingdom and the politically unstable, economically underdeveloped and socially fragmented Republic was enormous. A comparison of their respective GDPs in 1991 clearly demonstrates this gap. The Netherlands, with a population of 15 million, boasted a GDP of Nf 542.2 billion, whereas Suriname's GDP stood at Sf 3.7 billion with a population of 400,000.² In view of these fundamental differences, the idea of generating a lively debate among scholars and politicians on both sides of the Atlantic was proposed, including Haakmat, Meel, Schalkwijk and Fernandes Mendes. In analysing their views of the Lubbers Plan, it is important to be aware that given the lack of details, arguments for and against the Commonwealth were generally based on mere assumptions.

To begin with, supporters of the Commonwealth pointed out that the plan would allow Suriname to reorganize its administrative and judicial institutions, which had so far remained limited due to the NL's resistance to reforms. Lubbers himself argued for the necessity of restructuring and reducing Suriname's public service sector, for appointing a Dutch judge as the Chief Justice of the Republic (*Gemenebest* 1991:14) and for creating an 'overarching justice system' with the Netherlands (Dew 1994:183). Through these measures, all integral parts of the redemocratization process, Lubbers hoped to make the administration more efficient, to reduce the costs of running the relatively large bureaucracy and to ensure the protection of human rights.

A core objective of Lubbers' redemocratization programme was Dutch-Surinamese cooperation in military affairs with the silent intention of restricting Bouterse's political influence. Looking at this issue, Rosemarijn Hoefte, along with many Dutch and Surinamese commentators, defended Lubbers' proposal, arguing that 'the military can only be removed through outside intervention' (Hoefte 1991:11). In view of the difficulties experienced by Shankar from the very first day of taking office, Lubbers' emphasis on a bilateral defence policy is understandable. Surinamese soldiers were to be retrained

² *Financial statistics* 1993:522, 672. In 1991 the Dutch guilder fluctuated between 1.71 and 1.86 to the US dollar, hence allowing for a relatively easy comparison as the Surinamese guilder remained fixed at 1.79 to the US dollar.

by Dutch personnel to form a more professional armed service equipped for the country's defence while the NL's constitutional rights were to be further reduced. On this last point raised by Lubbers, Fernandes Mendes' comment that 'in South American democracies it is quite normal for the military to play a significant role behind the scenes' (Hoefte 1991:11) had become obsolete in view of the progress made by many Latin American democracies in recent years.

By diminishing the NL's political influence, Lubbers aimed to strengthen democratic institutions and to attract international and domestic investors in a bid to stabilize Suriname's economy. The keystone in achieving this was the establishment of a monetary union (*Gemenebest* 1991:14). It was unclear whether the Surinamese guilder was to be permanently pegged to the Dutch guilder or, more likely, if the latter would come in its place. Nonetheless, it was hoped that through a monetary union the Republic's main economic problems, including accelerating inflation and the growing gap between the official exchange rate and the black-market value of the Surinamese guilder, could be brought under control. Furthermore, since the Central Bank would be unable to simply print money to cover government expenditure, the administration would be forced to cut spending.

A further measure aimed at improving Suriname's economic prospect was to provide the Republic with additional Dutch aid on top of the remaining development assistance promised in the Aid Treaty. This technical and financial support was intended to improve and diversify the country's agricultural and industrial infrastructure, which would eventually stimulate local and overseas investors (*Gemenebest* 1991:14). As might have been expected, Anthony Caram (1993:296) of De Nederlandsche Bank (DNB) in Amsterdam evaluated the Lubbers Plan positively.

In the economic area, easily the most attention has been attracted by a recently publicized suggestion to form a commonwealth between the Netherlands and Suriname, possibly even extending to the formation of a monetary union. Closer links between the two countries are warmly endorsed, since this would in all probability mean that additional financial resources and manpower would be made available – admittedly under certain stringent conditions – to help overcome the crisis.

An improvement in Suriname's political and economic conditions was to go hand in hand with a strengthening of its social services. Consequently, a central component of the Lubbers Plan foresaw the abolition of visa regulations and free migration between the two countries. This was a crucial point, as a failure to improve the Republic's domestic situation would certainly lead to another exodus towards the Netherlands. By strengthening the Republic's domestic structures, particularly through additional funding for social services such

as housing, education and health, the Dutch government hoped that many Surinamese currently residing in the Netherlands would consider returning to the Caribbean.

Finally, with regard to Suriname's foreign policy, closer cooperation between the two countries meant that Paramaribo could benefit from what Dew (1994:183) described as improved access to 'a more extensive and professional foreign service'. As an active member of the international community the Netherlands maintained an extensive global network of diplomatic missions which would take, once again, responsibility for representing Suriname. Also within international organizations The Hague could act on Paramaribo's behalf. In addition, the Dutch Foreign Affairs Department would provide its Surinamese counterpart with professional skills, legal advice, organizational support and training facilities. This support could prove highly useful in strengthening Suriname's relations within the region since severe financial difficulties had made it impossible to maintain an adequate service of its own in Latin America and the Caribbean. Moreover, taking into account Haakmat's estimate (1996:149) that 70% of Suriname's diplomatic work had been focused on trying to regain access to Dutch aid, these scarce human resources could be used elsewhere once development assistance would be guaranteed in a Commonwealth treaty.

Considering the 'generosity' of the Dutch plan, it comes as no surprise that the majority of the Surinamese population strongly endorsed the formation of a Commonwealth. While according to Verschuuren (1994:146) 80% of Suriname's citizens favoured closer ties with the Netherlands, Haakmat (1996:134) cited a figure of 60% for Surinamese residing in the Netherlands and 70% for those living in the Republic. The preference of the Surinamese people was thus evident and as such could be used effectively as a justification for Paramaribo to join the Commonwealth, despite the ensuing limitations on the Republic's sovereign status.

Suriname's sovereignty was not an issue of primary importance for supporters of the Lubbers Plan as they argued that the Republic, on 25 November 1975, had merely gained political autonomy, but no economic independence. According to Haakmat (1996:133-4):

the political and the economic situation in Suriname do not track. On the one hand there is political independence and on the other an ever-increasing economic dependence on the Netherlands. As the years pass by, this discrepancy becomes greater. With this, the paradox has emerged that channeling more development aid to Suriname has led to more dependence, which was the opposite of its aim.

In other words, to modify current political reality into a Commonwealth would merely reflect the country's existing economic dependence on the Netherlands.

Yet Commonwealth advocates pointed out that it was unlikely for the Republic's sovereign status to be affected negatively by close 'cooperation' with the Netherlands. Their views were based on a letter to the House of Representatives in June 1991, in which Lubbers and Van den Broek informed parliament that, in contrast to Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles, Suriname's participation in the association was to be based on 'a close bond between two sovereign states regulated by a treaty, with the mutual option of termination'. Moreover, throughout the debate, the Dutch cabinet emphasized that a Commonwealth will only be established 'if Suriname agrees to it'.³

Interestingly, there was not only strong support for the proposal from the Surinamese population and some political parties and democratic institutions, but also from the major regional powers. In fact, when the House of Representatives began debating the idea of a Commonwealth, France, the United States, Venezuela and the OAS, as Hoefte (1991:9) has pointed out, had been pressurizing the Netherlands to solve the Surinamese 'problem'. For Paris, the Commonwealth would mean political and economic stability in a country bordering a French overseas department. This, it was hoped, would encourage the almost 10,000 Surinamese still residing in refugee camps to return home. Furthermore, France was eager to reduce the incidence of Surinamese smugglers selling goods on the black markets of St. Laurent and Cayenne in search of quick profits. 'In this respect', according to *NRC Handelsblad* (18-5-1991:3), 'for Paris, which traditionally is a lot less reluctant to interfere in the affairs of other countries, the Lubbers Plan is more than welcome'.

In Washington it was hoped that the proposed Commonwealth would primarily bring about Dutch involvement in combating drug trafficking. It was evident to the United States that some of the narcotics on its home market arrived through the Republic. Even with this knowledge, cooperation with Paramaribo had proven unsuccessful due to the NL's participation in the drug trade. Consequently, the White House favoured the reform of Suriname's legal institutions according to Dutch advice, 'because it is that country that has the privilege here'. According to an American diplomat, 'the best guarantee that this will actually succeed, is that the judicial system here is able to function independently once again. The Lubbers Plan can help' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 18-5-1991:3).

Caracas welcomed the Commonwealth as it would prevent the NL from carrying out any further coups, which, as it was feared, could have wider regional implications. Venezuela was also pleased to have been consulted on the Lubbers Plan, with The Hague, besides Paris and Washington, seeking Caracas' opinion. This was seen as a boost for Venezuela's image as a regional leader.

³ Tweede Kamer Document, No. 20361-049 1996.

Finally, in the eyes of the OAS, the Commonwealth would largely guarantee the Republic's respect for human rights as well as improve the international image of the continent while ensuring that the last military regime on Latin America's mainland had come to an end. To conclude, since Suriname and the Netherlands would cooperate as two equal sovereign states within this Commonwealth (at least in theory), there could be no talk of recolonization (*NRC Handelsblad*, 18-5-1991:3).

The case against a Commonwealth

Despite these positive responses, the Lubbers Plan also met with opposition. This disapproval took a wide range of forms, including the choice to remain silent (Brazil), the careful voicing of criticism (the NF cabinet) and the issuing of a sharp warning of possible unforeseen consequences (several scholars on both sides of the Atlantic). To begin with, and in contrast to other regional powers, Brasilia adopted a reserved position, stating that it was following a policy of non-intervention towards Suriname's domestic affairs. Even though President Fernando Collor de Mello did not publicly oppose the Lubbers Plan, Brasilia's silence indicated that The Hague could not count on its support (*NRC Handelsblad*, 18-5-1991:3).

Surinamese politicians were facing a far more difficult situation. Whereas the State Council, DA'91 and indeed the majority of the population favoured the Lubbers Plan, the NDP (following the May election) rejected the proposal as it implied the de facto recolonization of Suriname. Nationalistic in its outlook, the party – like its predecessor the VFB – had continuously battled against The Hague's overbearing influence in Surinamese affairs. A Commonwealth was therefore seen as an unacceptable step in the wrong direction. The New Front found itself in a particularly awkward position. Although aware that public opinion was in favour of seeking closer ties with the Netherlands, a Commonwealth would undeniably indicate that the 'old' parties had failed to lead the country through a difficult period and that they had been unable to solve the political and socio-economic crisis. The NPS in particular, since the early 1970s strongly in favour of independence, but also the VHP, finally supporting Suriname's withdrawal from the Charter, would inexorably have to admit that they had been unsuccessful in meeting the aspirations of their supporters since November 1975.

According to Haakmat (1996:135) this 'resistance among politicians', especially from those within the ruling NF, but also from NDP parliamentarians on the opposition benches was 'understandable'.

At least 80 per cent of the politicians who run the show in Suriname have in one way or another cooperated in the transition to independence. To now advocate a return in the form of a Dutch Commonwealth would be equal to admitting that at the time the decision for independence was wrong. The fact that leading Surinamese politicians and political parties are unwilling to put some kind of restored political bond with the Netherlands on the agenda means that the solution should not be sought in this direction.

The NDP and NF found support from various scholars and journalists who would raise strong objections against major elements of the Lubbers Plan. Dutch control of Suriname's defence policy was one of the least controversial issues (of course except amongst NL officers, who feared a loss of political influence), even though any subordination of the Republic's defence policy to the Netherlands could actually weaken Paramaribo's position. The inaction of the Dutch Armed Forces in Suriname (the so-called TRIS) during Guyanese army operations in disputed border areas in the late 1960s and The Hague's dismissal of Arron's request in the mid-1970s to send military assistance to deal with this conflict, had made clear that the Netherlands lacked credibility in defending the Republic.⁴

With regard to this issue, the Surinamese writer Rudi Kross rejected the idea that the Surinamese government was the only one to blame for the uncontrollable NL. As he emphasized, The Hague had given in to the demands made by Surinamese politicians to establish an army in the summer of 1975. This had come about, according to Kross, simply for reasons of prestige, springing from the belief that a sovereign state must have its own military apparatus (Hoeft 1991:9). Dutch Colonel Valk had then provided Bouterse with crucial advice, enabling him to carry out the February 1980 coup, while The Hague's pressure on the Front to curb the officers' constitutional position proved a critical factor in contributing to political tensions between the government and the military in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In other words, a Commonwealth might primarily provide the Netherlands with an opportunity to correct past mistakes, but it would also reduce Suriname's status to that of a guinea pig, allowing The Hague to practise decolonization.

More objections were raised against Lubbers' attempt to strengthen Suriname's democratic and legal structures. In his book *Herinneringen aan de toekomst van Suriname* (Memories of the future of Suriname, 1996) Haakmat predicted that the Commonwealth might be called into question if the NDP could retain its popularity with the Surinamese electorate, particularly in view of the party's fourfold increase in parliamentary seats between 1987 and 1991. Following a discussion of the weaknesses and strengths of the other political

⁴ Yet it must be acknowledged that the danger presented by Bouterse and his followers to Suriname's democratic institutions was far greater than any external threat.

parties, Haakmat argued that the NDP, as the representative of the Creole working class, would become Suriname's most influential party in the near future.⁵ With its sharp attacks on The Hague's 'neocolonial' policies and its support for regional integration, a future NDP-led government would in all likelihood severely clash with The Hague on Commonwealth issues requiring close cooperation.

From a different but equally important angle, Oostindie observed that in recent years The Hague had increasingly intervened in the domestic affairs of the remaining Dutch Caribbean territories despite their autonomous status. Similarly, the degree of self-government offered to the Republic might be less generous than expected by many Surinamese. This, at least, had been the experience of Antillean politicians. According to Oostindie (1996:221):

Even if the recent Dutch re-involvement in the Caribbean is not adequately defined as re-colonization, many Antilleans are apprehensive about exactly this. In Curaçao, the main Antillean island, the political response to the renewed Dutch presence was initially characterized by indignation and a defensive attitude. Yet the political elites' attempt to play out the argument of neo-colonialism stood little chance of being fully heeded in a post-Cold War international context.

Economic cooperation and the establishment of a monetary union also provoked considerable criticism. Even though the argument put forward in the article 'Gemenebest; Stap vooruit of terug?' (Commonwealth; A step forwards or backwards?) (*Gemenebest* 1991:13-6), that Suriname had strengthened and diversified its economic structure throughout the Bouterse era, could be questioned – most agricultural, mining and industrial production had, at best, stagnated under Bouterse, with diversification only taking place in palm oil and crude petroleum production (*Europa year book* 1993, II:2678) – it was true to claim that the economy had learned to become less dependent on Dutch aid.

Consequently, Haakmat (1993:12) warned that economic cooperation and a monetary union would only contribute to Suriname's increased reliance on the Netherlands, emphasizing that it was particularly the financial aid received that had manifested this dependence.

⁵ Haakmat 1996:139-45. Haakmat's prediction about this proved to be correct, at least in so far as the 1996 election result. Following the general elections of 23-5-1996, the seats in the Assembly were divided as follows: NF 24, NDP 16, DA'91 4, Pendawa Lima 4 and Alliantie (Alliance) 3. The KTIPI and a faction of the VHP, the Basispartij voor Vernieuwing en Democratie (Basic Party for Renewal and Democracy), defected from the NF and joined the NDP-Alliance coalition government (*Europa year book* 1997, II:3084). Likewise following the general elections of 25-10-2010, the Mega Combination, of which the NDP is the main force, won 23 seats. Allowing Bouterse to form a coalition government with the support of the A-Combination. The NF, in contrast, merely won 14 seats.

Besides revenues gained from the bauxite industry the Dutch development aid, which included the 'independence present' of Nf 3.1 billion, has become of prime necessity to the independent state of Suriname to keep its head above water. What the Netherlands had intended with independence, namely that it would no longer need to concern itself with Suriname, has completely failed to materialize. Since independence the Netherlands has actually become more involved in and with Suriname than in the previous period.

Rather than translating economic dependency into a similar political relationship by forming a Commonwealth, Haakmat (1996:135) suggested to do the reverse, by applying the current political actuality (that is, independence from the Netherlands) to the economic sector.

Suriname must become economically independent of the Netherlands. No more leaning on the Netherlands and asking support for every futility. The cause of the economic dependence is, as we have seen, the development aid that Suriname receives from the Netherlands. This 'aid addiction' must be ended.

Haakmat was supported in his views by Edo Haan, who in his 1998 PhD thesis on Dutch aid to Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles, compared the effects of the increasing development aid provided to the Netherlands Antilles (amounting to Nf 500 annually per capita) with the waning financial assistance granted to Aruba since 1986. Whereas the latter island had initiated a process of opening up its economy as an alternative to relying on Dutch aid – resulting in a significant increase in socio-economic prosperity – the industrial and service sectors of the Netherlands Antilles generally continued to operate inefficiently since there was always the prospect of being 'bailed out' by Dutch financial assistance (Haan 1998:265-6).

Even if Suriname decided to accept the Lubbers Plan and receive additional Dutch development aid, the expectations held by many Surinamese might not necessarily be met. As the banker Caram (1993:296) emphasized when talking about economic cooperation and a possible monetary union:

there is certainly no room for undue expectations, particularly since a shift is taking place in Dutch development cooperation towards a more business-oriented approach. As a dramatic deterioration in Suriname is essentially due to persistent economic mismanagement, Suriname itself will have to bear the lion's share of the burden of reform and restructuring.

Especially strong objections to the Lubbers Plan were raised with regard to the intended cooperation in the field of foreign policy. As outlined in Chapter II, in the immediate post-independence period the Surinamese Foreign Affairs Department made extensive use of the support offered by its Dutch

counterpart. The outcome was a further strengthening of the already strong links with the Netherlands, pushing the issue of regional integration even more into the background. Only during the Bouterse era, when Dutch-Surinamese relations were extremely tense, was progress made with regard to the desirable objective of closer ties with other Latin American and Caribbean countries. Consequently, it had to be feared that a renewed reliance on The Hague in the field of foreign affairs could contribute to the impression amongst many regional politicians that the Republic was something of an 'outsider' on the continent.

The Commonwealth's collapse into oblivion

Despite intensive discussions the Lubbers Plan would eventually fail to materialize. Heeding the concerns expressed by the NF cabinet and the strong rejection by the largest opposition party, the support for the Commonwealth steadily dwindled. Political attention in Paramaribo became centred on the NF's attempt to have NPS politician Ronald Venetiaan elected as President and former Justice Minister Adjodhia (VHP) as Vice-President (*Europa year book* 1993, II:2679). In the wake of the NF's loss of a two-thirds parliamentary majority, the Verenigde Volksvergadering (United Peoples' Convention), comprising members of parliament and representatives of the municipal and district councils, confirmed the government's nominees only after lengthy debates on 6 September 1991 (Verschuuren 1994:147). This delay put off any negotiations regarding the Commonwealth. In November 1991 Dutch and Surinamese representatives met on Bonaire to discuss the future direction of the relationship. However, during this meeting the Lubbers Plan was not discussed; instead, the Surinamese delegation pressured The Hague to reinstate the urgently needed financial assistance, while the Dutch delegation stressed the need for Paramaribo to first establish peace in East Suriname, to combat the drug trade and strengthen the democratic process by limiting the military's influence (Verschuuren 1994:147).

In other words, the two countries continued to go around in circles while the Republic's political and socio-economic problems remained largely unsolved. A breakthrough seemed to occur in the summer of 1992. Instead of establishing a Commonwealth, both countries now attempted to stabilize transatlantic relations while negotiating a far-reaching agreement which respected Suriname's sovereign status. While Lubbers enthusiastically proclaimed that this new phase in the relationship symbolized 'the end of the beginning', Venetiaan announced 'that we are now much better able to solve our problems' (*NRC Handelsblad*, 14-6-1992:3).

The Hague and Paramaribo thus agreed to make a fresh start, laid down

in the Raamverdrag Inzake Vriendschap en Nauwere Samenwerking tussen het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden en de Republiek Suriname (Frame Treaty for Friendship and Closer Cooperation between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Suriname) of June 1992 (Appendix IX). This treaty was upheld by both parties as a compromise, whereby the Netherlands agreed to grant the remaining Nf 1.3 billion in aid in exchange for Suriname's promise to establish a SAP, to negotiate peace with the various rebel groups and to address the problems regarding the NL's involvement in politics and drug trafficking.

A closer analysis of this 'new' Aid Treaty reveals that it appears all too similar to the 'old' Aid Treaty of 1975, with the stipulation that Suriname use at least Nf 300 million for economic projects, Nf 250 million for public education, health and housing, Nf 175 million for improving general infrastructure, Nf 150 million for various social programmes, Nf 75 million to reform the judicial and administrative sectors and Nf 50 million to rebuild the war-torn areas in East Suriname (*NRC Handelsblad*, 14-6-1992:3). This familiarity was not surprising since the Frame Treaty referred directly to the former agreement. In fact, Article 3.1 clearly stated that:

This Frame Treaty leaves unchanged the agreement signed between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Suriname on 25 November 1975 pertaining to development cooperation, including the supplementary regulations and additional protocols. This Agreement serves as the point of departure for Financial and economic cooperation. (Appendix IX.)

The objectives of the 1975 Aid Treaty were thus still valid, while the Frame Treaty also made use of the same financial sources, since the Nf 1.3 billion in funds made available in the 'new' agreement constituted nothing more than allowing Suriname continued access to the remaining aid, to which the Netherlands had already consented in 1975.

Furthermore, an examination of the first two paragraphs of Article 5 of the Frame Treaty makes it impossible to avoid a direct link to the agreements signed in 1975, in which Paramaribo had accepted The Hague's 'assistance' with regard to foreign affairs and had allowed the Netherlands to continue representing Suriname's interests wherever the Republic would not maintain its own diplomatic representation (for more details on both agreements, see later in this chapter).

5. Foreign Policy and Defence Policy:
 - 5.1 The Governments of both States will hold periodic consultations on subject matters regarding foreign affairs that touch upon the interests of both States.

- 5.2 The Governments of both States cooperate in the diplomatic and consular field, in particular through mutually offering the use of facilities by their representations abroad. (Appendix IX.)

Finally, the Frame Treaty included a paragraph (Article 2, Paragraph 7) assuring Paramaribo that should all development funds as promised in the 1975 Aid Treaty be spent, the Netherlands would continue to play an important role by continuing to provide financial assistance to Suriname.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands confirms its willingness to offer the Republic of Suriname further financial support after the funds, which have been agreed upon in the Treaty of Development Cooperation of 25 November 1975, have been exhausted. The volume, nature and duration of this aid shall be linked to the accomplishment of the objectives indicated in Article 1 of this Treaty and, in view of the necessary continuity, will be defined by both States in good time. (Appendix IX.)

Considering the objectives and the way in which the Frame Treaty was worded, it allowed both governments to concentrate on the positive opportunities opened up by the treaty. Thus it was only to be expected that the Lubbers Plan would lose its appeal. While Suriname was able to thus ensure its sovereign status and long-term continuation of Dutch aid, the Netherlands had regained its most important tool for influencing political and socio-economic developments in its erstwhile colony while leaving direct responsibility for the welfare of the Surinamese people with the government in Paramaribo. At the same time this significant shift away from the Lubbers Plan 'back' to traditional relations allowed both governments to avoid any possible negative consequences of the Commonwealth idea.

In the meantime Commonwealth advocates within the Dutch government were certainly right to argue that through close transatlantic 'cooperation' the Netherlands would be in a position to solve many of Suriname's diverse problems in the short term. This would provide The Hague with a second chance of 'decolonizing' the Republic by 'creating' a more stable political and socio-economic environment. It was hoped in The Hague that this would only lead to a temporary, albeit considerable, involvement in Surinamese affairs. Once the 'problems' would be ironed out, the Dutch government would withdraw from what it perceived to be a necessary, temporary interference in the Republic's development.

Yet in all of this, Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles actually illustrated the risk The Hague was running in becoming permanently engaged in Caribbean matters. While the Netherlands provided significant financial, technical and administrative assistance to these territories in comparison to many neighbouring islands – in order to maintain relatively stable political

and socio-economic structures⁶ – the notion of sovereignty had received only minimal public support (*Country profile* 1995:63). The example of Aruba, which in 1986 had agreed to proceed towards full independence within ten years in exchange for Dutch acceptance of the island's Status Aparte (Separate Status) from the Netherlands Antilles in the meantime (Croes and Moenir Alam 1990:81), demonstrated the islanders' opposition to ending constitutional ties with The Hague. Rather than seeking full independence, Aruba successfully lobbied the Netherlands and remained part of the Kingdom, thus ensuring the island's continued socio-economic prosperity.⁷

Moreover, by 'generously' providing aid, The Hague had not succeeded in solving the migration issue on the islands. The Netherlands Antilles, in fact, continued to be affected by an exodus towards the European metropolis, where a third of its population had settled (*Amigoe*, 23-4-1998:1). A similar development could be in store for Suriname, where, according to a survey undertaken at the twentieth anniversary of independence in November 1995, 53% of its citizens still favoured their country's readmission into the Kingdom, while many expressed the wish to retain the option of being able to migrate to the Netherlands (*de Volkskrant*, 21-11-1995:6). Once part of the Commonwealth, many questions would still have remained as to whether the Surinamese public would eventually seek full independence from The Hague and return to their 'homecountry' once stable political and prosperous socio-economic structures had been created with active Dutch support.

This development would have militated against the Dutch desire to reduce, in the long term, its involvement in the Republic's affairs, but also against Paramaribo's wish to be free to govern without continuous intervention from The Hague. Throughout this book it has become apparent that all cabinets, including the various Bouterse regimes, had looked across the Atlantic in the hope of gaining at least some assistance in funding economic development projects and social welfare schemes. Similarly, local business circles had relied on Dutch investments to establish and sustain the mining, agricultural, forest and manufacturing industries. Meanwhile, the Surinamese public often counted on Dutch funds for education, health and housing programmes.

This tendency of cabinets, business people and the population itself to direct their focus across the Atlantic has resulted in the perception that 'the Netherlands is not the motherland, but the fatherland for the Surinamese'

⁶ Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles are among the richest territories in the Caribbean region. Moreover, they have been classified as part of the, politically speaking, 'most free' countries and territories in the world, see Castello-Cortes 1991:98-9.

⁷ Even though the possibility of achieving sovereignty was not ruled out at a later stage, the Netherlands and Aruba agreed that first a public referendum on this issue needed to be held on the island and that a two-thirds majority in the Staten of Aruba was required to pass an act of independence.

(Haakmat 1996:156). In other words, rather than assuming the role of guardian to help the Republic in developing its own political and socio-economic structures, the Netherlands has become central in the thinking of many Surinamese. It may even be argued that a form of political 'cargo cult' has emerged, glaringly apparent in the Republic's tendency to seek Dutch assistance in bolstering its development process and easing various domestic problems. This dependence on the Netherlands would only have been strengthened by Suriname's participation in a Commonwealth, while, at the same time, Dutch willingness to solve the Republic's difficulties could not be taken for granted (*Weekkrant Suriname*, 28-4-1994:8).

Instead, it is important that both countries learn to steadily strengthen Suriname's political and socio-economic foundations with the ultimate objective of reducing the Republic's dependence on the Kingdom. This does not imply the immediate rejection of Dutch aid, as it is vital for Suriname's development to maintain access to financial and technical assistance. But what it does mean, is that the Netherlands must begin to gradually reduce its aid payments and allow Suriname to learn to access different financial sources. This also implies that The Hague must ease its direct intervention in the Republic's affairs (for instance by refraining from pressurizing civilian politicians to act against the NL's political influence) and that it must give Suriname a chance of integrating into the region (for example by supporting attempts to acquire local and regional rather than Dutch goods and services). In addition, the Netherlands must accept that its financial assistance cannot be used as a political tool. By repeatedly seizing the opportunity to withhold funds The Hague has ensured that Suriname was forced to abandon development projects and start all over again once aid was forthcoming, thus contributing to funds being wasted. For Suriname it is of vital importance to stabilize its democratic structures by rejecting corruption, *apanjahtism* and military rule. Although these goals may seem difficult to obtain, especially considering the recent history of the young republic as well as its socio-economic and political characteristics, they are, however, not unrealistic. A goof example of such a success story is Botswana, which demonstrates that political stability will most likely attract foreign and local investors, which in turn will enhance and diversify the economy and generate positive social effects.⁸ More significantly, Paramaribo has to end its cargo-cult mentality as Dutch aid is aimed at establishing and strengthening specific socio-economic

⁸ *Africa South of the Sahara* 1998:195. In 1991 Botswana was the only African country enjoying the political classification of 'most free' (Castello-Cortes 1991:98-9). And even though at the transfer of sovereignty in 1966 the country belonged to the twenty poorest nations, in the 1980s its economy saw a rapid growth. 'In the 1990s Botswana became an "upper middle income" country under the World Bank definition and, unusual for an African country, a contributor to Bank funds' (*Africa South of the Sahara* 1998:195).

structures but should not be taken for granted on a permanent basis. This can be achieved without having to dismantle the special relations which have evolved between the Netherlands and Suriname over the last three hundred years. Nevertheless, it is crucially important to develop a more mature interaction between the two nations based on mutual respect.

The dissatisfaction felt in The Hague regarding the state of affairs in Suriname would reach a new peak following the 1990 Christmas Coup. Irritated by developments within the Republic since the November 1987 elections, and indeed, it could be argued, since the actual transfer of sovereignty, The Hague introduced the so-called Lubbers Plan – named after its initiator – which foresaw the creation of a Commonwealth – a transatlantic association in which Paramaribo would primarily be asked to transfer foreign, defence, monetary and economic policies to The Hague. Through such a draconian measure the Netherlands attempted to help solve the political and socio-economic problems the Republic was facing.

Naturally, from this plan ensued a lively debate among Dutch and Surinamese scholars and politicians contending its pros and cons. Looking back at the first fifteen years of independence, those in support of a Commonwealth argued that the Republic had never achieved full sovereignty since its economy had remained fully dependent on the Netherlands. Consequently, Suriname's participation in a Commonwealth would merely bring Suriname's political status more in line with its economic reality. Yet opponents objected to increased Dutch involvement in Surinamese affairs and instead proposed to work towards achieving complete political and economic independence from the former colonial power. In the end, neither position was implemented. The Frame Treaty of June 1992 outlined the situation characterizing Suriname's status since independence: the Republic would continue to function as a sovereign state while in socio-economic terms remaining dependent on the Netherlands.

Conclusion

In many respects the Netherlands and Suriname are 'unequal partners'. Can Suriname's sovereignty be sufficiently guaranteed in such an all-embracing treaty?¹

This detailed analysis of Suriname's foreign policy from the country's independence in November 1975 up until talks on the creation of a Dutch Commonwealth in 1991, presents the difficulties many small developing nations are confronted with in their battle to achieve the right to conduct their own external affairs. With on the one hand a general dependency on financial hand-outs from industrialized countries and revenues generated by foreign-owned companies and on the other hand the pressure not to upset the political and military balance of the region and avoid confrontation with other regional powers, small states are faced with a much more restricted scope of freedom to formulate and implement an autonomous foreign policy than larger nations. Often, they are forced into a balancing act of accommodating the interests of their aid donors and locally operating multinational corporations while respecting the position of regional powers to ensure the preservation of their sovereign status.

Suriname has proven to be no exception. This can be extrapolated by bringing together the main themes of the former eight chapters. In doing so, the essence of the Republic's global approach can be summarized as follows: 'The foreign policy of the Republic of Suriname should be directed towards the promotion of the political and economic welfare of the country and safeguard the external security within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations' (*Foreign service training* 1981:2). As such, Suriname's external goals have become an integral part of its internal policy devised to reinforce the prosperity and sovereignty of the country. Unquestionably, both policy objectives would continue to act as core values in Suriname's foreign relations, regardless of the ideological direction or party combination of the successive

¹ Dutch jurist Cees Flinterman (1991:1189) on the Dutch proposal of creating a Commonwealth.

cabinets governing the Republic since 1975. Yet the approach followed by each government to secure prosperity and independence has been considerably different.

The first post-independence administration, led by Arron, sought to achieve these core objectives by directing Paramaribo's foreign policy towards regional integration and cooperation with the Third World. In this, Arron aimed to ensure Suriname's access to a broad range of countries which could contribute to the Republic's socio-economic development and to allow it, according to the 1975 Constitution, to interact 'in peace and friendship' with other states. Unfortunately, the government did little to attain these outlined objectives, as the Republic merely joined a few regional and international organizations, launched very few diplomatic missions in neighbouring countries (none in the Third World outside the Western Hemisphere) and maintained virtually no trade links with the Caribbean and Latin America. Consequently, Suriname remained a 'foreign' player in the New World despite the 'official' withdrawal of the Dutch from the territory.

Unquestionably, the main reason preventing Suriname from achieving regional integration and cooperation with Third World countries lies in the 'golden handshake' agreed upon in 1975 with the conclusion of the 'Treaty on Development Cooperation between the Netherlands and Suriname'. The final settlement of just over Nf 3.5 billion – roughly 10,000 guilders per capita – was intended to be spent over ten to fifteen years. The Arron government attributed such enormous importance to this treaty in ensuring Suriname's socio-economic progress that it made it the basis of Paramaribo's foreign policy. These 'generous' funds, however, did not come without preconditions. Suriname had to allow the Dutch authorities to exercise tremendous influence on the Republic's political and socio-economic affairs – a dependency only exacerbated by the fact that alternative sources of income through the few agricultural, mining, manufacturing and service enterprises were generally controlled by Dutch (and some American) multinational corporations. As a result, bilateral relations continued to be characterized by a similar patron-client relationship as had prevailed throughout three hundred years of colonial rule, during which the Dutch had defined Suriname's borders, its political structures, ethnic composition and economic foundation.

It was the fervent desire of many Surinamese nationalists that this blinkered foreign policy would soon come to an end following the February 1980 coup. Indeed, the subsequent Chin A Sen government, under the 'supervision' of Lieutenant Colonel Bouterse, promised to pursue a more independent course. Nevertheless, Chin A Sen followed in the footsteps of his predecessor in being careful not to disrupt the flow of development aid from across the Atlantic. Although his government gained some concessions from the Netherlands with regard to the implementation of the Aid Treaty – amongst other things

the inflation issue was addressed – this change in Dutch attitude was not the fruit of a more ‘independent’ stance taken by Paramaribo during bilateral negotiations. Instead, the Netherlands simply attempted to gain control of the moderate civilian wing of the Surinamese government to strengthen its position against the radical military members.

Not until a little over one year following the coup did the first shift in Suriname’s foreign policy become noticeable. With the appointment of Naarendorp as Foreign Minister and other left-wing politicians and officers entering government did the process of more clearly defining the ideological basis of the country’s foreign policy begin – eventually leading to the announcement of the ‘Revolution’ at the end of 1981 and the ‘withdrawal’ of the last moderate civilians from cabinet in the beginning of 1982. Inevitably, these internal developments revealed themselves in Suriname’s external relations. Identifying the Republic as part of the global conflict between North and South, Naarendorp emphasized the need to ease Paramaribo’s dependence on The Hague and, instead, to strengthen ties within the region and with the Third World.

Even though initially Naarendorp’s new foreign policy approach was rather limited, he succeeded in establishing relations with other socialist Caribbean states. This was made possible as the new Neyhorst administration relied on the support of the pro-Cuban RVP, the major coalition partner in the regime, assisted by PALU. Within a few months of Neyhorst’s inauguration, Naarendorp and the RVP achieved their primary goal of opening direct diplomatic relations with Cuba by signing various cooperation agreements, one of which entailed Havana providing military and political assistance. This increasing reliance on Cuba assumed additional importance as, at the same time, the Netherlands, objecting to Bouterse’s authoritarian rule, tried to force the regime back ‘into line’ by withholding aid.

Besides these simmering tensions in transatlantic relations, Naarendorp’s foreign policy shift also had immediate consequences for bilateral relations with the United States. Washington, caught up in the Reagan administration’s anti-communist rhetoric, viewed political developments in Paramaribo with grave concern and as a direct threat to its regional hegemony. Aware of American fears, Paramaribo attempted to ease Washington’s anxiety by clarifying its ‘revolutionary’ course. However, the Republic would unavoidably become embroiled in the East-West conflict.

These diplomatic strains with Washington and The Hague reached their climax following the December Murders of 1982, when Bouterse ordered the execution of fifteen opponents of the regime. Besides terminating its (limited) aid programme, the United States examined various options to remove the pro-Cuban regime, including covert military operations. The Netherlands saw no alternative but to oppose any ‘unruly’ politicians and officers and

suspend the Aid Treaty. Furthermore, it attempted to isolate the former colony internationally by accusing it of human rights violations.

In addition to American and Dutch criticism, regional and international organizations, along with many Caribbean and Latin American nations, sharply condemned the December Murders. Faced with the threat of international isolation and the prospect of making void any recent regional gains, Naarendorp showed his true abilities as Foreign Minister. Despite having resigned (along with the entire Neyhorst cabinet) in protest of the December Murders, he outlined Suriname's foreign policy course for the following months. His strategy included the launching of diplomatic missions throughout the region to 'inform' Caribbean and Latin American governments about recent 'events' in Paramaribo, to gain access to alternative aid sources and to make use of the NAM and the G-77 in order to put pressure on The Hague to reverse its decision to suspend the Aid Treaty.

Thus, Suriname, for the first time since the transfer of sovereignty, earnestly began to implement its defined foreign policy objective of strengthening ties with the region and other developing nations around the globe. This shift, it must be emphasized, was not the result of any premeditated strategy, but merely the knee-jerk reaction to The Hague's attempts to financially starve the country and throw its socio-economic structures into chaos. However, this foreign policy strategy was not pursued for long; the new Alibux cabinet, in which PALU took over the RVP's influential position, adopted a more pragmatic course, aimed at reversing Naarendorp's neo-Marxist approach to international relations.

In an attempt to withdraw from the East-West conflict, Alibux grasped the opportunity offered by Brazil in March 1983 to replace Cuban military support. Brasilia's tactic (in fact partly a covert tactic of the United States) paid off: Paramaribo significantly downgraded its relations with Havana. Also in the North-South conflict did the new regime scale down its 'revolutionary' rhetoric, in the hope of being able to normalize bilateral relations with The Hague. However, neither the pressure from Third World organizations nor Paramaribo's reconciliation offer made much impression on The Hague, which by now clearly stated that development aid would only be made available following the Republic's redemocratization. Frustrated by the Dutch position, relations deteriorated even further, reaching an all-time low when in mid-1983 Suriname's Ambassador to the Netherlands, Herrenberg, denounced the Kingdom as an 'enemy'.

Faced with the country's socio-economic collapse, Paramaribo had no choice but to try and compensate for this loss of Dutch aid through requesting a US\$ 100 million loan from the IMF. To do so, Alibux improved the Republic's international image by further scaling down the regime's revolutionary rhetoric and, following America's invasion of Grenada, suspending direct

diplomatic relations with Cuba. In the end, however, this policy merely led to the cabinet's downfall in the wake of widespread public protest against proposed tax increases as part of the financial package to appease the IMF.

The inauguration of the new Udenhout cabinet in early 1984 signalled the failure of Suriname's 'Revolution', ushering in yet another shift in foreign policy. Unable to benefit from regional or Third World solidarity and unsuccessful in negotiating the IMF loan, the government approached the Netherlands with the aim of reinstating the Aid Treaty. To achieve this, Udenhout realized that he had to do something about the regime's undemocratic structure. As a result, RVP and PALU politicians were replaced by representatives from the union movements and employers' organizations, while career diplomat Heidweiler succeeded the 'hawkish' Herrenberg as Ambassador to The Hague. Under these more favourable circumstances, various officials of the Surinamese government sought contact with their Dutch counterparts. Even Bouterse himself made an attempt at positively influencing transatlantic relations by admitting to still having a 'warm hart' for the Netherlands. In contrast, the importance of cooperating with other developing nations noticeably diminished.

Despite these good intentions, Udenhout's foreign policy course would fail. Even though The Hague was willing to participate in Paramaribo's initiative of 'quiet diplomacy', the Dutch continued to view the officers' interference in the Republic's political affairs with great suspicion and eventually rejected the redemocratization programme introduced by Udenhout in late 1984. This programme proposed the creation of an Assembly with appointed representatives from the army, unions and industrialists. Shortly after The Hague's negative response, transatlantic relations once again deteriorated, reaching another low point in mid-1985 as both governments withdrew their respective Ambassadors.

Faced with an uncompromising Dutch government, Suriname's foreign policy redirected its focus to the earlier approach of attracting regional and Third World assistance. Udenhout, in fact, proved to be relatively successful in this and encouraged by the Republic's improvement in its human rights record, loans were received from all around the globe, including Colombia, the European Development Fund and the People's Republic of China. More important, however, was the offer from Libya to loan the regime US\$ 100 million. This was of particular significance since by that time Brazil had reduced its involvement with Suriname. Furthermore, due to an allegation linking Surinamese officers to international drug trafficking in early 1986, The Hague was not even willing to contemplate reinstating the Aid Treaty (this possibility had been discussed following the signing of an agreement between the civilian political parties and Bouterse towards the end of 1985), thus increasing the regime's need for the Libyan loan.

Relations with Tripoli intensified with a civil war erupting in East Suriname in mid-1986. Under Brunswijk's leadership the SNLA considerably disrupted the Republic's economic activities by occupying the important mining town of Moengo and cutting off the electricity supply to Paramaribo from the Afobaka Dam. Following the rejection of Cuban assistance and the withdrawal of Brazilian aid the regime increasingly relied on Libyan military support to combat the SNLA. Inevitably, this development had direct repercussions for Paramaribo's slowly improving relations with Washington, as the United States hesitated to normalize bilateral relations and continued to withhold all forms of aid. Yet even more damage was done to French-Surinamese relations as Paris went so far as to indirectly support the SNLA to oppose Tripoli's involvement in the Republic. In other words, without realizing the full consequences of its reliance on Libya, Suriname risked becoming caught in the global clash between Washington and Paris, on the one hand, and Tripoli on the other.

Suriname's foreign policy makers were most frustrated by their fruitless efforts to repair transatlantic ties. At stake here were competing interests among the country's political leadership about the desired direction of Suriname's foreign relations. The new Radhakishun government, formed in mid-1986 and headed by a VHP politician, attempted to follow Udenhout's previous approach of engaging the Netherlands in 'quiet diplomacy'. This strategy seemed to pay off as the Dutch cabinet began to consider in what ways it could support the 'old' parties, in the hope of strengthening the country's redemocratization process. Nothing, however, emerged from this as the military, fighting against the SNLA, repeatedly clashed with The Hague on the issue of human rights violations. Moreover, Herrenberg, in his position as Foreign Minister, sought to counter Dutch influence by once again improving relations with the region and other Third World countries. In the end Bouterse and Herrenberg dominated the decision-making process, throwing Radhakishun's strategy into chaos by expelling the Dutch Ambassador early in 1987.

This 'final stand-off' staged by the regime's radical members not only sparked Radhakishun's resignation, but also elicited widespread public protest. Bouterse, therefore, had little choice but to continue the Republic's redemocratization process. This was finally achieved under the Wijdenbosch administration, in which Herrenberg was replaced by Heidweiler as Foreign Minister. Following the introduction of a new Constitution in March 1987, which signaled the return to democratic rule (while still providing the officers some limited political influence), free elections were held in November of the same year. While the civilian parties, combined as the Front, won forty seats in the new Assembly, the unpopularity of the military and radical politicians, united in the NDP, was clearly illustrated as they won merely three seats.

Having fulfilled the main Dutch prerequisite for reinstating the Aid Treaty, the new Shankar cabinet had high hopes of solving, with The Hague's support, the country's enormous socio-economic problems. Access to the remaining Nf 1.4 billion in aid was perceived as being of particular importance due to the fact that no other significant international loans or grants were secured (with the exception of some regional funding). In other words, January 1988 saw the Shankar government continuing where the Arron administration had left off after having been so violently interrupted in February 1980: Suriname returned to its traditional reliance on the Netherlands, with the Aid Treaty once more emerging as the basis for Paramaribo's foreign policy.

However, it was not all plain sailing from this point. The normalization of transatlantic relations proved more problematic than had been expected as the Netherlands required new demands to be agreed to before it was willing to provide the so urgently needed funds. In particular the Dutch attempt to 'internationalize' the Aid Treaty contributed to delaying the formal reinstatement of financial assistance until mid-1988. It did not end there; during the subsequent two years there were further delays in the transfer of development aid as The Hague exacted new conditions to be fulfilled, such as the end of the civil war, improvement of the country's human rights record, restriction of the officers' political interference and combating the military's involvement in drug trafficking. The Netherlands had thus regained its influential pre-coup position and was once more involved in determining Suriname's domestic affairs.

As an immediate result of this involvement a highly volatile situation emerged in Paramaribo. Under Dutch pressure the Shankar government attempted to address the issue of interference by military officers in domestic politics but failed to gain the upper hand over the military. Unable to fulfil The Hague's demands, the Front then attempted to convince the Dutch of the dangers of provoking the officers. This approach also failed and the Netherlands continued to provide merely a portion of the promised funds, resulting in further stagnation of the Republic's socio-economic development. This volatile situation finally 'exploded' on Christmas Eve 1990, when Bouterse staged another coup d'état, ousting the Shankar government. There was an immediate international backlash, led by the Netherlands, which once again suspended the Aid Treaty. Without any external support, the military was forced to hold new elections in May 1991. Although weakened, the NF gained thirty seats in the Assembly, and consequently formed the new Venetiaan cabinet, with the NDP, which had increased its representation to twelve seats, as the opposition.

As the Surinamese elections took place, a frustrated Dutch government put forward the plan to create a 'Commonwealth' composed of the Netherlands, Aruba, the Netherlands Antilles and Suriname. According to

this so-called Lubbers Plan the Republic would transfer essential powers in the domain of economics, defence, monetary and foreign policy to its former colonial master. With this, The Hague hoped to improve Suriname's socio-economic fortunes and stabilize its political structures by reducing the role of the army. Welcomed by the majority of the Surinamese population, the State Council and some smaller political parties, the Lubbers Plan was seen as an opportunity to curb the military's domestic influence, to attract foreign investors and to secure further Dutch assistance. However, the 'old' civilian parties and the NDP rejected the proposal, perceiving it merely as a form of recolonization. Unable to find consensus, the Lubbers Plan would be nipped in the bud and, instead, a new Aid Treaty was signed in June 1992, outlining Dutch commitment to reinstate financial assistance in return for Suriname's pledge to address The Hague's previous demands. Unfortunately, when comparing this so-called Frame Treaty with the 1975 Aid Treaty, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Suriname's future is more likely to be a reflection of its past as neither Paramaribo nor The Hague seemed to have been capable of interacting outside their traditional patron-client framework.

An examination of these first seventeen years of Suriname's foreign relations as a young state reveals several behavioural patterns that have characterized the Republic's regional and international conduct. First of all, it can be said that Paramaribo's main foreign policy goal has always been to attract financial and technical assistance. In other words, one of the primary reasons for Suriname's participation in the international system was simply to ensure an adequate flow of aid and loans to allow the country's socio-economic development to proceed. This approach was followed by all cabinets ruling the Republic since 1975, despite their various ideological foundations.

Although one could criticize Paramaribo for not pursuing any 'higher' external objectives it is understandable, taking into consideration the country's fragile socio-economic structure, why procuring development aid was given such high priority. Moreover, this strategy was not a policy followed by Suriname exclusively. Due to severely limited opportunities for generating funds from within their own countries, this approach has been a main characteristic of most smaller developing nations.

For Suriname, this 'money'-oriented foreign policy indisputably manifested itself in its reliance on the 1975 Aid Treaty. In fact, this agreement served as the very basis of the Republic's foreign policy from its creation. The emphasis on the treaty, therefore, underlines Suriname's second foreign policy characteristic: its dependence on the Netherlands. Through the treaty, the former colonial master continued to determine the Republic's socio-economic progress. This position of control was strengthened by a variety of other bilateral agreements, allowing the Netherlands to also influence the former colony's politics.

To make matters worse, in the commercial and public spheres Suriname relied heavily on Dutch financial and technical aid as well as on socio-cultural concepts.

As a result, transatlantic ties would continue to be characterized by a patron-client relationship, despite Suriname's claim to sovereignty. In other words, the Republic's domestic affairs tended to be sensitive to external influence, either in the form of direct Dutch pressure or merely in mimicking Dutch trends in the Netherlands. This was possible as the Kingdom not only functioned as the most important aid donor but also because it had defined the Republic's political and socio-economic structures. In this respect, Suriname shared the fate of many other small developing countries.

The costs of this one-sided policy towards the Netherlands lead to the third characteristic of Suriname's foreign relations, that of having lost the opportunity to integrate regionally. Despite the objective stated by all Surinamese governments between 1975 and 1992 of seeking closer ties with the Caribbean and Latin America, serious attempts to strengthen regional integration have generally only been made at times when bilateral ties with the Netherlands came under strain. The same is true for improving political and socio-economic relations with Third World nations and their respective organizations. This solidarity with the Third World was primarily sought as a diplomatic tool either to place political pressure on The Hague or to gain access to alternative funds.

Again, this characteristic is not uncommon – other small developing states have experienced similar problems. This is particularly true when a small nation is located in a geopolitical area with which it shares few communalities, this being the case for Suriname, which, having Caribbean-like characteristics, is positioned on the politically and socio-economically distinct Latin American mainland. Although in the Caribbean and the Pacific some effective alliances between smaller states have been achieved, this form of cooperation has nonetheless remained limited where nations had previously been colonized by different powers. Particular features, such as the use of different languages adopted from the various colonial masters, have often restricted the degree of regional integration.

This dichotomy of continued dependency on the Netherlands while aspiring to integrate regionally has been reflected in the fourth characteristic of Suriname's external relations: the sometimes sudden and strong shifts in Paramaribo's foreign policy. These shifts have particularly been a feature of the military-led regimes. As a result of alterations in the officers' objectives, for instance gaining Third World solidarity, repairing transatlantic ties or fostering regional relations with other socialist countries, the Republic's external course was marked by sharp turns, seeking alliance with various strong powers. While redirecting the emphasis of Suriname's foreign policy from

one specific goal to another, the gains previously achieved were frequently cancelled out as a result of this action.

These shifts in Suriname's foreign policy can mainly be attributed to the strong influence of internal developments. This is partly due to the relatively large number of cabinets appointed by the military throughout the 1980s, thus making it difficult to benefit from consistency in foreign policy. More importantly, however, was the fact that these shifts were generated by internal friction between various individuals or political groups within the ruling administration. As in the case of many other small developing nations, the strengthened position of an individual politician or foreign-policy maker, or the increased influence of a particular political faction or party (and this is true not only for military-led regimes) can have an enormous effect on the country's external course. In other words, as the administrative body in these states tends to be relatively small, the influence of an individual or group in bringing about change can be comparatively strong.

The specific behavioural patterns characterizing Suriname's foreign policy during the first seventeen years following the transfer of sovereignty point to one underlining aspect: the lack of a long-term strategy. Successive governments tended to follow a foreign policy by reacting to either internal or external developments in a bid to enhance their own prestige and position – whereas a consistent foreign policy course with a long-term objective would have been of paramount importance in strengthening the Republic's socio-economic progress.

For some, Suriname's participation in a Dutch Commonwealth became the answer to achieving this consistency and long-term strategy, placing those politicians who had tended to seek short-term goals under the close supervision of the Dutch authorities. However, the question remains as to whether Suriname joining a Commonwealth arrangement would have exacerbated the already severe problems Paramaribo was facing in defining and implementing its foreign policy. Instead of attempting to stimulate political, economic and social ties with countries in the region – often facing similar problems and experiences – Suriname's participation in a Dutch Commonwealth would merely have reinforced, what Meel described as 'continuing to make the same big mistake over and over again by focusing exclusively on the Netherlands' (cited in Hoefte 1991:11). This is particularly the case as the proposal for a Dutch Commonwealth could hardly be perceived as an association of equal partners. The far-reaching foreign policy, defence, legal, economic and monetary 'cooperation' between the two states would have severely undermined Suriname's position as an independent political unit. And Surinamese history has demonstrated that the concerns of the country have often been compromised in favour of Dutch interests.

Instead, the small Republic had to face a long and difficult path to establish

itself as a sovereign country in the Caribbean and Latin American region. While remaining strongly influenced by its colonial past, the hope remains that Suriname will increasingly integrate within its geopolitical environment and ease its dependency on the Netherlands. As Astrid Roemer and Gerlof Leistra (1997:137) have commented appositely on Suriname's search of a path.

The political future of Suriname is open. The will to develop the country is strongly present among Surinamese in Suriname and in the Netherlands. Decolonization is a process geared by destructive and constructive forces. But the connection with Switi Sranan [Sweet Suriname] remains strong as a cable and connects Surinamese of different ethnic backgrounds with each other and with the future of their country.

Epilogue

It will no doubt yield great political, economic, social and cultural benefits if we integrate [into the region] (Ambassador Alvares during a SACN conference in Venezuela, April 2007, *De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 13-4-2007:A2).

Prime Minister Lubbers' proposal following the Christmas Coup of 1990, to offer Suriname a degree of reintegration into the Kingdom within the framework of a 'Commonwealth' was eventually nipped in the bud. With the restoration of democracy in May 1991 – general elections were held on 25 May – the call for a new and closer relationship between Suriname and the Netherlands soon lost its appeal both in The Hague and in Paramaribo. In November 1991, at a conference between both governments on Bonaire, the idea of Suriname returning as a 'Kingdom-partner' was only a minor point of discussion. Instead, throughout this conference, Paramaribo pushed for a reinstatement of Dutch financial aid while The Hague persevered in its attempts to influence the Republic's economic development by formulating preconditions for monetary support. The Bonaire Akkoord (Treaty of Bonaire) concluded at the end of this meeting incorporated both positions. While The Hague agreed to reopen the flow of aid, Paramaribo once again accepted Dutch requirements regarding political and socio-economic reforms accompanying the investment of funds.

Even though the precise details of this agreement were to be elaborated upon by both governments at a later stage, the Treaty of Bonaire revealed the inability to define bilateral relations outside the traditional framework of development aid. This is not to say that the construction of a Commonwealth could have been a realistic alternative, but after sixteen years of independence, two military coups and many ups and downs in the relationship – resulting in aid payments being suspended twice – the Bonaire conference might have given both governments the opportunity to openly identify the core objectives of their bond. In this, the availability of Dutch financial support should only have played a subordinate role rather than continuing to dominate transatlantic ties.

That the aid issue would consistently overshadow Dutch-Surinamese rela-

tions can be observed in the so-called Raamverdrag (Frame Treaty) of 1992, a mutual friendship and cooperation agreement between Suriname and the Netherlands based on the Treaty of Bonaire. In fact, the Frame Treaty made direct reference to the 1975 Aid Treaty as it not only stressed that the long-term objective of both agreements would remain identical, but also referred to the same source of funding – the Nf 3.5 billion initially agreed upon. The 1992 Treaty also included a paragraph assuring Paramaribo that should all development aid be spent, the Netherlands would continue to provide financial assistance – thus in fact only exacerbating the situation of long-term dependency.

A subsequent meeting of both governments was held in October 1992, aimed at clarifying any remaining unresolved issues, after which the flow of Dutch development aid could recommence. However, as in the past, before long disagreements emerged between the parties – the main bone of contention being, as the Dutch claimed, Paramaribo's failure to formulate a coherent and convincing Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). An evaluation of Suriname's SAP by the European Union¹ (as presented by the Netherlands) had led to the conclusion that Paramaribo fell short of establishing sufficient and effective control instruments to ensure that the investments would be handled according to the programme. Moreover, the EU criticized the Republic for failing to implement preparatory measures deemed necessary if the SAP was to be executed successfully.

As Suriname rejected these findings, in June 1993 the Netherlands had little choice but to once again reduce the flow of financial assistance to the former colony. In production-related areas direct support of Suriname's budget and investments was withdrawn; funding in sectors such as education, health care and public housing remained (Van Beek 2004:159).

The Venetiaan cabinet (1991-1996) was surprised by The Hague's renewed restriction of development aid – as the Shankar cabinet had been when, following the November 1987 elections, it had been confronted with a lukewarm response to its request for financial assistance – and The Hague's stipulation that first certain political and socio-economic conditions be met. In fact, Paramaribo was convinced that it was fulfilling the Dutch requirements of the Treaty of Bonaire and the Frame Treaty. For instance, in October 1991 the government had implemented a 'socialization' programme to curb the military's political power and reduce the budget for the NL by half, resulting in a two-thirds reduction in personnel. Furthermore, in March 1992, the National Assembly had approved amendments to the Constitution which

¹ The EU, the successor to the European Economic Community (EEC), was established in 1992, after the signing on the Treaty of the European Union (better known as the Maastricht Treaty).

restricted the role of the military exclusively to matters of national defence while officers would no longer be permitted to take up representative public positions. Another important step was undertaken just one month later when the Military Authority was dissolved and therefore, at least in theory, Bouterse's chances of influencing Suriname's socio-economic development from a military-political perspective were severely curtailed. Finally, the Venetiaan cabinet signed a peace agreement with the SNLA and the Tucayana Indians in August 1992, which, based on the Kourou Agreement, called for the disarmament of the rebel groups and their incorporation into the police force (*Europa year book* 1994:2779).

As Paramaribo had made every effort to put on a good performance, it considered the Dutch decision to restrict the flow of aid inappropriate, even more so as the fear of a new military coup emerged following Lieutenant Colonel Bouterse's decision to once again hand in his resignation as NL Commander by the end of 1992 in protest of the government's decision to allow a commemoration ceremony at the tenth anniversary of the December Murders. Bouterse's confidant Graanoogst took over as interim Commander, but refused to resign when in April 1993 the government appointed Arthy Gorre as head of the NL. This conflict between the Venetiaan cabinet and the military escalated when other high-ranking officers expressed their support for Graanoogst. Eventually a compromise was found: in May 1993 Gorre took over the position as NL Commander while Graanoogst became government advisor.

Just when Paramaribo thought that it had 'solved' these domestic problems, the Venetiaan administration was confronted with a noticeable reduction in Dutch development aid. As an alternative, The Hague advised Paramaribo to seek IMF and World Bank assistance in formulating and implementing a coherent SAP, which would be the key to greater Dutch funding. However, as in the past, the Republic vehemently rejected the idea of internationalizing aid relations with the Kingdom. Failing to come to an agreement, the Netherlands then initiated a unilateral change in its development policy. While reducing the overall flow of financial support to the former colony, the remaining funds were used to invest directly in specific socio-economic sectors. The significance of this shift in Dutch development policy – as of June 1993 – should not be underestimated. The Hague felt so confident about this sector-related aid policy that it applied this new development strategy not only to the fields of education, health care and public housing, but also in other areas, such as agriculture, infrastructure and culture. In contrast, Suriname's own input in defining sector-related objectives and in making financial contributions necessary for the execution of this strategy remained limited. However, this was not unexpected, in view of the fact that politicians in Paramaribo had failed to embrace the new Dutch course (Kruijt 2004:74-5).

As a direct result of this policy change the Netherlands began to loosen the restrictive character of its aid policy and from 1995 raise the level of investments in Suriname. Continuing the restricted aid policy may have had a counterproductive effect when attempting to convince Suriname that the Dutch sector-related strategy was the best way to strengthen the Republic's weak socio-economic structures. Besides this obvious reason, two other important factors contributed to the increase in Dutch funds. First, Suriname's Finance Minister Humphrey Hildenberg had been successful in achieving a noticeable reduction in Paramaribo's budget deficit. In fact, the Dutch and Surinamese Ministries of Finance had come to the agreement that Dutch civil servants would advise their colleagues in Paramaribo on how to control government spending. Consequently, while increasing the amount of development aid, the Netherlands was simply trying to support Suriname's (and indirectly its own) successful monetary policy.

Second, the Venetiaan administration was becoming increasingly unpopular with the Surinamese public. The relatively high unemployment rate and the ensuing poverty many Surinamese were faced with were partly a knock-on effect of the government's efforts to control its spending. In the same vein, the virtual absence of private investment in production-related areas, under the influence of the restricted Dutch aid policy, played a role in ensuring that the NF's majority in parliament came under pressure. This growing unpopularity was observed with uneasiness in The Hague, in particular due to the approaching general elections of 1996. To counter this trend and in the hope of preventing the NDP from gaining political control in the National Assembly, the development aid tap was cautiously opened by The Hague (Van Beek 2004:160).

When looking at this last objective of Dutch development policies, it has to be said that it had little effect on the general elections of 23 May 1996. The NF parties 'only' gained 24 seats (whereas in 1991 it had taken 30 seats). In contrast, the NDP managed to increase its share in the Assembly from 12 to 16 seats. The remaining seats were divided between DA'91 (which went from 9 to 4 seats), the Pendawa Lima (4 seats) and 3 seats for the Alliantie (Alliance, a coalition of HPP, PSV and Politieke Vleugel Van de Far (PVF, Political Faction Van der Far). Unable to obtain the necessary majority in the Assembly to elect the president, Venetiaan was once again forced to call in the Verenigde Volksvergadering (parliament expanded with district councils). Unexpectedly, Wijdenbosch was elected President over Venetiaan. For the NF this was a disastrous outcome, followed by a further weakening when the KTPI together with a dissident faction from within the VHP – the Basispartij voor Vernieuwing en Democratie (BVD, Basic Party for Renewal and Democracy) – split from this party combination to help form a NDP-led government. The positions of DA'91 and the Alliance were also undermined

as both parties had to contend with splinter groups joining the newly elected Wijdenbosch administration (*Europa year book* 1997:3084).

Whereas initially Finance Minister Motilal Mungra seemed to continue the former Venetiaan cabinet's coherent monetary policy, a few months after the inauguration of the Wijdenbosch cabinet, a conflict erupted between the President and the Minister, sparked off by government expenditure. Following Mungra's dismissal (after having accused Wijdenbosch openly of extravagant spending), the unilateral suspension of the agreement relating to the Dutch Finance Ministry's advisory position on Suriname's budgetary matters and Bouterse's appointment as government consultant (despite the Dutch Public Prosecutor having issued an arrest warrant for him on drug trafficking charges), the Dutch government became so irritated that it suspended the Aid Treaty. But unlike the suspension in 1982, not all aid was immediately stopped. This time The Hague decided to continue financing projects that had already started; funding for new projects would be withheld (Kruijt 2004:76-7). As in the immediate post-December Murders period, financial consequences for Suriname were grave, summarized by Van Beek (2004:161) as follows:

The consequences are known: a second round of fiscal and quasi-fiscal expansion began in 1997-1998, once again financed through loans from the Central Bank, foreign loans and payment backlogs. Again this caused a spiral of high inflation and depreciation of the parallel exchange rate. [...] Also the system of economic restrictions, implemented under the military regime, was reintroduced, with all its inherent consequences. Besides the construction of two bridges across the Suriname and Coppename river, public housing projects were financed, along with an asphalt project and military equipment purchases. Furthermore, wage increases for government officials played an important role in the fiscal expansion, while education, social expenditure and several semi-public enterprises such as the Stichting Machinale Landbouw [SML, Foundation for Mechanical Agriculture] in Wageningen and Marienburg were being neglected.

The result of the Wijdenbosch cabinet's badly defined monetary and economic policies was a deepening of public disappointment with the government. From May 1998 until May 1999 the country was confronted with a series of industrial actions. The cabinet would finally resign after the Assembly's vote of no-confidence, in June 1999, against the president. Wijdenbosch, now leading an interim cabinet, responded by calling for early elections in May 2000. This time the NF – composed of the NPS, the Javanese Pertajah Luhur (PL, Full Confidence Party, representing the interests of Indonesian migrants), SPA and VHP – emerged victorious, with 33 seats. In contrast the Millennium Combinatie (MC, Millennium Combination), an alliance of the Democratic Alternative (DA), KTPI and NDP with Bouterse as leading candidate, won only ten seats. The remaining seats were divided between the Democratic National Platform 2000 (DNP 2000, comprising the Democratic

Party and the Democrats of the 21st Century) (three seats), DA'91 and PVF (both two seats) and PALU (one seat). Venetiaan was elected president and would for the second time form a NF cabinet. The new government lost no time introducing measures to stabilize the country's faltering financial and economic situation, primarily by restricting government expenditure, repaying loans with very high interest rates,² appointing André Telting as Central Bank President and introducing a new currency, the Surinamese Dollar, on 1 January 2004.

Again, the new cabinet approached the Netherlands to reinstate development funds. Yet more than ever was the Dutch government disappointed with the limited success of the substantial aid provided since 1975 and requested an evaluation of the aid relationship. In fact, considering that the Dutch Foreign Affairs Ministry's *Inspectie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Beleidsevaluatie* (IOB, Inspection Development Cooperation and Policy Evaluation) had examined the effectiveness of Dutch aid in many developing countries, while failing to evaluate the efficiency of funds provided to Suriname (despite the former colony obviously being a major target of Dutch financial assistance), this decision must be viewed as an important step (Van Dijck 2004b:57). The Surinamese government had little choice but to accept this new condition and as such Minister for Development Cooperation Eveline Herfkens and her Surinamese counterpart, Minister of Planning and Development Cooperation (PLOS) Kermechend Raghoebarsingh, agreed in October 2000 to analyse the effectiveness of Dutch development aid between 1975 and 2000. Conducted by Kruijt, a lecturer of Development Strategies at Utrecht University, and Marion Maks, Director of the Surinamese Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, the objective of the investigation was to examine what had gone wrong and how these mistakes could be prevented in the future.

The report was eventually published under the title *Een belaste relatie; 25 jaar ontwikkelingssamenwerking Nederland-Suriname 1975-2000* (A funded relationship; 25 years development cooperation between the Netherlands and Suriname 1975-2000) on 21 December 2001. However, Paramaribo rejected the critical findings, which led to disagreements between Dutch and Surinamese authorities, thus compelling The Hague to make adjustments. In the second interim report of 10 January 2003 authors Kruijt en Maks (2003:3) expressed their disappointment regarding Suriname's initial position.

In the correspondence that followed between the Dutch and Surinamese authorities, it emerged that the political and technical management of PLOS did not agree

² These loans had been concluded under the previous Wijdenbosch administration. By providing a credit of € 138 million through the Nederlandse Investeringsbank voor Ontwikkelingslanden (Dutch Investment Bank for Developing Nations), the Netherlands also helped in the loans' repayment.

with the tenor and findings of the interim report, despite one co-author of this report being part of the board of managers of this institution.

Although the reports clearly highlighted the different interpretations of the actual efficiency of the development aid, they did contribute to opening up the topic of Dutch-Surinamese aid relations to debate, at least on the European side of the Atlantic. For instance, at the Seventh Multatuli Lecture in November 2002, former Minister for Development Cooperation Pronk criticized the aid relationship between the Netherlands and Suriname since it had had 'a detrimental psychological effect' while admitting that 'we have insufficiently foreseen that this would result in aid addiction'. He continued that 'an aid-receiving country can cherish itself so much in the certainty that foreign aid will continue to be available, that this will actually miss its objective' (*Het Parool*, 1-11-2002:3). Venetiaan and Raghoebarsingh responded to Pronk's criticism with disappointment and called his findings 'misjudged' (*De Ware Tijd*, 4-12-2002:1). In a similar vein, Paramaribo responded negatively to the request of the Dutch House of Representatives that the findings of Kruijt and Maks in *Een belaste relatie* be discussed – accusing The Hague of acting unilaterally.³ Raghoebarsingh stated: 'That report was going to be written by both parties in good partnership. Thus there can only be a report between the parties and not one report written by Dutch Professor Kruijt alone' (*De Ware Tijd*, 11-12-2003:1). NF faction leader in the Assembly Otmar Rodgers countered even more outspokenly that 'we are sick and tired' of The Hague's attempts to investigate the effectiveness of its aid policy (*De Ware Tijd*, 13-8-2004:1).

Despite these strong efforts on the part of Surinamese politicians to stave off any discussions on the topic, the effectiveness of Dutch aid would become the subject of an ever-expanding and more open debate in the Netherlands. An outstanding example covering this discussion is the book *De toekomst van de relatie Nederland-Suriname* (The future of the relationship the Netherlands-Suriname) edited by Van Dijck and published in 2004. In this compilation of examinations and evaluations Surinamese and Dutch scholars, including Oostindie, Kruijt and Lim A Po, expressed their views as to why, after so many years of extensive Dutch investments, the Republic's socio-economic situation had only marginally, if at all, improved since the transfer of sovereignty in 1975. It is important to note that the finger of guilt was not simply pointed at the former colony: politicians on both sides of the Atlantic had made serious mistakes, especially while negotiating the 1975 Aid Treaty and the Frame Treaty of 1992.

³ Lim A Po, at the request of the Surinamese government, edited the report, which was eventually categorized under the title 'Lessons learned'. However, Dutch parliamentarians read and discussed both the original and the edited version of the report.

The above provokes the question why the effects of Dutch aid did become an openly debated subject within Dutch political and scholarly circles but failed to be discussed amongst Suriname's politicians. A primary reason lies with the politicians themselves. In contrast to the Netherlands a new generation of politicians and scholars had taken the reigns, in Suriname the 'Old Guard' still dominated the scene.⁴ While observing this, Hans Ramsodh and Wim Hoogbergen (2006:8) consequently argued that 'it is hardly surprising that emotions always run high in Suriname when it concerns the relationship with the Netherlands, considering many politicians surrounding President Venetiaan were active in the 1975 era. To them, pragmatism in Surinamese-Dutch relations is still a bridge too far'.

A second reason was of course the common fear in Paramaribo that without Dutch financial support, the Republic's socio-economic situation could and would not improve. In fact, The Hague's decision to suspend aid payments following the December Murders in 1982 and after the election of Wijdenbosch in 1996 is thought, particularly amongst civilian politicians of the traditional parties, to have greatly contributed to the unstable and weak socio-economic situation in the former colony. Thus Paramaribo was afraid that a discussion of the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of Dutch development funds and their failure to bring about stability and prosperity, might lead to The Hague completely withholding any further aid.

Proof that this fear was not unfounded came when the new Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation Agnes van Ardenne revised The Hague's development strategy and presented a new aid policy to the Balkenende cabinet. The document entitled *Aan elkaar verplicht; Ontwikkelingssamenwerking op weg naar 2015* (Indebted to each other; Development cooperation towards 2015) stated that:

The focus of Development cooperation is on the poorest countries. A suitable criterion, according to the Netherlands and many other donors, is the degree to which they are eligible for soft loans from the World Bank. Access to these loans from the International Development Association [IDA] are known as IDA-eligibility. This is determined by the relative poverty of a country and the degree to which the country has access to the international capital market. IDA employs in principle an income upper limit of USD 865 per capita [year 2002]. (Van Ardenne 2003:35-6.)

Considering that Suriname's GDP, standing at US\$ 1,940 per capita in 2002 (*Fischer Weltatmanach* 2005:417), was more than double the limit set by the IDA in order to be able to qualify for development funds, it became obvious

⁴ In The Hague, following the general elections of May 2002 a new cabinet under Jan Peter Balkenende had been formed with CDA and VVD as its core parties, supported first by the Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF, List Pim Fortuyn) and, following the elections of 22-1-2003, by D66.

to Paramaribo that the Netherlands was about to change its aid policy. Besides recent discussions among scholars on this subject, the criticism raised earlier in the report *Een belaste relatie* (Kruijt and Maks 2001), made it painfully clear to the Surinamese government that it would soon be confronted by unilateral Dutch steps that could fundamentally alter the traditional outlook on the transatlantic aid relationship. Indeed, in June 2004 Van Ardenne wrote a policy document specifically directed at Suriname entitled *Een rijke relatie* (A rich relationship). This time, the Minister noted that 'given the level of income per capita in Suriname, which is higher than in most other partner countries, the Netherlands will cut back on its broad development relations with Suriname' (Van Ardenne 2004:3).

Before debating this policy change in the House of Representatives in October 2004, Van Ardenne and Raghoebarsingh met in August 2004 to discuss the future of Dutch-Surinamese relations. During these talks, Paramaribo was informed that The Hague was looking at ways to terminate the 1992 Frame Treaty. However, this was not the only negative news the Surinamese delegation was presented with, as the Dutch Minister also emphasized that Paramaribo could not count on future Dutch support in the same form as laid down in the Aid Treaties of 1975 and 1992. Van Ardenne then drew Raghoebarsingh's attention to Article 2, Paragraph 7 of the Frame Treaty, in which the Netherlands had committed itself to continue providing funds after the original Nf 3.5 billion would have been spent. The Dutch Minister suggested that instead The Hague and Paramaribo implement a time frame of circa five years to end bilateral aid relations altogether (*De Ware Tijd*, 31-8-2004:1-2).

As a direct result of this significant shift in The Hague's development policy and confronted with the knowledge that Dutch funds would diminish in the near future, a major change in the course of Suriname's foreign policy took place. Instead of continuing to primarily focus on the Netherlands, Paramaribo began to implement a strategy intending to lead to Suriname's 'discovery' of the Caribbean and Latin America. This seems to be the Republic's first successful attempt at regional integration. Although following the transfer of sovereignty Paramaribo had emphasized the importance of maintaining friendly and close relations with Caribbean and Latin American nations, regrettably this strategy had been based on meaningless lip service rather than leading towards actual and tangible results. Instead, the first real efforts towards regional integration had come from former Foreign Minister Naarendorp in the early 1980s. Unfortunately, however, his initiative proved fruitless as it was only followed for a brief period, mainly due to Caribbean and Latin American nations reacting with strong reservations to Suriname's overtures as they mistrusted Paramaribo's military regime (most blatantly expressed in the December Murders). Subsequent military and civilian cabinets would fail

to bring about any major reorientation in the Republic's regional outlook. In fact, it was largely due to the Dutch policy change that Paramaribo once again turned intensively towards the Caribbean and Latin America.

This became clear in December 2002, when at the low point of bilateral relations – following the publication of the report *Een belaste relatie* – the Surinamese Minister of Foreign Affairs Marie Levens announced a new foreign policy direction:

For Suriname the region is of primary importance. That area confronts Suriname with more complex questions than the small Netherlands or the European Union. 70 per cent of the attention of the Surinamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs is directed at the region. Suriname and the Netherlands have to understand that it is only logical that we will grow apart. The Netherlands will integrate into the EU, Suriname into Caricom. (Gortzak 2002:65.)

A short time later, it was Venetiaan who emphasized not only the necessity for Suriname to integrate into the Caribbean, but also the potential for Paramaribo to play an important role in regional organizations. In view of Suriname's size and natural riches the President expressed his wish that the Republic be able to develop its political and economic strengths and grow into a powerful nation on a par with Jamaica or Trinidad and Tobago (*De Ware Tijd*, 26-2-2003:1-2).

Fortunately for Paramaribo, regional response to Suriname's renewed integrative intentions was positive, with the Caribbean and Latin America demonstrating an interest in 'discovering' Suriname. The positions to which Surinamese delegates were appointed in various Caribbean and Latin American organizations over the last few years clearly illustrate that the region is ready to welcome the former Dutch colony. In the summer of 2002 Carla Bakboord was elected Vice-Chairwoman of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) and in mid-2004 Regenie Fräser became General Secretary of the Caribbean Association of National Telecommunication Organizations (CANTO). In the same year Urmila Joelle-Sewnundun (later Suriname's Ambassador to the Netherlands) was elected to the Executive Council of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) and Nita Ramcharan was chosen as Vice General Secretary of the Association of Caribbean Media (ACM) in November 2005. More important has been CARICOM's unanimous support for Albert Ramdin as candidate for the position of Vice-General Secretary of the OAS in May 2005. In fact, the Surinamese candidate gained the backing of 19 of the 34 member states at the OAS meeting in June, thus beating the Nicaraguan candidate. Interestingly, Suriname not only managed to win the votes of the CARICOM nations (with fifteen member states), but also of some Latin American states (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 10-6-2005:A1). At the same time, president Venetiaan

held the position of Chair of CARICOM during the first half of 2005.

Another remarkable trend is that over the last couple of years, Paramaribo has welcomed delegates and guests from other Latin American and Caribbean nations since it has gained popularity as a location for the organization of conferences, meetings and seminars. Again, the following lists only a small overview of these gatherings. As a direct result of Suriname holding the CARICOM chair in the first six months of 2005, several related conferences were organized in Paramaribo, including the ministerial meeting of CARICOM's Legal Affairs Committee, the CARIFORUM (Caribbean Forum) conference and the CARICOM-India and CARICOM-Brazil working groups. Finally, at the end of the same year, Suriname hosted a meeting of the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors (CYA). The undisputable highpoint in these gatherings was the CARICOM top conference attended by fourteen of the fifteen regional government leaders (*De Ware Tijd*, 13-1-2005:1). A further milestone was the first International Anti-Narcotics Conference organized by Suriname with the aim of combating drug trafficking in the region. Twelve countries and several international organizations accepted Suriname's invitation, which was concluded with the 'Declaration of Paramaribo' at the end of 2006 (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 27-10-2006:A3).

The main factor responsible for Suriname's acceptance as a regional actor can be found in its membership of CARICOM. The former Dutch colony joined this most important Caribbean organization at the end of 1994 (after an earlier attempt had been blocked by Jamaica and Barbados in November 1982). Initially, the Republic's membership was viewed with some reservation among neighbouring nations. Besides the widespread perception that the country was politically and socio-economically exclusively focused on the Netherlands, another criticism stemmed from Paramaribo's failure to take any initiative with respect to CARICOM's future development, which was surprising considering Suriname's size and natural resources. However, this critical attitude among leading Caribbean politicians in the 1990s dramatically changed following Suriname's foreign policy shift from across the Atlantic towards the region. In fact, Suriname was the first country to issue the new CARICOM passport to its citizens in January 2005 (followed by St. Vincent and the Grenadines in June 2005) (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 30-6-2005:A3). Furthermore, it was under Paramaribo's leadership that the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) was finally inaugurated early in 2005 (an occasion personally described by Venetiaan as the highpoint in his tenure as chair of CARICOM) (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 8-7-2005:A1). In the same vein it was Suriname that together with Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica signed and implemented the CARICOM Single Market (CSM) initiative (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 3-2-2006:A10). Not surprisingly, in May 2006 CARICOM's General Secretary Edwin Carrington confirmed that the Republic had

successfully integrated into the region while effectively implementing most of CARICOM's processes and procedures (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 26-5-2006:A2).

Another important factor in Suriname's regional acceptance is its active participation in the wider Latin American area. Paramaribo, for instance, has recognized the ruling of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) with regard to the Moiwana case (39 civilians in the village of Moiwana were killed on 29 November 1986 by the NL during the Bouterse period). President Venetiaan and Foreign Minister Lygia Kraag-Keteldijk, in the presence of the families of the victims, the Corps diplomatique and representatives of several international organizations, at a ceremony in Moengo on 15 July 2006 publicly apologized for the atrocities that took place (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 21-7-2006:B1). It must be remembered that during the Arron era, the Republic hardly participated in any regional organizations and that under Bouterse, all international criticism of human rights abuses was rejected. Similarly, in 2000 Paramaribo has committed itself to the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA), with the objective of creating an effective road network linking all South American nations.

In view of this, two major projects are in the pipeline in Suriname, to be financed largely through the Inter-American Development Bank. One involves the improvement of the east-west road from Nieuw-Nickerie to Albina while the other will see the building of a bridge across the Marowijne (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 23-7-2006:A9). In the spirit of the times, in November 2006 the Republic signed an agreement between the Foreign Ministers of the South American Community of Nations (SACN) in Chile, which will permit Surinamese to travel freely on the South American continent without the need for visas. Reciprocally, Latin American citizens are allowed to enter the Republic simply by showing a valid passport.⁵

This intensified participation in Caribbean and Latin American organizations has also resulted in an increased accessibility to loans from the IADB. By the end of 2006 this financial institution, founded in 1959 with the objective of providing loans, grants, bank guarantees and investment capital to strengthen its member states' economic structures, had provided Suriname with US\$ 133.6 million over a ten-year period. Of that total, US\$ 103.3 million were provided as loans, the remaining US\$ 30.3 as grants (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 29-12-2006:A2). A total of 123 ventures were supported by the IADB, including projects relating to trade and agricultural reforms and a housing programme for low income groups. Even though with a budget of

⁵ *De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 1-12-2006:A7. Suriname joined SACN in 2004. SACN (also known as Comunidad Sudamericana de Naciones or CSN) was established in that year with the intention of combining the two main Latin American trade organizations, the Andean Community and Mercosur, to create an inter-governmental association loosely modelled on the EU.

US\$ 135 billion Suriname has gained access to only 0.1% of the total of loans, grants, bank guarantees and investment capital available, the IADB has nevertheless increasingly emerged as an important alternative to the dwindling funds from The Hague.

In a similar vein, on various bilateral levels the former colony has made enormous progress during the last few years in terms of strengthening integration into the Caribbean and Latin American region. For instance, rather than sending patients for specialist treatment to the Netherlands, Paramaribo and Bogotá have now agreed to these patients being treated in Colombia. Whereas medical treatment in the former metropole costs on average around € 30,000, the same treatment in Colombia amounts to around US\$ 8,000.⁶ Cuban and Venezuelan ophthalmologists, working under the Milagros Project, currently help over one hundred Surinamese patients per day.⁷ In extreme cases the patients are flown to Cuba to receive their treatment locally (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 28-10-2005:A9).

Several bilateral treaties have recently been signed with Venezuela, including the Petro-Caribe Deal guaranteeing the delivery of subsidized oil to the Republic. Moreover, the Caracas government provided Suriname with aid when the country was confronted with widespread flooding in the summer of 2006 and Venezuelan troops were invited to march through the streets of Paramaribo on the thirtieth anniversary of independence. Relations with Cuba have improved to such an extent that the Castro regime has decided to upgrade bilateral diplomatic relations (following Cardenas' expulsion in late 1983) by sending a new Ambassador, Andrés González Garrido, to Paramaribo in April 2006 (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 2-6-2006:A7). Once again, Cuban volunteers visited Suriname and provided people on low incomes with electricity-saving light bulbs – Cuba has so far donated more than US\$ 500,000. These various programmes offered by Havana and Caracas have contributed to a growing popularity of the Castro and Chavez regimes amongst the Surinamese population.

Similarly, bilateral links with other Caribbean nations have been strengthened. For example, at the end of 2005, Suriname's Minister of Justice Chandrikapersad Santokhi and his colleague David Dick from the Netherlands Antilles signed an agreement on bilateral judicial assistance (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 2-12-2005:A8). This was soon followed by Suriname, Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles deciding to further intensify judicial cooperation with the objective of combating drug trafficking and other cross-border criminal

⁶ *De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 24-6-2005:A1. By the end of June 2005 € 1 was valued at US\$ 1.21, which meant that an operation in Colombia was available for around € 6,610 compared to a price tag of € 30,000 attached to the same treatment in the Netherlands.

⁷ The Milagros Project has been fully funded by Havana and Caracas.

activities. Another significant treaty was concluded between Suriname, the Bahamas and Grenada in June 2006, allowing each other's citizens to enter the respective countries without visa restrictions (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 7-7-2006:A3). And, more recently, SLM has joined the Pan Caribbean Alliance which, besides the Surinamese national carrier, also comprises Insel Air from Curaçao, Air Antilles from Guadeloupe, Conviasa from Venezuela, TAF Linhas Aereas from Brazil and Winair from St. Maarten. The idea behind this association is to coordinate each other's route schedules and timetables so as to provide the regional traveller with a cross-Caribbean network (*Antilliaans Dagblad*, 4-6-2007:1).

Meanwhile, relations with direct neighbours have stabilized and improved, particularly with French Guiana. Hence Oostindie's statement (2004:28), that Paris continues to perceive The Hague at least as partly responsible for developments in Suriname, must be questioned. In fact, in recent years France has begun to substantially invest in the socio-economic development in the Republic. For example, the authorities in Cayenne have expressed the wish to link the electricity networks of Suriname and French Guiana by the end of this decade, in doing so ensuring a stable and relatively cheap supply of electricity. Paris has allocated € 25 million for this important project (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 24-11-2006:A2). Another investment of € 290,000 was allocated at the end of 2005 by the French government with the aim of combating malaria in the Marowijne region, an area where the public has often enjoyed the benefits of advanced and free French public health care rather than travelling to Paramaribo or other Surinamese towns for treatment. The French company Katopé took control of the Stichting Behoud Bananensector Suriname (SBBS, Foundation for the Preservation of the Surinamese Banana Sector) in October 2006, thus providing the Surinamese banana industry with improved management skills, investment capital and new export markets (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 13-10-2006:A3). Moreover, Surinamese police officers and customs officials have received training from French instructors throughout 2005 and 2006, thanks to the judicial cooperation agreement concluded earlier by Paramaribo and Paris. Further cooperation between both countries was observed in the beginning of 2006, when the Surinamese and French air forces agreed to provide each other with technical assistance (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 24-2-2006:A1). Last but not least, since mid-2006 a police attaché has been stationed at the French embassy in Paramaribo to act as a liaison between the two police forces and aid in combating cross-border crime.

In the last few years bilateral links with Brazil have intensified. In this respect, Venetiaan's visit to Brasilia in 2000 and above all the state visit by Brazil's President Luiz de Silva (better known as Lula) to Paramaribo in December 2004, have strengthened political and military ties between the two nations. That these friendly relationships have not remained limited to

contacts on an official level could be witnessed during the 2006 World Cup in Germany, as the Surinamese public largely supported the national team of their Brazilian neighbours. For its part, Brazil helped the Republic during the floods of May 2006 by sending a helicopter to transport food, water and medicine to the many cut off villages in the countryside.

However, there is still room for improvement in Brazilian-Surinamese relations. Especially in the interior, where gold is mined, many Brazilians are working illegally. Social tension and poverty amongst these *garimpeiros* has led to a rise in criminal activity, much to the chagrin of those living in these rural areas. Although the Brazilian police has supported its Surinamese colleagues in their efforts to deal with this issue, the problem continues to overshadow relations to some degree. The lack of trade between the two nations is another topic of concern. While Suriname has imported goods and services to the value of US\$ 35 million from Brazil, there is almost no movement in the other direction. Suriname's powerful neighbour has tried to rectify this situation by, for example, holding seminars at the Brazilian embassy in Paramaribo to stimulate trade (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 10-2-2006:A3). Another example demonstrating the Republic's need to increase regional trade is the agreement on rice exports signed by Paramaribo and Brasilia in April 2005, which allows Suriname to export rice to Brazil, an important alternative market considering the increased rice-export restrictions imposed by the EU. However, whereas Brasilia ratified the treaty in the same year, the Surinamese Assembly finally did so one year later and then only after extensive pressure from Surinamese rice farmers. This late response indicates that external affairs often plays a less important role in the day-to-day business of the government while highlighting the failure by the authorities in Paramaribo to make a direct link between the country's socio-economic development and foreign policy.

Finally, bilateral links with Guyana should be looked at, although these have become rather complex due to the border dispute between the two countries. Whereas this conflict used to centre on the Tigri area, the maritime border has now also emerged as a point of friction since oil and gas sources are thought to be located off the coast. This border dispute reached a climax in 1999, when the Surinamese navy forced the Canadian oil company CGX Energy – which had been granted permission to search for oil off the coast by Georgetown – to remove an oil rig from what Paramaribo perceived to be Surinamese territorial waters. During Bharrat Jagdeo's state visit to Suriname in January 2002 the presidents of both nations agreed to make use of the border commission, which has tried to come to an agreement about the exact land and sea borders, in order to look at ways of exploiting and sharing the profits from oil and gas drillings off the coast (*De Ware Tijd*, 30-1-2002:1-2). Failing to reach a compromise, Guyana eventually approached the UN Maritime Court in Germany to make a ruling on the issue. After over three

years of deliberations, the court finally defined the maritime border between both nations in September 2007. Although allocating oil-rich areas to Guyana, Suriname immediately accepted the court ruling and even approached Guyana to exploit the natural resources together (*De Ware Tijd Nederland*, 28-9-2007:B5).

Thus it would be wrong to assume that Georgetown and Paramaribo have been unfriendly neighbours. For instance, during Jagdeo's visit to Suriname in May 2006, both nations decided to strengthen cooperation in combating crime in the border regions and to improve and link their respective road networks as part of the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) project. In addition, the Agricultural Ministers of both nations have agreed to formulate a strategy aimed at strengthening the rice industries as both nations have been confronted with falling rice exports to the EU. The Guyana Trade Union Congress (TUC) and RAVAKSUR are cooperating on issues that might affect workers in the two countries, such as those arising from the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and the CSM. Finally, when Guyana was hit by heavy flooding early in 2005, the Surinamese government and local NGOs actively participated in the distribution of medicines, water, boats and other goods, and when the Republic was similarly affected by floods in the summer of 2006, it was Georgetown's turn to reciprocate.

It must be noted that these examples provide only a selection of the various steps taken by Suriname over the last few years to intensify its drive towards regional integration. Besides these steps, Paramaribo has also become more active on a global level, particularly with regard to India, Indonesia, China and the EU. This expanding regional and global approach has been largely the result of the shift in Dutch aid policy. However, it would be wrong to assume that Paramaribo has followed a Caribbean and Latin American integration policy merely due to the The Hague's development strategy change. In fact, Surinamese politicians have also opted to strengthen regional links in order to take advantage of the economic and political benefits connected with Caribbean and Latin American integration.

Looking towards the future, there is no indication that Dutch-Surinamese relations will become a thing of the past. On the contrary, these relations will continue to be of a special nature based on their shared history, cultural and language heritage, especially due to the large community of Surinamese residing in the Netherlands, who maintain close contact with their relatives in the Republic. However, over the last few years, the Netherlands has lost its 'privileged' position, with the centre of gravity in Surinamese foreign policy shifting towards Latin America and the Caribbean. In a similar vein, countries and organizations such as China, India, Indonesia and the European Union are growing into centres of trade at which Suriname will increasingly direct its focus. This recent shift from one specific centre across the Atlantic towards

several more regional and global centres must be viewed as a remarkable milestone in the history of Suriname's interactions with other nations and organizations. In fact, it can be concluded that this is a new era and should therefore be the topic of a new research project.

Appendices

Appendix I

Toescheidingsovereenkomst inzake Nationaliteiten (1975)

Artikel 1

1. Meerderjarig in de zin van deze Overeenkomst zijn zij die de leeftijd van 18 jaar hebben bereikt of vroeger in het huwelijk zijn getreden.
2. Voor de toepassing van deze Overeenkomst wordt onder vader, onderscheidenlijk moeder, mede verstaan adoptief-vader, onderscheidenlijk adoptief-moeder.
3. Voor de toepassing van deze Overeenkomst wordt een in Suriname gevonden of verlaten kind geacht aldaar te zijn geboren uit aldaar geboren ouders.

Artikel 2

1. Het verkrijgen van de Surinaamse nationaliteit ingevolge deze Overeenkomst heeft verlies van het Nederlanderschap tot gevolg.
2. Het verkrijgen van het Nederlanderschap ingevolge deze Overeenkomst heeft verlies van de Surinaamse nationaliteit tot gevolg.

Artikel 3

De Surinaamse nationaliteit verkrijgen alle meerderjarige Nederlanders die in Suriname zijn geboren en op het tijdstip van de inwerkingtreding van deze Overeenkomst in Suriname hetzij woonplaats, hetzij werkelijk verblijf hebben.

Artikel 4

De Surinaamse nationaliteit verkrijgen voorts alle meerderjarige Nederlanders die, buiten Suriname geboren zijnde, op het tijdstip van de inwerkingtreding van deze Overeenkomst in Suriname hetzij woonplaats, hetzij werkelijk verblijf hebben, indien:

- a. hetzij hun vader of, indien deze wettelijk onbekend is, hun moeder wel in Suriname is geboren. Is niet bekend waar de vader of, indien deze wettelijk onbekend is, de moeder is geboren, dan wordt deze geacht in Suriname te zijn geboren;
 - b. hetzij zij het Nederlanderschap hebben verkregen
1. ingevolge de Overeenkomst betreffende toescheiding van staatsburgers, opgenomen in de wet "Souvereiniteitsoverdracht Indoënesië" (wet van 21 december 1949, Stb J570) en op 27 december 1949 hetzij woonplaats, hetzij werkelijk verblijf hadden in Suriname;
 2. door naturalisatie bij of krachtens de wet op het tijdstip van de indiening van het verzoek in Suriname hetzij woonplaats, hetzij werkelijk verblijf hadden;
 3. in verband met het huwelijk met een Nederlander, van rechtswege dan wel door het doen van een kennisgeving, en op het tijdstip van de huwelijksluiting hetzij woonplaats, hetzij werkelijk verblijf in Suriname hadden.

Artikel 5

1. Meerderjarige Nederlanders die in Suriname zijn geboren of die, buiten Suriname geboren zijnde, behoren tot een van de in artikel 4 onder sub b omschreven groepen van personen en die op het tijdstip van de inwerkingtreding van deze Overeenkomst buiten Suriname hetzij woonplaats, hetzij werkelijk verblijf hebben, verkrijgen, ook buiten Suriname, de Surinaamse nationaliteit door voor 1 januari 1986 hun wil daartoe te kennen te geven.
2. De in lid 1 bedoelde personen hebben het recht te alleen tijde met hun gezin onvoorwaardelijk tot Suriname te worden toegelaten en daar in alle opzichten als Surinamer te worden behandeld. Zij verkrijgen van rechtswege die Surinaamse nationaliteit, indien zij gedurende twee jaren in Suriname hetzij woonplaats, hetzij werkelijk verblijf hebben.
3. De echtgenoten en de voor het jaar 2001 geboren kinderen, adoptief-kinderen daaronder begrepen, van de in lid 1 bedoelde personen hebben eveneens het recht op de voet van lid 2 onvoorwaardelijk tot Suriname te worden toegelaten.
4. Aan de in de voorgaande leden bedoelde personen kunnen, zolang zij het Nederlanderschap bezitten, geen rechten worden verleend of verplichtingen worden opgelegd welke onverenigbaar zijn met het Nederlanderschap.

Artikel 6

1. Behoudens in lid 2 bepaalde volgen minderjarigen de nationaliteit van hun vader of, indien deze overleden of wettelijk onbekend is, die van hun moeder.
2. Minderjarigen volgen de nationaliteit die hun moeder ingevolge deze Overeenkomst verkrijgt of behoudt, indien en zolang zij met de moeder in een ander land verblijven dan de vader.
3. Op minderjarigen zijn de artikelen 2-5, 9 en 10 van overeenkomstige toepassing, indien hun ouders zijn overleden of onbekend zijn, dan wel indien hun vader, of, indien deze overleden of wettelijk onbekend is, hun moeder het Nederlanderschap niet beziet.
4. De in de voorgaande leden bedoelde minderjarigen verkrijgen de nationaliteit die zij, indien zij ten tijde van de inwerkingtreding van deze Overeenkomst reeds meerderjarige waren geweest, zouden hebben gekregen dan wel hadden kunnen verkrijgen of behouden, door binnen vijf jaar na het bereiken van de meerderjarigheid hun wil daartoe te kennen te geven, mits deze nationaliteit is de nationaliteit van het land waar zij dan woonplaats hebben. Hetzelfde geldt voor wegens geestelijke stoornis onder curatele gestelden na de beëindiging van de curatele.
5. Buiten Suriname geboren minderjarigen van wie de moeder eveneens buiten Suriname als Nederlander geboren is, die op het tijdstip van de inwerkingtreding van deze Overeenkomst in Suriname hetzij woonplaats, hetzij werkelijk verblijf hebben en het Nederlanderschap hebben verloren ingevolge lid 1, herkrijgen die hoedanigheid door binnen vijf jaar na het bereiken van de meerderjarigheid hun wil daartoe te kennen te geven.

Artikel 7

1. Indien ingevolge deze Overeenkomst die nationaliteit van een echtgenoot wordt gewijzigd, heeft elk der echtelieden de bevoegdheid de nationaliteit van de andere echtgenoot te verkrijgen door binnen vijf jaar na de wijziging de wil daartoe te

kennen te geven, mits de echtelieden op de dag van de kennisgeving beiden woonplaats of werkelijk verblijf hebben in hetzelfde land.

2. Personen als in lid 1 bedoeld die een kennisgeving als daar bedoeld hebben gedaan, verkrijgen na de ontbinding van het huwelijk of de nietigverklaring daarvan de nationaliteit die zij onmiddellijk voor het doen van die kennisgeving bezaten, door binnen drie jaar na de ontbinding of nietigverklaring van het huwelijk hun wil daartoe te kennen te geven.

Artikel 8

1. Zij die ingevolge deze Overeenkomst de Surinaamse nationaliteit verkrijgen en op het tijdstip van de inwerkingtreding daarvan een publiekrechtelijk dienstverband bezitten met Nederland of de Nederlandse Antillen, verkrijgen het Nederlander-schap te rekenen van dat tijdstip door binnen één jaar daarna hun wil daartoe te kennen te geven.
2. Nederlanders die op het tijdstip van de inwerkingtreding van deze Overeenkomst een publiekrechtelijke dienstverband bezitten met Suriname en de Surinaamse nationaliteit niet ontlene[n] aan deze Overeenkomst, verkrijgen deze nationaliteit te rekenen van de tijdstip, door binnen één jaar daarna hun wil daartoe te kennen te geven.
3. Deze kennisgeving kunnen niet meer worden gedaan nadat het dienstverband is beëindigd.

Artikel 9

Nederlanders die op het tijdstip van de inwerkingtreding van deze Overeenkomst in Suriname woonplaats hebben en die ingevolge deze Overeenkomst de Surinaamse nationaliteit niet hebben verkregen, verkrijgen die hoedanigheid door binnen drie jaar na de inwerkingtreding van deze Overeenkomst hun wil daartoe te kennen te geven, mits zij op de dag van de kennisgeving in Suriname woonplaats hebben en meerderjarig zijn.

Artikel 10

Zij die de Surinaamse nationaliteit ontlene[n] aan artikel 3 van deze Overeenkomst en van wie de vader of, indien deze wettelijk onbekend is, de moeder buiten Suriname als Nederlander is geboren, verkrijgen het Nederlander-schap te rekenen van het tijdstip van de inwerkingtreding van deze Overeenkomst door binnen één jaar daarna hun wil daartoe te kennen te geven.

Artikel 11

1. Kennisgeving als bedoeld in deze Overeenkomst kunnen worden gedaan:
 - a. in Nederland aan de burgemeester van de gemeente waar de betrokkene woonplaats of werkelijk verblijf heeft en aan de Surinaamse diplomatieke vertegenwoordiger en consulaire ambtenaren;
 - b. in de Nederlandse Antillen aan de door de Gouverneur aangewezen autoriteiten en aan de Surinaamse consulaire ambtenaren;
 - c. in Suriname aan de door de Minister van Justitie van Suriname aan te wijzen autoriteit en aan de Nederlandse diplomatieke vertegenwoordiger en consulaire ambtenaren;
 - d. elders in den vreemde aan de Nederlandse en Surinaamse diplomatieke vertegenwoordigers en consulaire ambtenaren.

2. Voor minderjarigen worden kennisgeving gedaan door hun wettelijke vertegenwoordiger. Voor hen die wegens geestelijke stoornis onder curatele zijn gesteld, wordt de kennisgeving gedaan door de curator.
3. Tenzij in deze Overeenkomst anders is bepaald, werken kennisgeving niet terug.
4. Van alle kennisgevingen wordt onverwijld afschrift gezonden aan de Minster van Justitie in Nederland en Suriname.

Artikel 12

Vraagstukken welke bij de toepassing van deze Overeenkomst mochten rijzen worden in onderling overleg tussen de administraties van de beide landen van het Koninkrijk en van Suriname opgelost, onverminderd de bevoegdheid van de bevoegde rechter in elk van de beiden landen van het Koninkrijk en in Suriname volgens de daar bestaande wetgeving een beslissing te geven.

Appendix II

Overeenkomst tussen de Regering van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden en de Regering van Suriname over het Verblijf en de Vestiging van Wederzijdse Onderdanen (November 1975)

Artikel 1

Voor de toepassing van deze overeenkomst wordt verstaan onder persoon:

- in het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden: een onderdaan van Suriname;
- in Suriname: een onderdaan van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden

Artikel 2

Elke Overeenkomstsluitende Partij verleent toestemming tot verblijf op haar grondgebied aan een persoon die over middelen van bestaan en passende huisvesting beschikt. De toestemming wordt verleend voor de periode waarvoor verwacht kan worden dat de middelen van bestaan toereikend zijn. De termijn waarvoor toestemming is verleend kan worden verlengd.

Artikel 3

1. Elke Overeenkomstsluitende Partij verleent toestemming tot verblijf op haar grondgebied, ten behoeve van het verrichten van arbeid in loondienst, aan een persoon die op dat grondgebied een arbeidsplaats en passende huisvesting heeft.
2. De toestemming, bedoeld in het vorige lid wordt verleend voor een periode van twaalf maanden. Na afloop van die periode wordt de toestemming verlengd, indien de betrokken persoon een arbeidsplaats en passende huisvesting heeft.
3. Nadat een persoon gedurende een onafgebroken periode van twaalf maanden op het grondgebied van der andere Overeenkomstsluitende Partij arbeid in loondienst heeft verricht, wordt, indien hij een arbeidsplaats heeft, de hem verleende toestemming voor periodes van telkens vijf jaar verlengd.

Artikel 4

1. Elke Overeenkomstsluitende Partij verleent toestemming tot verblijf op haar grondgebied, ten behoeve van het verrichten van arbeid als zelfstandige, aan een persoon die kan aantonen dat hij voldoet aan de eisen die de Overeenkomstsluitende Partij, op wier grondgebied deze persoon werkzaam wil zijn, daarvoor aan eigen onderdanen stelt, alsmede dat hij passende huisvesting heeft.
2. Het tweede en het derde lid van Artikel 3 zijn van overeenkomstige toepassing.

Artikel 5

1. Indien een persoon op grond van een van de artikelen 2-4 toestemming tot verblijf op het grondgebied van de andere Overeenkomstsluitende Partij heeft verkregen,

dan verleent deze Overeenkomstsluitende Partij tevens toestemming tot het verblijf van de gezinsleden van die persoon, mits deze kan aantonen dat voor hen passende huisvesting beschikbaar is.

2. Onder gezinsleden worden verstaan:

- de echtgenoot;
- degenen met wie de betrokken persoon een duurzame en exclusieve persoonlijke relatie onderhoudt;
- feitelijk tot het gezin van de persoon behorende minderjarige kinderen over wie een van der ouders het gezaag uitoefent;
- andere familieleden, die feitelijk tot het gezin van de betrokken persoon behoren en die van hem afhankelijk zijn.

Artikel 6

1. Elke Overeenkomstsluitende Partij verleent toestemming tot verblijf op haar grondgebied ten behoeve van het volgen van onderwijs aan een persoon die kan aantonen dat hij is ingeschreven bij een onderwijsinstelling en dat de kosten van het volgen van onderwijs en van levensonderhoud gedurende de periode waarin onderwijs zal worden gevolgd, zijn gedekt.
2. Het eerste lid is van overeenkomstige toepassing op verblijf ten behoeve van het volgen van een praktijkopleiding, met dien verstande dat de betrokken persoon moet kunnen aantonen dat een plaats beschikbaar is voor het volgen van zodanige opleiding.

Artikel 7

1. De eerste toestemming tot verblijf als bedoeld in een van der artikel 2-6 kan worden geweigerd:
 - a. indien de gegevens, nodig voor het beoordelen van het verzoek om toestemming, niet of onvolledig zijn verstrekt;
 - b. indien de betrokken persoon gevaar oplevert voor de openbare rust, de openbare orde of de nationale veiligheid van het land waarop het verzoek om toestemming betrekking heeft.
2. De toestemming tot verblijf, als bedoeld in een van de artikelen 2-6, kan worden ingetrokken of verlening hiervan kan worden geweigerd:
 - a. indien onjuiste gegevens zijn verstrekt, voor zover bekendheid met de juiste gegevens tot weigering van de toestemming, of onderscheidenlijk van de verlening, zou hebben geleid;
 - b. indien de betrokken persoon in het land van verblijf inbreuk heeft gemaakt op de openbare rust of de openbare orde, dan wel een gevaar vormt voor de nationale veiligheid;
 - c. indien de betrokken persoon niet meer beschikt over voldoende middelen van bestaan; voor levensonderhoud bestemde uitkeringen ingevolge sociale verzekeringswetten worden als voldoende middelen van bestaan aangemerkt.

Artikel 8

1. Elke Overeenkomstsluitende Partij verleent toestemming tot vestiging op haar grondgebied aan een persoon die aldaar op 25 november 1975 hetzij woonplaats, hetzij werkelijk verblijf had.

2. Elke Overeenkomstsluitende Partij verleent tevens toestemming tot vestiging op haar grondgebied aan gezinsleden, als bedoeld in artikel 5, tweede lid, van een persoon aan wie op grond van het eerste lid van het onderhavige artikel toestemming tot vestiging is verleend.

Artikel 9

De toestemming tot vestiging, als bedoeld in artikel 8, kan uitsluitend worden geweigerd of ingetrokken:

- a. indien de betrokken persoon in het land van vestiging bij rechterlijk gewijsde is veroordeeld wegens een opzettelijk begaan misdrijf, waarvoor hem een gevangenisstraf van meer dan vier jaar kan worden opgelegd;
- b. indien de betrokken persoon in het land van vestiging een gevaar vormt voor de nationale veiligheid.

Artikel 10

Elke Overeenkomstsluitende Partij draagt zorg dat tegen een beschikking tot weigering, intrekking of niet-verlening van een toestemming, bedoelt in een van de artikelen 2-9, voor de belanghebbende een hogere voorziening openstaat.

Artikel 11

1. Indien aan de Overeenkomst tussen het Koninkrijk België, het Groothertogdom Luxemburg en het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, enerzijds, en de Regering van Suriname, anderzijds, inzake de afschaffing van de visumplicht een einde zou komen, verleent elk van de Overeenkomstsluitende Partijen een visum voor een verblijf van ten hoogste drie maanden aan een persoon die daarom verzoekt.
2. Elke Overeenkomstsluitende Partij behoudt behoud zich het recht voor te weigeren personen op haar grondgebied toe te laten die niet in het bezit zijn van de voor binnenkomst vereiste documenten of wie het ontbreekt aan voldoende middelen van bestaan of die deze niet door legale arbeid kunnen verwerven, dan wel te weigeren personen toe te laten, die als ongewenste vreemdeling worden beschouwd of wier aanwezigheid in het land een bedreiging wordt geacht voor de openbare orde of de nationale veiligheid.

Artikel 12

1. Wat het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden betreft, zal deze overeenkomst voorshands alleen gelden voor het in Europa gelegen grondgebied van het Koninkrijk. De toepassing van de overeenkomst kan evenwel worden uitgebreid tot het grondgebied van de Nederlandse Antillen door middel van een notawisseling tussen de Regering van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden en de Regering van Suriname.
2. Elk der Overeenkomstsluitende Partijen kan de toepassing van de overeenkomst op de Nederlandse Antillen, als bedoeld in het vorige lid, beëindigen door dertig dagen tevoren van hun voornemen hiertoe kennis te geven aan de regering van der andere Overeenkomstsluitende Partij.

Artikel 13

1. Deze Overeenkomst treedt in werking nadat de Overeenkomstsluitende Partijen elkaar schriftelijk hebben medegedeeld dat in hun land aan de terzake geldende constitutionele voorwaarden is voldaan en werkt terug op 25 november 1975.
2. De Overeenkomst wordt aangegaan voor de duur van vijf jaar, te berekenen vanaf 25 november 1975.
3. De Overeenkomst wordt voorlopig toegepast met ingang van 25 november 1975.

Appendix III

Overeenkomst tussen de Regering van het Koninkrijk België, de Regering van het Groothertogdom Luxemburg en de Regering van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, enerzijds, en de Regering van Suriname, anderzijds, Inzake de Afschaffing van de Visumplicht (1975)

De Regeringen van de Beneluxlanden, gezamenlijk optredend op grond van de op 11 april 1960 te Brussel ondertekende Overeenkomst tussen het Koninkrijk België, het Groothertogdom Luxemburg en het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden inzake de verlegging van personencontrole naar de buitengrenzen van het Beneluxgebied

En de Regering van Suriname

Verlangende, de formaliteiten met betrekking tot het reisverkeer van hun onderscheiden onderdanen te regelen,

Zijn het volgende overeengekomen:

Artikel 1

In deze Overeenkomst wordt verstaan: onder "Beneluxlanden": het Koninkrijk België, het Groothertogdom Luxemburg en het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden; onder "Beneluxgebied": de gezamenlijke grondgebieden in Europa van het Koninkrijk België, het Groothertogdom Luxemburg en het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden.

Artikel 2

Onderdanen van de Beneluxlanden die in het bezit zijn van een geldig paspoort mogen ongeacht de plaats van vertrek voor een verblijf van ten hoogste drie maanden zonder visum Suriname binnenkomen.

Artikel 3

Onderdanen van Suriname, die in het bezit zijn van een geldig nationaal paspoort mogen ongeacht de plaats van vertrek voor een verblijf van ten hoogste drie maanden zonder visum het Beneluxgebied binnenkomen.

Artikel 4

Voor een verblijf van meer dan drie maanden dienen de onderdanen van een der Overeenkomstsluitende Partijen, voor hun aankomst in het ontvangende gebied, de vereiste toestemming te verkrijgen door tussenkomst van de diplomatieke of consulaire vertegenwoordiger van het land waarheen zij zich willen begeven.

Artikel 5

Onderdanen van de Beneluxlanden die met toestemming van de bevoegde autoriteiten van Suriname in Suriname gevestigd, en onderdanen van Suriname die met toestemming van de bevoegde autoriteiten van de Beneluxlanden in een der Beneluxlanden zijn gevestigd, mogen het land van vestiging verlaten en daarheen zonder visum terugkeren op vertoon van een geldig nationaal paspoort, terwijl geen zekerheidstelling wordt vereist.

Artikel 6

Elke Regering behoudt zich het recht voor te weigeren personen op haar grondgebied toe te laten die niet in het bezit zijn van de voor binnenkomst vereiste documenten of wie het ontbreekt aan voldoende middelen van bestaan of die deze niet door legale arbeid kunnen verwerven, dan wel te weigeren personen toe te laten, die als ongewenste vreemdeling worden beschouwd of wier aanwezigheid in het land een bedreiging wordt geacht voor de openbare orde of de nationale veiligheid.

Artikel 7

Behoudens de voorgaande bepalingen en behoudens nadere overeenkomsten tussen de regeringen van elk van de Beneluxlanden en Suriname is deze Overeenkomst niet van invloed op de voorschriften inzake vreemdelingen welke in de Beneluxlanden en in Suriname van kracht zijn betreffende de binnenkomst, de duur van het verblijf, de vestiging en de uitwijzing, alsmede met betrekking tot enigerlei werkzaamheid.

Artikel 8

Elke Regering verplicht zich zonder enige formaliteit weder tot haar grondgebied toe te laten

- b. haar onderdanen die het grondgebied van de andere Overeenkomstsluitende Partij zijn binnengekomen;
- c. bezitters van een van de in de artikelen 2 en 3 bedoelde en door haar afgegeven documenten, zelfs in het geval van een persoon omtrent wiens nationaliteit twijfel bestaat.

Artikel 9

Wat het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden betreft, zal deze Overeenkomst voorshands alleen gelden voor het in Europa gelegen grondgebied van het Koninkrijk. De toepassing van de Overeenkomst kan evenwel worden uitgebreid tot de Nederlandse Antillen door middel van een notawisseling tussen de Regering van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden en de Regering van Suriname.

Met inachtneming van het bepaalde in de artikelen 10 en 11 kunnen de Regeringen van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden en de Regering van Suriname de toepassing van de Overeenkomst op de Nederlandse Antillen bedoeld in de tweede volzin van dit artikel beëindigen door dertig dagen tevoren kennis te geven hun voornemen hiertoe.

Artikel 10

Deze Overeenkomst treedt in werking op 25 november 1975 voor de duur van één jaar. Indien de Overeenkomst niet dertig dagen voor het verstrijken van die periode is opgezegd, wordt zij geacht voor onbepaalde tijd te zijn verlengd. Na de eerste periode van één jaar kan elk der ondertekende Regeringen de Overeenkomst opzeggen door

de Belgische Regering hiervan in kennis te stellen. Indien een der ondertekende Regeringen de Overeenkomst opzegt, treedt deze buiten werking. De Belgische Regering deelt de andere ondertekende Regeringen de ontvangst mede van de in dit artikel bedoelde kennisgeving van opzegging.

Artikel 11

Behoudens artikel 8 kan de toepassing van deze Overeenkomst door ieder der Overeenkomstsluitende Partijen worde geschorst.

De Belgische Regering wordt onmiddellijk langs diplomatieke weg van deze schorsing in kennis gesteld. De Belgische Regering deelt de andere ondertekende Regeringen de ontvangst van deze kennisgeving mede. Dezelfde procedure wordt gevolgd wanneer de schorsing wordt ingetrokken.

Appendix IV

Verdrag Betreffende Ontwikkelingssamenwerking tussen Nederland en Suriname (November 1975)

Nederland en Suriname gaan, uitgaande van het protocol van de regeringsconferentie Nederland, Suriname en de Nederlandse Antillen te 's-Gravenhage op 18 t/m 21 mei 1974, met ingang van de datum van onafhankelijkheid van Suriname de volgende overeenkomst aan teneinde Suriname in staat te stellen zich op zo kort mogelijke termijn verder zelfstandig te ontwikkelen.

Artikel 1

Nederland en Suriname zullen zoveel mogelijk samenwerken op alle gebieden waarbij de economieën der beide landen aanvullend en stimulerend op elkaar kunnen inwerken, in die zin dat daardoor het welvaartsverschil tussen beide landen kan verminderen en de economische groei en goede welvaartsspreiding binnen Suriname kunnen worden bevorderd, opdat de economische weerbaarheid van dit land op efficiënte wijze en zo snel mogelijk kan worden bereikt.

Artikel 2

Uitgangspunt voor deze ontwikkelingssamenwerking tussen beide landen is het Surinaamse meerjarenontwikkelingsprogramma, zoals aangegeven in het Rapport van de Surinaams-Nederlandse commissie van deskundigen "Programma voor de sociaal-economische ontwikkeling van Suriname", d.d. januari 1975, met de daarbij behorende bijlagen. Het geheel van projecten en de deelprogramma's, die uitgevoerd worden op basis van dit meerjarenplan, zullen eveneens worden gericht op de vergroting van de economische weerbaarheid van Suriname, vergroting van de werkgelegenheid, verbetering van de levensomstandigheden der gehele bevolking en de regionale spreiding.

Artikel 3

Voor de uitvoering van het meerjarenplan zullen worden aangewend Surinaamse besparingen, Nederlandse financiële en technische hulp, hulp door andere donorlanden en internationale organisaties alsmede particuliere investeringen. Nederland zal verder alle medewerking aan Suriname verlenen om een snelle en efficiënte realisatie van het gehele plan mogelijk te maken.

Suriname aanvaardt de consequenties van de planuitvoering en zal de eigen middelen en inkomsten zoveel mogelijk opvoeren teneinde naar vermogen aan de benodigde middelen bij te dragen.

Artikel 4

Teneinde Suriname in staat te stellen onbelast met schulden uit het veleden aan de uitvoering van het meerjarenontwikkelingsplan te werken, verleent Nederland algehele kwijtschelding van de op de datum van de onafhankelijkheid bestaande schuld, zoals gespecificeerd in bijlage 1.

Artikel 5

Nederland stelt voor een periode van 10 à 15 jaar in totaal *f* 3500 mln beschikbaar voor de uitvoering van het meerjarenontwikkelingsplan. Dit bedrag is als volgt opgebouwd:

- *f* 2700 mln is bestemd voor medefinanciering van projecten en programma's welke onderdeel uitmaken van het Surinaamse meerjarenontwikkelingsprogramma; voor sociaal educatieve ontwikkelingsprojecten en voor medefinanciering van ontwikkelingsprojecten van particuliere organisaties, universiteiten en de Financieringsmaatschappij voor Ontwikkelingslanden;
- indien na besteding van het bedrag van *f* 2700 mln het plan nog niet volledig is gerealiseerd, is Nederland bereid tot een maximum van *f* 300 mln het resterende tekort te financieren op basis van strikte pariteit met Surinaamse besparingen;
- voor het verstrekken van garanties te verlenen op ontwikkelingsleningen van ontwikkelingsfondsen en banken ten behoeve van projecten deel uitmakend van het meerjarenprogramma is, voorzover noodzakelijk *f* 500 mln beschikbaar. Materialisering van deze garanties zal ten laste komen van de in deze periode dan wel daarna te verlenen ontwikkelingshulp.

Behalve de hierboven genoemde bedragen blijft het restant van de in het verleden gecommitteerde doch niet uitgegeven Nederlandse hulp voor Suriname ad ongeveer *f* 350 mln beschikbaar.

Artikel 6

Op basis van het ontwikkelingsprogramma stelt Suriname jaarlijks een plan vast, met toelichting. Deze planopstelling is een Surinaamse aangelegenheid.

Artikel 7

Suriname doet jaarlijks voorstellen voor de financiering en uitvoering in het kader van de Nederlandse ontwikkelingshulp van projecten en programma's welke deel uitmaken van het jaarplan.

Artikel 8

Beide landen benoemen elk een commissie van drie personen voor gezamenlijk overleg. De benoeming zal zodanig plaatsvinden dat er rekening wordt gehouden met de continuïteit bij de planuitvoering. De commissies kunnen zich doen bijstaan door deskundigen.

Artikel 9

De in punt 7 genoemde voorstellen worden besproken in de aldus gevormde gezamenlijke commissie van deskundigen, welke deze toets aan het Surinaamse ontwikkelingsprogramma en aan de criteria zoals genoemd in punt 2.

Artikel 10

Indien er in deze gezamenlijke commissie geen overeenstemming wordt bereikt, vindt overleg plaats tussen de beiden regeringen.

Artikel 11

In een nog vast te stellen protocol zullen de procedures te volgen bij de voorbereiding en uitvoering van projecten te financieren uit Nederlandse hulp worden vastgelegd.

Artikel 12

De gezamenlijke commissie zal ook adviseren over de verslagen die het Planbureau jaarlijks dient uit te brengen met betrekking tot de realisatie van het plan en het beheer der middelen.

Artikel 13

Bij de uitvoering van het plan zal Suriname gehoord de gezamenlijke commissie waar het economisch en technisch verantwoord is, zoveel mogelijk prioriteit verlenen aan levering van kapitaalgoederen en diensten uit Nederland boven andere ontwikkelde landen. Nederland zal binnen het kader van internationale regelingen en instellingen zijn beleid afstemmen op de bevordering van de afzet van in Suriname geproduceerde goederen in en buiten Nederland.

Artikel 14

Nederland en Suriname stellen zich ten doel uit Nederland afkomstige particuliere investeringen ten goede te doen komen aan de ontwikkeling van de Surinaamse economie.

Indien Suriname zou willen overgaan tot Surinamisering van investeringen kan voor de financiering daarvan een beroep worden gedaan op de in punt 5 genoemde middelen.

Artikel 15

Nederland verklaart zich bereid ook na de voltooiing van het Surinaamse ontwikkelingsprogramma Suriname ontwikkelingshulp te verlenen. Over de omvang, aard en duur daarvan zal, gehoord het advies van de gezamenlijke commissie over de resultaten van het Surinaamse ontwikkelingsprogramma, overleg tussen beide regeringen plaatsvinden aler deze periode is verstreken.

Specificatie kwijtschelding van schulden van Suriname jegens Nederland

| | | |
|--|------|----------------|
| Overbruggingslening | Nfl. | 50.601.890,29 |
| 2.5% 30-jarige annuïteitenlening 1971 (Tienjarenplan, Aanvullend Opbouw Plan, Extra Ontwikkelingshulp) | Nfl. | 124.091.289,46 |
| Vijfjarenplan 1967 t/m 1971 zachte lening | Nfl. | 104.049.729,10 |
| Vijfjarenplan 1967 t/m 1971 normale lening | Nfl. | 22.684.526,11 |
| Vijfjarenplan 1971 t/m 1976 niet-geconsolideerde lening | Nfl. | 60.156.296,44 |
| | | ----- |
| Total | Nfl. | 361.583.731,40 |

Na volledig gebruik van de toezeggingen, vervat in het Vijfjarenplan 1972 t/m 1976 wordt dit 40% van Nfl. 400 mln ofwel Nfl. 160 mln. Thans hieronder nog beschikbaar

Nfl. 99.843.703,56

| | | |
|---|------|----------------|
| Schuld van de Stichting Machinale Landbouw jegens Nederland, overgebleven van bij de financiële sanering in 1965 | Nfl. | 56.029.177,00 |
| Totaal kwijt te schelden schuld | Nfl. | 517.456.611,96 |

Appendix V

Official Note by Foreign Minister Errol Alibux directed towards the Cuban Embassy, announcing the expulsion of Osvaldo Cardenas (October 1983)

De Surinaamse minister van Buitenlandse Zaken brengt zijn eerbiedige groeten over aan de ambassade van de Republiek Cuba en heeft de eer de volgende kwestie onder uw aandacht te brengen:

De leiders van de Surinaamse Revolutie hebben de informatie over de gebeurtenissen op Grenada waarover zij op dit moment beschikken bestudeerd en hebben vastgesteld dat ten gevolge van deze gebeurtenissen niet alleen de voortgang van de revolutie van Grenada in het bijzonder wordt belemmerd, maar ook die van de revolutionaire processen in het algemeen, vooral van die in ons gebied. Met het oog hierop zijn de leiders van de Surinaamse Revolutie tot de slotsom gekomen dat het niet in het belang van de revolutie zou zijn wanneer men zou toelaten dat het, zoals op Grenada is gebeurd, op een ander plaats en tijd opnieuw tot een explosieve polarisatie van standpunten zou komen, die binnen de bestaande structuren van de revolutionaire organisaties niet met elkaar in overeenstemming blijken te zijn. Ten dele vanwege de overeenkomsten tussen de revolutionaire processen van Suriname en Grenada heeft hetgeen op Grenada is voorgevallen de leiders van de Surinaamse Revolutie ertoe gebracht naarstig te zoeken naar mogelijke factoren binnen het bestel van de Surinaamse Revolutie die op lange of korte termijn gebeurtenissen zouden kunnen veroorzaken die vergelijkbaar zijn met de gebeurtenissen welke nu op Grenada hebben plaatsgevonden.

Tot de factoren die deze bezorgdheid veroorzaken en deze nog vergroten behoren enkele effecten van de goed bedoelde activiteiten van de Cubaanse ambassade in Suriname, waarbij de activiteiten die ambassadeur Osvaldo Cardenas heeft ontplooid met betrekking tot de ontwikkeling van het bewustzijn van de revolutionaire kaders en de oprichting en de versterking van revolutionaire instellingen, sterk in het oog springen.

Een van de oorzaken van de aanzienlijke maar ongewenste effecten van de goed bedoelde activiteiten is ongetwijfeld de oncontroleerbare intensivering van de betrekkingen tussen onze landen, mede als gevolg van de onstuimige manier waarop deze betrekkingen met name in de laatste maanden zijn uitgebreid.

Teneinde de geconstateerde ongunstige ontwikkelingen in goede banen te leiden en de opbouw van een duurzame, broederlijke relatie tussen Cuba en Suriname te waarborgen, vraagt de Surinaamse regering de medewerking van de Cubaanse regering om de betrekkingen tussen de twee landen op een controleerbaar niveau te houden, van waaruit kan worden gewerkt aan een systematische uitbreiding van stabiele en evenwichtige betrekkingen. Dit in overweging nemend verzoekt de

Surinaamse regering de Cubaanse regering derhalve:

1. De heer Osvaldo Cardenas, Cubaanse ambassadeur in Suriname, binnen een termijn van zes dagen na het uitgaan van deze nota terug te roepen.
2. De betrekkingen tussen beide landen tijdelijk op het niveau van zaakgelastigde te voeren, dat wil zeggen een diplomaat plus maximaal drie leden van de diplomatieke dienst, zulks binnen een termijn van veertien dagen na dagtekening.
3. De uitvoering van projecten met onmiddellijke ingang stop te zetten om de tussen de Cubaanse en de Surinaamse Republiek gesloten akkoorden te heroverwegen.

Ter bevestiging van ons voornemen om broederlijke en evenwichtige betrekkingen tussen onze naties te onderhouden, berichten wij u met genoegen dat de Surinaamse regering de Republiek Cuba nog die jaar zal laten weten wie ze zal accrediteren bij de Cubaanse regering als haar zaakgelastigde. Het Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken van de Republiek Suriname maakt van deze gelegenheid gebruik om de ambassade van de Republiek Cuba opnieuw te verzekeren van zijn steun en hoogachting.

Paramaribo, 25 oktober 1983

Errol Alibux

Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken

Appendix VI

Surinamese Note to the UN Special Repporteur, Dr. Amos Wake (January 1983)

Suriname

11 January 1983

Referring to the information requested concerning reports of executions in Suriname, those reports do not reflect the actual recent events in our country.

In an official statement of the Military Authority it is stated that on 8 December 1982 a number of persons, detained for their involvement in activities to overthrow the Government through violent means were killed in an unfortunate accident as a result of their attempts to escape custody.

The National Army and Government will see to it that such occurrences be prevented in the future.

Source: United Nations 1982

Appendix VII

Final Communiqué of the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordination Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries (April 1986)

234. The Ministers reaffirmed their solidarity with the Government and people of the Republic of Suriname in their efforts to preserve their independence and sovereignty. While expressing deep concern at the continuing economic and other coercive measures which have been and are still being applied against Suriname, they nevertheless noted the statement of the Foreign Minister of Suriname to the effect that since the Luanda Meeting there had been some improvement in the relations between Suriname and the Governments concerned. They expressed the hope that these relations would continue to improve and that they would be free from coercion or any other form of interference and be conducted on the basis of full respect for the rights, interests and well-being of the people of Suriname.

Source: Non-aligned Movement 1986:78

Appendix VIII

Surinamese Note to the Special Rapporteur, Dr. Amos Wako (October 1983)

Concerning visit Special Rapporteur Chr Dr Wako to Suriname from Oct 30 to Nov 4, 1983, regret to communicate upon instructions Government of the Republic of Suriname that Surinamese commission under Chairmanship of Mr Ph Akrum is not in a position to receive Dr Wako during the above-mentioned period on account of particular unforeseen circumstances, which suddenly arose.

Offering you on behalf of the Surinamese Government our apologies for any inconvenience this temporary delay might cause you.

Source: United Nations 1983:6

Appendix IX

Raamverdrag inzake Vriendschap en Nauwere Samenwerking tussen het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden en de Republiek Suriname (June 1992)

Haar Majesteit de Koningin der Nederlanden en Zijne Excellentie de President van de Republiek Suriname, zich baserend op het Protocol van conclusies van besprekingen tussen de Regeringen van beide Staten inzake nauwere samenwerking, zoals op 16 november 1991 te Bonaire tot stand gekomen;

gelet op de Overeenkomst betreffende ontwikkelingssamenwerking van 25 november 1975 cum annexis en de andere tussen beide Staten gesloten verdragen; indachtig de historische, vriendschappelijke en bijzondere betrekkingen tussen beide Staten, onder andere tot uiting komend in het grote aantal personen van Surinaamse herkomst dat in het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden verblijft;

overwegende dat beide Staten streven naar een voordurende verbetering van de omstandigheden waaronder hun volkeren leven en werken;

herbevestigend de beginselen van de democratie en de rechtsstaat en van eerbiediging, handhaving en bevordering van de fundamentele rechten en vrijheden van de mens, zoal zijn vervat in:

- de Universele Verklaring van de Rechten van de Mens van 10 december 1948;
- het Internationaal Verdrag van 19 december 1966 inzake burgerrechten en politieke rechten (met Facultatief Protocol);
- het Internationaal Verdrag van 19 december 1966 inzake economische, sociale en culturele rechten; en
- het Internationaal Verdrag van 7 maart 1966 inzake de uitbanning van alle vormen van rassendiscriminatie;

vastbesloten op deze grondslag samen te werken teneinde steker te staan tegen de gevaren die de ontwikkeling en het voortbestaan van de democratie en de rechtsstaat, de economische, sociale en culturele ontwikkeling van de samenleving en daarmee het welzijn van hun volkeren kunnen bedreigen;

hebben overeenstemming bereikt over die Raamverdrag inzake vriendschap en nauwere samenwerking, waarin de hoofdlijnen van een samenhangend stelsel van nauwere betrekkingen tussen beide Staten op basis van wederzijds respect en vertrouwen, soevereiniteit en gelijkwaardigheid worden vastgelegd:

Artikel 1

Grondbeginselen

1. Beide Staten maken zich binnen hun rechtsmacht sterk voor de handhaving en bevordering van de democratie en de rechtsstaat en een democratisch gelegitimeerde en gecontroleerde overheid.

2. Beide Staten eerbiedigen, handhaven en bevorderen de fundamentele rechten en vrijheden van de mens in overeenstemming met de Universele Verklaring van de Rechten van de Mens van 10 december 1948, het Internationaal Verdrag van 19 december 1966 inzake burgerrechten en politieke rechten (met Facultatief Protocol), het Internationaal Verdrag van 19 december 1966 inzake economische, sociale en culturele rechten en het Internationaal Verdrag van 7 maart 1966 inzake de uitbanning van alle vormen van rassendiscriminatie.
3. De Regering van beide Staten bestrijden de misdaad, in het bijzonder de georganiseerde grensoverschrijdende misdaad die de rechtsorde in hun Staten kan bedreigen.
4. De Regeringen van beide Staten zetten zich binnen hun rechtsmacht in voor de rechtszekerheid alsmede voor economische groei en sociale rechtvaardigheid.
5. De Regeringen van beide Staten bevorderen de ontwikkeling van de internationale rechtsorde, internationale samenwerking en regionale integratie.
6. De Regeringen van beide Staten laten zich in hun handelingen en in hun onderling overleg voortdurend leiden door de beginselen van wederzijds respect en vertrouwen, soevereiniteit en gelijkwaardigheid zoals vervat in het Handvest van de Verenigde Naties.

Artikel 2

Doelstellingen en uitgangspunten

1. Dit Raamverdrag heeft tot doel een kader te schaffen voor een nauwere samenwerking tussen beide Staten op een veelheid van terreinen in onderlinge samenhang, met inachtneming van de grondbeginselen van dit Raamverdrag. Zij behoeven zich daarbij niet te beperken tot de in de Raamverdrag genoemde onderwerpen.
2. De samenwerking richt zich in het bijzonder op:
 - de instandhouding en versterking van de democratie en de rechtsstaat;
 - de structurele versterking van het overheidsapparaat; en
 - de bevordering van economische ontwikkeling en sociale rechtsvaardigheid.
3. Samenwerking op specifieke terreinen wordt waar nodig vastgelegd in nadere overeenkomsten of accoorden.
4. Waar nodig en mogelijk zoeken de Regeringen van beiden Staten gezamenlijk samenwerking met derde landen en internationale organisaties met het oog op de doelstellingen van dit Raamverdrag en met inachtneming van de grondbeginselen en uitgangspunten daarvan.
5. De samenwerking wordt regelmatig geëvalueerd en waar nodig bijgesteld op basis van de grondbeginselen, doelstellingen en uitgangspunten van dit Raamverdrag.
6. Voor de financiering van samenwerkingsprogramma's, daaronder begrepen die welke worden bedoeld in het tweede lid van dit artikel, kunnen de uit hoofde van de Overeenkomst betreffende ontwikkelingsamenwerking van 25 november 1975 beschikbare middelen worden aangewend, indien en voorzover die aanwending in overeenstemming is met doel en bestemming van die middelen binnen het raam van die Overeenkomst.
7. Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden bevestigt zijn bereidheid ook na besteding van de middelen uit de Overeenkomst betreffende ontwikkelingsamenwerking van 25 november 1975 de Republiek Suriname aanvullend verdragsmiddelen beschikbaar te stellen. Omvang, aard en duur zullen in verband met de verwezenlijking van

de in artikel 1 van voornoemde Overeenkomst aangegeven doelstellingen en met het oog op de noodzakelijke continuïteit tijdig, vóór de uiteindelijke committering door beide Staten worden vastgesteld.

Artikel 3

Financiële, economische en ontwikkelingssamenwerking

1. Dit Raamverdrag laat onverlet de op 25 november 1975 te Paramaribo totstandgekomen Overeenkomst tussen het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden en de Republiek Suriname betreffende ontwikkelingssamenwerking, met Bijlagen en Aanvullende Protocollen. Deze Overeenkomst vormt het uitgangspunt voor de samenwerking op financieel en economisch gebied.
2. In het kader van de bevordering van economische ontwikkeling en sociale rechtvaardigheid werken de Regeringen van beide Staten samen ten behoeve van de uitvoering van een programma van aanpassing en structurele hervorming van de Surinaamse economie gericht op herstel, groei en een rechtvaardige welvaartsverdeling. De Republiek Suriname zal de eigen middelen en inkomsten zoveel mogelijk opvoeren teneinde naar vermogen aan genoemd programma bij te dragen. De Regering van beide Staten zullen in de aanzet van genoemd programma ertoe overgaan nader overeen te komen bedragen ten laste van de uit hoofde van de Overeenkomst betreffende ontwikkelingssamenwerking van 25 november 1975 beschikbare middelen te bestemmen voor:
 - een investeringsprogramma voor rehabilitatie en verbetering van de infrastructuur;
 - een sociaal programma waaronder begrepen financiële bijdragen aan een sociaal fonds, om ongewenste sociale effecten bij de aanpassing en structurele hervorming van de economie zo goed mogelijk op te vangen;
 - investeringen in sociale sectoren, onder andere ten behoeve van onderwijs, gezondheidszorg en volkshuisvesting;
 - een programma ter stimulering van de particuliere productie waaronder begrepen betalingsbalanssteun en financiële bijdragen aan een investeringsfonds; en
 - wederopbouw en ontwikkeling van het binnenland.Bovendien kunnen in verband met de versnelde uitvoering van de overeengekomen nauwere samenwerking en met inachtneming van artikel 2, lid 7, verdragsmiddelen van de Overeenkomst betreffende ontwikkelingssamenwerking van 25 november 1975 worden aangewend ten behoeve van de versterking van de democratie en de rechtsstaat. De verdeling van dat deel van de middelen dat nu reeds wordt toegewezen aan bovengenoemde categorieën wordt neergelegd in een protocol.
3. De samenwerking strekt zich tevens uit tot de bevordering van directe buitenlandse investeringen, van de wederzijdse handel en van de overdracht van technologie, waartoe zo nodig speciale overeenkomsten kunnen worden gesloten.
4. Voorzover de Regeringen van beide Staten het wenselijk achten, werken zij op monetair gebied samen ter bevordering van prijsstabiliteit en een gezonde munt.

Artikel 4

Versterking van de rechtsstaat

1. In het kader van de versterking van de rechtsstaat en van het overheidsapparaat wordt samengewerkt ter ondersteuning van de wetgeving, de verschillende

sectoren van de rechtshandhaving en de departementen van algemeen bestuur. Daartoe kunnen justitie- en politiedeskundigen worden verbonden aan de Ambassades van beide Staten.

2. De Regeringen van beide Staten weken tevens samen bij de bestrijding van de onwettige productie, de in-, door- en uitvoer van, de handel in en het bezit van verdovende middelen en psychotrope stoffen alsook andere vormen van misdaad die daarmee verband houden.

Artikel 5

Buitenlands beleid en veiligheidsbeleid

1. De Regeringen van beide Staten houden periodieke consultaties over onderwerpen van buitenlands beleid die de belangen van beide Staten raken.
2. De Regeringen van beide Staten weken samen op diplomatiek en consulaire gebied, in het bijzonder door het wederzijds verlenen van faciliteiten door hun respectieve vertegenwoordigers in het buitenland.
3. Aan de Ambassades van beide Staten kunnen militaire attachés worden verbonden.
4. De Regeringen van beide Staten verlenen elkaar technische bijstand op het gebied van defensie.

Artikel 6

Culturele samenwerking

De Regeringen van beide Staten bevorderen naar vermogen hun samenwerking op het gebied van onderwijs, wetenschap, cultuur en sport. De op 5 februari 1976 te 's-Gravenhage tot stand gekomen Culturele Overeenkomst tussen het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden en de Republiek Suriname en de Vriendschaps- en samenwerkingsovereenkomst tussen het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden en de Republiek Suriname van 27 november 1978, alsmede de op basis van die Overeenkomsten gemaakte en nog te maken afspraken vormen daarvoor de grondslag.

Artikel 7

Milieu

De Regeringen van beide Staten nemen op zich, in het kader van een verantwoord gebruik van het milieu onder andere ten nutte van duurzame economische ontwikkeling, samen te werken op het gebied van milieuonderzoek, milieueducatie en de overdracht en ontwikkeling van milieutechnologie te bevorderen.

Artikel 8

Personenverkeer

Met inachtneming van op elk van beide Staten rustende verplichtingen zetten Nederland en Suriname zich in om de voorwaarden te verwezenlijken waaronder vrij verkeer van personen kan worden hersteld. Zolang de visumplicht nog voortduurt, zetten zij zich in om de procedures met betrekking tot visumverlening humaan, soepel en snel te doen verlopen.

Artikel 9

Overlegstructuur

1. Met het oog op de uitvoering van dit Raamverdrag voeren de Regeringen van beide Staten wanneer noodzakelijk, doch in beginsel éénmaal per jaar, ministerieel

overleg. Tijdens dit overleg zal een evaluatie plaatsvinden van de samenwerking. Zonodig zal daarbij worden aangegeven welke verdere werkzaamheden wenselijk worden geacht, zowel met het oog op de bespoediging van de reeds ondernomen werkzaamheden als met het oog op verdere verdieping en verbreding van de samenwerking.

2. Ter voorbereiding van dit overleg wordt opgericht een Gemengde Samenwerkingscommissie bestaande uit ten hoogste drie vertegenwoordigers van ieder van beide Staten, die afwisselend op het grondgebied van één van beide Staten, danwel op een andere in onderling overleg te bepalen plaats, bijeenkomt. De Gemengde Samenwerkingscommissie komt éénmaal per jaar bijeen of zo veel vaker als nodig wordt geacht. Het tijdstip, de plaats en het voorzitterschap van de bijeenkomsten van de Gemengde Samenwerkingscommissie zullen telkens langs diplomatieke kanalen worden vastgesteld.
3. De Gemengde Samenwerkingscommissie kan werkgroepen oprichten ter bespreking van specifieke onderwerpen. Deze werkgroepen bestaan uit personen met bijzondere kennis op het desbetreffende terrein. De werkgroepen komen zo vaak bijeen als door de Gemengde Samenwerkingscommissie nodig wordt geacht. Zij komen bijeen op een in onderling overleg overeen te komen plaats, bij voorkeur op het grondgebied van één van beide Staten.
4. De werkgroepen brengen geregeld verslag uit aan de Gemengde Samenwerkingscommissie. De Gemengde Samenwerkingscommissie kan de werkgroepen verzoeken hun werk voort te zetten of te intensiveren, of kan besluiten de resultaten van hun werkzaamheden voor te leggen aan het overleg op ministerieel niveau.

Artikel 10

Voorrechten en immuniteiten van deskundigen

1. Aan de in het kader van de uitvoering van dit Raamverdrag uitgezonden deskundigen, die niet uit hoofde van een ander verdrag worden uitgezonden, zullen, voor zover zij niet worden verbonden aan de staf van de Ambassades, wederzijds de faciliteiten, voorrechten en immuniteiten worden verleend genoemd in Hoofdstuk II, Afdeling II, van het Verdrag van Wenen inzake consulaire betrekkingen van 24 april 1963.
2. Deze regeling zal niet gelden voor de uitvoering van artikel 9 van dit Raamverdrag.

Artikel 11

Regeling van geschillen

1. Indien zich tussen beide Staten een geschil voordoet over de uitlegging of toepassing van de bepalingen van dit Raamverdrag, daaronder begrepen datgene dat slechts door één der beiden Staten als geschil wordt aangemerkt, en indien het bestaan van dat geschil uitdrukkelijk onder de aandacht van de andere Staat is gebracht, en indien dit geschil vervolgen niet binnen een termijn van drie maanden op bevredigende wijze langs diplomatieke kanalen is geregeld, kan het op verzoek van één van beide Staten, hierna te noemen Partijen, worden voorgelegd aan een uit drie leden bestaand scheidsgerecht. Iedere Partij wijst een scheidsman aan. De beiden aangewezen scheidsmannen benoemen een voorzittend scheidsman, die niet de nationaliteit van één der Partijen bezit.
2. Indien één der Partijen geen scheidsman heeft aangewezen en indien zij geen gevolg heeft gegeven aan het verzoek van de andere Partij om binnen drie maanden tot

- deze aanwijzing over te gaan, wordt de scheidsman op verzoek van laatstgenoemde Partij benoemd door de President van het Internationale Gerechtshof.
3. Indien de twee scheidsmannen binnen drie maanden nadat de laatste scheidsman is aangewezen niet tot overeenstemming zijn geraakt over de keuze van de voorzittend scheidsman, wordt deze op verzoek van één der Partijen benoemd door de President van het Internationaal Gerechtshof.
 4. Indien in de gevallen bedoeld in het tweede en derde lid van dit artikel, de President van het Internationaal Gerechtshof verhindert is of indien hij de nationaliteit bezit van één der Partijen, geschieden de benoemingen door de Vice-President. Indien deze verhindert is of indien hij de nationaliteit bezit van één der Partijen, geschieden de benoemingen door de in anciënniteit hoogste rechter in het Hof, die niet de nationaliteit bezit van één der Partijen.
 5. Het scheidsgerecht doet uitspraak op basis van het internationaal recht, zoal dat onder meer blijkt uit:
 - verdragen die door beide Partijen zijn bekrachtigd, in het bijzonder dit Raamverdrag;
 - internationaal gewoonterecht zoals blijkend uit algemene statenpraktijk;
 - algemene beginselen van volkenrecht.
 6. Het scheidsgerecht kan in ieder stadium van de procedure een minnelijke schikking van het geschil ter goedkeuring aan Partijen voorleggen.
 7. De taal van het scheidsgerecht is het Nederlands, tenzij Partijen voor een bepaalde procedure een andere taal kiezen. De zitting vindt plaats in de lokalen van het Permanent Hof van Arbitrage in het Vredespaleis te 's-Gravenhage, tenzij Partijen voor een bepaalde procedure een andere plaats kiezen.
 8. Het scheidsgerecht stelt zijn procedureregels vast. De beslissingen van het scheidsgerecht worden genomen met meerderheid van stemmen en zijn met redenen omkleed. Zij zijn voor Partijen definitief en verbindend.
 9. Elke Partij draagt de kosten van de door haar benoemde scheidsman. De kosten van de voorzittend scheidsman en de kosten van het scheidsgerecht worden gelijkelijk door beide Partijen gedragen.
 10. Het in dit artikel gestelde laat de bevoegdheid van beide Staten onverlet geschillen welke zich mochten voordoen over de uitlegging of toepassing van andere tussen beide Staten bestaande overeenkomsten voor te leggen aan het Internationaal Gerechtshof.

Artikel 12

Looptijd en inwerkingtreding

1. Dit Raamverdrag wordt voor onbepaalde tijd gesloten, en zal door beide Staten worden bekrachtigd overeenkomstig de grondwettelijke bepalingen van beide Staten. De akten van bekrachtiging zullen te 's-Gravenhage worden uitgewisseld.
2. Dit Raamverdrag wordt voorlopig toegepast met ingang van de datum van ondertekening, en treedt in werking op de eerste dag van de tweede maand volgend op de dag van de uitwisseling van de akten van bekrachtiging.

Artikel 13

Opschorting en opzegging

1. Indien de Regering van één van beide Staten van oordeel is dat in de andere Staat sprake is van fundamentele schending van de constitutionele beginselen van de

democratie en de rechtsstaat of van één of meer van de in artikel 4 lid 2 van het Internationaal Verdrag van 19 december 1966 inzake burgerrechten en politieke rechten bedoelde fundamentele mensenrechten, kan die Regering verklaren dat zij het Raamverdrag met onmiddellijke ingang opschort. Indien over de opschorting tussen beide Staten een geschil ontstaat, is, tenzij de Regeringen van beide Staten anderszins overeenkomen, uitsluitend het Internationaal Gerechtshof bevoegd daarvan kennis te nemen. De uitspraak van het Hof is voor beide Staten definitief en bindend.

2. Dit Raamverdrag kan op ieder ogenblik door de Regering van één van beide Staten schriftelijk worden opgezegd. De opzegging wordt van kracht op de eerste dag van de dertiende maand na ontvangst van de opzegging door de Regering van de andere Staat. Met inachtneming van het gestelde in het vierde lid van dit artikel wordt de werking van het Raamverdrag vanaf die dag beëindigd.
3. Opschorting of opzegging van dit Raamverdrag impliceert niet de opschorting op opzegging van andere tussen beide Staten bestaande overeenkomsten. Deze zullen in voorkomende gevallen elk afzonderlijk moeten worden opgeschort of opgezegd.
4. In geval van opschorting of opzegging blijven de artikelen 10 en 11 van dit Raamverdrag van kracht voor zolang nodig is voor de afwikkeling van de lopende zaken en geschillen.

TEN BLIJKE WAARVAN de ondergetekenden dit Raamverdrag hebben ondertekend.

GEDAAN TE 's-Gravenhage op 18 juni 1992 in twee exemplaren, in de Nederlandse taal.

Voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, daartoe gevolmachtigd door Hare Majesteit de Koningin,

**De Minister-President:
R. F. M. Lubbers**

**De Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken:
H. VAN DEN BROEK**

Voor de Republiek Suriname,

**De President:
R. R. Venetiaan**

**De Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken:
S. CH. MUNGRA**

Protocol

Ingevolge artikel 3, lid 2, van het Raamverdrag inzake Vriendschap en nauwere Samenwerking tussen het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden en de Republiek Suriname van 18 juni 1992

Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden en de Republiek Suriname zijn ter uitvoering van artikel 3, lid 2, en met inachtneming van artikel 2, lid 7, van het Raamverdrag van 18 juni 1992 overeengekomen van de per 1 juli 1992 voor besteding beschikbare verdragsmiddelen als een bijdrage aan de financiering van een door de Republiek Suriname uit te voeren structureel aanpassings- en ontwikkelingsprogram te bestemmen voor:

| | |
|--|----------------|
| · een investeringsprogramma voor rehabilitatie en verbetering van de infrastructuur | Nfl. 175 mln. |
| · Een sociaal programma om de ongewenste sociale effecten van de aanpassing zo goed mogelijk op te vangen | Nfl. 150 mln. |
| · een programma ter stimulering van de particuliere productie, waaronder begrepen betalingsbalanssteun en financiële bijdragen aan een investeringsfonds | Nfl. 300 mln. |
| · de wederopbouw en ontwikkeling van het binnenland | Nfl. 50 mln. |
| · de versterking van de rechtsstaat en het overheidsapparaat | Nfl. 75 mln. |
| · De sectoren onderwijs, volksgezondheid en volkshuisvesting | Nfl. 250 mln. |
| <hr/> | |
| TOTAAL | Nfl. 1000 mln. |

Ten behoeve van het programma ter stimulering van de particuliere productie kunnen tevens de garantiemiddelen worden gebruikt.

Over de uitvoering van bovenvermelde programma's zal op korte termijn overleg worden gevoerd.

De overige verdragsmiddelen zullen benut worden voor latere ophoging van de hierboven genoemde bedragen en voor de financiering van overige in het Raamverdrag en het Ontwikkelingsverdrag genoemde doelstellingen. Over de concrete inhoud, modaliteiten, duur en omvang van de te financieren projecten en programma's en de desbetreffende committeringen zal in gemeenschappelijk overleg worden besloten. Hierbij zal rekening worden gehouden met enerzijds de conclusies van het eerste en van het tweede Beleidsoverleg (juli 1989, resp. februari 1990) en anderzijds met de aanbevelingen vervat in de rapporten van Coopers and Lybrand en het Warwick Research Institute en de reacties van de Nationale Assemblée van Suriname daarop.

De Nederlandse regering is bereid in overleg met het Nederlandse parlement na de besteding van de middelen uit de Overeenkomst betreffende ontwikkelingssamen-

werking van 25 november 1975 de Republiek Suriname aanvullend verdragsmiddelen beschikbaar te stellen. Omvang, aard en duur zullen met het oog op de noodzakelijke continuïteit tijdig voor de uiteindelijke committering door beide Staten worden vastgesteld.

GEDAAN te 's-Gravenhage op 18 juni 1992 in twee exemplaren, in de Nederlandse taal.

**De Minister voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking van Nederland
J. Pronk**

**De Minister van Planning en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking van de Republiek
Suriname,
E. J. Sedoc**

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