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Principled pragmatism : VOC Interaction with Makassar 1637-68, and the nature of company diplomacy

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Chapter 6: The Pragmatic Dynamics of the Batavian Diplomatic Mode—Shifts and Fluctuations in the High Government’s Approach towards Makassar as Presented in the *Generale Missiven*, 1656–61

Section 1: Introduction to the chapter topic

The difference in opinion between Maetsuyker and De Vlaming in 1655 originated, as we have seen, from diverging appreciations of Sultan Hasanuddin’s intentions. In the period after the conclusion of the 1655 treaty up to the war in 1660 however, there was a shift towards De Vlaming’s position that Hasanuddin was inherently untrustworthy. The actual choice of policy was predominantly determined by the logic of the situation. This chapter analyses the shift in policy assumptions from 1656 and the reasons behind the fluctuations in policy decisions as they can be read from the High Government’s presentation of them in the *Generale Missiven* in the period after 1656 until 1661.

Although policy recommendations between 1656 and 1660 fluctuated between accommodation and intervention, the basic

underlying assumption for both positions marked a break in that there was now little left of the trust in Hasanuddin that had been the basis of the 1655 treaty. This meant that negotiations were increasingly regarded in purely tactical terms. The restructuring of the political order in South Sulawesi by military intervention increasingly came to be viewed as the optimal solution to the Company's problems with Makassar. In 1659, a situation arose in which the prospects of setting forth De Vlaming's grand strategy of 1655 looked promising. As this situation subsided, the arguments against military intervention in conjunction with an internal rebellion were not precisely the same as in 1655. Instead of claiming the absolute impracticality of implementation, the counter-argument implicitly added "for the time being," that is postponing it until favourable conditions would again arise.

The High Government asserted that this shift of thinking was forced on the Company by Hasanuddin's devious manoeuvres and continued aggressive schemes for the Spice Islands. There was clearly an element of "selling" the argument to the Directors, who always regarded war as a last resort. But, there can be no doubt that Hasanuddin's claims to his rights to sail to the Spice Islands, and his exercise of that right after the conclusion of the 1655 treaty, formed the basis for a break with the

1655 assumptions as well as the revitalisation of the grand strategy for Makassar.

Contextual considerations and factors

Besides the internal unrest caused by the Bugis rebellion, attention also had to be paid to affairs outside Sulawesi and the Moluccas. In the period 1659–60, one of the most pressing issues for the High Government was Ceylon. At the end of June 1658, the Portuguese gave up their last fort in Ceylon⁸²⁴ and the Company had seemingly broken Portuguese power on the island for good. But the Company soon faced war with their former ally, Raja Singha.⁸²⁵

In 1658, the Company had also ousted the Portuguese both in Coromandel and Malabar,⁸²⁶ but with the outbreak of war between the Company and Raja Singha, the Portuguese were quick to use the opportunity for their benefit, launching an offensive against the Company in Malabar with success.⁸²⁷ The peace with Makassar in August 1660, however, freed troops for engagements both in Ceylon and

⁸²⁴ Stapel, *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch Indië*, 318.

⁸²⁵ Ibid. 321.

⁸²⁶ Ibid. 319.

⁸²⁷ Ibid. 321.

against the Portuguese.⁸²⁸ One must infer that the Company's challenges in both Ceylon and Malabar in 1659–60 made concluding a peace with Makassar a more tempting alternative to prolonging the war.

But there were also other factors that may have both distracted the High Government's attention from Makassar, or made peace seem an alluring alternative. Aceh was one such factor. The period between a peace treaty agreed in December 1655 and one concluded in June 1659⁸²⁹ saw both Company blockades of the Aceh roadstead and a military expedition against the sultanate.⁸³⁰

Probably more alarming were developments in China and their implications for the Company's position in Taiwan. As in 1655, the concern was about the war between the advancing Manchu forces and Ming loyalists in Southern China. The leader of the resisting warlords of the southern provinces was the famous Coxinga. In a letter to the High Government in early 1660, the Dutch governor of Taiwan, Frederick Coyet, reported on rumours that Coxinga harboured plans to evacuate to Taiwan because he could no longer withstand the Manchus, and that a number of Chinese on the island were already in his service and

⁸²⁸ Ibid. 322.

⁸²⁹ Ibid. 356 and 358, respectively.

⁸³⁰ Ibid. 357–58.

supplying him with information.⁸³¹ This cannot but have increased the tension in Batavia and increased its wish for a conclusion of the war against Makassar.

So all in all, if circumstances in South Sulawesi at one point seemed to offer the Company a complete solution to its problems with Makassar, there were clearly circumstances outside the Moluccas that weighed against it.

Propositions

My main propositions are that as trust in Hasanuddin decreased the attraction of De Vlaming's original "grand strategy" increased. Shifts in attitude towards Hasanuddin meant that "negotiations" and negotiated revisions to the treaty on symmetrical terms came to be looked on in Batavia as secondary to waiting for an opportunity to force a "final showdown." The political reordering of South Sulawesi by military intervention came to be viewed as *the* instrument by which a viable solution of the Makassar problem could be finally achieved. Whereas the *missive* of December 24, 1655 had advocated negotiation with no

⁸³¹ Ibid. 366.

goal beyond getting an optimal treaty that of December 16, 1660 advocated transforming the political geography of South Sulawesi as the one and only means that could establish a lasting solution to the problems with Makassar.

In this process, the meanings of “negotiations,” “treaty,” and “war” were readjusted. Negotiations were grounded in the lack of opportunity and a means to implement the grand strategy—that is in the absence of a powerful local ally. Whenever there were prospects of such an alliance appeared, so did advocacy for the grand strategy. This all goes to corroborate my general proposition that the High Government’s diplomatic thinking was pragmatic through and through, and not driven by European preconceptions of international law. The aim of this chapter is to show that the pragmatism was dynamic and grounded in considerations of local context and situation.

Focus and plan of exposition

The High Government’s presentation of policy deliberations and decisions concerning Makassar in the *Generale missiven* between 1656 and 1660 forms the topic of the present chapter and I discuss these presentations in chronological order. The analysis is focused on the way

policy options and decisions were argued to explicate both the mode of thinking as well as the emotions involved. At the beginning of the analysis of each respective *missive* I review events that are relevant to understanding the context for the issues raised and the approach argued. This introductory section is followed by a close reading of the text itself. At the end of my analysis of each *missiven*, I comment on the relationship between the text and historical context. Many of the events treated here will be analysed in a broader context and greater detail in chapters 6 and 7. However, those chapters analyse Batavia's diplomatic posture towards Makassar. In the present chapter, I deal with the dynamics of Batavia's perception of diplomacy towards Makassar between 1655 and 1660 as presented by the High Government to the Directors in the Netherlands.

Comments on the sources

As the primary sources here are letters from the *Generale Missiven*, the same general source critical warnings given in chapter 4 apply: they should be read with an eye to how Batavia sought to please the Directors. Between 1655 and 1661, Maetsuyker signed reports in which the

assumptions and positions regarding Makassar ran contrary to his earlier views of 1655. That and the fact that Batavia after 1655 came to endorse an offensive policy, which in general was not to the Directors' liking, goes a long way to explain why the arguments and their respective assumptions are so thoroughly worked out. In that quality, they make excellent material for the study of the language of legitimating a form of overseas diplomacy. As for the general chronology of events, I rely mainly on Stapel's 1922 thesis, *Het Bongaais Verdrag* (The Bongaya treaty).

Section 2: The missive of December 4, 1656—blaming Van der Beeck

The 1656 context—the reversal of positive expectations of Hasanuddin

The missive of February 1, 1656, contained nothing on policy deliberations Makassar. Nor do the two brief letters to the Directors dated 18 and 31 July, respectively.⁸³² It may then seem reasonable to assume that up to late summer 1656 the feeling in Batavia was that the Company's relations with Makassar were well taken care of by the 1655 treaty. Still, Stapel points to the fact that friction and “lack of trust” in the Makassarese was beginning to show,⁸³³ and by the autumn of 1656, there was open discord. The point of contention was that Makassarese sailings to Ambon had resumed and Hasanuddin claimed he was entitled to continue the sailings under the terms of the 1655 treaty.⁸³⁴ It seems reasonable to date the break with the 1655 model of trust and soft diplomatic approach towards Makassar with these events. The section on Makassar in the letter of December 4, 1656 is symptomatically dedicated

⁸³² Symptomatically none of these are found worth mentioning in the relevant section in Stapel, *Het Bongaais Verdrag*, 52–55.

⁸³³ Ibid. 54 “weinig vertrouwen”

⁸³⁴ Ibid. 54–55.

to the deliberations on what steps needed to be taken regarding aggressive plans by Makassar.

Textual analysis, Makassar in the missive of December 4, 1656

The focus on Makassar in the *missive* of December 1656 was on new problems with the sultanate, and how they could be blamed on Van der Beeck's poor performance during the negotiations in December of the previous year. In short, the current problems were not the fault of the 1655 decision to negotiate as such, but were blamed on Van der Beeck's poor performance in negotiating the treaty. Generally speaking, he had accepted a treaty that "could give very little contentment" to the Company.⁸³⁵ The fault for the substandard treaty terms was given exclusively to Van der Beeck, who seemed to have understood "the High Government's instructions and intentions poorly."⁸³⁶ In fact, by acting in "direct contradiction to the High Government's intentions,"⁸³⁷ Van der Beeck had concluded a treaty that was "totally adverse" to the Company's interests.⁸³⁸ Due sanctions had been taken, however: Van der

⁸³⁵ "Gans weynich contentement connen scheppen." December 4, 1656, *GM* 3.88.

⁸³⁶ "schijnende onse ordre ende mijninge daerinne qualijck te hebben begrepen." December 4, 1656, *GM* 3.88.

⁸³⁷ "directelijk met onse intentie strijdigh." December 4, 1656, *GM* 3.88.

⁸³⁸ "Geheel 't onsen nadeele." December 4, 1656, *GM* 3.88.

Beeck was now excluded from the Council and had no prospects for promotion.⁸³⁹

Comments

Although more or less officially ostracised because of his poor performance in 1655, Van der Beeck was still made commander of the return fleet in 1656.⁸⁴⁰ At an earlier time, he and his co-envoy Soliman had also been praised and rewarded for their “good services during the negotiations.”⁸⁴¹ After all, the 1655 treaty was no more than the logical result of Maetsuyker’s trust in Hasanuddin. It therefore seems fair to propose that what had changed by December 1656 was not a loss of faith in Van der Beeck’s ability as a negotiator but the belief in accommodation as a means to solve the problems with Makassar. The merciless denunciation of Van der Beeck in the 1656 *missive* thus signalled that the High Government had made a decisive shift in expectations towards Makassar.

⁸³⁹ December 4, 1656, *GM* 3.88.

⁸⁴⁰ *DRB* 1656, November 14, 10.

⁸⁴¹ “De goede officien ... aen d’Ed. Comp.” *DRB* 1656, November 10, 8.

What was the approach argued by the High Government, when confronted with new Makassarese intrusions in the Eastern Archipelago? In view of the challenging situation, a campaign against Makassar was out of the question: Batavia was quarrelling with Banten, it was at war with Aceh, Mataram kept its ports shut to the Company, and the kingdom of Johore and its allies were threatening Malacca.⁸⁴² Appeasement to buy time was the selected option. At the end of 1656, the approach was thus to “keep up the appearance of peace towards the sultan but at the same time watch out for an attack.”⁸⁴³ The tactics towards Makassar must be to offer the sultan every outward sign of peace, including engaging in negotiations that could possibly be drawn out for one to three years.⁸⁴⁴ That was a choice for “mock negotiations,” negotiations that primarily served to bar the Makassarese from declaring war on the Company.

⁸⁴² “doch uyt veele opsichten het contrarie seer soude mogen vresen.” December 4, 1656, *GM* 3.88.

⁸⁴³ “Dien voorst (the Sultan of Makasar) vooreerst al wat te simuleren ende in te sien, maer sullen daeronder echter niet naerlaten naer vermogen op hoeden te sijn.” December 4, 1656, *GM* 3.89.

⁸⁴⁴ “Soo den Maccassaeren haer maer voor een jaar á drie aen haere onderhandelinge trouwelijck houden gebonden.” December 4, 1656, *GM* 3.88.

Summing up positions and their implications in the missive of December 4, 1656

A definite shift in Maetsuyker's assumptions and recommended policy towards Makassar is obvious in a comparison of the *missive* of December 1655 and that of one a year later. Although much of blame was given to Van der Beeck, the message of December 1656 was that the 1655 approach and treaty had proven totally unproductive. By implication, war was understood as the force that could bring about a viable interaction regime and treaty with Makassar. Because the present conditions ruled out that option, the tactics for the time being were to negotiate and to avoid war by buying time. Maetsuyker's positions on and understanding of "treaty" and "negotiations" in 1656 thus seem to have turned 180 degrees from the positions he had taken the previous year. That turn would find its full articulation in the *missive* of December 17, 1657.

Section 3: The missive of December 17, 1657—full explication of an offensive policy towards Makassar

Context

By December 1657, the Company's relations with Banten and Mataram had changed for the better compared to the previous year. Although the Bantenese had been provocatively aggressive in 1656, the mood turned during 1657, culminating with a Bantenese initiative for negotiations for peace in December.⁸⁴⁵ The tension regarding Mataram, too, had lessened somewhat, as the ports of northern Java were reopened. As a feared pan-Islamist alliance against the Company did not materialise, the prospect of war with Banten, Mataram, and Makassar, which characterised the previous year, also subsided.⁸⁴⁶ The Company was on the offensive in Aceh and entered negotiations in the summer of 1657,⁸⁴⁷ but peace was not concluded until June 1659. In short, developments in 1657 presented a context that opened up a wider range of options and a more offensive policy towards Makassar than the in previous year was possible.

⁸⁴⁵ Somers, *Nederlandsch-Indië*, 69.

⁸⁴⁶ De Graaf, 1977, 106-107.

⁸⁴⁷ Stapel, *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch Indië*, 358.

Makassar in the missive of December 17, 1657

The policy advocated for Makassar in the *missive* of December 17, 1657, represents an explicit, final break with the approach of 1655. Now the premise was that Hasanuddin would always look for an opportunity to increase his influence in the Spice Islands, no matter what he might promise to the contrary.

In December 1657, the High Government wrote that only a successful military campaign, devastating Makassarese power once and for all, could in the end secure a viable and lasting interaction regime with the sultanate. This in fact represented an endorsement of De Vlaming's long-held assumption that Hasanuddin and the Makassarese were by nature deceitful and could not be trusted in diplomatic dealings. With this newly adopted framework of principled distrust "negotiations" and "treaty making" came to be understood primarily in tactical terms.

Textual analysis, missive of December 17, 1657: Validating Hasanuddin's hostile intentions and deceitfulness

The High Government harboured no doubt that Hasanuddin was pressing his right to sail to Ambon in order to inspire a new rebellion there among

the VOC's subjects.⁸⁴⁸ After the 1655 treaty had been signed, Hasanuddin had a copy of the contract taken to Ambon where it was shown to the pardoned rebels as a trophy. As the High Government saw it, Hasanuddin was posing as a champion of the rebel's cause by perverting an act of mercy granted by the Company's generosity.⁸⁴⁹

Hasanuddin's spite in turning the Company's virtue into a vice and transforming his own vice into a virtue was but one incident where the High Government perceived a generally defiant arrogance and ill will towards the Company building up in Makassar. The Company's commissioners and residents were shown very little respect in public, and a demonstrative haughtiness by certain Makassarese nobles clearly indicated that Makassar was not inclined towards peaceful coexistence with the Company.⁸⁵⁰

⁸⁴⁸ "buyten twijfel niet anders voor hebbende gehadt dan maer occasie te houden om U.Ed. onderdanen tegen U.Ed. daer weder op te ruyen." December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.147.

⁸⁴⁹ "Om daeruyt d'inwonders te doen blijcken van de liefde ende genegenheit, die sij (quasi) in het besluyten van hetselve met haerl. pardon van ons t' obtineren tot haerl. hebben bethoont om haer met hetselve op haer sijde te trekken." December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.148.

⁸⁵⁰ "is onsen commisaris ende residenten daer doorgaens seer cleen respect aengedaen, sulx sijl. Uyt verscheyde hoofden wel claerlijck doen blijcken haer aen U Ed. Vrundtschap gantsch niet en laten sijn gelegen." December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.153.

Comment: The emotional aspect of the turn from trust to distrust

The High Government's main point in the drawing attention to the above incidents was clearly aimed at underlining the probability of plans for war in Makassar. The Company was facing a challenge of power politics. Still one should not underestimate the impact of Makassarese provocations to the Company's prestige. The issue of prestige had important implications for the Company's diplomacy, viewed both instrumentally in power politics, as well as taken as an insult to the Company in its own right. From a power politics perspective, not answering Makassarese provocations meant potentially undermining the Company's diplomatic capital in the archipelago at large and among potential allies in Sulawesi in particular.

But there are strong indications that the High Government's grievances about the lack of respect may well have had purely emotional motives too. When Maetsuyker's and other advocates of accommodation held forth in 1657 that the sultan was acting with defiant arrogance against the Company, they must have done so with some feelings of having been deceived. After all, the Hasanuddin whom they in 1655 had presented as having learnt not to stick his nose into affairs that were none

of his business was in 1657 presented as thumbing his nose at the Company. This may well help explain the peculiarly “heated” tone in the deliberations on Makassar in the December 17 *missive*.

Explaining the probability of Makassarese plans for war and conspiracy against the Company

If not explaining the emotional aspect of its turnaround regarding what to expect from Makassar, the High Government did emphasise that Hasanuddin’s provocations and the demonstrations of anti-Company sentiment in Makassar could only mean that the sultan and his nobles were once again planning for war.⁸⁵¹ Furthermore, there was alarming evidence of the sultan and his court’s encouraging the Portuguese to challenge the Company’s military presence in Asia wherever possible.⁸⁵² In other words, the prospects of war were not only considered very likely, they were considered very grave taking the Makassarese–Portuguese conspiracy and alliance into account.

⁸⁵¹ “Soowel de Coningh en de grooten aengaet, alsoo lief met U Ed. weder tot oorloge traden, als in vrede bleven.” December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.153.

⁸⁵² “Daertoe haer buyten twijfel de Portugesen seer animeren om daerdoor alle uwe wapenen op de custe van Indien ende elders, waer se haer drucken, van hare halsen te krijgen.” December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.153.

The commercial conspiracy, already at work

If the political-military conspiracy had not appeared in the open yet, at the commercial level a joint Makassarese-Portuguese conspiracy was already at work. By sailing under the Makassarese flag, Portuguese in Makassar were in actual fact free to trade wherever they pleased⁸⁵³ and thus undermine the Company's monopoly rights in the Spice Islands. Judging from this practice and other "absurdities,"⁸⁵⁴ there can be no doubt that the Makassarese were determined to continue sailing to the Spice Islands notwithstanding the terms of the 1655 treaty.⁸⁵⁵

The explanation of the post-1655 strategy

It was time for the High Government to explain its new strategy. The shift in assumptions and the break with the 1655 line on accommodation began in a "soft voice," but soon rose in volume. The High Government had "seriously begun to have grave doubts [about] whether staying on

⁸⁵³ "Trachtende haren handel herwaerts ende derwaerts onder de naeme der Maccassaren ende haerl. ontsagh onbecommert uyt die platse te drijven." December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.153.

⁸⁵⁴ In this context to be read as "decoy-arrangements" i.e. on par with the Makassarese sailing flagging themselves as Portuguese.

⁸⁵⁵ "Al hetwelcke en meer en andere absurditeiten, de Comp.e bij dat hof aengedaen werdende, van ons sijnde ingesien ende dat sijl. onaengesien de vrede, die met haer gemaekt hebben, al echter niet sullen naerlaeten d'oosterse quartieren te bevaeren." December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.153.

friendly terms under the present conditions would serve the Company's interests and whether it would not be better served by once again going to war."⁸⁵⁶ The question must be read as a rhetorical one. The implicit request is illustrative of the post-1655 conceptualisation of the position of war in the "war–negotiations–treaty triangle." As it stands in the *missive* of December 17, 1657, war was presented as the sole guarantor for the production of a reasonable treaty with the Makassarrese. In this regard, the High Government now assumed the same position De Vlaming had advocated in 1655. This begs the question: Why advocate for war in 1657 and not in 1656? The answer is simple: the context had changed. In 1657, Makassarrese provocations had devolved from bad to worse and, just as important, the Company had gained control of the situation with Aceh and the danger of having to fight both Banten and Mataram had diminished.

⁸⁵⁶ "Soo beginnen wij grootelijckx te twijffelen of deselve vrede op dien voet de Comp.e al voordeelijck sal wesen, en of niet goet en sal sijn weder met haer in oorlogh te comen." December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.153.

Arguing the case for war by referring to the deceitful nature of Hasanuddin and the Makassarese

The High Government's argument for negotiations in 1655 had rested on the assumption that Hasanuddin could be trusted. The call for war in 1657 rested on the contrary assumption. Still, in the *missive* of December 17, 1657, there is a discrepancy between the uncompromising depiction of Hasanuddin's aggressive intentions, and the relatively "soft wording" of the proposition for militant actions.⁸⁵⁷ This may be explained by the fact that the Directors had been so eager for an end to the war in 1655.⁸⁵⁸ On the one hand, there can be little doubt about the High Government's real intentions. It was no longer deliberating whether war would be the best way to secure a viable interaction regime with Makassar; that had already been decided. What the Councillors more likely wondered was the best way to sell this proposition to the Directors. It is against this background that we must read the remaining part of the letter, which contains a return to the "all reasons not to trust Hasanuddin" argument, and turns upside-down the cost-benefit arguments used to counter the pro-war argument in 1655. In this section, the tone heats up again.

⁸⁵⁷ "One had begun to wonder if war was the preferable option." See above.

⁸⁵⁸ See chapter 5.

The presentation of Hasanuddin as an unreliable partner in treaty making

It is reasonable to think that, for the High Government, the Directors' acceptance of the war option rested on their conviction of the irredeemably deceitful nature of the Makassarese. The High Government worked hard to convince the Directors. Its first argument was that Hasanuddin's motives in signing the 1655 treaty had been purely tactical, and his agreement to a peace had only come about because at the time he was unable able to wage war effectively.⁸⁵⁹ But beneath a mask of friendliness, Hasanuddin still harboured plans to attack the Dutch. Given the consistently devious nature and aggressive plans of the Makassarese, an accommodating mode was thus not only futile but counterproductive: "Because the more we appease and accommodate them [the Makassarese], the more they claim [from us] and the more impertinent they become in their claims."⁸⁶⁰ The real message read loud and clear: Hasanuddin must under no circumstance be regarded any longer as a reliable treaty-partner. Doing so would harm the Company's interests.

⁸⁵⁹ "Niet anders namentlijk also deselve (tegen haer Haer Ed. Comp.e) met publicque oorloge niet hebben subsisteren." December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.148.

⁸⁶⁰ "hoe wij haerl. meer inwilligen ende caresseren, sij noch al meer ende van ons begeeren ende te stouter warden." December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.148.

Assurance of the commitment to fend off a Makassarese attack on Ambon and Banda

On top of the harassment of continued Makassarese sailings to the Spice Islands, the High Government pointed to a range of incidents that clearly indicated that Hasanuddin and his supporters were escalating their activities in the Eastern Archipelago. The Directors were however assured that measures had been taken to defend the Company's "precious" (*costelijcke*) possession of Banda and Ambon. Orders had been given that the defences on Ambon and Banda, belonging to the Company by right of conquest, be duly strengthened to ward off any intrusion by the Makassarese or anyone else.⁸⁶¹

The reference to the Company's legitimate claims to defend its position in Ambon and on Banda "by right of conquest" is the only reference to international law in the deliberations on Makassar in the December 17 *missive*. The legality of a pre-emptive war on the other hand, were not considered. The option of war was, as in 1655, discussed in terms of pragmatic cost-benefit considerations. If the mode of thinking

⁸⁶¹ "Soo hebben wij nu ordre gegeven, als voors. Plaetsen Comp.s eigen landen metten den swaarde gewonnen sijnde de voorsz. Vestinge daer hetsij met ofte tegen haerl. gemoede geweldelijck te doen leggen, ende de Maccasaren ende alle andere vremdelingen van daer en omtrent te houden." December 17, 1657, GM 3.148.

in this regard was the same as in 1655, in 1657 both assumptions and conclusions of the war option had been turned upside down.

A return to, and turnaround of, the 1655 cost-benefit arguments about war

An important argument in the High Government's promotion of the war option in December 1657 was that the relatively low costs of war outweighed the gross long-term benefits to be gained from it. In essence, this was an endorsement of De Vlaming's position in 1655. Disregarding its argument of the lack of realism in the war plan in 1655, and countering the 1655 argument that war would mean a lessening of trade, and thus a loss of profit for the Company, in 1657 the High Government pointed out that war would disturb Makassar's trade.⁸⁶² No mention was made of the Company's losses.

Comment

The arguments presented for war in 1657 illustrate not only the break with the positions of 1655, but point to a break in the High Government's general mode of thinking about the VOC's relations with Makassar. In

⁸⁶² "Als wanneer wij haer in retorsie tenminsten oock haeren handel seer soudén becommeren." December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.153.

1655, Maetsuyker's assumption about Makassarese intentions in seeking peace rested on potential losses of trade due to war. The mode of argumentation in 1655 thus built on an assumption of *shared* concerns over trade losses as a motivation for peace in both Makassar and Batavia. In 1657, war and the impending losses in trade were the means to *force* Makassar to a lasting peace. By implication, the terms of the treaty to follow that war would be of a quite different nature than the treaty of 1655.

The argument concerning the high costs of war countered

The High Government's positions in 1657 regarding the costs of war equalled De Vlaming's positions of 1655. The High Government now argued that the military expense of a campaign might well be kept within reasonable limits. A campaign would not imply much of an increase compared to what the Company was already spending on its defence of Ambon and Banda. In 1657 alone, the High Government had had to

deploy 573 soldiers to discourage and prevent Makassarese intrusion.⁸⁶³

That was approximately the same number that would be required for a campaign. War would thus mean minimal or no additional expense.⁸⁶⁴

Reassuring that the security of Ambon and Banda is not jeopardised and arguing the soundness of the war plan

The 1655 counter-argument to war had been that the transfer of troops from Ambon and Banda would jeopardise the defence there. This argument was rejected in 1657. Now the argument ran that the transfer of troops from Ambon and Banda was not only a necessary prerequisite for the success of the campaign, it should also be regarded as a tactically sound adjustment since the troops were already there, ready, and packed.⁸⁶⁵ Deploying them in Makassar was sensible and the High Government assured the Heeren XVII it would never do so in a way to cause peril.⁸⁶⁶ Timing was the decisive factor in the High Government's argument here. If undertaking the campaign during the eastern

⁸⁶³ "Want wij desen jaere al echter om op haer ende haerl. bedrijf toe te sien een nombre van 573 soldaten sijn genootsaeckt geweest uyt te setten." December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.153.

⁸⁶⁴ "Dat al omtrent sooveel is wij by tijde van oorloge te doen plachten, ende dan weynich of gene onkosten mede gepraevenieert warden." December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.153.

⁸⁶⁵ "Indien wij deselve chrijghsmacht van daer over becomeen." December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.153.

⁸⁶⁶ "gelijck vreesen, dat niet sullen doen mogen, soo wij geen pericul willen loopen." December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.153.

monsoon,⁸⁶⁷ one need not worry about attacks on Ambon and Banda.⁸⁶⁸

All in all, considering the serious challenge that Makassar posed for the Company, and the good prospects of a successful campaign undertaken at low cost and risk, it was the time to act. If no military actions were taken, the Company stood the danger of facing irreparable damage.⁸⁶⁹

Inscribing Makassarese deceit towards the Company as structurally embedded

Having advocated the arguments for going to war and the good prospects for success, the appeal to the Directors to endorse the plan returned to the basic premise, that the Makassarese could never be trusted. In its 1657 version, this view is given an additional twist. Deceit by the Makassarese towards the Company was described as a structurally inherent trait in Makassarese character and society. When the Makassarese had proven to be untrustworthy, it was because they were by nature opportunistic and would break contractual obligations at any time to serve their own best

⁸⁶⁷ Meaning the period October–February.

⁸⁶⁸ December 17, 1657, GM 3.153.

⁸⁶⁹ “een onversettelijcke schade aengedaen te werden.” December 17, 1657, GM 3.153.

interests.⁸⁷⁰ Maetsuyker's volte-face could hardly be more striking. He now assumed that by their very nature they neither could, nor would, be trusted either at present or in the future.

The cultural-religious argument

The psychological argument for inherent Makassarese deviousness was supplemented by a cultural-religious argument. When the Makassarese by their nature would gladly break any promise with any party, the case for the Company was even worse, representing as it was a Christian party.⁸⁷¹ The religious code in Islam read that it was no sin for a Muslim to dishonour a treaty with Christians, the latter being considered unbelievers.⁸⁷² In short, regarding promises made to the Company by the Makassarese, the latter could cheat and lie as much as they liked without breaking their own religious code. Makassarese fraud and deceit towards the Company were thus presented as structurally embedded, by both cultural predisposition and religious sanction. Any hope for change was naïve and futile.

⁸⁷⁰ “wie haer aen eeden trouwe ofte beloften niet houden gebonden, als sij met dezelve te breecken maer voordeelen te behaalen weten.” December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.153.

⁸⁷¹ “Doch vornaementlijck tegen ons Christenen te doen hebbende.” December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.153.

⁸⁷² “Die sij voor ongelovige houden en geen sonde van en maecken of sij bedriegen ende te cort doen ofte niet.” December 17, 1657, *GM* 3.153.

Comments

Propositions that this negative portrayal of the Makassarese represents a typical Eurocentric perception would do well to consider the *timing* and context of these remarks. Rather than interpreting this characterisation as “orientalist,” it would seem more to the point to regard it as *ex post facto* rationalisations of what was considered in Batavia as consistent Makassarese breaches of contract. One would also do well to view the proposition about inherent deceit in the light of the need to “sell” the war option to the Directors. After all, the High Government’s advocacy for war basically rested on the proposition that words alone would never suffice and that a solid, durable treaty with Makassar had to be enforced by the sword.

In no way can the above remarks be regarded as originating from fixed Eurocentric preconceptions. The contrast between the declared optimism and trust that provided the arguments for the initiative for peace and the negotiations in 1655 and the realism that characterises the thinking in 1657 goes to disprove that. The thinking about the role of religion and the appeal to religious concerns may be said to have been completely reversed. The concessions made on religious grounds in

the 1655 treaty sprang from an assumption of a separation between the religious and political spheres in Makassar. In 1657 the political implications constituted the primary focus. Learning from experience must explain this change of position from 1655 to 1657.

Summing up the break with the 1655 assumptions and positions in the Generale Missiven of December 1656 and 1657

The 1656 letter marks a general break with the optimism of 1655 and the belief that the differences with Makassar had been sorted out by the treaty that year. The 1657 *missive* to the Directors argued for a new direction. This shift must be explained by Hasanuddin's resumption of his activities in the Spice Islands, which was regarded as a clear breach of treaty in Batavia. But there was more to it than the terms of the treaty. The uncompromising pro-war stand, the language used, and the essentialist characterisations of Hasanuddin and the Makassarrese in the 1657 *missive* betray the fact that the High Government felt fooled by Hasanuddin. It was a matter of restoring prestige and face.

In the deliberations over Makassar presented to the Directors after 1657, the issue was not whether to war, but whether the moment was ripe or not, or whether the desired result could be achieved in some other

way. The *missiven* after 1657 and up to the war in 1660 reveal a fluctuation of recommendations for war and tactical considerations.

Section 4: The missive of December 14, 1658

Context and focus

The background for the approach to Makassar in the *missive* dated December 14, 1658, was that the Company was still formally in a state of war with Banten, but relations with Mataram had eased since the *susuhunan* (king) had reopened the northern harbours in the spring.⁸⁷³ Still the fear of an anti-Company alliance between Mataram and Makassar lingered.⁸⁷⁴ Letters and reports from Makassar and increased Makassarese activity in the eastern provinces confirmed and strengthened the Council's fears of Makassarese plans for war.⁸⁷⁵

The High Government's outward response to the Makassarese challenges of 1658 was accommodation, but it kept a sharp eye on the possibility of war. On August 20, merchants Joan Barra and Pieter Schuyftang were sent to Makassar to ease tension and keep relations as normal as possible.⁸⁷⁶ This was clearly a defensive move dictated by Batavia's ambivalent situation at the time. The *missive* of December

⁸⁷³ H.J. De Graaf, *De Regering van Sunan Mangku-Rat I Tegal-Wangi, vorst van Mataram, 1646-1677*, Verhandelingen KITLV, 33, S'-Gravenhage – Martinus Nijhoff, 1961, 107.

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid. 105.

⁸⁷⁵ Stapel, *Het Bongaais Verdrag*, 58.

⁸⁷⁶ Ibid. 58–59.

1658 throws light on how Batavia viewed regional politics in the archipelago in an unclear situation, and how the High Government's presented its response to the Directors. Of special interest is that the prospect of being confronted by a coalition of Muslim states led to elaborate deliberations on the role of religion in overseas diplomacy, or more specifically, on how to tackle the religious divide between the Company and its Muslim friends and foes.

The fear of a Makassar–Mataram alliance, and the implications for the Spice Islands

The section on relations with Makassar in the December 1658 letter started with a repetition of the 1657 position that the Company should not trust the Makassarese, but be on the alert.⁸⁷⁷ The High Government then turned to the particulars of the 1658 situation, namely that Makassar was trying to mobilise other powers in the archipelago as allies in its struggle against the Company. Information had been acquired that Makassar had sent envoys to Mataram asking the *susuhunan* to close the northern ports (of Java) to the Company. This initiative aroused anxiety

⁸⁷⁷ “Invogen wij voor dat rijcke altos wel verdacht ende op hoede sullen dien te sijn.” December 14, 1658, *GM* 3.216.

that Mataram could be talked into trying to starve Batavia.⁸⁷⁸ The High Government believed that Hasanuddin presumed that a blockade of the northern harbours would lead to unrest in the Company's possessions in the eastern quarters.⁸⁷⁹ The contact between Makassar and Mataram thus confirmed and actualised the High Government's fear of aggressive Makassarese plans for the Spice Islands, "from which one most certainly should presume that the Makassarese had no friendly intentions towards the Company."⁸⁸⁰ That was a euphemism. The real message to the Directors read that in view of a possible Makassar–Mataram alliance, the Makassarese threat to the Company had acquired a new, more serious dimension, namely a threat to the Company's possessions in the Spice Islands.

Deliberating on the nature of religion in Makassar's expansion efforts

The mobilisation appeal behind the anti-Company alliance was taken to lie in the religious division between the Company and its Muslim antagonists. Makassar's religious prestige made possible a rallying of its

⁸⁷⁸ "Havens voor ons weder soude sluyten om ons daermede tot necessiteyt ende hongersnoot te brengen." December 14, 1658, *GM* 3.216.

⁸⁷⁹ "Dat sij wel weten, dat in de oosterse quartiren strackx mede ongelegentheden verorsaect." December 14, 1658, *GM* 3.216.

⁸⁸⁰ "waeruyt men met recht wel soude presumeren, de voors. Maccassaren van geen goet voornemen tegen de Compagnie." December 14, 1658, *GM* 3.216.

co-religionists in the archipelago against the Company. The fact that a significant Makassarese fleet had been sent to Mena on northern Timor to offer “protection” was but one example of how the political and religious dimensions were intertwined in Makassar’s expansionism. The population on Mena was still heathen, but the Makassarese initiative could be seen as part of a more encompassing plan by which the Makassarese sought to secure dominance over Mena by converting the population to Islam.⁸⁸¹

Comment

The worries over the Makassarese approach towards Mena serve well as a springboard to offer some comments on the High Government’s thoughts on the role of religion and religious prestige in Makassar’s expansion effort after 1655. As we saw in chapter 4, the concessions made in the 1655 treaty were made in large part in response to Hasanuddin’s appeal to his concern for his co-religionists. Andaya takes this at face value, as an example of two contradictory means and ends

⁸⁸¹ “Sij haere dominie over die eylanden noch mede sullen soecken te verbreyden ende desselve, noch heydenen sijnde, tot de Mahumetise religie te brengen.” December 14, 1658, *GM* 3.216.

constellations: Makassar was pursuing religious and political prestige by, among other things, economic means, while the Company sought power and prestige as a way to increase its profit.⁸⁸²

My proposition regarding the Company's concessions is that these were given with the implicit understanding that Hasanuddin's motives had to do with religion and prestige only. Seen from the viewpoint of power politics, they were insubstantial. The Company's understanding at the time was congruent with Andaya's propositions. But in 1658, the explicit understanding was that the appeal to religion went hand in hand with, or was even deliberately used for, political purposes. When the High Government that year pointed out that the Makassarese court was well known for its religious zeal,⁸⁸³ the issue of concern was clearly the ability to mobilise political and -military support that Makassar possessed by virtue of its religious prestige. The scenario depicted in 1658 was that the Company faced the prospect of war with the three largest Muslim powers in the archipelago, Mataram, Banten, and Makassar. Joined together in faith and purpose, these would represent a formidable power, both ideologically and militarily.

⁸⁸² Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka*, 46.

⁸⁸³ "In hetwelck het Maccassars hoff op haere wijze vrij devoot schijnt te sijn." December 14, 1658, *GM* 3.216.

However, in the 1658 text, the magnitude of the challenge of the combined forces united by faith is not further elaborated. This could be explained by the fact that the implication was more than clear enough at the outset. For my purposes, the important point is that the High Government was well aware of both of the twin religious and political nature of Makassarese expansion and the potential of using religion as a tool for political mobilisation in the archipelago, and that this represented a shift compared to the thinking in 1655.

The High Government's change of view on the mix and hierarchy among the pursuits of power, prestige, and profit

Andaya's cultural-divergence model shows an absolute dichotomy between the Company's quest for influence in the Eastern Archipelago and that of the Makassarese: Makassar sought pride and prestige, the Company optimal trading opportunities. As I have pointed out in the analysis of the 1657 *missive* above, as well as in my analysis of the instructions from the Netherlands, there are reasons to believe that the preservation or restoration of prestige, both at the individual level for the Company as a whole, played a role in political considerations both at home and in Batavia. The frequent display of corporate pride in rituals

and ceremonies when celebrating Company successes at Batavia is a phenomenon that comes to mind.⁸⁸⁴

A comparable, if not necessarily identical sense of “prestige” and “pride,” whatever its cultural particularities, likely played a part in both Batavian and Makassarese politics. If the Company’s politics were not free from “contamination” by non-commercial concerns, it seems unlikely that Hasanuddin’s politics were absolutely “uncontaminated” by secular concerns of profit and power. Such differences as there were between the Company and Makassar seem more appropriately explained as a divergence in “mix” and balances than by absolute dichotomies.

The proposition of the December 1658 *missive* is that Hasanuddin played his religious-prestige card in a game he also conceived of in terms of power politics. The High Government no longer viewed the assumptions about religious concerns as purely symbolic. In 1658, Batavia acknowledged the substantive role of religion in the power politics of the Indonesian archipelago.

⁸⁸⁴ See F. De Haan, *Oud Batavia*, 2nd ed. (Bandoeng: A.C. Nix, 1935), 135 ff.

Concluding the analysis of the December 14, 1658 letter: The difference of tone in the 1657 and 1658 letters

A striking feature of the 1658 *missive* is that it is calm and “matter of fact” in tone compared to the one of December 1657. My suggestion is that the “heated” tone of the earlier letter reflected the then still-fresh feeling of having been cheated by Hasanuddin. By 1658, the assumption of Hasanuddin as a fraudulent partner in diplomacy had become a premise in the High Government’s thinking about Makassar. After the initial “emotional blow-out” in 1657, the High Government went back to a cooler presentation on how to handle Makassar based on their new set of assumptions.

Shared characteristics of the 1656, 1657, and 1658 missiven in contrast to that of 1655

What distinguishes the approach to Makassar in the three *missiven* of 1656, 1657, and 1658 is that they originate from a perceptual framework markedly different from the one of 1655. Those of 1656 and 1657 made clear that the High Government’s preferred solution to the problems with Makassar was a military campaign. In the 1658, that station was already passed. Starting a war on Makassar was out of the question because it

might help trigger a war with a broader anti-Company alliance. The Company reverted to a time out for tactical reasons. When in August 1658 Barra and Schuyftang were sent to obtain the sultan's permission to reopen the Company's trade in Makassar, their instructions were to concede to all Makassarese claims "as much as the Company's prestige could suffer."⁸⁸⁵ This does not mean that the idea of going to war against Makassar had been abandoned. In the 1658 setting, negotiations and accommodation were forced by the logic of the political situation at large. The purpose of Barra's and Schuyftang's mission was to temporarily cool down the situation.

⁸⁸⁵ "als behoudens Compagnies reputatie eenigzins mogelijk was." Instructions to Barra, August 20, 1657, in Stapel, *Het Bongaais Verdrag*, 58n5, taken from Van Dijk, "Borneo."

Section 5: The December 16, 1659 missive: Reporting on Negotiations with Low Expectations

The primacy of contextual considerations

Three events mark the period January–December 1659: the sending of another embassy to Makassar, headed by Willem Basting, who left Batavia on February 25; the outbreak of rebellions against Makassar by Mandars and Bugis;⁸⁸⁶ and the long-delayed decision to wage war on Makassar in the coming November.⁸⁸⁷ Of these events, only the Basting mission is elaborated on in the December 16, 1659 *missive*. The decision for war was not included, but the Mandar and Bugis rebellion was mentioned as a factor that was diverting the energy of Makassar court away from the Spice Islands.

The High Government did not refer to the possibility of creating an alliance with the Mandars and Bugis however. (Those issues would receive full attention and elaboration in the *missive* of December 16, 1660.) But, the section on Makassar in the December 1659 letter was dedicated to the Basting mission. This is surprising, considering that the

⁸⁸⁶ Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka*, 48.

⁸⁸⁷ Stapel, *Het Bongais Verdrag*, 62.

1659 context presented a scenario in which the option of putting De Vlaming's original plan of intervention was much more relevant than in 1658. Contributing to this was that peace had been concluded with Banten in July 1659.⁸⁸⁸ My proposition is that this new situation made the High Government ambivalent about the Basting negotiations. In my analysis of the *missive* of December 16, 1659, I shall focus on how this ambivalence towards negotiations colours the High Government's presentation of it to the Directors.

The chronology of the Basting mission

On January 10, the High Government sent lengthy instructions to Barra and Schuyftang in Makassar, informing them of its plans to send out a negotiation mission to "seek out" the possibilities for an agreement with Makassar, even though there was little hope of success. On February 10, the Council decided to send Willem Basting on this mission. He was instructed to be accommodating with respect to Makassarese damage claims, but he was to stay firm on the demand that the Makassarese must

⁸⁸⁸ See *Corpus Diplomaticum*, 2.155–61.

keep out of the Spice Islands.⁸⁸⁹ Inconclusive negotiation between Basting and Hasanuddin took place in Makassar on April 1, 7, and 27.⁸⁹⁰

The chronology of the negotiations suggests that the main purpose of this embassy might well have been to buy time. In response to Hasanuddin's claims of his contractual right to sail to the Spice Islands, Basting insisted that he had to confer with his superiors in Ambon before taking a decision. For his part, the governor of Ambon, Jacob Hustard, declared himself unauthorised to make a decision. Basting's mission in Makassar ended inconclusively when he asked the sultan for permission to return to Batavia to discuss the matter and get a decision from the highest authority directly. On his return to Batavia on September 16, Basting gave his oral report. The crux of the problem remained the sultan's insistence on his lawful right to sail to and from the eastern quarters.

⁸⁸⁹ Stapel, *Het Bongaais Verdrag*, 59.

⁸⁹⁰ For this and the below on Basting's mission, see *ibid.* 60–62.

Textual analysis

The essence of the High Government's presentation of the 1659 negotiations to the Directors was that it had stuck to an outwardly accommodating approach. During the negotiations, it had, for instance, let go of its initial claim that Hasanuddin swear by oath that once his damage claims had been met, he would have no further claims on the Company.⁸⁹¹ In the fall of 1659, the contextual counter-arguments against war in 1658 had changed. A treaty of peace and friendship had been concluded with Banten on July 10, 1659.⁸⁹² Moreover, the Mataram–Makassar alliance had failed to materialise and relations between the two were cool until November the same year.⁸⁹³ As the High Government saw it, the probability of Hasanuddin going to war alone was low. On his own, without foreign help, he was no match for the Company.⁸⁹⁴

The decision for new negotiations in the beginning of 1659 must be seen against the background of general pressure from home to avoid war, and because the peace with Banten had not yet been concluded.

⁸⁹¹ December 16, 1659, *GM* 3.253.

⁸⁹² *Corpus diplomaticum*, 2. 155-160.

⁸⁹³ De Graaf, 1961, 49-50.

⁸⁹⁴ “sij allenigh sonder uytenlandts behulp tegen de Comp.e niet substisteren connen.” December 16, 1659, *GM* 3.252.

Considering the change of context in the autumn of 1659, it is a puzzle that a more offensive approach was not considered. The High Government's presentation of Basting's report quickly kills any propositions about a possible return to the accommodation model. The High Government felt provoked by what it deemed as Hasanuddin's contemptuous treatment of Basting. However much the High Government regarded its own proposals and claims to be "totally fair and reasonable,"⁸⁹⁵ Hasanuddin had been presenting his own desire in a "most disrespectful manner."⁸⁹⁶ This, the High Government held, must lead to the conclusion that Hasanuddin was only looking for a pretext to declare war so as to have his way with the Company completely on his own terms, rather than seeking a peaceful agreement in earnest.⁸⁹⁷ The Makassarrese performance had only confirmed the High Government's pessimistic assumptions about Hasanuddin.

⁸⁹⁵ "niet dan volcomen redelijk ende billicke sijn." December 16, 1659, *GM* 3.252.

⁸⁹⁶ "Hebbende haer begeeren oock op een seer laetdunckende wijze den commissaris bekentgemaect." December 16, 1659, *GM* 3.253.

⁸⁹⁷ "Waeruyt men eerder soude mogen geloven, sij maer redenen soecken om met ons weder tot oorlogh te comen ofte ons t'eenmemael naer haere pijpen dansen, dan dat se van ons trachten voldaan te wesen." December 16, 1659, *GM* 3.253.

The report to the Directors on the negotiations in the December 1659 *missive* suggests that war as the ultimate means to finally resolve all the problems with Makassar was still in Batavia's mind. If negotiations and compromise were forced upon the Company from an excess of caution and the still unclear situation in 1659, the conditions were drastically changed in the following year. The December 1660 *missive* portrays high expectations of military intervention as the ultimate problem-solver.

Section 6: The December 16, 1660 missive

The *missive* of December 16, 1660 encapsulated the period in which a new war with Makassar was launched and a new treaty was agreed on. It also covered a dramatic shift in context as a new Bugis rebellion against Makassar broke out in spring 1660.⁸⁹⁸ This took place after an armistice had been signed between the Company and Makassar, but before the final treaty had been countersigned. The High Government's presentation of relations with Makassar reflects this shift in opportunity. Now the grand strategy was conceived of as the only means that could establish a lasting solution to the problems with Makassar. But, when this option fell with the suppression of the Bugis rebellion, the High Government fell back on a return to the negotiated treaty. I shall analyse these shifts, and will be arguing that Batavia reverted to the latter option out of necessity. The lure of the ultimate solution promised by the grand strategy was still there.

⁸⁹⁸ Basset 1958, 31.

*Brief diplomatic chronology, January–December 1660*⁸⁹⁹

In January and February 1660, a war fleet under the command of Major Johan van Dam and chief merchant Johan Truytman sailed for Makassar via Ambon. On June 7, they arrived at the Makassar roadstead where they engaged in a sea fight with the Portuguese. The Makassarese responded by hoisting the war flag. On June 12, Company forces succeeded in taking the strategically important Fort Panakkukang, south of Makassar city. With the fall of the fort, the Makassarese asked for an armistice, which was agreed to the next day. Two important conditions were set for an armistice, namely that the Makassarese send envoys to Batavia to sign a new treaty, and that the Company evacuate the fort until a final peace had been signed.

Van Dam returned in Batavia on July 17 with the Makassarese envoys, and negotiations started in Batavia on July 29. On August 19, a new treaty between the Company and Makassar was signed in Batavia. Zacharias Wagenaar and Jacob Cau were assigned to bring the Makassarese envoys home and obtain the sultan's countersignature. They arrived in Makassar October 13, but were not given access to

⁸⁹⁹ The below based on Stapel, *Het Bongaais Verdrag*, 61–68, who in his turn draws heavily on Van Dam Van Ijselt, Mr. Johan van Dam en sijne tuchting van Makassar in 1660, *Bijdragen*, KITLV, series 7, part 6 (1908): 16 ff.

Hasanuddin until November, when they found themselves in a different kind of negotiation situation than they had expected. Hasanuddin proposed radical revisions of the Batavia text and raised new claims. Nonetheless, on December 3, Hasanuddin countersigned a revised version of the August 19 treaty in Makassar.

The Bugis rebellion, 1660

Hasanuddin was aware of the possibility that the Company might seek an alliance with rebellious Bugis.⁹⁰⁰ Already in February, he had started consolidating Bugis commitment to the defence of the realm, calling in troops from his vassal states as well. In June 1660, he called in manpower to build fortifications for the defence of the capital.⁹⁰¹ The beginning of the Bugis rebellion can be dated to August 7, when the Bugis in Makassar, some ten thousand of them, decided to return to their homeland because of excessive burdens laid on them in conjunction with the war.⁹⁰² Once returned, they reorganised themselves to rebel against Makassarese overlordship. Hasanuddin on his side raised forces to bring

⁹⁰⁰ Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka*, 48.

⁹⁰¹ Ibid. 48, referring to Stapel, *Het Bongaais Verdrag*, 65–66.

⁹⁰² Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka*, 49.

them back into the fold, but it was not until the beginning of October that the rebellion was quelled.⁹⁰³ It is worth noting that the Makassarese envoys to Batavia sailed at the beginning of the Bugis rebellion and before serious fighting had broken out. The beginning of the negotiations for the Countersignature in Makassar started before the outcome of the rebellion was clear, whereas the actual countersignature of the treaty took place when the rebellion had been quelled.

Topics and issues in the missive December 16, 1660

Stapel comments on a divergence in the historiography regarding the High Government's instructions to Van Dam.⁹⁰⁴ Valentijn has it that Van Dam was instructed to negotiate before engaging in actions of war. Stapel however, subscribes to Van Ijselt's version,⁹⁰⁵ which holds that Van Dam was instructed to immediately open attack after having rescued the three remaining Company servants still residing in Makassar.⁹⁰⁶ There is all the reason to support the latter's view. Searching for the possibility of a negotiated solution before entering into action was what

⁹⁰³ Ibid. 50.

⁹⁰⁴ Stapel, *Het Bongaais Verdrag*, 63-64.

⁹⁰⁵ Ibid. 64, referring to Van Dam van Ijselt.

⁹⁰⁶ Ibid. 64.

one would have expected according to standard procedure.⁹⁰⁷ But because Hasanuddin still stood by his claims in the Eastern Archipelago, the standard procedure no longer applied. The General letter of December 16, 1660, bears witness to that. The High Government's basic preoccupation now was how to cripple Makassar both politically and militarily so that it would no longer pose a threat to the Company. In the period between the sending off of the Makassarrese for the signature of a treaty in Batavia and their return for countersignature in Makassar, the Bugis rebellion had made it seem that De Vlaming's plan could be executed, but after the defeat of the Bugis, conditions returned to "normal."

The contextual imprint in the December 16, 1660 missive on Makassar—and the slide from realism towards cynicism

If the tactical options of the Bugis and Mandar rebellion in 1659 were not yet commented upon in the *missive* of December that year, in the following year they were dealt with in full. The topic in this section is

⁹⁰⁷ Compare for instance the procedure in 1654, See chapter 5.

how the High Government presented this situation in the Missive of December 1660.

With the Bugis uprising in August 1660 and its final repression by the Makassarrese in early October, the *missive* of December 1660 covered a period of two diametrically opposite contexts as far as Batavia's strategic options towards Makassar were concerned. The Bugis-rebellion revived plans for allying with the rebels to solve the problem of Makassar by intervening militarily on the side of the Bugis. The "grand strategy" fiercely rejected by Maetsuyker and the Council in 1655 now popped up again, expanded to involve a total restructuring of the political landscape of South Sulawesi. But in October, when it was clear that the Bugis stood to lose, there was a reversion back to the negotiation approach. This was a totally pragmatic shift. The advocacy for negotiation was mixed with speculation about the inevitability of a new war in which the opportunity to implement the grand strategy might well present itself again. The change in meaning of "negotiations" in the 1660 policy recommendations may be characterised as an explication of a glide from a realistic to an outright cynical understanding of it.

*Textual analyses, the December 16, 1660 missive on Makassar:
Defending the decision to go to war*

The section on Makassar in the December 16, 1660 *missive* starts, not unexpectedly, with a ritual assurance that the Company's possessions in Ambon and Banda were now both duly protected and secured against Makassarrese intrusion.⁹⁰⁸ The High Government immediately went on to defend its decision to go to war against Makassar. This should have given ample opportunity to legitimate it in terms of international law.

It was an opportunity neglected. The defence of the decision for war was accorded one paragraph only, and the argument for it was exclusively contextual: At the time of the decision it was considered that either Batavia or Makassar would start a war; and it was deemed that it had better be the Company as "the time seemed right."⁹⁰⁹ The "right time" in this context is best translated as "availing oneself of the window of opportunity." The viability of the option was judged by opportunity, not by law. In other words, the High Government's rationale for going to war

⁹⁰⁸ "De waardevolle provincie Amboina is royaal van alles voorzien, zo van 700 soldaten w.o. voor Banda, en dat wegens Makassar, waartegens overal dient gewaakt." Deceember 16, 1660, *GM* 3.314.

⁹⁰⁹ "hebben dan geraden geacht beeter te sijn, wij selfst eerst op waren ende trachhten,...Indien het de tijt noch veelen conde, haer in haer eygen landtbodem te vallen." December 16, 1660, *GM* 3.318.

reflected nothing more than *raison d'état* thinking brought overseas, pure and simple. That this was the dominant mode of thinking is further illustrated by the High Government's explanation of favourable conditions for successful intervention.

Advocating the grand strategy

With the outbreak of the Bugis rebellion in August, a Company alliance with them and others chafing under Makassarese authority, of which there were plenty, to overthrow the present regime was presented as highly realistic.⁹¹⁰ The prospect of toppling Hasanuddin's regime by joining forces with local rebels was even more alluring because it opened a window of opportunity for dealing a crippling blow to Makassar's politico-military power. It would reorganise the political structure of South Sulawesi in such a way as to dethrone Makassar as a hegemon and reduce it to only one among many powers on the island: "Makassar's might and power could be broken or kept in check for the foreseeable future by dividing the realm into smaller entities, such as had been the

⁹¹⁰ "Op hoope soodanig dese ende gene gemisconteerden (wie daer veele sijn) mochten gaende werden om de wapenen benefens ons tegen de presente monerchale regeringe mede op te nemen." December 16, 1660, *GM* 3.318.

case before the Makassarese expansion⁹¹¹. This was how the Company's "promised land" of political order in South Sulawesi was envisioned: *divide et impera*. It was also an unofficial endorsement of De Vlaming's plan of 1655.

Comment

Despite its hardly concealed optimism for a final resolution of the "Makassar problem," the call for implementing the "grand strategy" was remarkably calm considering the dramatic measures it proposed. Not only a direct military intervention, but a central role for the Company in the construction of a new political order was implied. But with the Makassarese defeat of the Bugis in October, the scheme was put aside for the time being.

⁹¹¹ "Mitsgaders deselve trachten te destrueren ende het gemelte rijck weder onder verscheyde cleyne souvereine Coningjens verdelt te helpen Soos hetselve voor desen geweest is. December 16, 1660, *GM* 3.318.

Policy preferences fluctuating as to information about context

Van Dam returned to Batavia with the Makassarese negotiators on July 17,⁹¹² and the Bugis rebellion did not break out until August, so at the time of concluding the negotiations in Batavia, the High Government either did not know of it, or, if it did, felt bound to go through with the process of negotiations now that they had started. Reflections on the option of implementing the more tempting grand strategy must have taken place sometime between the conclusion of the treaty in Batavia on August 19 and the sending off of the Wagenaar-Cau mission for countersignature in Makassar on October 13. On the other hand, there is evidence that Cau contacted the Bugis to seek out the possibility of an alliance as late as in November.⁹¹³ It is improbable that Cau would have undertaken this without prior consent or instructions from the High Government. When the Bugis were finally defeated, however, the only realistic option left was to go through with the treaty agreed upon with Hasanuddin.

⁹¹² Stapel, *Het Bongaais Verdrag*, 66.

⁹¹³ *Ibid.* 67.

Comment

What is striking about the 1660 negotiations for counter-signature of the treaty signed in Batavia on August 19 is that it represented a “double play” in the sense that Batavia was negotiating for a treaty while at the same time searching for possibilities to overthrow its treaty partner. This might be indicative of the fact that negotiations had been “devaluated” to purely tactical devices to be reverted to as long as the grand strategy could not be carried out. Moreover, the Company in the first place *had* signed a treaty, which meant it had to be honoured. Then again, that was as far as the legal considerations went. More important is that if the High Government seems to have been ambivalent about whether to proceed with the treaty or search for opportunities for an alliance with the Bugis rebels in the late autumn, this should be regarded as a turn towards a cynical interpretation of the diplomatic interaction with Makassar. That turn was not at all legally dogmatic, simply contextually pragmatic.

In the final paragraph of the section on Makassar in the December 1660 *missive*, the subtext clearly reveals that the High Government at the end of the day placed its bet on another war with Makassar. The section ends by stating that the Makassarese had regained their spirit and started

to rebuild their military strength,⁹¹⁴ but that under the circumstances, there was not much the High Government could do about it.”⁹¹⁵ This definitely reads like regret for a lost opportunity, but it also reads as an implicit hope that such an opportunity would present itself again soon, even if that meant bending the terms of the newly signed treaty.

Bending treaty agreements on Fort Panakkukang in the hope of implementing the grand strategy

One of the terms of the August 19 treaty in Batavia was that the Company could hold on to Fort Panakkukang until the treaty had been countersigned in Makassar.⁹¹⁶ With a view to the prospect of another local uprising against Makassar, this ruling was bent to give room for a devious plan. By holding on to the fort as long as possible, the High Government reasoned that the Company might well be able to inspire a new rebellion. Holding on to the fort was thus of strategic importance if an opportunity for intervention in an internal conflict should arise in future. Also, the longer the Dutch held the fort, the more Makassar

⁹¹⁴ December 16, 1660, *GM* 3.318.

⁹¹⁵ “Sulcx het schijnt, offer bij dusdanige gelegenheyt door ons niet veel op te doen soude sijn.” December 16, 1660, *GM* 3.319.

⁹¹⁶ August 19, 1660, treaty, art. 25, *Corpus Diplomaticum* 2.176.

would lose respect, already on the wane, from its subject people.⁹¹⁷ The implication was clear enough: loss of respect meant a higher probability for another revolt. It was explained in the following manner: no one could know what the “hot-headed” Bugis would do if the Makassarese tried to regain the fort and were unsuccessful.⁹¹⁸ In short, what the High Government proposed was to bend the terms of the treaty to recreate favourable conditions for the implementation of the grand strategy. However much it may have paid heed to international law, whatever the Company’s insistence on *pacta sunt servanda*, the High Government’s perception of treaty making with Makassar in 1660 must be characterised as cynical power politics applied to local, overseas conditions, rather than an uncritical import of European legal formalism.

Comments

In my view, the position of the High Government towards Makassar as presented to the Directors in the *missive* of December 16, 1660,

⁹¹⁷ “Conde het wel sijn, wij reputatieushalve de voorsz. Vestinge noch voor een wijle tijt bleven in behouden ... De vrees van de omliggende volken voor dat rijck (Makassar) is gedaald.” December 16, 1660, *GM* 3.319.

⁹¹⁸ “Wat veranderingh hetselve in de keeteloorige Boegesen soude veroorsacken mogen.” December 16, 1660, *GM* 3.319.

represents what can be regarded as the culmination of a downward spiral into cynicism after the breakdown of the order created by the 1655 treaty. Military victory increasingly came to be seen as a far more attractive means of solving the Company's otherwise intractable problems with Makassar, and it was only the lack of favourable local conditions that spoke against it. Such conditions arose briefly in 1660, but entanglements barred Batavia from taking full advantage of the resulting opportunity.

The temptation to make use of the Bugis rebellion as the springboard for launching the grand strategy in 1660 must be seen as preconditioned in a decreasing trust in Hasanuddin as a reliable partner after 1655. The loss of trust hardened the belief in the war option as the favoured means of bringing him to heel. With that came a more cynical view of "negotiations" and "contracts" as second-best options.

Section 7: The Missiven of January 26 and December 22, 1661: The grand strategy in a novel design

One of the clauses of the 1660 treaty stated that the Portuguese had to leave Makassar within a year.⁹¹⁹ The English stayed put, however, and filled much the same function that the Portuguese had done. How to solve this problem? “We lean towards the opinion,” stated the High Government to the Directors in the *missive* of January 26, 1661, that “as long as we can’t keep the English from sailing to enemy places, we will be better off continuing the war with Makassar than making peace.”⁹²⁰ Following the conclusion of the 1660 treaty, the High Government came to take an ambiguous attitude towards the grand strategy as the ultimate solution to the conflict with Makassar, based on pragmatic considerations. On the one hand the Company’s strengthened commercial position, and in particular the expulsion of the Portuguese, gave way to a kind of thinking that the expulsion clause would suffice as the basis for entrenching the Company’s power and influence in

⁹¹⁹ December 2, 1660, treaty, unnumbered clause 7, *Corpus Diplomaticum*, 2.178.

⁹²⁰ “van gevoelen sijn dat als ‘t niet en ware om de Engelsen, en dat wij deselve niet mogen verhinderen op vijantlijcke plaetsen te varen, het voor de Comp.e al soo dienstich soude wesen met Mqacassar in oorlogh te continueren dan vrede te maecken.” January 26, 1661, *GM* 3.367.

Makassar. At the same time, remnants of the original grand strategy survived in the form whereby the Company's new commercial position could serve as a basis for Company dominance over Makassar. This ambiguity is demonstrated in the *missive* of December 22, 1661.

The plans for the post-1660 commercial regime and its political implications

The *missive* of December 22, 1661 may be read as a temporary return to the accommodationist line. It stated that the High Government would "as far as possible take care not to provoke, but rather please the sultan."⁹²¹

In particular, one had to relieve him of any notion that the expulsion of the Portuguese would lead to commercial strangulation of Makassar.⁹²²

The latter point explained the choice of accommodation. It must be seen as a tactical device to make Hasanuddin comply with the expulsion clause of the 1660 treaty.

But the High Government also presented the exclusion of the Portuguese as the first step of a broader plan to gain a commercial monopoly in Makassar. The catch was that to succeed the High

⁹²¹ "Maer om zijn gem. Hooghheyt sooveel doene. tegenmoet te comen." December 22, 1661, *GM* 3.376.

⁹²² "De apprehensie, die hij van Macassars ondergangck sij hebbende te doen verdwijnen." December 22, 1661, *GM* 3.376.

Government had to play its cards shrewdly. To make commercial dependence on the Company more palatable, assurances had to be made to the sultan that the Company would provide even more cloth and other items than had hitherto been brought to Makassar by the Portuguese.⁹²³

The High Government also had to guarantee that there would still be room for local Makassarese commercial interests.⁹²⁴

Comments

These concessions were made so as not to suffocate the local economy of Makassar and were directly linked to the plan of replacing the Portuguese in foreign trade by the Company. The plans for the Company's enhanced commercial position in Makassar can thus be seen as a part of the grand strategy of political domination by economic means. The High Government only implicitly revealed the political aspect of its commercial grand strategy. But when it stated that by occupying the role of chief provider of Makassar's imports, it was clear that the Company would in due course drive out both the English and the

⁹²³ "Het lant van Macassar nu wat meerder van alle hande lijwaten ende andere getrockene waren te voorsien als voor desen." December 22, 1661, *GM* 3.376.

⁹²⁴ "ende daarmede wat neering in de stadt te maken." December 22, 1661, *GM* 3.376.

local Moorish traders.⁹²⁵ By depriving Makassar of commercial partners and tying the sultanate commercially to the Company, the Company was also isolating Makassar from potential allies against the Company.

The accommodation advocated was no more than a tactical device to make the plan work. It simply required some co-operation from the sultan, and his co-operation in its turn required obtaining his goodwill. One of the proposed means of easing his worries was, as we saw above, to convince him of the advantages of co-operating commercially with the Company. Another was to obtain his goodwill by buying him off. To give a better “grip” on the Company’s takeover of Makassar’s foreign trade the High Government thus decided to give the sultan a substantial gift, to the value of around 20000 guilders, in order to “soothe his losses” and “ease his bitterness.”⁹²⁶

Summing up

The December 1661 tactics towards Makassar reflected adaptations to the context after the Bugis rebellion had been quelled. Prospects for a

⁹²⁵ “ende sal hetselve meteene dienen om de Engelsen en de Mooren mettertijt mede te doen verhuysen.” December 22, 1661, *GM* 3.376.

⁹²⁶ “ende om hetselve noch wat meer klem te geven soo is oock verstaen Sijn gem. Hoockheyt dit eerste iaer tot versoetinge van sijn schade ende om het ongenoegen weg te nemen, toe te senden een aensienel. Schekagie, begroot 20000 gl. of daeromtrent.” December 22, 1661, *GM* 3.376.

war in combination with an internal uprising had waned, and the High Government had to work with what they had obtained in the 1660 treaty. Of primary importance in the treaty was that it guaranteed—in writing, anyway—that the Portuguese would leave Makassar. That opened the opportunity for the Company to drive all unwanted third parties out. To make that happen, the Company had to act with courtesy and accommodation towards the sultan.

In essence, the High Government's strategy as spelled out in the *missive* of December 22, 1661 was that a commercial monopoly would do double duty by securing both the Company's commercial and its political position in Makassar. In that strategy, war was redundant. A dominant position for the Company over Makassar would be secured by the sultanate's commercial dependence on the Company. In this sense, the 1661 plan definitely represented an alternative to the grand strategy based on military intervention. At the same time, it implicitly represented a plan that would place Makassar in category 2 of the 1650 instruction, if the other European nations were expelled too. In this latter aspect, the commercial takeover plan was but a variant of the original grand strategy by contractual commercial means.

Chapter Conclusion

I have included the High Government's plan of 1661 of establishing a viable interaction regime by commercial dependence for the reason that it succinctly illustrates the range of tactical options deliberated and advocated by the High Government in the period after the signing of the 1655 treaty and in the immediate aftermath of the signing of the 1660 treaty. When there were fluctuations in perspectives on particular points of policy, these can generally be accounted for by changes in appreciation of the contextual constrictions and opportunities encompassing the wider world of insular South East Asia. Flexibility by considerations of context, in other words, was the basic principle in the High Government's policy planning. Principles of law mattered less, if at all. The former went with a pragmatic approach, the latter with a dogmatic one. In general, pragmatism reigned supreme.