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The mood of the country: new data on public opinion in the Netherlands on nuclear weapons and other problems of peace and security

by Philip P. Everts

1. Introduction

In recent years we have seen the rapid growth of an increasingly vocal and active movement, expressing what is perceived as deep-seated anxiety about the likelihood of nuclear war, not only in the Netherlands, but in other European countries and in the United States and Canada as well. To what extent is this movement supported by public opinion at the mass level? Can we discern shifts in public opinion which could be connected to this movement? And if we discern such a shift does it portend to be a major and fundamental change in 'the mood of the country'? What do data from public opinion polls tell us about these questions?*

In an earlier article we tried to analyse available data on public opinion in the Netherlands.[1] While there was little concrete evidence of a changing mood (the available data simply do not permit much comparison over time), it became clear that public revulsion at the prospect of nuclear war has become fairly general. A strongly anti-nuclear mood has become characteristic for the opinion climate of the country, with a majority expressing itself, for instance, in favour of removal of nuclear weapons from the Netherlands; an even stronger opposition exists against admitting new nuclear weapons. At the same time, however, established ideas about how to prevent war, for instance by maintaining a military equilibrium between East and West continue to enjoy widespread support as well (even within the group of people with antinuclear feelings); support for the membership of NATO is hardly decreasing. These apparent inconsistencies in public opinion call for explanation and further research.

A number of opinion polls could, for various reasons, not be included in the article, referred to above. Also new data have become available since then. In this article I intend to follow up my earlier analysis by bringing together and comparing systematically the available evidence concerning public

* See notes at the end of this article.

opinion on a number of specific themes, some of which were only touched upon briefly before or not discussed at all; others, which were discussed, are taken up again.

In a final section we shall return to the important political question to what extent the peace movement is really representative of the mood of the country and represents 'the tip of the iceberg' or whether it is still a relatively isolated affair which can be discounted by policy and decisionmakers.

2. Perceptions of threats and the danger of war

It is often said, especially by opponents of the peace movement, that the resistance against nuclear weapons is mainly based on fear of war or a more general and vague anxiety, which, as some of them argue, is skilfully manipulated to undermine the will to defend oneself and the confidence in the system of war prevention through deterrence. The apparent shift in the deterrence doctrine, away from pure deterrence and towards the possibility of fighting a nuclear war, together with the perceived increase in the likelihood of a limited nuclear war fought out in Europe play a major role in this discussion. But what do we actually know about perceptions of the likelihood of a new world war? Questions about this topic have been asked a number of times, but comparisons are complicated due to a lack of similarity between the questions, with few exceptions.[2]

If the question is phrased in a fairly general way, fear of a new world war indeed seems on the increase, as appears from the Eurobarometer data collected over a number of years (table 1).[3] Similar results were obtained in 1981[4]: 68% felt that the chances of war had increased in the past ten years and only 3% felt that they had decreased.

Table 1: Perceptions of the likelihood of a new world war within ten years

	July 1971	October/ November 1977	April 1980	October 1981
– Likely (chance > 50%)	9	16	20	19
– 50%	13	19	9	21
– Unlikely (change < 50%)	37	45	47	41
– No danger	27	17	10	13
– Do not know / no answer	14	3	14	6

The number of those who see little or no danger – a small majority – seems, however, not to have changed in the last ten years. The fluctuations in the do-not-know/no-answer category are intriguing.

Results pointing in the same direction (but referring to a somewhat different question) were obtained in 1982. In answer to the question 'How large, according to you, is the chance that war will break out within the next ten years between the countries of NATO and those of the Warsaw Pact?' 10% answered 'very large', 31% 'fairly large', 37% 'fairly small' and 22% 'very small'.[5]

That a majority is not seriously concerned with an attack from the Soviet Union ('in the nex five years'), appears from data collected in 1981.[6]

Table 2: Concern about a Soviet attack on Western Europe

Qu.: How concerned are you that the Soviet Union will attack Western Europe within the next five years: very concerned, fairly concerned, not very concerned or not at all concerned?

	March 1981		*July 1981*		*October 1981*	
	All	(Best educated)	All	(Best educated)	All	(Best educated)
– Very concerned	8	(7)	6	(2)	10	(8)
– Fairly concerned	24	(13)	22	(19)	32	(21)
– Not very concerned	36	(54)	34	(34)	25	(25)
– Not at all concerned	18	(20)	35	(44)	17	(30)
– Do not know / no answer	15	(6)	4	(1)	7	(5)

There is little variation over time. The better educated are less concerned about the possibility of war with the Soviet Union; they also estimate its likelihood less highly than the mass public (86% consider the probability of war with the Soviet Union to be not very likely or not likely at all (compared to 80% at the mass level).

These outcomes show no difference from a similar question put in July 1980, when 53% thought that the Soviet Union did not constitute a very serious danger to the countries of Western Europe and only 10% thought the opposite ('very serious danger') and 29% considered it 'a fairly serious danger'.[7]

Few (12%) believe that 'in the end the Soviet Union will dominate the world;' 79% do not believe this will happen.[8]

While people do not, in general, seem to think that the chance of a nuclear war is very great, they see little chance of personal survival once a nuclear war would occur: 32% expects certain death, 36% expects a very small chance of survival and only 4% sees a big chance to survive a nuclear war.[9] In another survey, held in January 1981, 71% thought they would not survive a nuclear war.[10]

But, one may argue, a direct Soviet attack against Western Europe may be

unlikely, but the Soviet Union could use its military pressure elsewhere (e.g. in the Middle East) or use it to exercise political pressure. What do people think about these possibilities?[11]

Table 3: Danger of cut-off of oil from the Middle East by the Soviet Union

Qu.: Do you think these is or is not a danger that the Soviet Union will try to cut off the Netherlands' access to Middle East oil? If yes: is this a great danger or not a very great danger?

	All	Best educated
– It is a great danger	18	20
– It is not a very great danger	35	45
– It is not a danger	24	25
– Do not know / no answer	23	10

Table 4: Likelihood of political pressures by the Soviet Union

Qu.: How concerned are you that the Soviet Union will pressure the Netherlands into adopting policies which are chiefly in the Soviet Union's interest: very concerned, fairly concerned, not very concerned or not at all concerned?

	All	Best educated
– Very concerned	5	7
– Fairly concerned	20	13
– Not very concerned	37	51
– Not at all concerned	21	25
– Do not know / no answer	17	5

In the case of a cut-off of the oil supplies the best educated are only somewhat more outspoken. The relative lack of concern shown in table 4 may be misleading, however. This appears from the fact that, in another poll, only 15% expressed approval of the following statement: 'There is no danger to be afraid of from the side of the Soviet Union even if we would be in a weaker military position. The Soviet Union will not misuse a possible preponderance or interfere with our domestic affairs and respect our independence'. 83% disapproved. Among the supporters of unilateral nuclear disarmament this was only slightly less: 75% disapproved and 23% approved.[12]

An effort to rate the various possible threats to the overall security of the Netherlands was also undertaken, in March 1981.[13] The wording of the answer categories and the overlapping in these as well as in the answers (respondents had to select two items on the list) make interpretation of the data not very easy: we can do little more than speculate. The fact that the poll was held early in 1981, makes it understandable that a

Table 5: Threats to the overall security of the Netherlands

Qu.: At present, which two of the items on this list pose the greatest threats to the Netherlands overall security?

	All	Best educated
– The economic demands by the developing countries	9	5
– The possibility of a cut-off in access to Middle East oil	25	28
– The long-term build-up of the Soviet military forces	25	26
– A possible Soviet intervention in Poland	36	38
– The increased competition with the U.S.A. and Japan for raw materials	8	2
– The Soviet military presence in Afghanistan	7	6
– The increased tension between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.	41	55
– The long-term build-up of the U.S. military forces	12	21
– No answer	10	5

Soviet invasion of Poland was among the threats most mentioned. But while 25% saw the long-term build-up of the Soviet military forces as the greatest threat, many more pointed to the more general increase of tensions between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. as a threat to the security of the Netherlands. Remarkable – at least to me – seems the number of those who are afraid of the build-up of the military forces of the United States: 12% at the mass level and 21% among the best educated. There is some evidence therefore, that it is the general build-up of weapons on both sides with the resulting tensions rather than the threat of a Soviet attack which seems to be worrying people. This conclusion is underscored by the outcomes of a related question in the same poll.

Table 6: Responsibility for current tensions

Qu.: Who do you believe is most responsible for the current tensions in East-West relations: the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R.?

	All	Best educated
– The U.S.A.	11	20
– The U.S.S.R.	45	36
– Both are responsible (volunteered)	37	34
– Do not know / no answer	7	2
Total	100	100

While more blame is clearly put on the Soviet Union, almost the same number of people blame each side equally.

While the possibility of a Soviet invasion in Poland constituted a major source of concern, very few were in favour of reactions in the military sphere, such as suspending arms control negotiations (8%) or strengthening our armed forces (6%); 43% preferred either to do nothing at all or condemn the Soviet Union, but undertake no further action. Among the best educated, however, sizeable groups were in favour of either cutting of diplomatic relations (35%) or suspending trade (32%); among this group a larger number (20%) were also in favour of suspending arms control negotiations in case of an invasion.

To summarize the data presented in this section one could say that fear of (nuclear) war is increasing. But the chances of war, according to the public, seem to emanate just as much from the bipolar confrontation between the two superpowers as from the threat posed by the Soviet Union. Few people believe they would survive a nuclear war.

3. Perceptions of relative strength and influence of the United States and the Soviet Union

A major point of debate on the problem of armaments, especially when the possibilities of particular arms control proposals or the necessity of deploying new generations of nuclear missiles are concerned, is the question how the two blocks (and the major protagonists in particular) relate in nuclear and total military strength. Indeed, one of the major claims of spokesmen for the defence establishments is that people would accept the necessity of increased armaments, if they would only know what the military facts are, i.e. that the balance of forces is shifting rapidly in favour of the East. But do people believe that this is the case? The available evidence suggests that this is not the case, although the estimates tend to vary over time. But there is no discernable trend toward increased acceptance of the view that the Soviet Union is ahead in military strength. In October 1979, when asked about the relative strength of NATO and Warsaw Pact, 13% said that NATO was stronger, 33% considered both equally strong and 44% said that, according to them, the Soviet Union was ahead in military strength.[14]

But early in 1981, these figures were rather different (and more or less similar to earlier results obtained in 1977 and 1978[15] and the remained on the same level throughout that year, as shows from table 7.[16]
Remarkably enough, the better educated seem to be even less impressed by the argument that the balance was shifting toward the East (except for estimations of conventional strength in October 1981).

The same picture, but even more clearly, emerges when respondents were asked what they thought about the military balance as it would be in five

Table 7: Perceptions of relative strength of the United States and the Soviet Union

Qu.: How do you think the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. compare at present time in total military strength?

	All				Best educated			
	March 1981	April 1981	October* 1981		March 1981	April 1981	October* 1981	
– The U.S.A. considerably/ somewhat ahead	10	16	16	15	6	23	24	12
– The U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. are about equal	43	48	40	38	61	56	40	28
– The U.S.S.R. somewhat/ considerably ahead	29	28	35	37	25	18	32	56
– Do not know / no answer	19	8	9	11	15	2	4	4

* In October 1981 separate questions were asked for nuclear (first column) and conventional (second column) strength. It is unfortunate that this was not done in the two earlier surveys.

years time.[17] Less people now see the Soviet Union as being ahead and more do so in the case of the United States. The prevailing image is now one of parity in the military balance between East and West.

Table 8: Perception of military balance in five years time

Qu.: And how do you think both countries will compare in total military strength five years from now?

	All		Best educated	
	March 1981	April 1981	March 1981	April 1981
– The US.A. considerably/ somewhat ahead	14	16	16	24
– The U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. are about equal	39	53	55	57
– The U.S.S.R. somewhat/ considerably ahead	17	15	11	10
– Do not know / no answer	30	15	18	9

With respect to estimates of present military strength similar results were obtained in another survey, held in November 1981.[18] This survey also helps us to answer the question, whether there is a relationship between perceptions of the military balance and attitudes toward unilateral steps toward disarma-

ment, as proposed by groups like IKV. People favouring the removal of nuclear weapons, irrespective of what other West European countries do, are indeed less likely to perceive a military advantage to the Soviet Union and vice versa with respect to the United States.

Table 9: Perceptions of military strength and preference for unilateral nuclear disarmament of the Netherlands

	All	In favour of denuclearization	Against denuclearization
– NATO is stronger	16	21	11
– Both about equally strong	47	48	46
– Warsaw Pact is stronger	33	27	42
– Do not know / no answer	3	5	1

With respect to the perceived goals in the military field of the United States and to those of the Soviet Union respectively a large majority believed that the U.S.S.R. seeks military superiority. A smaller group –but still a majority – believes that this is also the case for the United States. Support for the view that the United States seeks (only) parity increased, however, from 24% in October 1981 to 35% in December of the same year.[19]

One common assumption in power politics thinking is that there is perhaps not a perfect, but at least a close connection between military and political power. On the basis of this reasoning one would expect that the perceptions of the relative political influence of the superpowers would not deviate too much from those of their relative military power.

Respondents, however, tend to perceive the United States as being relatively more influential in general terms than militarily. The opposite is the case for the Soviet Union. Or, to be more precise: more people perceive the United

Table 10: Perceived influence of the United States and the Soviet Union, now and five years from now

Qu.: How would you compare the influence of the United States and the Soviet Union on the outcome of world events? And how about five years from now?

	Now		Five years from now	
	All	Best educated	All	Best educated
– The U.S.A. has (somewhat) more influence than the U.S.S.R.	20	33	18	33
– Both are about equal	42	43	36	29
– The U.S.S.R. has (somewhat) more influence than the U.S.A.	21	19	12	15
– Do not know / no answer	17	13	35	22

States to be ahead in terms of (political and economic) influence than with respect to military strength. This is even more pronounced when we compare the estimates of military power and influence 'five years from now'. Thus, while 21% think that the Soviet Union is now more influential than the United States, only 12% think this will be so in five years time. The number of those who have no fixed opinion to this matter increases in this case to about one third, however.[20]

4. Opinions on the United States and U.S. leadership

At the basis of Dutch foreign and defence policy lies the conviction that its security and other interests are very much in agreement with those of the United States, that the security guarantees of the United States to Europe can be relied upon (or, at least, should not be questioned openly) and that American leadership of 'the free world' is desirable. At the same time, some of these beliefs have become under scrutiny and criticism and it is argued by some that the Netherlands are more and more in the grip of virulent anti-Americanism. What do people think about these and related questions?

While a majority is still sympathetic to the United States, this sympathy seems to be diminishing, if not crumbling, probably as a consequence of the present policies of the American administration. Thus, some 55% in 1981 showed a very or somewhat favourable opinion on the United States, while 28% had a somewhat and 8% a very unfavourable opinion. In 1978 the situation in terms of the U.S. perspective was much better: 80% had a favourable and 18% an unfavourable opinion of the United States.[21] Comparable data for the Soviet Union show much less sympathy: 16, 52 and 24% respectively.[22] The same is true when the question is phrased in terms of 'respect' for the Soviet Union and the United States respectively: again, more people respect the United States than the Soviet Union and more show respect than a lack of respect for the United States. But the differences are small.[23] But, according to respondents in a more recent poll (1982), 55% have become more critical of the United States than a few years ago.[24] This was especially the case among supporters of the left (PvdA and D'66: 70%), among women (57%) and among those under thirty (65%).

Respondents also seemed to agree that it matters rather much who is president of the United States (68% agreed to this). That respondents had the present American president in mind when answering this question, is reflected in responses to a question put in April 1981: 'As best as you can judge, do you think that the foreign policy direction taken by the United States under President Reagan is more likely to improve or more likely to harm East-West relations?' 48% of the population and 68% of the best educated chose the

second option, while only 14% and 16% of the best educated chose the first option.[25] Majorities among the best educated as well as the total population also thought it desirable for the Netherlands interest that the United States should exert strong leadership in world affairs.[26] That confidence in the U.S. ability to deal responsibly with world affairs had suffered, however, appears from the following data.[27]

Table 11: Confidence in U.S. ability to deal responsibly with world affairs

Qu.: In general, how much confidence do you have in the ability of the United States to deal responsibly with world problems?

	March 1981	October 1981	December 1981
– A great deal / fair amount	43	39	41
– Not very much / none at all	37	52	56
– Do not know / no answer	19	10	3

In the course of 1981 the public had become more outspoken. The do-not-know/no answer category had diminished considerably in size and, consequently, those who had little or no confidence in U.S. ability to deal responsibly with world problems, had gained the upper hand over those who still had this confidence.

(Increased) criticism of U.S. policies also appears from the data presented in table 12, which allows us to compare the degree to which the United States and the Soviet Union are seen as dangers to world peace.[28]

Table 12: The United States and the Soviet Union as dangers to world peace

Qu.: – Recently, there has been considerable criticism of the armaments plans and the foreign policy of President Reagan. Can you tell me in how far you consider the present America to be a threat to world peace?
– And can you tell me too to what degree you consider the present Soviet Union to be a threat to world peace?

	All	PvdA	D'66	CDA	VVD
The United States:					
– a great danger	37	60	45	24	17
– a small danger	33	27	41	41	42
– no danger	20	8	14	25	32
– do not know / no answer	11	5	–	11	9
The Soviet Union:					
– a great danger	48	47	49	55	46
– a small danger	36	39	35	32	49
– no danger	7	9	10	4	2
– do not know / no answer	9	5	6	9	5

More than one third considers the United States to constitute a great danger to world peace, but in the case of the Soviet Union this is almost a majority; equal numbers consider both to be a small danger, and only 7% considers the the Soviet Union to be 'no danger', while this is 20% for the United States. Unfortunately, the question did not specify in what way the two powers were considered as dangerous (politically, economically, military?), but it is evident that the Soviet Union is still considered to be more dangerous. Things are different, however, when we look at the breakdowns according to party preference (age does not seem to have too much to do with the appreciation, although in the under thirty group almost equal numbers consider the United States and the Soviet Union to be a great danger). 60% of the PvdA supporters think the United States is a great danger to peace, but only 47% say so about the Soviet Union. For the D'66 voters both powers are equally dangerous and those supporting CDA and VVD are much more concerned about the Soviet Union than about the United States. The public is therefore, it seems, much more divided in its judgment of the United States than with respect to the Soviet Union.

This division is reflected in answers to a question put in March 1981, whether the security interests of the United States and the Netherlands are very of fairly much in agreement or (rather) different. 35% only thought that these interests are in agreement, less so than the number of those who thought they were different (40%); 26% were undecided.[29] But still 22% expressed a great deal and 39% a 'fair amount' of confidence that the United States would come to our aid in case of the threat of a Soviet attack. These percentages were even higher among the best educated; this may be related to the fact that few believed that U.S. territory could stay out of a nuclear war in Europe (believed only by 17% of all respondents and 36% of the best educated).[30] Although the questions are not comparable ('being a reliable ally' may not be the same as 'coming to our aid'), respondents seem to have become more sceptible on this point, however.[31]

Table 13: The United States: a reliable ally?

Qu.: Do you consider the United States to be a reliable ally to Western Europe?

	All	Men	Women	PvdA	D'66	CDA	VVD
– Yes	46	57	36	38	41	58	59
– No	39	33	44	55	45	26	24
– Do not know / no answer	16	10	11	8	14	16	17

Scepticism as to the reliability of the United States seems highest among women and, again, those with a more leftist orientation. Almost twice as

many PvdA and D'66 supporters show this scepticism, compared with the supporters of CDA and VVD, which still show strong confidence (58 and 59%). Other data, presented below in tables 14 and 15, seem to contradict somewhat this outcome, but this may be caused by the way the question is worded: it stressed the doubts rather than the expectation as to U.S. support. Table 14 also shows that people still see U.S. support as indispensable for European security.[32] But at the same time 48% agree and 41% disagree that Western Europe should be able to do without American support for its defence.[33] Again, the outcomes seem contradictory to some extent. But since the latter question leaves open so many questions as to the way it has been interpreted by the respondents, it seems dangerous to attach more than minor significance to the results, especially if we take into account that – as shown in section 5 – there is little sympathy to alternatives for the present security arrangements in the framework of NATO.

Table 14: Relations between the United States and Europe

Statement A: 'It is doubtful whether the United States will come to the aid of Western Europe in case of war'
Statement B: 'The Netherlands and the other European countries cannot do without support by America for their security'

	A:	B:
– Agree totally	7	19
– Agree	26	44
– Do not agree of disagree	25	20
– Disagree	32	12
– Disagree totally	10	5

Table 15: A European defence system without American aid

Qu.: At present Western Europe is also dependent on the Unites States for its defence. Do you think that Western Europe should be able to do without American aid for its defence?

	All	30-	30-49	50+	PvdA	D'66	CDA	VVD
– Yes	48	62	47	38	64	67	30	38
– No	41	30	44	47	23	31	58	38
– Do not know / no answer	11	8	9	15	13	2	12	5

Given the fact that support for this statement is strongest among those groups which – in the survey – showed themselves to be most critical of the United States, it seems likely that this is another expression of disenchantment with the United States rather than an expression of support for specific European arrangements. It varies negatively with age.

5. Membership of NATO – neutralism

Although support of NATO has fluctuated somewhat over time to be or to remain a member of the Atlantic Alliance had never become a major point of debate in the Netherlands.[34] The number of those in favour of withdrawal has never exceeded 20% and in recent polls, up to 1981, three out of four have usually favoured membership of NATO. This trend was confirmed by recent NIPO polls in February and April 1981, which showed support by 73 and 78% respectively with only 14 and 17% in favour of withdrawal.[35] But another poll, held in October 1981, seemed to indicate that something is changing; this poll showed a considerable decline in sympathy with 69% in support, 12% in favour of withdrawal and 19% undecided.[36] It remains to be seen whether this indicates the beginning of a trend which will persist or whether it is a temporary or chance deviation of the normal pattern. Some evidence that things are changing comes from the following results.[37]

Table 16: Better to stay in NATO or become a neutral country?

Qu.: All things considered do you think it better for our country to belong to NATO, the Western defence alliance, or would it be better for us to get out of NATO and become a neutral country?

	1977	March 1981	July 1981	November* 1981
– Stay in NATO	78	62	56	72
– Become neutral	11	17	25	26
– Do not know / no answer	11	21	18	2

* These figures are derived from a different poll, in which respondents were asked whether they agreed with the statement 'The Netherlands should become a neutral country and leave NATO'.

A trend toward neutralism seems unmistakable. A breakdown of the figures in the last column by supporters and opponents of unilateral nuclear disarmament shows that while neutralism is still preferred by a minority only, their number is greater among the proponents of unilateral nuclear disarmament (37% compared to 10%), which is not surprising; but 60% of them would prefer to remain member of NATO. Support for neutralism seems also to be higher among the better educated (25% in March and 45% in July 1981) and varies negatively with age.

But at least six out of ten consider NATO membership 'still essential'; this number has not changed since October 1980, when the question was first asked.[38] That membership of NATO is not considered as a nominal affair, but is taken quite seriously, shows from answers to a question whether the Nether-

lands should follow when the majority of the alliance makes a decision on matters of defence and armaments[39]: 61% of those in favour of NATO membership said they should do so. The 37% who said that this was not necessary were then asked whether we should run the risk that nobody in NATO listens to us anymore; 60% said 'no' and 27% said 'yes'. These figures put together show that of all respondents 47% thought that we should follow and cooperate with majority decisions and that 29% said that this was not necessary. The latter category consisted of two groups: 17% which felt that we should not run the risk that nobody would listen to us and 8% who felt we could run this risk, and the remainder was undecided. This implies that the idea that we could be a nominal member only, enjoys no great deal of sympathy.

Related to this problem are three statements to which respondents were asked to react to in a recent poll held in January 1982.[40] The statements were the following.

(1) The Netherlands can defend themselves only in alliance with NATO.
(2) If NATO holds on to nuclear weapons, the Netherlands should resign and leave.
(3) If the Netherlands leaves NATO, it looses almost all of its influence in Europe.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
– Agree completely	21	10	16
– Agree	44	17	37
– Nor agree, nor disagree	21	26	23
– Disagree	9	34	19
– Disagree completely	5	13	5

The outcome reinforces the conclusions reached sofar. While two out of three see NATO membership as essential for security, a considerable group is apparently not convinced that alternative options would imply a loss of all influence. The 27% who would prefer to leave NATO if the organization holds on to nuclear weapons, probably to a large extent are the same people who prefer neutrality. We return to the question of nuclear weapons in section 8.

The question of NATO membership could also be compared with alternative forms of providing for our security.[41]
Both among the mass public and the better educated a majority prefers NATO as it is today or is undecided about the alternatives, each of which enjoys the support of only small minorities.

This seems remarkable to some extent, because at the same time there is only a plurality which has either a great deal or a fair amount of confidence in NATO's ability to prevent an attack on Western Europe.[42]

Table 17: NATO and its alternatives

Qu.: Which of the statements on this card comes closest to your own view on how the Netherlands could best provide for its security?

	All	Best educated
– NATO as it now operates among the countries of Western Europe, the United States and Canada	31	41
– NATO changed, so that Western Europe has more to say in NATO, in return for paying more of the costs	15	11
– Withdraw our military forces from NATO, buth otherwise remain in NATO for such things as policy consultations	11	15
– Establish an independent West European defence force not allied to the United States	11	17
– Rely on a greater accommodation to the interests of the Soviet Union	6	5
– Do not know / no answer	27	13

Table 18: Confidence in NATO's capability to prevent attack on Western Europe

Qu.: How much confidence do you have in NATO's ability to prevent an attack on Western Europe?

	All	Best educated
– A great deal	8	14
– A fair amount	38	39
– Not very much	28	32
– None at all	8	7
– Do not know / no answer	19	9

Apparently, there is also not much confidence that alternative security options would mean an improvement in the present situation. It may also well be that the lack of outspokenness is also due to the fact that, while on the nuclear question and related aspects opinions and attitudes are by now well-developed, this is not the case with respect to possible alternative security arrangements and defence systems which are much less discussed. Consequently, opinions about possible alternatives are almost randomly distributed.

Preference for alignment or neutralism (accepting for a while that this is an acceptable dichotomy) can also be measured in other ways. Related to the question of NATO membership or neutrality is the question whether we should always side with the United States in disputes with the Soviet Union or stay neutral (whether or not our interests are involved). Contrary to questions about NATO membership, these questions show a considerable tendency to prefer neutrality over taking sides. But, admittedly, we are dealing here with a very different situation: actual war, and not general political-military align-

ment in time of non-war for the sake of preventing war. In answer to the question 'In disputes with between the United States and the Soviet Union our government should (a) generally side with the United States or (b) stay out of disputes between the Soviet Union and the United States, even if Dutch interests are involved' only 40% preferred the first option and 54% stated a preference for the second one.[43] A similar question put in October 1981 led to almost the same answers (1% preferred to side with the Soviet Union).[44] The The number of proponents of staying neutral may have increased considerably since 1957, when a related but somewhat different question was asked ('If a war breaks out between the Soviet Union and the United States, should your country stay neutral or should it support one of the powers?'): 22%, then, preferred to stay out of the conflict (but this question referred, it should be emphasized, to 'war' rather than 'disputes').[45]

6. Expenditures for defence

It is often argued, especially by those who see the military balance shifting to the advantage of the Warsaw Pact, that we should strengthen our military forces and increase expenditures for defence; these arguments are most often voiced within the NATO establishment. But despite the opinion of a majority that we should follow up and cooperate with majority decisions on defence and armaments in NATO, there is very little sympathy with proposals to increase defence expenditures, even by those who share the perception that NATO is weaker than its opponent.

In October 1981 respondents were faced with three 'motions', one stating that the West should increase its armaments, one that the West should decrease its armaments and one pleading to keep armaments at the present level

Table 19: Level of armaments

	Reinforce NATO	Keep armaments at present level	Decrease armaments efforts	Total
All	13	65	21	99
NATO is weaker	29	61	9	99
NATO is equally strong as the countries of Eastern Europe	5	74	21	100
Eastern Europe is weaker	6	54	40	100
Pro unilateral nuclear disarmament	6	61	32	99
Anti nuclear disarmament	23	70	6	100

('assuming that there are no results yet of disarmament negotiations with the East').[46]
There is a clear, but not surprising, relation between attitudes on nuclear disarmament and perceptions of force relations on the one hand and preferences with respect to armaments levels on the other hand.

These outcomes confirm earlier results which showed support for increased defence expenditures to be restricted to 11%, with 35% preferring reduced expenditures and 36% in favour of retaining present levels (in October 1980 these figures were 10, 31 and 51% respectively).[47]

When the supporters of increased expenditures were asked whether they would continue this support, if social services might decline as a result, the number of supporters dropped to 8%; among the best educated the number dropped from 19 to 16%. This is one of the few examples of the best educated showing more support for 'tough' measures than the mass public. But in January 1981 55% said 'yes' in answer to the proposition that the Netherlands should stick to the NATO agreement to increase defence expenditures by 3% (40% said 'no').[48]

A somewhat larger degree of sympathy with strengthening our defence efforts also appears to exist when the phrasing of the question is more general and the need to maintain a balance of power is mentioned and when no specific reference is made to defence expenditures.[49]

Table 20: Improvement of security by strengthening military forces or pushing for arms control

Qu.: Do you think the Netherlands can improve its security best by strengthening its own military forces to help NATO maintain a balance of military power with the East or by pushing harder for arms control negotiations to try to reduce military forces on both sides?

	All	Best educated
– Strengthen NATO	21	22
– Push harder for arms control negotiations	44	63
– Do both simultaneously	9	8
– Do not know / now answer	26	7

While many of the mass public are undecided, among the best educated there is a clear majority in favour of pushing for arms control negotiations.

Above (section 2) we have already referred to the outcome that only 10% favoured suspension of arms control talks in case of a Soviet invasion of Poland. In July 1981 56% expressed a feeling that arms control talks with the Soviet Union should start as soon as possible and that the West should not increase its nuclear forces first.[50]

7. Resistance to military attack: use of conventional and nuclear weapons

It is often argued today, especially by people from conservative circles in the United States that Western Europe is in the grip of a wave of neutralism and pacifism and that Europeans are no longer willing to defend themselves. How much substance is there in this claim, especially as regards the Netherlands?

Available public opinion data on this point are confusing and appear inconsistent. One of the reasons for this state of affairs may be that we are dealing here with a highly hypothetical situation. To threaten to defend oneself in case of war and to prepare for the eventual use of nuclear weapons is one thing, but to carry out the threats with all possible consequences is quite another. And one may question whether anyone would really know what he would do in such a situation.

In this section we shall present and discuss a number of data dealing with war and self-defence in general, with the willingness to use force in the case of attack and the use of nuclear weapons in particular.

In answering questions with respect to the possible use of force, people *do* make a distinction between nuclear and conventional force with a larger number accepting the latter compared with the former, as shows from the following results.[51]

Table 21: How to react in case of an attack by the Soviet Union

(a) If the Netherlands were attacked by the Soviet Union with convential weapons we should:	
– resist	73
– not resist	18
– do not know / no answer	9
(b) If the Netherlands were attacked by the Soviet Union with nuclear weapons we should:	
– resist	56
– not resist	33
– do not know / no answer	12

In the latter case one might ask whether the futility of 'defence' prevails in people's minds or the fact that retaliation would have to be carried out by nuclear weapons. Both elements were present in the following question, put in 1981: 'Some people say that a nuclear war would be so terrible, that it would be better to be conquered by the Soviet Union than to fight and defend the Netherlands with all the possible consequences. Do you or don't you agree?' – 37% agreed and 53% did not and would be prepared to fight and accept te consequences.[52]

That something in the order of 35% is a good estimate of the number of nuclear pacifists, appears also from the answers to other questions.[53]

Do you or don't you agree to the following statements:

(1) the use of nuclear weapons is not acceptable under any circumstances, not even if we are attacked with nuclear weapons ourselves
(2) nuclear weapons in Western Europe should only be used to defend the West, if the East would attack with nuclear weapons
(3) if the Eastern bloc would attack Western Europe without using nuclear weapons, we would be justified in using nuclear weapons to bring about an end to the war quickly

	(1)	(2)	(3)
– Agree (completely)	36	51	9
– Disagree (completely)	44	32	74
– Do not know / no answer / undecided	21	18	17

The same number of 36% appears in statement (1). While logically the 32% in statement (2) could include those who are also in favour of the use of nuclear weapons in other circumstances than a first use by the other side, it appears from the context of statement (1) and (3) that this is not generally the case and that they consist largely of the same group of nuclear rejectors. That the option of first use of nuclear weapons is accepted by a very small minority only, appears from statement (3). The same differences between opinions on the use of weapons in general and the use of nuclear weapons appears from two slightly different questions. The first dealt with the various circumstances under which the Netherlands should be prepared to use military force.[54]

Table 22: Under which circumstances would you favour the use of military force by the Netherlands?

	All	Best educated
– Force should never be used	28	35
– If the Netherlands were attacked by the Soviet Union	33	16
– If another member of NATO is attacked by the Soviet Union	28	41
– Do not know / no answer	15	14

The interpretation of this question presents a number of difficulties. First of all it really measures two things: 'loyalty to the allies' and 'willingness to use force'. But the answer categories are also not very clear. It is, for example, difficult to imagine an attack on the Netherlands which would not also be an attack on other NATO countries. Respondents may also be unaware of the obligations under the NATO treaty and, consequently, it is not entirely justi-

fied to consider the expressed reluctance to use the Netherlands armed forces if a NATO ally is attacked as a refusal to keep these obligations.

The other question deals with the use of nuclear weapons by the Western allies in case of an attack. The following answers were given[55]:

	July 1981	October 1981
– NATO should never use nuclear weapons	36	50
– NATO should only use nuclear weapons if Soviet conventional forces threaten to overwhelm Western forces	19	11
– NATO should only use nuclear weapons if the Soviet Union uses them first	32	31
– Do not know / no answer	13	8

Due to the different construction of the question the outcomes are not very well comparable to the other questions on the same theme referred to before. But the general trend seems unmistakable: there is a group of 'complete nuclear pacifists' (which, by the way, had risen from 36% in July to 50% in November 1981 – a trend which is also visible in other West European countries) and those who do not reject all use of nuclear weapons. The latter are divided into two groups: one which would accept the use in retaliation only, and a small minority which would be willing also to consider first use by NATO in response to a conventional attack.

8. Nuclear weapons in or out of the Netherlands?

In connection with the general debate of nuclear weapons in general much attention has been devoted to the proposal to remove nuclear weapons from Dutch territory and Dutch armed forces. This is urged by some of the major peace movements, which see it as an independent disarmament move which could facilitate a multilateral disarmament process. It is summarized in the slogan of the Interchurch Peace Council (IKV): 'Free the world of nuclear weapons and let it begin with the Netherlands'. A number of recent polls included questions on this issue. Some were straightforward and asked respondents whether they agreed with the IKV proposal, others were more general and still others added conditions to the removal of nuclear weapons, such as the likelihood that other countries would follow. In my earlier analysis I have already discussed some of the available data.[56] Let me summarize them here. The picture is somewhat complicated. Polls in 1978 and 1981 revealed that 58 and 54% respectivley supported the IKV proposal (in another poll, also held in 1981, the number of those agreeing (completely) with the proposal was somewhat less: 30 (+ 18%).[57] A more general question, in 1980, gave

65% saying 'no' to the question 'Do you think that there should be nuclear weapons on Dutch territory, or should they be removed?' A more specific question dealing with 'modern nuclear weapons' revealed that 53% opposed their presence in the Netherlands. In two different polls 38 and 46% respectively felt that there should not be nuclear weapons in the Netherlands. Finally – to end this summary –, we also found evidence that we should be cautious in oud conclusions, because if conditions are added in the question, support for removal of nuclear weapons drops considerably. Thus, only 38% said 'yes', when the question was worded as follows: 'Do you think that the Netherlands should remove all nuclear weapons from its territory, even if other countries in East and West are not prepared to do so, or do you think the Netherlands should not do this?' Finally, in one other poll only 24% expressed support for the view that NATO (not the Netherlands alone!) should get rid of its nuclear weapons unconditionally. It all depends, apparently, on how you phrase the questions. This is underscored by the following data.

A very simple question was asked in September 1981 (it was put to Roman Catholics only, but we know from other polls that they do not deviate in their answer patterns from the total population[58]: 'What do you think about the idea "all nuclear weapons out of the Netherlands"?' 61% were in favour, 32% against and 7% gave no answer.[59] Considerably less expressed support

Table 23: Presence of nuclear weapons in the Netherlands

Qu.: As a part of the Dutch role in NATO, do you believe that we should or should not allow nuclear weapons to be present on our soil?

	All	Best educated
– It should no be allowed	43	44
– It should be allowed	35	45
– Do not know / no answer	22	11

Table 24: Good example: no nuclear weapons in the Netherlands

Qu.: The Netherlands should, irrespective of what the other countries in Western Europe do, give the good example and not allow nuclear weapons on its territory; there need not be a guarantee that Eastern Europe will follow. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

	All	PvdA	D'66	CDA	VVD	Best educated
– I agree	56	76	66	47	24	53
– I disagree	41	24	33	46	75	45
– Do not know / no answer	2	0	1	7	1	1

in the following poll, held in March 1981 (table 23).[60] But, remarkable enough, since the question was a 'tougher' one, the number went up again in another poll, held in November 1981 (table 24).[61] Four connected questions on this topic were included in the national election survey, which was also held in 1981.[62]

Table 25: Views on the removal of nuclear weapons from the Netherlands

	Agree totally	Agree	Agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree totally
a. The Netherlands should, if necessary independently of the other NATO countries, give the good example and no longer admit nuclear weapons to the Netherlands at all	27	18	10	28	17
	45			45	
b. The Netherlands should strive for a reduction of NATO's nuclear weapons, irrespective of whether the Soviet Union does the same	21	32	9	27	12
	53			39	
c. The Netherlands should strive for a reduction of NATO's nuclear weapons only if the Soviet Union does this as well	18	34	8	31	9
	52			40	
d. The Netherlands should strive for a reinforcement of NATO's nuclear weapons, in order to negotiate with the Soviet Union from a favourable position	8	19	20	35	27
	27			62	

The interpretation of these results presents a number of difficulties.[63] First of all, it seems that some respondents have not answered the question consistently (thus leaving doubts as to the degree to which everyone has understood the questions). Thus, majorities seem to support both the view that the Netherlands should strive for a reduction by NATO, irrespective of what the Soviet Union does as well as of the view that this reduction should only take place if the Soviet Union does the same.

But the questions can also well be understood in two different ways. They can refer to the admission of additional nuclear weapons (three questions seem to refer to the current debate on the new TNF: deployment before or with negotiations, or only after these have failed). But they can also be interpreted as referring to the existing nuclear weapons as well as to new ones. This reduces the usefulness of the information considerably.

But the number of those in favour of giving 'the good example' (45%) is in line with earlier results. When a distinction is made between 'immediately' and 'not yet', the number of supporters drops considerably, as is shown in Table 26. In April 1981 NIPO collected the following data.[64]

Table 26: Removal of nuclear weapons from the Netherlands

Qu.: Do you (also) wish to see all nuclear weapons removed immediately from the Netherlands, or would you like to see it, but do you think this is not yet possible, or are you against removal of all nuclear weapons from this country?

	All	Those who would 'now' vote for: PvdA	D'66	CDA	VVD
– All nuclear weapons removed immediately	29	45	24	13	12
– Would like to see removed, but not yet possible now	50	41	64	63	57
– Against removal of nuclear weapons	14	9	6	19	27
– Do not know / no answer	7	5	6	5	4

The same is true if the question includes not only the removal of nuclear weapons from the Netherlands, but from the Western European countries in general as well. In March 1981 the following question was asked.[65]

Table 27: Removal of nuclear weapons from Western Europe

Qu.: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'The Western European countries should get rid of all their nuclear weapons, even if the Soviet Union and the United States do not'?

	All	Best educated
– I agree	34	40
– I disagree	47	50
– Do not know / no answer	19	9

In the discussion concerning the removal of nuclear weapons from the Netherlands it is sometimes argued – by opponents – that some of the proponents are 'hypocrites' or 'free riders', in the sense that they wish to enjoy the protection of nuclear weapons, but are unwilling to pay the costs and risks. In this criticism justified? Answers to three related questions throw some light on this problem.[66]

	Agree totally	Agree	Agree nor disagree	Dis-agree	Dis-agree totally	Do not know / no answer
1 Nuclear weapons should be deployed in the Netherlands, as well as in the rest of Western Europe and in the United States	9	27	15	27	19	3
2 Nuclear weapons should be deployed in Western Europe as well as in the United States, but not in the Netherlands	2	8	13	49	25	3
3 Nuclear weapons should be deployed in the United States only and not in Western Europe	4	9	15	49	20	3

It can be argued that there are sound strategic and political arguments to restrain the deployment of nuclear weapons to the United States and, therefore, the 'hypocrite' argument does not carry as much weight in this case as it does in the case of the second statement, i.e. to be in favour of the deployment of nuclear weapons elsewhere in Western Europe, but not in the Netherlands.

A plurality of 46% *dis*agrees with the first statement. But what does this mean? These groups could include the 'hypocrites' and 'free riders' as well as those who are really against nuclear weapons in the United States as well as in the whole of Western Europe. It is question 2 which should provide the answer. The number of those who reject that statement is very large indeed: 74% rejects an exclusive position for the Netherlands and 10% only pleads for that position. If we crosstabulate the responses to the first and the second statement, it appears that most respondents answer consistently. Only a few (some 5% of the whole sample) can truly be called 'hypotrites': they disagree with the first statement and accept the second one. But strangely enough there is also another, though still smaller group (of some 3% of the total sample) which agrees to both statements (table 28).

The same pattern emerges if we cross-tabulate the answers to the first and the third question. Again there are a few who disagreed with the first and agreed with the third statement and also there are some who agreed to both statements. In addition to the 46% who disagreed with the first statement, there are altogether some 7% others who accepted one of the two other statements or both and rejected the deployment of nuclear weapons partially, i.e. not in

Table 28: Deployment of nuclear weapons in the Netherlands, Western Europe and the United States by deployment of nuclear weapons in the United States and Western Europe, except in the Netherlands (in %)

	Nuclear weapons 'everywhere': agree totally	agree	agree nor disagree	disagree	disagree totally
Nuclear weapons in U.S.A. and Western Europe, except in the Netherlands:					
agree totally	5	1	1	2	2
agree	3	8	8	12	4
agree nor disagree	2	10	47	10	8
disagree	36	69	36	66	53
disagree totally	55	13	8	11	54
	101	101	100	101	101

the Netherlands and/or Western Europe as a whole, which would bring the rejecters to a total of 53%.

With respect to the presence of nuclear weapons in the Netherlands, the argument that their removal would help either to prevent war in Europe or a nuclear war, is rejected by large majorities and we can safely discard the thesis that this argument plays a major role in determining people's attitudes in favour of removal. This is underscored by the outcome of the 1982 survey of *Krijgsmacht en Maatschappij*.[67] This survey included the following statement: 'Whether there are nuclear weapons on Dutch territory or not, has hardly any influence on international security'; 42% agreed (totally), 34% disagreed (totally) and 24% took a middle position.

Earlier surveys already showed that there was relatively little belief in the idea often heard in connection with the proposal that nuclear weapons should be removed from the Netherlands, i.e. that this example would be followed by other countries, either in NATO or in the Warsaw Pact. This is confirmed by the ISEO data of June 1981 (1) and the survey of *Krijgsmacht en Maatschappij* of January 1982 (2):

	Agree totally	Agree	Agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree totally
(1) If the Netherlands would no longer admit any nuclear weapons on its territory, other countries would follow our example	4	22	25	36	10
(2) What the Netherlands does with the nuclear weapons, will be followed be other countries	6	24	32	30	8

On the other hand, there is also no widespread agreement with the argument which is often heard from opponents of removal, i.e. that by removing nuclear weapons we would betray our allies: 32% agreed wholly or in part with such a statement, while 43% disagreed and 24% did not want to take sides on this issue or abstained from expressing an opinion.[68]

When it comes to assessing the best way to bring about disarmament, either by taking unilateral steps or by remaining active within NATO (and consequently retaining for the time being a number of nuclear tasks within the alliance), opinions are clearly divided, with more people opting for the second than for the first course. But the latter still obtains the support of 42%. Among PvdA voters this goes up to 66%. D'66 voters are split in the middle and the supporters of CDA and VVD have a clear preference for the first way.[69]

Table 29: Dutch influence on disarmament

Qu.: How do you think the Netherlands can exercise most influence on disarmament and the reduction of nuclear weapons in the world: by unilaterally repealing as much as possible of Dutch nuclear tasks, or by remaining active within NATO and consequently continue to participate in the nuclear tasks of the NATO alliance.

		Those who would 'now' vote for:			
	All	PvdA	D'66	CDA	VVD
Most influence by:					
– remaining active in NATO and retaining nuclear tasks	48.5	27	49	68	79
– giving up nuclear tasks unilaterally as much as possible	42	66	43	25	14
No answer	9.5	7	8	14	7
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

One small comment seems in order. The two alternatives do not present themselves in reality in the way they are represented here. One could remain active in NATO and still make some unilateral moves and vice versa. There is, therefore, also some middle ground between the two options.

Official policies on nuclear weapons are based on a number of assumptions. These include: peace is maintained only through the maintenance of an equilibrium of strength/deterrence; once escalation to the nuclear level starts, it is highly doubtful whether a war could be maintained; a nuclear war limited to Europe is hardly probable; once countries are member of an alliance with nuclear weapons, they should share in the risks involved and they will be

nuclear targets, even if there are no nuclear weapons on one's territory, etc.

Also it is maintained that without nuclear weapons military defence is not possible and that, whatever we try to do about the problem, we shall have to learn 'to live with nuclear weapons'.

The question, then, is: to what extent can the movement against nuclear weapons capitalize on a general rejection of these 'nuclear assumptions', or is it fear and moral outrage – also called 'emotions' – which primarily form the basis of the anti-nuclear movement?

The main argument, of course, in favour of nuclear weapons is that they help to prevent war. Table 30 gives some information on the extent to which this belief is shared.[70]

Table 30: Nuclear weapons and the prevention of war

That a war between the countries of NATO and those of the Warsaw Pact has not taken place so far

– is mainly due to the existence of nuclear weapons	27
– is due somewhat to the existence of nuclear weapons	36
– has nothing to do with the existence of nuclear weapons	37

The results seem clear: 63% believes that the prevention of war has at least some connection with the presence of nuclear weapons so far. But what about the future? Can we get rid of nuclear weapons and are they dispensable in our defence? The responses to three statements on this problem show how divided the public is.

	Agree totally	Agree	Agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree totally
– Military defence without nuclear weapons is impossible in the present situation	12	31	26	22	9
– We shall have to learn to life with nuclear weapons whatever we do	14	44	15	17	10
– The fact that nuclear weapons do exist implies unavoidably that they shall be used some day	11	31	24	25	9

There is a moderate correlation ($r = .44$) between the answers to the first and the second statement. But more people tend to believe that we shall not be able to get rid of nuclear weapons, even though they doubt their necessity

for military defence. There is no correlation between the answer patterns of the first two and the third statement. Optimism and pessimism as to their eventual use seem unrelated to the ideas about the possibility to get rid of nuclear weapons.

Related questions were included in the ISEO survey *Meningen over kernwapens* (1981). There is rather firm agreement that the present equilibrium between East and West is conducive to the maintenance of peace. But on the question whether in this equilibrium nuclear weapons help to prevent or

Table 31: The role of nuclear weapons and the chances of war

	Agree totally	Agree	Agree nor disagree	Dis-agree	Dis-agree totally	Do not know / no answer
1 The present equilibrium between East and West is the best guarantee for peace	15	36	21	20	5	3
2 The use of nuclear weapons on a small scale in Europe shall lead to a world war	15	40	23	16	3	3
3 A war between India and Pakistan in which nuclear weapons would be used shall lead to a world war	6	24	31	32	3	3
4 The presence of nuclear weapons in Europa only increases the chances of war	14	29	16	31	7	3
5 The increase of nuclear weapons in Europe only increases the chances of war	16	33	17	27	5	3
6 If there would be no nuclear weapons in the Netherlands, our country would remain free of a possible attack with nuclear weapons	1	7	14	49	25	3
7 If the Netherlands should decide no longer to admit any nuclear weapon on our territory, this would decrease the chances of a nuclear war	3	17	22	43	12	3

rather add to the danger of war opinion is divided in almost equal parts. And when it comes to the question what additional nuclear weapons would do to the chances of war, the scepticism as to their war-preventing role reaches a majority.

When the answers to the latter two questions are combined, it appears that 12% considers only the increase of nuclear weapons to be dangerous, whereas 43% considers the present situation already dangerous (and *a fortiori* an increase); 43% considers the present situation nor the increase to constitute a danger which could lead to war.

Although it is often argued that the plans to introduce new nuclear weapons in Europe should be seen as the evidence of an effort to create the option of containing a nuclear war to Europe, it is not generally believed that this would actually be possible. A firm majority believes that a nuclear war in Europe would escalate into a world war. But this belief is less firm with respect to a war between India and Pakistan in which nuclear weapons would be used: only 30% believes that this would lead to a world war, compared with 55% in the case of Europe. When the statements 2, 3, 4 and 5 are taken together, it appears that 40% tends to agree with most of these statements; 37% scores predominantly neutral and 23% tends to disagree with most of these statements. Fear of war as measured by these four variables correlates with the political left-right dimension. The more leftist, the stronger is the fear of war.

On the basis of four items included in their survey ISEO/Veldkamp were able to construct a general scale for/against nuclear weapons.[71] By cumulating item scores a general score was calculated. It then appeared that 36% could be considered to be anti-nuclear weapons; 27% obtained a neutral score and another 36% consisted of those who are not against nuclear weapons. Higher scores for anti-nuclear weapons attitudes are obtained among the age group 25-34, among persons with a higher education, humanists and those without a religion and generally among the more leftist-oriented. Supporters of CDA and VVD were predominantly not aginst nuclear weapons (52 and 77% respectively).

It was also possible to construct a scale, based on four items (2, 3, 4 and 5

Fear:	*Attitudes on nuclear weapons:* strongly against	against	neutral	not against	not at all against
– much afraid	39	31	19	9	2
– afraid	18	31	30	17	4
– neutral	5	19	38	28	10
– not (so) afraid	3	10	6	41	29

(tau = .42, p. < .001)

in table 31), to obtain one measure of 'fear of nuclear war'. It appears that anti-nuclear weapons attitudes are closely related to fear of nuclear war. The same correlation exists between fear of war and support for the IKV proposal to remove nuclear weapons from the Netherlands.

Fear:	*Attitudes towards the IKV proposal:* agree (completely)	neutral	disagree (completely)
– much afraid	79	9	12
– afraid	66	13	21
– neutral	36	29	35
– not (so) afraid	20	11	69

(tau = .44, p. < .001)

Fear of nuclear war seems to play a major role, therefore, among the motives of those favouring removal of nuclear weapons. At least, this seems to be so in the eyes of the general public.[72]

In section 12 we shall come back to this question. We shall, then, present some findings which give evidence of the existence of a more general 'anti nuclear' sentiment as an independent dimension in popular attitudes on the armaments problem.

9. Deployment of new nuclear missiles in the Netherlands

Due to the concrete nature of the choices to be made, the political debate concerning nuclear weapons has concentrated since 1979 on the question whether as a part of a more general program of modernization the Netherlands should co-operate in the decision taken by the NATO countries to deploy the new nuclear missiles, unless the results of arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union make this deployment unnecessary. The Netherlands are supposed to receive 48 cruise missiles, but so far the government, forced by parliament and public opinion, has postponed a final decision on this matter.

Earlier analyses showed the existence of a strong opposition to this deployment. Polls held in February and April 1981 showed rejections by a margin of 62 to 30% and by 68 to 28% respectively. A more detailed question put in a different survey showed that 46% rejected deployment unconditionally, while 36% was prepared to accept the missiles under certain circumstances and 12% only accepted the missiles unconditionally.[73]

Recent information underscored these outcomes. Opposition tends to remain high and stable, if it is not increasing. I shall give the data below. But

first I want to discuss two related questions: the first has to do with actual knowledge on this question, the second with the expected results of deployment of the new missiles.[74]

The public does not seem to be completely informed on the question whether there are actually already missiles on Dutch territory which can reach the Soviet Union. In July 1981 46% said 'yes' and 48% said 'no'; in October these figures were 42 and 48%. Among the best educated these figures were 32 and 52 and 33 and 46% respectively.

Would the deployment (of 'nuclear weapons': no reference was made to *new* nuclear weapons) in Western Europe help to prevent Soviet attack? In July 1981 56% said that indeed the (new) nuclear weapons would make a Soviet attack less likely. But in October 1981 this figure had decreased to 42% and the number of those who thought it made a Soviet attack more likely, had increased from 32 to 40%. But it is not true – as is alleged by some of the opponents of the 'new peace movement' – that people are more worried by the missiles 'on their own side' than by those on the Soviet side. It is true, however, that this sentiment is relatively stronger in the Netherlands than elsewhere in Western Europe, as appears from the following data.[75]

Table 32: Threats to the security of Western Europe

Qu.: What, in your opinion, threatens the security of your country most?

	France	West Germany	Great Britain	Nether-lands
– The presence of nuclear missiles in Eastern Europe	41	58	43	29
– The future deployment of new U.S. missiles in Western Europe	19	33	29	24
– Both	7	2	–	31
– Do not know / no answer	33	7	28	16

After this excursion I return to public attitudes on the deployment of the new missiles. Questions concerning this topic have been asked a number of times in 1981. Unfortunately, differences in wording complicate comparisons with earlier questions in the same year... In the USICA poll, held in October 1981, questions were included in which the general question whether one was in favour or against deployment of the cruise missiles was preceded by the following statement: 'The Russians have 450 nuclear warheads on new medium-range nuclear missiles – the SS 20s – aimed at Western Europe, while NATO has no such missiles aimed at the Soviet Union'. One can, of course, question the correctness and completeness of this statement, but since this is not the topic of this paper, I will merely note that the sug-

gestion conveyed in this statement is clear. And it is interesting to see whether and how it effects the responses. Based on the various surveys the following table can be drawn[76] (data in brackets refer to the 'best educated').

Table 33: Attitudes on the development of new nuclear missiles in the Netherlands (1981)

	February	April	July	October	
				with additional info	without
– In favour	30	28	44	36 (29)	26 (23)
– Opposed	62	68	51	56 (67)	67 (77)
– Do not know / no answer	8	4	5	8 (4)	7 (–)

But, one may argue, the political decision is not now phrased in terms of a yes-no choice. The question is whether one wants to reject or accept the missiles unconditionally or only if negotiations are going on at the same time or when

Table 34: Attitudes on deployment of new nuclear missiles in relation to arms control negotiations (1981-1982)

Qu.: Listed on this card are four different opinions about (the) new nuclear missiles. Which of these opinions is closest to your own?

	March	July	October	December	July 1982
– Under no condition should we agree to station these new nuclear missiles in the Netherlands	39 (39)	38 (57)	47 (55)	52	44
– We should accept stationing of the new nuclear missiles only if arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union have failed	15 (20)	20 (11)	21 (23)		20
– We should accept stationing of the new nuclear missiles in the Netherlands only if there are arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union at the same time	16 (21)	22 (20)	18 (21)	43	15
– We should accept stationing of nuclear weapons without first insisting on for arms control negotiations	8 (10)	9 (8)	7 (1)	7	8
– Do not know / answer	21 (11)	11 (3)	8 (–)	–	14

these have demonstrably failed. This is the way in which the question has also been phrased and put a member of times. The results are given in table 34. Unconditional opposition seems on the increase and reached a majority in December 1981. The best educated are clearly more opposed to the missiles than the total population. In addition, we note that – basing us on the July 1981 data[78] – this opposition is most pronounced among:

– those who oppose any use of military force	86%
– those who would stay out of U.S.-S.U. disputes	71%
– those preferring neutrality over NATO	83%
– those 'not at all' worried about a Soviet attack	61%
– those who prefer arms control negotiations first to strengthening NATO first or doing both simultaneously	70%
– those who oppose any use of nuclear weapons	87%
– those who think that having nuclear weapons in Western Europe makes a Soviet attack more likely	78%
– those who want to give up all nuclear weapons on Dutch soil	90%
– those who believe that the U.S.A. can stay out of any nuclear conflict in Europe	68%
– those who believe it is better to be conquered by the Soviet Union than to risk nuclear war	77%
– PvdA supporters	71%
– 18-24 years olds	61%

There definitely seems to be a hard core of opposition of some 40-50%. An additional 30% or so seems to be wavering and is likely to be influenced by the information given and the chances of arms control negotiations. Half of these tend to share the opposition if faced with a straightforward question. The most recent poll (August 1982) led to 68% opposing and only 25% favoring the deployment of the cruise missiles.[79]

To end this section, I want to refer to one other question on the same topic[80], which was phrased somewhat differently: 'In 1979 NATO has decided to deploy 572 new nuclear weapons in Europe, the so-called cruise missiles (slightly incorrect – Ph. E.). A decision by the Netherlands to deploy 48 of these cruise missiles in our country was then postponed to December of this year. What do you think the Second Chamber is going to do in December? And what would you do yourself?'

	The Second Chamber will:	I would myself:
– agree to the development of all 48 cruise missiles	23	24
– agree to deploy a smaller number of missiles	51	21
– reject all deployment in the Netherlands	18	58
– do not know / no answer	8	6

A clear majority (58%) opposes all deployment. But only 18% expects the Second Chamber to take that decision; 51% expects the deployment of a smaller number of the cruise missiles. Scepticism as to the likelihood that the government, supported by the parliament, will follow public opinion also appears from another survey, which showed that only 28% expected that the government would probably (7% certainly) prevent the deployment of new missiles in the Netherlands; 50% expected that this would probably not (13% certainly not) happen.[81]

10. The neutron bomb

Another focus of the opposition against nuclear weapons was the plan to introduce the so-called neutron bomb in the NATO arsenals. Opposition against this plan was particularly strong in the Netherlands, until April 1978, when President Carter deferred a decision to produce this weapon (a decision afterwards formally taken by President Reagan, in 1981). In recent surveys a number of questions were also included on this issue. Unlike the question of the new nuclear missiles, the public is relatively well-informed. In the Netherlands 85% said that they had heard about this bomb (in some of the other countries of Western Europe this was much lower, ranging from 55% in Belgium to 83% in the Federal Republic of Germany).[82] Those who had heard of the neutron bomb, were then asked whether they thought it likely or unlikely that the introduction of the neutron bomb would increase the chances of escalation in a war with the Soviet Union to the nuclear war. In the Netherlands (again: more than in all the other countries where the question was also asked) 59% said that they felt the introduction of the neutron bomb would increase these chances. But less people (41%) thought that the neutron bomb would make a Soviet attack more likely, while 40% thought that it would help to prevent such an attack: 19% was undecided on this score. These figures help to explain why large majorities reject both the U.S. decision to produce the neutron bomb as well as its deployment in Europe (including the Netherlands).

Respondents were also supplied with additional information telling them of the uses of the neutron bomb to counter Soviet superiority in tanks. This had some positive effect on the degree of support for this weapon.[83]

Table 35: Production of the neutron bomb by the United States

	All		Best educated	
	with additional info	without	with additional info	without
– Strongly favour	7	–	3	1
– Favour somewhat	15	12	17	10
– Oppose somewhat	8	18	17	10
– Strongly oppose	60	69	46	52
– Do not know / no answer	3	–	4	2
– Not applicable (not heard about N-bomb)	7	–	13	17

Opposition against deployment of the neutron bomb was even higher[84]:

Table 36: Deployment of the neutron bomb

	March 1981		October 1981	
	All	Best educated	All	Best educated
– Favour deployment	17	25	11	14
– Oppose deployment	58	59	69	80
– Do not know / no answer	14	12	5	3
– Not applicable (not heard about N-bomb)	12	4	15	3

Opposition seems to have increased even more after President Reagan's decision to proceed with the production of the neutron bomb as planned.

11. Attitudes on arms control and disarmament negotiations

Faced with a choice between 'pushing harder for arms control negotiations to try to reduce military forces on both sides' and 'strengthen its military forces to help NATO maintain a balance of power with the East' the Dutch clearly prefer the first course (by a margin of 44 to 21%, in March 1981).[85] In July 1981 similarly 56% expressed support for the statement that the West should begin talks as soon as possible, while only 10% thought that it should strenghten its nuclear forces first (26% preferred to do both simultaneously).[86] This preference for arms control negotiations above strengthening military forces also shows from other data: 47% agreed (in April 1981) that a summit meeting between Reagan and Brezhnev would improve the international situation, 55% supported the view (in the same survey) that the SALT talks should be resumed, while 35% thought this should only be done after

the U.S.S.R. has become less aggressive. In addition, 51% supported the idea of a new disarmament conference in Europe, while few thought that now it was not the right time (18%), or that such a conference was not a good idea, because there were other opportunities to negotiate about disarmament (10%); (only) 13% thought the conference a bad idea, because recent Soviet actions showed the need to strengthen the defence of the West rather than reducing its defence.[87]

There thus seems to be only a small group which stresses the need to strengthen the military force of the West before one can enter into negotiations with the other side. Yet the majority does not want to pursue negotiations at all costs. Thus, in answer to a question what would cause the respondents to favour the Netherlands suspending further efforts to improve the East-West relations, 27% mentioned a Soviet invasion of Poland (53% of the best educated did so), 19% (28% of the best educated) mentioned interference by the Soviet Union with access to Middle East oil and 18% (26%) mentioned 'severe Soviet political pressure on Western Europe'[88], while other categories were mentioned (much) less often (more answers were possible). But when faced with the question how the West should react to a Soviet invasion of Poland only 10% mentioned suspending arms control with the Soviet Union.[89]

There was a clear division over the question whether the West should accept the Soviet proposal that NATO and the Soviet Union should stop deploying new mediumrange nuclear missiles in Europe[90]: 43% (and 34% of the best educated) thought that 'the West should reject this proposal, because the Soviet Union already has many missiles which can hit West European cities, while NATO has no missiles on the European continent which can hit Soviet cities'. 46% (62% of the best educated), however, thought that 'the West should accept this proposal, because stationing new nuclear missiles in Western Europe which could hit the Soviet Union would increase the danger of war'.

While a clear majority (61%) thought it unlikely that results of the East-West talks would be forthcoming in the next two years, there was also a considerable belief (contrary to most of the other countries where this question was also asked) that both the Soviet Union and the United States were making serious efforts to reach successes (62% thought so about the United States and 56% thought so about the Soviet Union).[91] Earlier, 46% said that they considered the various Soviet proposals to be 'an attempt to divide and weaken the western alliance' rather than (38%) showing 'a genuine concern for peace'.[92]

12. Interest, knowledge and involvement

It is often said that public opinion data should be treated with care, because opinion surveys usually do not distinguish between those who are interested in the problem and/or knowledgeable on the subject and those that are not. This distinction is necessary not only if one wants to find out what people 'really' think (uninterested people may just say what comes to their mind, what they have just heard or what they perceive to be the 'socially correct' answer), but also when one wants to explore the possible impact on the political behaviour of the respondents and the political significance of the distribution of opinions which one finds. Are people willing to act upon their conviction, or is their interest marginal compared to other issues? Are they willing to support initiatives to bring about changes in the desired direction? Etc. Three out of four people say that they are seriously concerned about nuclear weapons[93], but what does this really signify? How strong is this sentiment? In this respect the opinions of those who are involved in the problem and strongly committed to a particular opinion may be much more relevant (or at least relevant in a different way) than the views of those who have only a marginal interest or are not really informed at all.

What do we know about these aspects with regard to the subject matter discussed in this paper? First of all: *interest*. We do have some measure of public interest. Table 37 gives the responses to a question asked in March 1981.[94]

Table 38: Interest in questions of national defence and security

Qu.: How closely do you follow the news about national defence and security issues? Do you follow that news very closely, fairly closely or not very closely? Or don't you follow that news at all?

	All	Best educated
– Very closely	14	24
– Fairly closely	34	45
– Not very closely	34	26
– Not at all	12	4
– Do not know / no answer	6	2

That the figures are much higher for the best educated than for the mass public is not surprising. Surprising – at least to me – is the degree of interest expressed: almost half say that they follow the news either fairly or very closely. Some 'social desirability' effect may be at play here.

The figures are rather similar, however, to those coming out of a related question asked in June 1981. In response to the statement 'I follow all develop-

ments in the field of nuclear weapons as closely as possible' 31 and 9% replied that they respectively agreed or agreed completely with the statement and 10 and 31% said the exact opposite; 19% took a middle position.[95] Among the best educated 56% agreed with the statement. Women with lower education only showed least interest (25%).

Then, there is the *knowledge* factor. This is, of course, important to judge the quality of the information gathered in opinion surveys. Little information on the objective state of existing knowledge is available on this point. As we have seen above, a large majority of the public in the Netherlands had heard about the neutron bomb, but it was less well-informed about the presence/absence of nuclear missiles in the Netherlands which can reach the Soviet Union. In another poll 62% gave a correct answer to the question what NATO is; 31% gave a wrong answer and the rest said they did not know.[96] These figures are not very impressive. More relevant, perhaps, is what the public itself and observers of public opinion think about the degree of both available and necessary knowledge and the consequences to be attached to public opinion. What do we know about this? The evidence is contradictory: in an earlier survey (1977) 64% agree to the statement 'Problems such as the

Table 39: Expertise in and importance of public opinion on defence matters

	Agree completely	Agree	Agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree completely
– The essentials of defence problems can also be understood by those who are not experts	9	31	38	27	5
– As a non-expert it is almost impossible to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of removing nuclear weapons from the Netherlands	11	35	26	20	8
– If the majority of the population thinks that nuclear weapons should be removed from the Netherlands, this should happen	23	38	19	15	5
– What should happen to the nuclear weapons in the Netherlands, should ultimately be left to our parliament	13	36	19	22	10

relations between East and West, the unification of Europe and other such problems are too complicated for people like myself'.[97]

In 1982 two related questions were asked on the available and necessary expertise and two others on the consequences to be attached to public opinion[98]; 40% of the population agrees (completely) that defence problems can well be understood by those who are not experts and 32% disagrees. But when it comes to a more concrete example of such problems, an opposite picture emerges: 46% affirms the difficulty of weighing the pros and cons of the removal of nuclear weapons for the layman! The relationship between the two answer patterns is the weak ($r = -.18$) but in the expected direction. Not all those agreeing with the first statement disagreed with the second one.

A similar inconsistency in answers can be discovered with respect to the two other questions: 61% feels that the opinions of the majority of the population should be decisive for what happens to nuclear weapons in the Netherlands. This seems a clear vote of confidence in the democratic process. But only 32% draws the consequence from this by concluding that the final decision should, therefore, *not* be left to the parliament; 49% thinks that it should (an explanation for this discrepancy could be that people feel that the opinions of 'the people' should be decisive, but that, of course, parliament is to take the final – formal – decision). But there is a correlation in the expected direction between the answers to both questions, but it is rather weak ($r = -.23$). Thus, both the public's judgment on its qualifications to form a considered opinion and its attitudes on the role of a majority view on the matter of removing nuclear weapons are ambiguous and contradictory.

One interesting effort to establish a reliable measure of involvement in problems of public concern has been developed by P. H. van Westendorp.[99] This measure allows to study the development of involvement over time, to evaluate the meaning of opinions expressed by people on social problems and to study groups of people with different degrees of involvement. The measure of involvement is derived by calculating scores for (subjective) levels of interest and knowledge, topical perception ('which issues preoccupy many people?'), cognitive involvement (issues read or spoken about) and emotional involvement (issues concerned about); action disposition is also measured. By substracting from raw data those with the lowest degree of interest, involvement and action disposition one can get at the 'hard core' of people which are really committed and/or have strong opinions on a particular topic and separate them from those that are not involved. By comparing involvement with one topic with the general level of involvement with a whole range of topics, one can arrive at a measure of relative involvement. Every three months involvement with 36 'standard' problems and 9 'current' problems is measured, which enables to judge to what degree subjects remain on or disappear from the

'public agenda'.

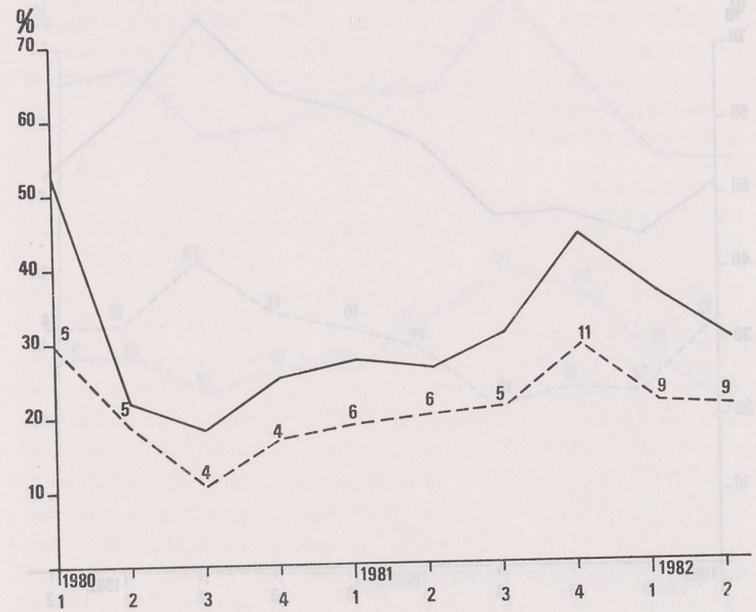
One interesting result of the application of this method was the following.[100] One of the items in the list of standard problems is the problem of armaments and disarmament, described as 'the arms race between countries, atomic armaments, Netherlands and NATO, disarmament and peace negotiations etc.' By way of experiment the reference to *atomic* weapons was left out in one of the regular surveys. Results show that involvement in problems of armament and disarmament drops considerably if this reference is not made. This drop cannot be explained by reference to general variations in involvement over time, which remained constant over the period (1980).

The 'profile of involvement' with regard to armaments questions (including atomic weapons) is very similar to the profile for 'nuclear energy', while the profile for armaments questions (without mentioning atomic weapons) is different and more similar to the profile for 'chances of war'. 'Modernization of nuclear weapons' shows a similar profile to the first and the profile for 'Netherlands and NATO' is similar to the second. The author(s) conclude that it is a general concern with 'the atom' which leads to a high degree of involvement with both the problems of nuclear weapons and nuclear energy. The relationship with the more general problem of armaments and chances of war is weaker. The latter lead to much less involvement. 'Modernization of nuclear weapons' is characterized by a high level of emotional involvement and a high action disposition, which supports the view that this problem appeals mainly to a restricted group of people (special interest groups).

Among the other results is a confirmation of the often heard argument that involvement in problems of foreign affairs is relatively low, compared to domestic problems. How 'topical knowledge' (the perception of general interest in and concern with a specific problem), 'general involvement' and 'action disposition' vary over time, is portrayed in figures 1, 2 and 3, which show these variations with respect to the problems of war and peace in general, the problem of nuclear weapons and nuclear energy respectively. These profiles show how involvement, especially with respect to the latter two problems, gradually increased until it reached a maximum toward the end of 1981 (coinciding with the demonstration in Amsterdam on November 21, 1981), and then decreased again, remaining at a higher level than in 1980, however.[101] These profiles underscore the remarks made above with respect to the linkage between 'nuclear weapons' and 'nuclear energy'.

Bearing in mind that results of surveys which combine the problem of nuclear weapons with problems of war and peace in general or which focus on nuclear weapons probably lead to an overestimation of concern with the war problem in general, we turn to other data, which give additional information on the degree and character of concern with nuclear weapons. They deal in particular

Figure 1

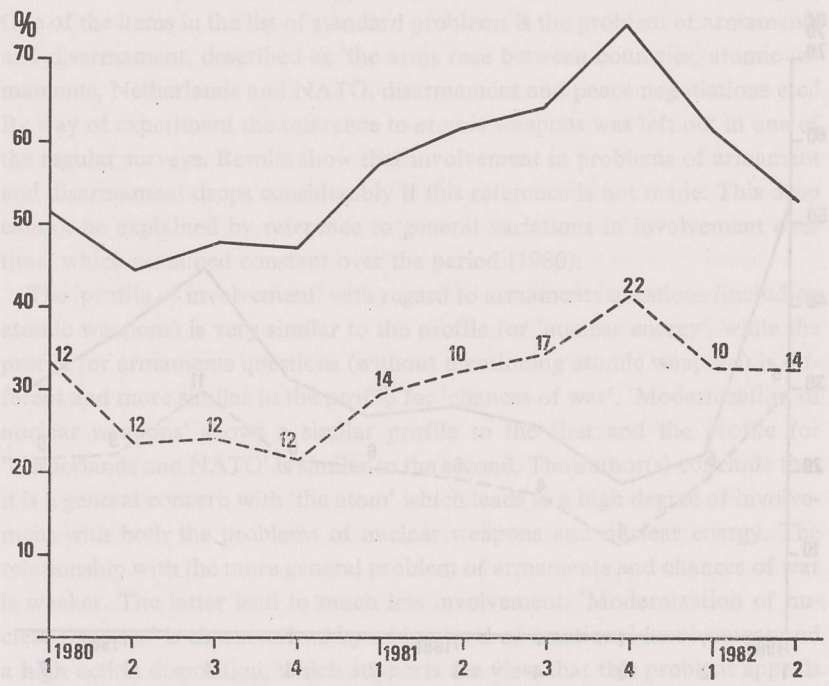


Involvement profiles *'chance of war'* (quarterly figures)
——— = topical perception
– – – – – = general involvement (levels: high and medium-high)
The figures indicate 'action disposition'
Source: NSS MDI

with the degree of support for demonstrations as a means to show one's opposition to established policies (table 40, p. 540).[102]

That the problem is taken seriously and that few people believe the claim that the peace movement is but a tool of Soviet foreign policy seems evident. But at the same time the problem is apparently so frightening and so overwhelming, that people turn to apathy rather than to action: 38% state that they rather not think about nuclear weapons at all, and another group of some 10% apparently prefers to take a neutral position. But that leaves a group of some 50% which not only rejects nuclear weapons, but also expresses a remarkable show of sympathy with people demonstrating against nuclear weapons (48%);

Figure 2

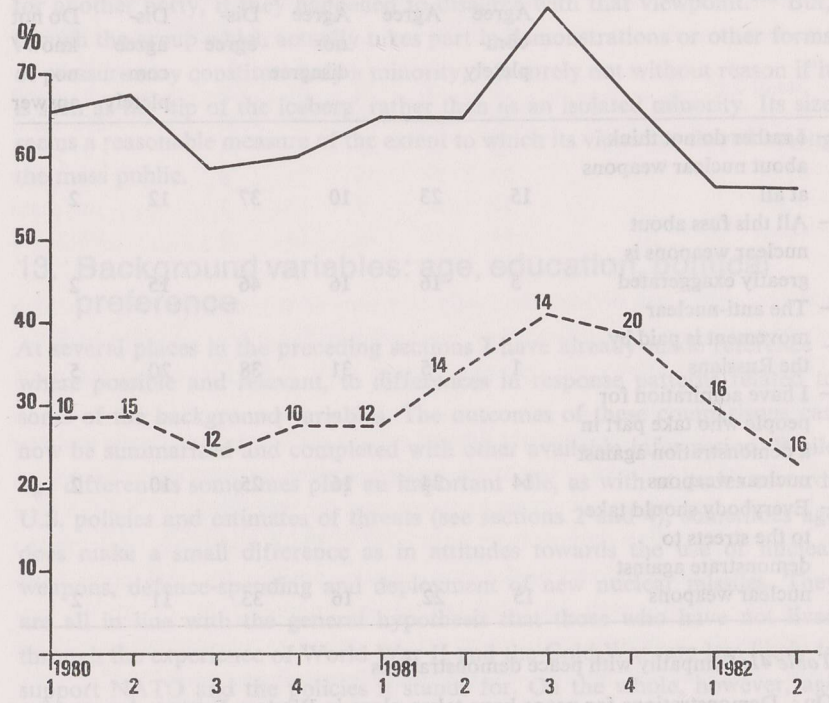


Involvement profiles 'armament/disarmament' (quarterly figures)
———— = topical perception
– – – – – = general involvement (levels: high and medium-high)
The figures indicate 'action disposition'
Source: NSS MDI

of these an only somewhat smaller group of 37% thinks that everyone should follow the example of the demonstrators. But a group of the same size shares the opposite view. But, admittedly, demonstrations are only one form of action and the fact that one does reject demonstrations, does not necessarily imply that one is not prepared to undertake any action at all. The attitudes towards demonstrations correlates strongly with attitudes towards nuclear weapons in general (tau = .36), fear of nuclear war (tau = .31) and – to a lesser extent – with attitudes towards the Eastern bloc (tau = –.17).

That there is an amazing degree of support (at least at this verbal level)

Figure 3



Involvement Profiles *‚nuclear energy'* (quarterly figures)
———— = topical perception
– – – – – = general involvement (levels: high and medium-high)
The figures indicate 'action disposition'
Source: NSS MDI

with the group – admittedly a small minority – which actually does take part in the demonstrations also shows from the results of another poll, held by NIPO in December 1981, just after the massive demonstration in Amsterdam on November 21, 1981. 94% stated that they had heard or read about the demonstration and 76% of these stated that it had made a favourable impression on them.[103] This result is confirmed by the outcomes of a poll comparing views in four Western European countries (but held somewhat earlier (table 41).[104]

Table 40: Intensity of attitudes with respect to nuclear weapons

	Agree completely	Agree	Agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree completely	Do not know / no answer
– I rather do not think about nuclear weapons at all	15	23	10	37	12	2
– All this fuss about nuclear weapons is greatly exaggerated	5	16	16	46	15	2
– The anti-nuclear movement is paid by the Russians	1	5	31	38	20	5
– I have admiration for people who take part in a demonstration against nuclear weapons	14	34	16	25	10	2
– Everybody should take to the streets to demonstrate against nuclear weapons	15	22	16	33	11	2

Table 41: Sympathy with peace demonstrations

Qu.: Demonstrations for peace have taken place in Western Europe. Are you personally sympathetic to these demonstrations?

	Netherlands	France	Great Britain	West Germany
– Totally in sympathy	46	22	23	23
– Mostly sympathetic	33	28	29	36
– Mostly unsympathetic	9	13	15	22
– No sympathy at all	8	21	24	16
– Do not know / no answer	4	16	9	3

Majorities show sympathy with the demonstrators in all four countries, but this sympathy is even stronger in the Netherlands. But showing support in words or in answering an opinion poll is not the same as putting these words into practice. Thus, for instance, I found little evidence for the suggestions that the nuclear weapons issue played an important role in determining the behaviour of the voters in the 1981 parliamentary elections in the Netherlands, in spite of the fact that this issue was among the most discussed items in the campaign preceding the elections and in spite of the fact that 17% of the respondents in two different opinion polls had declared that the point of

view of the party of their choice on nuclear weapons would be a reason to vote for another party, if they happened to disagree with that viewpoint.[105] But, though the group which actually takes part in demonstrations or other forms of pressure may constitute only a minority, it is surely not without reason if it is seen as the 'tip of the iceberg' rather than as an isolated minority. Its size seems a reasonable measure of the extent to which its views are shared among the mass public.

13. Background variables: age, education, political preference

At several places in the preceding sections I have already made reference – where possible and relevant, to differences in response patterns related to some of the background variables. The outcomes of these comparisons can now be summarized and completed with other available information. While age differences sometimes play an important role, as with attitudes towards U.S. policies and estimates of threats (see sections 2 and 4), sometimes age does make a small difference as in attitudes towards the use of nuclear weapons, defence-spending and deployment of new nuclear missiles. They are all in line with the general hypothesis that those who have not lived through the experience of World War II and the Cold War, are less likely to support NATO and the policies it stands for. On the whole, however, age does little to explain the differences which we find.[106]

The best educated tend to differ on a number of issues with the population as a whole. Examples of this are the use of nuclear weapons and force in general, support for neutralism, deployment of new nuclear missiles and support for arms control over strengthening one's own military position. Like the young, the best educated tend to be more critical of established NATO policies and 'tough' attitudes towards the East (the small number of university-educated in the samples should caution against drawing unwarranted conclusions, however).[107]

Differences in party alignment lead to important differences in world view. These differences, by and large, neatly follow the left-right spectrum, as we already have seen a number of times on the preceding pages. Tables 39 and 40 serve as an illustration of this pattern. They are based on a general 'attitude on nuclear weapons' scale, derived from scores on the four items in table 25.[108]

The picture that emerges in table 41 shows that, on the one hand, adherents of D'66 and PvdA show a similar distribution over the five positions with much internal division, but a certain preference for position 3, which can be labeled 'rather negative'. On the other hand, adherents of CDA and, even more so, those of VVD and the right-wing small parties show a very different

Table 41: Attitudes to nuclear weapons by party preference

	Positive				Negative	Total
	0	1	2	3	4	(N =)
– Small left	5	6	12	21	*55*	99 (99)
– PvdA	16	18	19	*25*	22	100 (379)
– D'66	20	16	*20*	*25*	18	99 (205)
– CDA	37	*27*	18	12	6	100 (504)
– VVD	*58*	21	9	10	2	100 (235)
– Other (right)	51	16	14	14	5	100 (74)

pattern, much less divided internally and skewed towards position 0, which could be labeled 'least negative' or 'most prepared to accept nuclear weapons'. The small left shows the opposite picture with 55% supporting the most negative position.

Table 42 shows this left-right dimension in a different way. Again we have underlined for the sake of clarity the highest percentage, this time in each row. The most positive group draws its supporters for two thirds from CDA and VVD, while finding support from only 20% of PvdA and D'66, while on the other hand the supporters of the most negative position for 56% come from these two parties, with the small left adding another 26%. Of all the respondents the adherents of position 4 form only a small group, however, of 14%. Together with position 3 they are still less than one third.

Table 42: Party preference by attitudes towards nuclear weapons

	Positive				Negative
	0	1	2	3	4
Small left	1	2	5	8	*26*
– PvdA	13	23	29	36	*39*
- D'66	9	11	17	*20*	17
– CDA	40	*44*	37	23	14
– VVD	*29*	16	9	9	2
– Other (right)	*8*	4	4	4	2
All	100	100	101	100	100

The skeweness of this distribution compared with other measures of nuclear opposition which I have presented in the preceding sections shows that, perhaps, this measure of nuclear attitudes does not give us a good indication of the distribution of attitudes on this point, after all, although it does show clearly the extent to which the political spectrum on this matter in terms of party alignment consists of two clusters, left and right, with little in between, rather than of a continuum. This is underscored by the data presented below,

which show how adherents to the four major parties differ in their judgement on a number of defence-related questions.[109] Each of the fourteen shows a neat left-right pattern. I calculated an 'average score' on these fourteen issues,

Table 43: Attitudes on defence-related problems by party preference

	PvdA	D'66	CDA	VVD
– Never use military force	40	33	13	11
– Prefers NATO to neutrality	37	60	76	78
– Side with United States in disputes	26	29	53	63
– Never use nuclear weapons	52	49	18	15
– Favours LRTNF deployment	27	28	59	78
– Deploy LRTNF under no condition	56	51	20	16
– Decrease defence-spending	54	37	20	13
– Give up nuclear weapons from Dutch soil	62	53	22	14
– United States should give up nuclear weapons	38	35	13	9
– 'Better red than dead'	48	51	30	16
– Accept neutron weapon in Western Europe	7	18	25	51
– U.S. leadership is desirable	46	61	61	81
– U.S.-Dutch security interests agree	31	39	40	51
– Has confidence in U.S. ability in world affairs	34	48	58	71

for each of the parties (taking into account the 'direction' of each of the questions), which led to the following overall picture:

- PvdA 60
- D'66 52
- CDA 33
- VVD 23

Voters for PvdA and D'66 on the one hand and those preferring CDA or VVD on the other hand clearly form two different groups.

Finally, I want to say a few words about the labels 'pacifism', 'nuclear pacifism' and 'neutralism'. In political debate often no distinction is made between either nuclear pacifism and 'total' pacifism on the one hand and between pacifism and neutralism – which are seen as complementary, if not identical – on the other hand. Rejection of the use of military force, either nuclear or all military force, should lead logically, it is said, to preference for a policy of neutrality and international abstentionism. From our data we can draw conclusions about the degree to which the groups concerned do also make this distinction or accept the logical identity/clomplementarity.[110] We can also see to what extent the pacifism/non-pacifism and the neutrality/support of NATO-Western alliance dimension are strong or weak predictors of other defence-related attitudes and can, therefore, be used as significant labels for the attitudes of people.

With respect to the first question we can draw some firm conclusions. Defining 'pacifism' as the attitude of those who oppose the use of force 'even if one's country or another country is attacked by the Soviet Union' (see table 22) and 'nuclear pacifism' as the attitude of those opposing NATO's use of nuclear weapons of any kind under any circumstances (see end of section 7), we can – combining the two – arrive at the following table.

Table 44: Pacifism and nuclear pacifism

		Pacifism		
		yes	no	all
Nuclear pacifism	yes	21	15	36
	no	7	57	64
	all	28	72	100

Less than two thirds of the nuclear pacifists reject all use of military force and there are also people who reject all use of military force and yet – strangely enough – do not reject all use of nuclear weapons. Pacifism and nuclear pacifism are clearly not identical to those concerned.

The same thing occurs with respect to 'neutralism', defined as the attitude of those who prefer a policy of neutrality over membership of NATO (see table 16). Knowing preferences concerning the use of force and the views of these two groups on neutralism we can, again, calculate the following distribution (table 45). Similar data for (non-)nuclear pacifists are not available, but assuming that their attitudes on other defence problems – as we shall see in table 47 – do not deviate from the pure pacifists on this topic as well, we can also calculate how they relate to the problem of neutrality versus NATO membership (table 46).

Table 45: Pacifism and neutralism

		Pacifism		
		yes	no	all
Neutralism	yes	15	10	25
	no	13	62	75
	all	28	72	100

Table 46: Nuclear pacifism and neutralism

		Nuclear pacifism		
		yes	no	all
Neutralism	yes	19	6	25
	no	17	58	75
	all	36	64	100

Table 47: Attitudes of (nuclear) pacifists and non-pacifists, neutralists and NATO/Western Alliance supporters (% who agree with the statement)

	Pacifists	Nuclear pacifists	Non-pacifists	Non-nuclear pacifists	Neutralists	NATO / Western Alliance
– Military force should never be used	100	59	–	12	59	17
– The Netherlands should give up all nuclear weapons on its territory	75	77	25	21	77	26
– The Netherlands should stay out of disputes between the United States and the Soviet Union	78	78	44	41	88	41
– It is better to be conquered than to risk war	64	66	27	24	66	30
– We should give up opposing the Soviet Union	35	33	11	10	37	11
– Not very much or no confidence in NATO's ability to defend Western Europe against an attack	*	*	*	*	70	33
– Unconditionally opposed to INF deployment	84	86	35	29	*	*
– INF deployment make Soviet attack more likely	57	58	22	20	57	25

* not available

Only slightly over half of the (nuclear) pacifists do opt for neutrality rather than remaining committed to the Western alliance and member of NATO. Neutralism and pacifism are, therefore, much less related than is often alleged and, inversely, a preference for neutralism does not automatically lead to some form of pacifism. Yet some six out of ten respondents reject both neutralism and pacifism. Although the groups concerned overlap only to a limited extent, it is interesting to note that in terms of world view, related to other issues of defence and foreign policy, the groups *are* very similar, as is shown in table 46.

14. Summary and conclusions

What does all this lead up to? Are there any firm conclusions which we can draw? One obvious conclusion is that there are many remaining questions which cannot be answered, mainly for lack of data. This is particularly true with respect to comparisons over time. But there are a number of other, more positive, things which can also be said.

If anything, public opinion tends to become more outspoken. In most cases where comparisons could be made the 'do not know/no answer' group got smaller over time. As the distribution of opinions becomes more polarized, people with fixed opinions do not change their mind easily. The battle is over the 'hearts and minds' of the doubters and unconcerned.

With respect to the content of public opinion a number of conclusions can be drawn. While fear of – especially nuclear – war seems on the increase, a majority does not estimate the likelihood of war more than 50%. Likewise, a majority is not seriously concerned that the Soviet Union will attack Western Europe in the next five years. Although the Soviet Union is certainly seen by a plurality as a major threat to peace, it is remarkable to note how many hold both superpowers responsible for the current increase in tensions. There is also some evidence that many see the character of the relationship between these two as such as a major threat to peace rather than any particular 'troublemaker'.

Few expect to survive a nuclear war, should one occur. There is also little evidence that people seriously believe that a nuclear war could remain limited to Europe (an argument which plays a major role in efforts to explain the upsurge of 'the new peace movement' in Europe).

With respect to the relative military strength of the Soviet Union and the United States the argument that the mliitary balance has shifted in favour of the Soviet Union is not generally believed. When asked to estimate how this relationship will look 'in five years time', even less see the Soviet Union as being ahead. Respondents seem little troubled by this problem of the balance of forces. Rather than show one's strength and increase the military power of

the West they opt for a policy of reconciliation for arms control negotiations as a means to deal with it. In addition to disbelief in a shifting military balance and a natural preference for butter over guns a sense of futility with respect to defence expenditures may be at play in the general unwillingness to increase these expenditures. Even among those who perceive an unfavourable imbalance, only 29% want to increase defence expenditures. A majority wants to keep them at present level. This is also true for the proponents of unilateral nuclear disarmament. Thus, the argument that reduction of conventional armaments will be the next item on the 'shopping list' of the peace movement finds little support in the available data (or, put differently and perhaps more correctly: any such proposal would find little support among public opinion, at least at this moment).

While a majority still believes that the United States will come to the aid of Europe in case of war, confidence in the reliability of the United States as an ally, in its leadership and its capability to deal responsibly with world affairs is decreasing. The number of those who have a generally favourably opinion of the United States has also diminished. It does not seem too far-fetched to conclude that the policies of the present administration in Washington have something to do with this shift. Of all respondents 37% considered 'the present America' to be a great danger to world peace.

Yet, at the same time, a majority supports the view that the Netherlands and other countries cannot do without support by America for their security. While 48% think that Western Europe should be able to do without American aid for its defence, there is little indication where the preferences with respect to possible alternative security arrangements might lie. Opinions are either very much divided or the alternatives have simply not been seriously considered yet. The unwavering support for NATO as an institution and Dutch membership in it are therefore perhaps less an indication of positive support than of rejection of the alternatives, including a turn towards neutralism. Indeed, while membership of NATO continues to enjoy strong support, the policies which the alliance stands for, especially with respect to the threat to use nuclear weapons in case of attack, are by and large rejected: 28% turned out to reject all use of force and the nuclear pacifist position seems on the increase. One poll showed an increase from 36% in mid 1981 to 50% at the end of that year. Two out of three respondents reject the deployment of new nuclear weapons in the Netherlands. This number becomes somewhat less (but still a majority) if the deployment is tied (in the question) to arms control negotiations or if the question is preceded by information stressing the imbalance in land-based eurostrategic missiles. The number of people rejecting the introduction of the neutron bomb is even greater.

Depending on the way the question is phrased, from 40-55% opt for uni-

lateral removal of nuclear weapons from the Netherlands. But the argument that such a step would be followed by other countries, does not enjoy the support of more than 30%. Even less believe that this would decrease the chances of a nuclear war breaking out.

Apart from those who are seriously concerned about nuclear weapons, there is also a sizable group (of more than one third) of people who 'rather do not think about nuclear weapons at all', but the first group is certainly larger. While only a minority is actually involved in actions against nuclear weapons, these actions seem to enjoy very considerable support. Thus, 46% said they were 'totally in sympathy' with the recent demonstrations across Europe and a further 33% said they were 'mostly sympathetic'; 48% agreed with the statement 'I have admiration for people who take part in a demonstration against nuclear weapons' and 37% agreed that 'everybody should take to the streets to demonstrate against nuclear weapons'.

It appeared that criticism of present defence policies is particularly strong among the best educated. Age was of less importance in explaining differences in attitudes. These follow a neat left-right pattern. Supporters of PvdA and D'66 on the one hand and CDA and VVD on the other hand shared much the same outlook towards the question discussed in the surveys covered. The same is true for 'pacifists' and 'nuclear pacifists' and supporters of 'neutralism'. But these are not at all the same people. These groups overlap only partially. Especially neutralism and pacifism are much less related than is often alleged.

List of sources and their abbreviations

Anti-Amerikanisme survey	Onderzoek inzake anti-Amerikanise, undertaken by Inter/View bv for *De Volkskrant*, 6 maart 1982
KRO-Brandpunt	Polls undertaken by Intomart for KRO-Brandpunt (TV program)
Krijgsmacht en defensie	*De publieke opinie over krijgsmacht en defensie*, Stichting Krijgsmacht en Maatschappij, Den Haag 1982 (data collected by NIPO in January 1982)
Meningen over kernwapens	*Meningen over kernwapens*, Instituut voor Sociaal-wetenschappelijk en economisch onderzoek, Baarn/Veldkamp Marktonderzoek bv, Amsterdam 1981 (data collected in June 1981)
Nationaal Kiezersonderzoek 1981	National Election Survey 1981. See A. Th. J. Eggen, C. van der Eijk and B. Niemöller, *Kiezen in Nederland*, Actaboek, Zoetermeer 1981 (data collected in the first six months of 1981)
NIPO	Weekly surveys undertaken by the Netherlands Instituut voor de Publieke Opinie en het Marktonderzoek (NIPO)
Le Nouvel Observateur	Poll in four European countries undertaken at the request of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, November 21, 1981
Schaduwparlement	Polls undertaken at the request of AVRO broadcasting organization by Lagendijk Opinieonderzoek
USICA March 1981 USICA April 1981 USICA July 1981 USICA October 1981 USICA December 1981 USICA July 1982	Surveys undertaken by NIPO at the request of the United States International Communications Agency

All polls were held among a representative national sample of the adult population (18 years and above) in the Netherlands.

Notes and references

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The assistance of a number of centres and institutions which have provided me with data and other materials is gratefully acknowledged. These include the Embassy of the United States of America in the Hague, the Steinmetz-Archive and the Polls Archives of the Baschwitz Institute of the University of Amsterdam. The interpretation of the data is, of course, entirely my own and can in no way be identified with the institutions which have provided the data. Due to limits of time, energy and availability I have been forced to present the data in the form in which they were made available to me. Further analyses and breakdowns by demographic and other variables in many cases would provide valuable additional knowledge. Sometimes these breakdowns were available, but more often they were not.

Data from a number of surveys are available at the Steinmetz-Archive for further analysis. These include:

- National Election Survey 1981
- NIPO weekly public opinion polls 1962-1981
- *Meningen over kernwapens* 1981
- *Eurobarometer* 1974-1982

All the surveys have been held in Dutch. In most cases the translation of the questions is my own: the reader should be aware of possible distortions.

1. Ph. P. Everts, Wat denken 'de mensen in het land'?, Openbare mening en kernwapens, *Acta Politica*, 16 (1981), 3, 305-354.

2 See for other data and discussion: *Oorlogsverwachtingen en overlevingskans*, NIVV-notitie, Den Haag, January 1978.

3. *Eurobarometer*, nr. 16, December 1981. Figures in all tables are given in percentages.

4. KRO-Brandpunt, February 14, 1981.
5. Source: Krijgsmacht en defensie.
6. Source: USICA data from March, July and October 1981. A comparative analysis based on these data (and similar data collected in four other West European countries) is given by: K. P. Adler and D. A. Wertman, *West European Security Concerns for the Eighties: Is NATO in Trouble?*, paper for the 1981 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Public Opinion Research, Buck Hill Falls, Pa., May 28-31, 1981, published in revised from in *Public Opinion*, August/September 1981. Unfortunately, the USICA data in the available form and the analyses of them only contain breakdowns by education ('the best educated' = some 10% of the sample) and sparse references to age and political affiliation.
7. USICA Briefing Paper B-3/24/81.
8. USICA Research Memorandum M-9/28/81.
9. Source: NIPO.
10. KRO-Brandpunt, February 14, 1981.
11. USICA, March 1981.
12. Source: Schaduwparlement, November 10, 1981.
13. USICA, March 1981. Respondents were requested to list two possible threats: no distinction was made between the first and the second mentioned threat.
14. NIPO, November, 1979 (report 407/42). But another survey, held at the same time (NOS Kijk- en luisteronderzoek B-79-138, November 8, 1979, for TROS Aktua), led to very different results: in response to a similar question 53% said they did not know or gave no answer, 5% said they thought NATO was stronger and 26% thought the same for the Warsaw Pact, whereas 16% considered both equally strong. If we leave the non-response out of account, however, the figures would be 11, 55 and 34%.
15. See USICA Research Memorandum M-9/28/81.
16. USICA, March, July and October 1981. Data from December 1981 show, however, a considerable shift with the number of those seeing the Soviet Union as being ahead increasing from 23 to 39%. This may be due to sample errors or temporary deviations (see USICA research note N-12/22/81).
17. See note 16.
18. Schaduwparlement, November 10, 1981.
19. USICA Research Note N-12/22/81.
20. USICA, March 1981.
21. See USICA Research Report R-13-82, July 1982.
22. USICA, October 1981.
23. USICA, March 1981.
24. Anti-Amerikanisme survey.
25. USICA, April 1981.
26. USICA, March 1981.
27. USICA, March, October and December 1981. See also USICA Research Note N-12/22/81.
28. Anti-Amerikanisme survey. Differences in the context (the question concerning the United States was preceded by a reference to criticism of President Reagan; the question concerning the Soviet Union was not preceded by a similar reference) may have had an effect on the answers to these questions.
29. USICA, March 1981.
30. USICA, July 1981.

31. Anti-Amerikanisme survey.
32. Krijgsmacht en defensie.
33. Anti-Amerikanisme survey.
34. See Everts, op. cit. (see note 1), pp. 313-314.
35. NIPO for KRO-Brandpunt and *NIPO Weekbericht* 2112, May 21, 1981.
36. Source: NIPO.
37. Sources: for 1977, USICA Research Memorandum R-9/28/81; for March and July 1981, USICA; for November 1981, Schaduwparlement.
38. See USICA Briefing Paper B-3/24/81.
39. *NIPO Weekbericht* 2112, May 21, 1981.
40. Krijgsmacht en defensie.
41. USICA, March 1981.
42. USICA, March 1981.
43. USICA, July 1981.
44. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, November 21, 1981.
45. International Research Associates, as cited by F. Bolkestein, Nederland en de verleidingen van het neutralisme, *NAVO-Kroniek*, October 1981.
46. Schaduwparlement, November 10, 1981.
47. USICA, March 1981. See also Adler and Wertman, op. cit. (see note 6).
48. KRO-Brandpunt, February 14, 1981.
49. USICA, March 1981.
50. USICA, July 1981.
51. USICA, October 1981.
52. USICA, July 1981.
53. Meningen over kernwapens.
54. USICA, July 1981. Because some respondents gave more than one answer, the total comes to 104%.
55. USICA, July and October 1981.
56. See Everts, op. cit. (see note 1).
57. Meningen over kernwapens.
58. See, among other evidence, for this conclusion: *Vijandbeeld in Nederland, Eindverslag van een onderzoek naar het vijandsbeeld in Nederland*, Projectgroep Vijandbeeld, Studiecentrum voor Vredesvraagstukken, Nijmegen 1980, pp. 36, 43, 63, 64, W. Goddijn et al., *Opnieuw God in Nederland*, Amsterdam 1979, pp. 138, 165, 231, and *KRO-Brandpunt*, February 14, 1981.
59. KRO-Brandpunt, September 19, 1981.
60. USICA, March 1981.
61. Schaduwparlement, November 10, 1981.
62. Nationaal Kiezersonderzoek 1981.
63. The original Dutch text is: 'Geen nieuwe kernwapens meer toelaten'. In their analysis of these questions Riemersma and Irwin apparently adhere to the first interpretation. See R. Riemersma and G. A. Irwin, Strijdpunten, in: *Kiezen in Nederland*, 103-131, p. 112 (see list of sources).
64. *NIPO Weekbericht* 2107, April 28, 1981.
65. USICA, March 1981.
66. Meningen over kernwapens.
67. Krijgsmacht en defensie.
68. Meningen over kernwapens.
69. *NIPO Weekbericht* 2108, April 30, 1981.

70. Krijgsmacht en defensie.
71. Meningen over kernwapens.
72. For more details see Meningen over kernwapens.
73. See Everts, op. cit. (see note 1).
74. USICA, July and October 1981.
75. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, November 21, 1981.
76. Data in the first two columns are from KRO-Brandpunt TV and NCRV Hier en Nu TV. (See Everts, op. cit., p. 328). Source for the last two columns: USICA.
77. Source: USICA, March, July, October and December 1981, July 1982.
78. USICA Research Memorandum M-9/28/81.
79. NIPO for TROS-Aktua TV; see *De Volkskrant*, August 28, 1982.
80. Meningen over kernwapens.
81. Schaduwparlement.
82. USICA, October 1981. See also *Kernblad IKV*, March 1982.
83. USICA, October 1981.
84. USICA, March and October 1981. In March the question mentioned deployment 'in Western Europe', in November deployment 'in the Netherlands'.
85. USICA, March 1981; Adler and Wertman, op. cit. (see note 6).
86. USICA, July 1981.
87. USICA, April 1981.
88. USICA, March 1981.
89. USICA, March 1981; Adler and Wertman, op. cit. (see note 6).
90. USICA, April 1981.
91. USICA, July 1981.
92. USICA, April 1981.
93. Meningen over kernwapens.
94. USICA, March 1981.
95. Meningen over kernwapens.
96. Meningen over kernwapens.
97. See Everts, op. cit. (see note 1), p. 309.
98. Krijgsmacht en defensie.
99. See P. H. van Westendorp, A New Dimension in Public Opinion Research, Standard multidimensional measurement of involvement with social problems: Technique and applications, *Journal of the Market Research Society* 23 (1981), 3, 161-180, and *Peilpunten*, special MDI-1, September 1981 (issued by NV v/h Nederlandse Stichting voor Statistiek, The Hague).
100. See *Betrokkenheid bij atoombewapening: het atoom centraal, of de bewapening?*, NSS, The Hague 1981.
101. Source: NSS MDI data.
102. Meningen over kernwapens.
103. *NIPO Weekbericht* 2153, December 16, 1981.
104. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, November 21, 1981.
105. See Ph. P. Everts, *Foreign Policy in the 1981 Parliamentary Elections*, paper Colloquium on Elections and Foreign Policy, Corfou, September 16-19, 1981, for a more detailed treatment of this question.
106. See Adler and Wertman, op. cit., (see note 6), p. 17.
107. See USICA Research Memorandum M-9/28/81.
108. See R. Riemersma and G. Irwin, op. cit., (see note 63), pp. 123-124, and pp. 158-159.

109. USICA Research Memorandum M-9/18/81.
110. The following paragraph is based on data provided in USICA Research Memorandum M-10/28/81 and M-1/7/82. These sources are based on data from their July 1981 survey. Tables 43, 44 and 45 are derived from the figures of this survey.