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Ghosts in the Machine? Ernst van der Beugel, the Transatlantic Elite, and the 'New' Diplomatic History
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Prof.dr. Giles Scott-Smith

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the 'New Diplomatic History'



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Ghosts in the Machine?

Ernst van der Beugel, the Transatlantic Elite, and the ‘New Diplomatic History’

Oratie uitgesproken door

Prof.dr. Giles Scott-Smith

bij de aanvaarding van het ambt van hoogleraar op het gebied van

Ernst van der Beugel Leerstoel voor

Diplomatieke Geschiedenis van de Atlantische Samenwerking na WW II

aan de Universiteit Leiden

op 5 oktober 2009



Universiteit Leiden

The Ernst van der Beugel Chair at Leiden University is the initiative of the Van den Berch van Heemstede Foundation. The aim of the Chair is to promote the study of modern diplomatic history in Leiden, in the footsteps of one of the foundation's former board members, the late Professor E.H. van der Beugel, who taught the history of Atlantic cooperation at Leiden from 1966 to 1984. I am very grateful to the foundation for granting me this opportunity, and for their support in developing this Chair.

Giles Scott-Smith

Since this Chair is named after Ernst van der Beugel, I thought it most appropriate to talk about the man himself. To do so I will refer to his friendship with Henry Kissinger, to the existence of a transnational elite within the study of transatlantic diplomatic history, and finally to an example, involving Van der Beugel, Kissinger, and KLM, which illustrates its relevance in a specific policy situation. To conclude, I highlight the need for a new diplomatic history that can merge the formal and informal aspects of diplomatic relations into a coherent whole.

From time to time it is difficult to realize that you and I still belong to the same human species and the only thing I can say is that I feel very safe with you in that spot of chief political astronaut.

It is very strange to feel that every thing which the US does and in which I always felt so terribly 'engagé' now has on top of that the second dimension of knowing that one of your best friends is involved to the extent you are.

Ernst van der Beugel to Henry Kissinger (Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs), 25 April 1969¹

Ernst van der Beugel, without whom my life would be unimaginable.

Henry Kissinger, *The Years of Upheaval* (1982)

Of professor Van der Beugel's many international political, academic, and business contacts throughout his life, his close friendship with Henry Kissinger stands out as being quite exceptional. They first met in 1957 when Kissinger, Associate Professor at Harvard and recently appointed Associate Director of the Center for International Affairs, was touring Europe following the publication of his book *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*.² At the time Van der Beugel was the Secretary of State for European Cooperation in the Dutch Foreign Ministry, and Kissinger was introduced to the Dutchman thanks to a

suggestion of the then US Ambassador to the Netherlands, H. Freeman Matthews. The first meeting over lunch left a strong impression on both men, each intrigued and stimulated by the other's political and intellectual insight. Kissinger, a German émigré to the United States in 1938, was always active in meeting and tracking rising talents on the European scene, and as Director of the Harvard International Seminar he would invite many of them to the US.³ Van der Beugel, fascinated by the United States since reading of the New Deal during his student days in the 1930s and having been directly involved in the implementation of the Marshall Plan in the late 1940s, was always keen to discuss American power, strategy, and purpose.⁴ Despite the increasing intensity of their professional lives, their contact developed considerably over the ensuing years, as the opening quotes attest. Yet in the recent major biographies of Kissinger, fuelled by the opening of archival material from his time at the helm of US foreign policy, little mention is made of this friendship.⁵ Only Jeremi Suri in his *Henry Kissinger and the American Century* refers to Van der Beugel's presence in Kissinger's stellar community.⁶

Ernst van der Beugel and the Atlanticist Elite

It is fair to say that Ernst van der Beugel was an out-and-out Atlanticist. Atlanticism, of course, has come in many shades and colours. From the 1940s to the 1960s there were those who argued for the gradual building of institutions towards transatlantic economic and political unity on the basis of a common Western civilisation. Only in this way could transatlantic differences be diffused, divisions removed, and the strength for repulsing enemies gained. The shape of this 'unity' differed greatly, from federalism to confederalism to partnership, but the wish to bind the two halves of the Atlantic together both formally and informally was a constant. In contrast, Van der Beugel belonged to a more realist stream of Atlanticism that wanted US leadership, based in NATO and extending into other policy fields, to provide the focal point for Western unity. The US security guarantee was the corner-stone for continuing West European stability and integrity. European

integration was a necessity but should not trigger false - and dangerous - illusions of grandeur.⁷ This outlook separated him from his oldest friend, Max Kohnstamm, who together with Jean Monnet felt that Europe first needed to develop its own economic capability and political voice before it could contribute fully to the Atlantic cause. Kohnstamm in no way advocated a break with the United States, and during the 1950s and early 1960s he, Monnet, and their Action Committee for a United States of Europe were very influential in Washington policy-making circles. US policy support for European unity therefore placed Van der Beugel and other Dutch Atlanticists in the position of “plus royaliste que le roi”⁸ or, better said, “plus Atlanticist que les Américains”.⁹ The history and international position of the United States meant that it was not made for international cooperation between equals: Instead, as Van der Beugel stated in his oral history, “they can be sublime in a hegemonic position”. It was for these reasons that colleagues in the Labour party protested when he was named State Secretary for European affairs in 1958 because they considered him anti-European.¹⁰ But there was a clear divide between his pro-US attitude and his wish to maintain a Dutch identity. More British in his social manner and, definitely, with his sense of humour, Van der Beugel was never keen on actually moving to the US to live, preferring to be “revitalised” through regular contact with that country.¹¹

But Van der Beugel was not just any Atlanticist - for several decades he belonged to what can only be referred to as the Atlanticist elite, the loose collection of policy practitioners, intellectuals and influentials dedicated to maintaining close transatlantic relations from dinner table to diplomacy and all points in between. It is worth reflecting a little here on the term ‘elite’. By origin a French word, in the sixteenth century it initially referred to making some kind of a choice: *faire élite*. By the seventeenth century it had become attached to merchandise of a higher quality. It was only in the late eighteenth century that the term was applied to particular social groups, such as crack military units or the upper reaches

of the nobility. The *Oxford English Dictionary* records the first usage in the Anglo-Saxon world in 1823. The notion that society would best be ruled by those of superior talent or intellect has of course a long lineage in political thought, its most well-known formulation in Western thinking coming already in Plato’s *The Republic*, and there have been plenty of religiously-inspired creeds based around a chosen few having special access to a deity. However, the modern, common use of the term elite, with which we are all familiar (however loosely), only entered circulation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, fuelled by wider speculations at the time on democracy, class, and race.¹²

The first to begin analysing what exactly an ‘elite’ might mean in a political context was the Italian Vilfredo Pareto, who in his four volume *Trattato di Sociologia Generale* from 1915-1919 presented a picture of society run by an elite that could be divided into governing and non-governing groups. For Pareto, as for his fellow-country-man Gaetano Mosca, society would always be divided between some kind of organised minority and a non-elite majority. This was not necessarily at odds with a democratic system, which could operate as an open arena for competing elites organising and contesting for power, as liberal pluralists argued from the 1950s onwards. But what concerns us here is the image of two principle concentric circles of political importance - in the words of T.B. Bottomore, “in every society there is, and must be, a minority which rules over the rest of society; this minority [is composed of] the ‘political class’ or ‘governing elite’, composed of those who occupy the posts of political command and, more vaguely, those who can directly influence political decisions...”.¹³ The key part of this sentence is ‘more vaguely’. Neither Pareto nor Mosca offered a clear idea of who exactly belonged to this outer circle of influentials, partly due to the fact that both theorists opposed a closed determinist interpretation based on class, and partly due to the fact that politically, sociologically, even psychologically, it is not always a straight-forward matter to track lines of influence coming into the policy-making environment

from 'outside'. Bottomore himself refers to a "political class" including "all those groups which exercise political power or influence," within which one can isolate a "political elite" of "those individuals who actually exercise political power in a society at any given time".¹⁴

Following Pareto and Mosca, the analysis of political elites focused on their function within national political systems, and the special impact of particular groups within the elite itself. US-based positivist political science conducted comparative studies, such as that by Harold Lasswell and others at the Hoover Institute during the 1950s, investigating the specific relations between elites and the practice of political power in different national contexts.¹⁵ C. Wright Mills gave us the Power Elite, with its triumvirate of corporation heads, political leaders, and military chiefs.¹⁶ Antonio Gramsci focused on the role of intellectuals, who he saw as fulfilling "an organisational function in the wide sense - whether in the field of production, or in that of culture, or in that of political administration"¹⁷ - that is, they projected and maintained the norms of everyday politics, economics, and society according to particular class interests. Research on the compatibility (or not) of elites and democracy has produced many valuable studies.¹⁸ New terms have been brought into service by other commentators since then to refer to this social phenomenon, such as managers, experts, professionals, technocrats, cadres, and the establishment, to name a few,¹⁹ but the basis has largely remained the same - the role of particular groups in a national political context. Studies in the Netherlands have largely followed this pattern, examining the sources and stability of elites and their influence in the political, foreign policy, and economic-financial realms.²⁰

Let us return to Ernst van der Beugel. For just over a decade, from the late 1940s to the late 1950s, he certainly belonged to what Bottomore would refer to as the decision-making political elite in the Netherlands. From 1945 to 1952 he was directly involved in the planning and implementation of

post-war economic recovery, particularly in coordination with the European Recovery Program or Marshall Plan. He then switched from the Ministry of Economics to Foreign Affairs, at first continuing his role in coordinating the US-sponsored economic and military assistance programme, before becoming the State Secretary for European Affairs during 1957-58. The significance of this period in terms of Van der Beugel's career as a whole is very clear, both politically and administratively, and his official role in a national, European, and transatlantic setting. From the perspective of traditional, archive-based diplomatic history it is also a relatively straightforward task to track and assess this period, in the sense of following the paper trail that records his decision-making, the processes that led to it and the results that fed from it, and his deliberations and negotiations with policy-making counterparts. Van der Beugel's contribution to implementing the Marshall Plan and furthering the cause of European integration is therefore 'safe', to put it prosaically, in the hands of the diplomatic historian interested in the workings of government and the direction of policy. But then we approach a conundrum. As of 22 December 1958 Van der Beugel left his position as State Secretary when the cabinet of Labour leader Willem Drees handed in its collective resignation. During early 1959, to bridge the period of new elections and the formation of a new cabinet, Van der Beugel continued as an advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but on 1 July 1959 his official connection with the Dutch government ended, and he was thereafter - aside from the possibility of becoming Mayor of Rotterdam in 1964-65, which he turned down - never tempted to return. For a traditional diplomatic historian, at that point he effectively falls off the map. A fine synopsis of Van der Beugel's career, published in 2008 in a collection of essays on Dutch diplomats and civil servants in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, illustrates the problem. The focus lies on his administrative career, while the period thereafter is sketched as a series of anecdotes because it doesn't fit easily into a chronicle on diplomats. This is not an issue of quality - it is after all a fine contribution - but an

observation on the limitations of this kind of history-writing. As the author says, “Van der Beugel was a born networker,” not so much for his own benefit but above all as a middle-man bringing others together, such as the Dutch football term ‘aangever’ suggests.²¹ Yet his networking occurred largely outside of the formal diplomatic arena. A full appreciation of Ernst van der Beugel’s life and work clearly needs to find a way to tap into and unwrap these extra dimensions and place them in a political context that understands their significance.

Even a cursory glance at his career confirms this. From 1959 to 1963 he was at the centre of national economic interests in heading one of the foremost multinational concerns, Royal Dutch Airlines. His departure from KLM represented another turning point - having already decided that front-line politics was not for him, he likewise saw that a full-time business position was not the way ahead. Instead he sought out, successfully, a more free-form existence. From 1966 to 1983 he was very influential as Professor of Western Cooperation after World War II here in Leiden, a host of future members of the Dutch diplomatic corps passing through his classes. Only recently did the former Secretary General of NATO, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, discussing his appointment to the Kooijmans Chair in Leiden, remark that professor Van der Beugel was a major influence on his political thinking as a student: ‘Bij hem ben ik afgestudeerd op een scriptie over de Amerikaanse militaire aanwezigheid in Europa. Hij is iemand die mij sterk heeft gemotiveerd voor vredes- en veiligheidsbeleid’.²² Van der Beugel’s page on the website of Parlement en Politiek, a database of Dutch political history, lists forty-eight board memberships and advisory posts, spanning the 1950s to the 1980s and covering everything from business, academia, and health to cultural exchange, economic planning, and security think tanks.²³ Above all, he served at the centre of two of the most important institutions in the transatlantic milieu: from 1960 to 1980 he served as the European Secretary General for the Bilderberg meetings, and from 1972-85 the chairperson of the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London.

While the IISS deserves more attention, Bilderberg is always a nice subject, and those of you familiar with my work will know that it would have been impossible for me to give this speech without going into it in some way. It also gives us a perfect entrée back to the issue of elites and diplomatic history.

The first Bilderberg meeting took place in the Hotel Bilderberg in Oosterbeek, near Arnhem, in May 1954, and there have been annual meetings at locations on both sides of the Atlantic ever since. The brainchild of the Pole Joseph Retinger to provide a forum for off-the-record discussion between American and European influentials, ease policy differences, and dispel misunderstandings, the proposal rapidly took on a strong Dutch flavour with the invitation to Prince Bernhard to become the group’s chairman. The annual informal gatherings were meant to involve a circulating group of participants from policy-making, media, business and academia, brought together to discuss current issues and problems in transatlantic (and global) affairs. In 1959 Van der Beugel, who already knew the Prince through his government work, came into more regular contact with him through their common association with KLM. It was this that led to the Prince asking him to be Retinger’s successor as Secretary General, and he attended his first Bilderberg meeting in Turkey later that same year to assume this new role.²⁴ Van der Beugel was candid in his appreciation of what this position meant for him: “Als ik kijk naar mijn leven na Buitenlandse Zaken en KLM, dan is die Bilderberg voor mij ongelooflijk belangrijk geweest”.²⁵ He states openly that it not only provided a second-to-none source for his research on transatlantic relations (and several generations of Leiden students were educated with priceless Bilderberg anecdotes), but it also opened doors for the expansion of his own activities into the board-rooms of Rank Xerox, Petrofina, and General Electric, among others. His capabilities as a deferential but determined manager and supervisor of the transatlantic relationship confirmed, it led directly to his appointment as council member and then chairman (for twelve years) of the

equally prestigious and influential International Institute of Strategic Studies in London. On Bilderberg as a whole he was adamant that it was this provision of access as a meeting point (not a network “maar het komt er wel bij”), rather than any exertion of political influence from behind the scenes, which gave it its special value.²⁶ Nevertheless, the facilitation of informal understanding between transatlantic power-brokers is something that deserves attention, because it must have fed through into policy-arenas, media outlets, and lecture halls.

How has Bilderberg been treated by diplomatic history? The short answer is not very well. There are quite a few books, ranging from the poor to the dreadful, which sensationalise its importance as some kind of shadow world government taking decisions that affect our lives and that never gain democratic consent.²⁷ However, there is a new generation of scholars who are piecing together the relevance of Bilderberg based on the careful analysis of a broad range of archival sources, in doing so de-mystifying it and bringing it within range of diplomatic historical legitimacy and respectability: Valerie Aubourg in France, Thomas Gijswijt in the Netherlands, Ingeborg Philipsen in Denmark, and Hugh Wilford in the United States are particularly important here.²⁸ What needs to be grasped with Bilderberg is its essential *transnational* character - its participants, roving from one location to another within the Atlantic world to discuss a shifting agenda of topics depending on contemporary developments, were effectively forming a novel informal community of influence, a kind of transatlantic political space, that knew no national boundaries. I turn here to Hugh Wilford's conclusions concerning his research on Bilderberg:

One thing that the new documentary evidence does show clearly is that it is extremely difficult to locate Bilderberg's origins in terms of national history. The Group was neither an entirely European nor American invention, but rather the result of a highly complex process of Atlantic interaction. For that matter, it is equally difficult to tell

whether Bilderberg was the creation of state agencies, specifically the western intelligence services, or non-governmental actors. In the curious person of its principal founder, the wandering scholar Retinger, the distinction between the private and official realms, civil society and the state, seem to collapse altogether, as indeed does the very concept of nationality.²⁹

The notion of the transnational as opposed to the national or international has certainly gathered attention within the field of International Relations, such as to do with the importance of multinational corporations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). On the influence of transnational elites in the Atlantic area, there has been the ground-breaking work of Carroll Quigley and his memorable if impenetrable *Tragedy and Hope* (1962),³⁰ but the best analyses have come from Gramscian-inspired studies such as the work of Robert Cox and Stephen Gill in Toronto, and those associated with the former Amsterdam School, particularly Kees van der Pijl.³¹ Constructivists have also turned their attention to the role of elites in the diffusion of ideas and their transformation into norms, guiding behaviour as a result. Yet it is not simply outside observers from the academic community who have absorbed the significance of transnational elites. James Huntley, a foremost believer in transatlantic unity and active both inside and outside the US government in promoting it since WW II, has recorded how his introduction to the work of Gaetano Mosca whilst a student at Harvard opened his eyes to the crucial role a multinational elite could play in amalgamating societies across national boundaries, thereby increasing the chances for peace.³² And Ernst van der Beugel himself openly recognised the influence of transnational non-state groups. In his inaugural lecture as professor in Leiden on 9 December 1966 he spoke of the “particularly great significance” of Jean Monnet's Action Committee for a United States of Europe during the 1950s and early 1960s, and in his afscheidscollege here on 16 November 1984 he pointed in the same direction when he remarked that the main threat

to continuing Western cooperation was a growing tendency towards a shallow materialist nationalism, the implication being that this could only be overcome through the continual fostering of a political consciousness not bound by national borders.³³ These references are all the more striking since Van der Beugel generally wrote from a traditional diplomatic history perspective, treating nation-states as separate units that hold the keys to all decision-making powers.

Ernst van der Beugel, Henry Kissinger, and KLM

It is time to return to the contact between Van der Beugel and Henry Kissinger, and to introduce the issue of KLM. When these two men first met in 1957, KLM was at the top of Van der Beugel's agenda. Since the end of World War II the Dutch airline had been seeking to expand its landing rights in the United States in order to increase its lucrative transatlantic operations, but the issue had become an awkward bone of contention between the two nations. US airlines (especially PanAm) had a lot of political muscle and they disliked the serious competition they faced from the Dutch. As State Secretary, Van der Beugel was directly involved in the tough negotiations that led to KLM flights being allowed into Houston, an agreement that temporarily solved the issue.³⁴ But the discontent on the Dutch side rumbled on, and Foreign Minister Luns raised the issue with the Americans at every opportunity. In the hierarchy of national interest, KLM was placed only slightly below the monarchy.

Through Van der Beugel, Kissinger gradually became drawn into the world of KLM. As company president in the early 1960s the Dutchman organised a large-scale annual dinner for the great and the good in the Netherlands, and for three years running Kissinger was the guest speaker, flying over the Atlantic on the Dutch carrier, all expenses paid. There is no doubt that, through these visits, Kissinger became acquainted with the significance of KLM within Dutch-American relations. In May 1961, during a European tour, he took on the role of minor go-between when he privately expressed

to McGeorge Bundy in the White House the level of Dutch agitation on the issue, going so far as to forward a letter from Van der Beugel that made this plain. Kissinger expressed no feelings on the issue at that time.³⁵ The contact between the two men continued to develop. Van der Beugel, at Kissinger's suggestion, stayed at Harvard for several months in 1963 to work on his dissertation.³⁶ He would return to Harvard in 1967 to deliver a series of Erasmus lectures, and, had the negotiations gone according to plan, he would certainly have occupied a proposed Lectureship in the Civilisation of the Netherlands at Harvard which unfortunately, due to reasons not important here, never materialised.³⁷ Whenever the American came to Europe, the Dutchman personally secured the best assistance for his travels via the appropriate KLM offices.³⁸ When Kissinger's parents visited the Netherlands in August 1966, they flew KLM and were hosted by Van der Beugel.³⁹ And of course they met at the Bilderberg meetings, Kissinger being a regular participant after first attending in 1957 - something that his biographers have also largely passed over.⁴⁰

By the mid-60s, the Dutch were focusing on gaining landing rights in Chicago. The real aim was Los Angeles, but the level of American opposition to this meant that the mid-west option was more realistic. The election of Richard Nixon in 1968 seemed to open an opportunity - the new US Ambassador to the Netherlands, J. William Middendorf II, had been the treasurer to the Republican National Committee and a campaign advisor for Nixon, giving him quite some influence in the Oval Office. Middendorf has gone on record in an oral history interview that his direct personal contact with the President enabled him to secure KLM landing rights at Chicago O'Hare airport before he even arrived in The Hague in mid-1969.⁴¹ However, the truth seems somewhat different. In March 1969 President Nixon made his first trip to Europe, but failed to include the Netherlands in his itinerary. Seeing this as a slight for a close and loyal ally, this drew a "vociferous" reaction from Foreign Minister Luns.⁴² Washington tried

to make amends by inviting Luns and Prime Minister Piet de Jong to come to the White House in late May, the first European leaders to meet Nixon there, but this was alone not enough - the message from The Hague was that the Dutchmen must return home after the meeting with some form of concrete policy concession. It was necessary for the US to publicly show its support for the Dutch government at a time when domestic politics, fuelled by opposition to the Vietnam war, was becoming restive.

The outlook for the May meeting was initially not good. When Kissinger, now National Security Advisor, informed Nixon of a visit by Prince Bernhard on 19 April, he raised the possibility that Bernhard, as a member of the KLM board, may raise the landing rights issue “which in all likelihood we will have to refuse”.⁴³ Then late in the day the issue loosened up. On 20 May Helmut Sonnenfeldt reported to Kissinger that the State Department, although divided internally, now recommended laying “the groundwork for a satisfactory negotiated outcome”. The Chicago route was calculated to be worth \$7.5m annually for KLM, but if the Dutch conceded on some other minor points then they could come close to a reciprocal agreement.⁴⁴ By 23 May Nixon was being advised that, considering long-standing support for US objectives on Vietnam, nuclear proliferation, and trade and monetary policy, the visit of Luns and De Jong “should build renewed Dutch confidence in the United States”.⁴⁵ The first meeting between the leaders on 27 May followed this pattern, and that same afternoon Under Secretary of State Elliot Richardson, De Jong, and Luns confirmed “that there was agreement in principle” to settle the request for landing rights in Chicago, with the “technical details” to be negotiated in Washington in July.⁴⁶ It was, by all intents and purposes, a remarkably swift breakthrough.

Why refer to this episode at all? In his oral history interview Van der Beugel is asked by Rob Meines if he ever used his close friendship with Kissinger to gain any results on policy matters. He answered no, not at all....well, yes. Once. To do with

KLM and the Chicago negotiations. Literally: “De KLM heeft Chicago gekregen omdat ik dat via Henry heb gedaan”. Meines tries to delve a little deeper - Who proposed this contact? But Van der Beugel is vague - it may have been someone from KLM, or possibly the government....and he then changes the subject.⁴⁷ Yet the documentary record fits this fleeting image of a backroom deal based on a transatlantic friendship. Following the Luns-De Jong visit to Nixon in May 1969 Van der Beugel wrote to Kissinger the following:

I can hardly tell you how excellently everything has worked. It has been a repair job of the highest order and the impact on American-Dutch relations could not be better. It will please you to know that both of them [Luns and De Jong] fully realized how very important the role has been which you have played in the arrangement and the substance of the visit. I repeat, it could not have been better.⁴⁸

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Kissinger seems to have been able to shift the way in which the issue would be treated. In early March 1969 it was being reported that President Nixon was “supporting stronger State Department direction of international air transport activities....to permit a tighter application of foreign policy considerations”. In practice this meant that, if necessary, the President would intervene directly in the decision-making process.⁴⁹ Who else would have argued for this aside from the President’s own National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger? Having laid the groundwork for a favourable treatment of the Dutch request in the Oval Office, Kissinger stayed on top of the KLM negotiations from start to finish. In early July 1969 Peter Flanigan, Assistant to the President for International Economic Affairs, came to the Netherlands for preparatory talks on the Chicago deal. Ernst van der Beugel, the informal link-man, made enquiries with “a close friend,” Secretary of State for Transportation Meijer Keyzer, to ensure that there were no remaining obstacles, something which Kissinger greatly appreciated.⁵⁰ Talks conducted between 14-18 July duly reached an agreement that KLM would receive the right for

non-stop flights between Amsterdam and Chicago. Kissinger had made clear to the State Department beforehand that he “would especially appreciate being informed should the negotiations run into difficulty”.⁵¹ Soon afterwards Flanigan, clearly on the instigation of Kissinger, convened an inter-agency committee to review US aviation policy and contacted Van der Beugel for his advice on the matter.⁵²

What secured a deal on Chicago? Middendorf’s intervention was certainly not as decisive as he would like to imagine, although his special access to the President may have had some impact.⁵³ The State Department’s advice to Nixon to take the opportunity to quell a major irritant in Dutch-American relations probably had more weight. The negotiations were complicated by extra issues, involving the rights of US charter airlines and KLM’s Caribbean subsidiary, which delayed a final agreement until November 1969. Needless to say, the official record has no trace that Kissinger was involved.⁵⁴ But there is no doubt that the Kissinger - Van der Beugel relation was a constant factor in the background. Flanigan informed Van der Beugel of the following:

long before Kissinger had accepted his position in the White House, he had been continuously reminded by [you] that US aviation policy created difficulties with other countries, which were unjustifiable if one considered these interests in the context of relations with these countries as a whole.⁵⁵

Kissinger’s foremost concern, as Van der Beugel rightly stated in his oral history, was stability in international politics. For this reason he would have understood the necessity to remove an irritating issue that was undermining the otherwise close relations between two allies. By bringing civil aviation negotiations within the bounds of national security, he could exercise greater control over the process. Of course, he wouldn’t have done this purely for the Netherlands. But it is hard to believe that he would have invested such concern

in the KLM issue as National Security Advisor without his friendship with Van der Beugel. The Kissinger - Van der Beugel connection set the context within which a successful agreement could be reached, and this alone is significant. The traces of the transnational elite’s informal networks are therefore to be found in traditional diplomacy and policy-making, but they are not always immediately apparent. The task of a ‘new’ diplomatic history, therefore, is exactly to identify these traces and build up a broader, multi-layered picture of diplomatic relations that reflects both the complexity of formal and informal transnational contacts, and their impact, in the transatlantic area. Only in this way can a full appreciation of Ernst van der Beugel’s influence be secured.

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- 11 Map 62, Map 65, EvdB.
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- 15 Harold Lasswell, Daniel Lerner and Charles Easton, *The Comparative Study of Elites* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institute, 1952).
- 16 C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).
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 - 22 'Oud-secretaris-generaal van de NAVO wordt hoogleraar', Nieuwsbrief Universiteit Leiden, 1 September 2009, available at <http://www.nieuws.leidenuniv.nl/nieuws-agenda/oud-secretaris-generaal-van-de-navo-wordt-hoogleraar.html>.
 - 23 See 'E.H. van der Beugel' in the biographies collected at <http://www.parlement.com/>.
 - 24 Map 64, EvdB.
 - 25 Ibid.
 - 26 Interview with Ernst van der Beugel, The Hague, 16 July 2002; Map 64, Map 65, EvdB.
 - 27 See for instance Robert Eringer, *The Global Manipulators: The Bilderberg Group, the Trilateral Commission, Secret Power Groups of the West* (Bristol: Pentacle Books, 1981); Daniel Estulin, *The True Story of the Bilderberg Club* (Walterville OR: Trine Day, 2007); H. Paul Jeffers, *The Bilderberg Conspiracy* (Citadel, 2009). For an exploration of the conspiracy theories surrounding Bilderberg see Jon Ronson, *Them: Adventures with Extremists* (Oxford: Picador, 2001).
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 - 29 Wilford, p. 254.
 - 30 Carroll Quigley, *Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time* (New York: Macmillan, 1962).
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 - 32 James Huntley, *An Architect of Democracy* (Washington DC: New Academia, 2006), p. 93.
 - 33 Ernst van der Beugel, *Nederland in de Westelijke Samenwerking: Enkele Aspecten van de Nederlandse Besluitvorming* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), pp. 14-15; Ernst van der Beugel, *Terugblik: Kanttekeningen bij 40 Jaar Westelijke Samenwerking* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), p. 25.
 - 34 On these early negotiations see Marc Dierikx, 'Een spel zonder kaarten': KLM-landingsrechten als Nationaal Belang, 1945-57', *Jaarboek Buitenlandse Zaken* (1996), pp. 11-26.
 - 35 Kissinger to Bundy, 11 May 1961, Declassified Documents Reference System, RSC, Middelburg.
 - 36 This became *From Marshall Plan to Atlantic Partnership: European Integration as a Concern for American Foreign Policy* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1966), with a foreword by Henry Kissinger.

- 37 See Kissinger to Van der Beugel, 7 March 1966, which first mentions the Chair, Map 7 Privé correspondentie 1963-1968, EvdB, and Franklin L. Ford to Professor S. Dresden, 22 July 1969, for some of the reasons why it didn't happen, Map 8, EvdB.
- 38 See for instance Van der Beugel to Kissinger, 4 June 1963, and Kissinger to Van der Beugel, 21 August 1964, *ibid*.
- 39 Kissinger to Van der Beugel, 19 August 1966, *ibid*.
- 40 See Eugene Pasymowski and Carl Gilbert, 'Bilderberg: The Cold War Internationale', *Congressional Record* Vol. 117 Pt. 24, 92nd Congress 1st Session, pp. 32051-32060, and the brief reference to Kissinger's participation in Isaacson, *Kissinger*, pp. 755-756.
- 41 See J. William Middendorf II, interview with Charles Stuart Kennedy, 28 July 1993, ADST. Available online at <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-in/query/D?mfdip:1:./temp/~ammem_Sgi3>. His predecessor in The Hague, William R. Tyler, stated in his own oral history interview that thanks to Middendorf "Nixon pressed a button and called in whoever the flunky was, the high-level flunky, and said, 'Work this one out, whatever the problems are. Get over them so that we can do something for the Dutch' That was all there was to it".
- 42 US Embassy to Dept. of State, 24 February 1969, Reel 18, Richard M. Nixon National Security Files, 1969-1974 Western Europe (hereafter NSC).
- 43 Kissinger to Nixon, n.d., *ibid*.
- 44 Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, 20 May 1969, *ibid*.
- 45 Memo for the President, 23 May 1969, *ibid*.
- 46 Memo of Conversation, Oval Office/White House, 27 May 1969, and Richardson to Nixon, 27 May 1969, *ibid*.
- 47 See this exchange in Map 65, EvdB.
- 48 Van der Beugel to Kissinger, 5 June 1969, Map 8, EvdB.
- 49 *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 3 March 1969, Map 2422, Archive No. 5.016: Rijksluchtvaartdienst, Nationaal Archief, The Hague (hereafter RLD).
- 50 Kissinger to Van der Beugel, 21 July 1969, *ibid*; Flanigan to Kissinger, 9 July 1969, NSC.
- 51 Kissinger to John Walsh (State Dept.), 12 July 1969, and Theodore Eliot (State Dept.) to Kissinger, 21 August 1969, *ibid*.
- 52 Flanigan to Van der Beugel, 4 August 1969, Map 8, EvdB.
- 53 Middendorf was also prominent when the first KLM flight to Chicago took place in May 1970. See Kissinger to Nixon, 22 May 1970, NSC.
- 54 See Bilaterale luchtvaartovereenkomsten 1927-1979, Map 514, RLD.
- 55 Van der Beugel to G. van der Wal (president of KLM), 1 September 1969, Map 8, EvdB. The source for this confirmation was Peter Flanigan.

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For the past ten years his research has been situated in the cross-section of International Relations and Diplomatic History, concentrating on the Cold War period. His Ph.D., which examined the purpose and relevance of the Congress for Cultural Freedom in transatlantic relations during the early Cold War, was published by Routledge in 2002 (*The Politics of Apolitical Culture*). His most recent publication is *Networks of Empire: The US State Department's Foreign Leader Program in the Netherlands, France, and Britain 1950-1970* (Peter Lang, 2008). Since then his research has looked at the role and influence of transnational non-state actors in transatlantic relations, and he has published widely on these topics in journals such as *Intelligence and National Security*, *Cold War History*, the *Journal of European Integration History*, the *Journal of American Studies*, *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, and the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*. He is currently occupied with two broad research fields: the impact and effectiveness of (US) public diplomacy (especially exchange programmes), and the organisation of anti-communist networks in Western Europe. He is a board member of the Netherlands American Studies Association and the Netherlands Intelligence Studies Association, an editor of the *European Journal of American Studies*, and a member of the management committee for the Transatlantic Studies Association.



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