



National Coordinator for Counterterrorism



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Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties

In June 2007, the sixth counter-terrorism progress report was submitted to the House¹. This letter represents the seventh progress report, which describes the progress made during the last six months with regard to the development and implementation of the various components of counter-terrorism policy. The report looks in turn at international cooperation, the fight against polarisation and radicalisation, the creation of an effective organisation and instruments, the implementation of security measures, preparations for (the consequences of) a possible attack, communication and the provision of information. As usual, the progress report begins with a summary of the most recent National Terrorist Threat Assessment [*Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland*, DTN]. The DTN is drawn up four times per year by the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism [*National Coordinator Terrorismebestrijding*, NCTb], who is responsible for its content. A list of action points is attached to this report.

1. Summary of the National Terrorist Threat Assessment, October 2007

The threat level for the Netherlands is currently denoted as *limited*. This means that the risk of a terrorist attack is currently deemed to be relatively low. A number of developments have taken place during the last few months which have made an attack

¹ Lower House, session year 2006-2007, 29 754, no. 100

in the Netherlands more likely. This increased likelihood is due to an increase in international influence on the jihadist threat in Western Europe as a whole. This was demonstrated in recent incident whereby groups connected with al Qa'ida provided training and strategic management to local cells in Germany and Denmark. As was the case at the time of the previous threat assessment, there are however no specific indications that the Netherlands will also be faced with an attack. There have been a number of significant developments, particularly with regard to resistance to terrorism. These developments will therefore be discussed first.

Resistance

Resilience to terrorism

In the fifth threat assessment, it was reported that there appeared to be a certain sense of resignation within broad sections of the Muslim population in the Netherlands regarding the bitter debate over Islam. Muslims are responding less violently to offensive statements about Islam than was the case a few years ago. However, the above does not alter the fact that offensive statements about the prophet and Islam are still able to evoke strong emotions. The debate over Islam that flared up last summer (reported on in the previous threat assessment) was evidence of this. The extent to which anti-Islamic comments in the media and the political sphere lead to violent reactions from certain parts of the Muslim community depends upon factors such as the nature of the comment, the existence of other topics that dominate the media and whether or not anti-Islamic sentiments are prevalent at the time. In the event of a violent response, it is not always clear whether the debate will continue and will reveal underlying emotions and attitudes, or whether it is a case of a short, hot dispute that will peter out within the space of a week. In other words, when there is a violent response to anti-Islam comments it is difficult to determine whether this is a result of deep-seated emotions and attitudes, or a matter of individuals allowing themselves to be swept along by the 'issues of the day' and by public debate at the time. Particularly on the Internet, these 'issues' play a major role in influencing reactions to anti-Islam comments.

The Muslim communities in Germany, Denmark and Austria have emphatically disassociated themselves from Muslims who have been arrested in these countries due to terrorist and/or jihadist activities. At the same time, Muslim representatives in these three countries have warned against placing all Muslims in the same category. In Denmark, Muslims have stated that they feel as though they have gone two steps backwards as soon as Muslims are suspected of having planned or committed an attack. In the Netherlands too, Muslims renounced jihadist activities more emphatically in the wake of the murder of Theo van Gogh, whilst a number of Muslim leaders also denounced violence on other occasions. A recent example of this is the chairman of the Association of Imams in the Netherlands [*Vereniging Imams in Nederland, VIN*], who declared on the part of a few ex-Muslims that violence against individuals who have renounced Islam is absolutely forbidden.

From February 2006 onwards, the threat assessments reported on the increasing resistance amongst Muslims to Islamic violence. A large-scale study recently carried out by the research centre PEW Global Attitudes shows that this trend is also evident on a global scale. The study reveals that fewer inhabitants of Muslim countries consider suicide attacks to be a permitted means of defending Islam. This five-year study, in which 45,000 people in 47 countries were interviewed, shows that in countries such as Lebanon, Bangladesh, Jordan, Pakistan and Indonesia, support for suicide attacks has dropped by fifty percent in comparison with five years ago. It is worth noting that (suicide) attacks have taken place in the above-mentioned countries since 2002. It can be concluded from this that citizens are more likely to condemn terrorist attacks if they are more likely to be affected by such attacks themselves. Incidentally, the responses on the website of the Arabic news network Aljazeera show that the majority of viewers who responded condemn attacks against innocent Muslims.

Against this background, it is also important not to underestimate the importance of an ideological change of direction in the intellectual debate in the Islamic world, which has become apparent during the past few months. A number of prominent spiritual leaders have renounced the current practice of Jihad (suicide attacks, religious violence in Iraq etc.). The possibility cannot be ruled out however, that actions such as these are in part attempts by governments in the Middle East to create a more positive image of themselves in the West.

Countermeasures

On 19 August 2007, an appeal case lodged by a Kenyan Imam from the Al Fourqaan mosque in Eindhoven against his deportation was brought before the court. This case related to one of three Imams from this mosque against whom deportation proceedings have been instituted. One of these Imams left the Netherlands of his own account, another has already been deported. The Imams were alleged to have taken insufficient action to combat the activities of Jihadist recruiters in and around their mosque. The case of the Kenyan Imam differs from that of the Imam who was previously removed from the Netherlands as, due to the fact that he is married to a Swedish citizen, the former falls within the scope of Community Law. This generally means that the individual in question has a stronger position in accordance with legislation in respect of foreign nationals. The court ruled on 10 October 2007 that the grounds on which the official report issued at the end of 2005 by the General Intelligence and Security Service [*Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst, AIVD*] on the Kenyan Imam was based are substantively correct. The Imam's objection against his deportation from the Netherlands was declared unfounded.

A citizens' initiative by members of the American freewebs forum in the United States has caused more than forty jihadist websites, a number of which belong to the most influential jihadist websites in the world, to be taken offline by their hosting companies. Jihadists and radical Muslims in the Netherlands also visited these websites. Although

some of the websites found alternative hosting facilities almost immediately, the majority are currently still offline. As far as is known, no relationship exists between the US security services and this citizens' initiative. Furthermore, the removal of sites thwarts the intelligence interests of the US government. One advantage is however that an insight may now be gained into the consequences of closing down jihadist sites: how long does it take, for instance, before the websites are back online and what hosting facilities are they using?

Terrorism

Contact between local autonomous networks and international networks, such as core al Qa'ida or groups affiliated to it in the border area of Pakistan/Afghanistan, appear to exist within Europe on a larger scale than only in the United Kingdom. This was demonstrated by the failed and thwarted attacks in Denmark and Germany, and gave rise in the previous threat assessment to the conclusion that the likelihood of threats from internationally-oriented networks had also increased for the Netherlands, particularly as there are also similarities between the profiles of Denmark and Germany and that of the Netherlands. At the same time, there are no signs of an imminent attack; there were also specific backgrounds in the relevant countries to the incidents referred to above and there are doubts with regard to the professionalism of the networks which have been rounded up. Moreover, the image of the networks known to the Dutch authorities was not a cause for concern at that stage. This is indeed still the case. A number of factors that further illustrate the situation regarding the likelihood of a threat to the Netherlands are referred to below.

At the time of the previous threat assessment, there was a focus on converts as a risk group with regard to participation in terrorist networks. Another risk group is that of Muslims who have recently taken up residence in Western countries. On average, their violent radicalisation takes place more rapidly and in larger strides than in the case with Muslims who were born in the West or who have been living here for much longer. This was the case for example with the attackers at Glasgow Airport (29 June 2007) and the perpetrators of the failed train attacks in Germany (July 2006). A possible explanation for this may be that in the case of Muslims who have recently come to Europe, there is a greater discrepancy between their views and the customs that prevail in their new environment. With regard to the abovementioned examples, practice has shown that recent Muslim immigrants have not come to the attention of the intelligence and security services in time. This group is therefore clearly attractive to terrorist networks as a target group, and potentially more attractive than young men who have grown up in the West, who will quickly come within the sights of the counter-terrorism agencies if, for instance, they are in contact with sympathisers in Pakistan.

The events within the known Islamic zones of conflict, the Dutch political and military involvement with regard to Afghanistan and Lebanon, and cooperation in this respect with the United States -- these all enjoy a special focus among some radical Muslims

living in the Netherlands, and continue to be a source of inspiration that incite these individuals to wage Jihad. Intentions within the local networks to take part in Jihad abroad are growing. Allegedly there are currently no individuals in these networks who have knowledge of the routes to the zones of conflict. The right contacts, which are needed in order to organise this type of journey to Jihad, are simply not in place at this time. It must be taken into account that in future the Netherlands may, like our neighbouring countries, have to deal with individuals who are travelling to these areas with the aim of later carrying out attacks against the Dutch military in these countries, or against targets within the Netherlands itself. Transnational networks which also have branches in the Netherlands could facilitate such attacks. This means that the threat against the Netherlands or against Dutch interests abroad could increase over time. Finally, there is evidence that financial support is being provided on a limited scale from the Netherlands to jihadist groups present in the Pakistani/Afghan border area.

With regard to the decision-making process in the Netherlands in relation to extending the Dutch mission, it is likely that national politics will be influenced by threats and the kidnapping of Dutch citizens abroad. It is possible to conclude, particularly from the recent case in Germany, that Western countries with a military presence in Afghanistan are faced with a heightened risk profile, especially if they have not yet been affected by a Jihadist attack.

Radicalisation and polarisation

Previous threat assessments have reported on the continued spread of Salafism in the Netherlands, as a result of which more and more mosques are coming under Salafi influence. In addition to this ideological influence, Salafis are not afraid of creating rifts between mosques. These recent developments in the Netherlands show marked similarities with the situation in France, where those Salafis who adhere to the teachings of the well-known Islamic scholar Samir Amghar employ a 'parasiting' strategy in order to disseminate their beliefs. 'Parasiting' is when a group of Salafis decide to visit a mosque or an Islamic cultural centre. Once this group feels that it has sufficient strength, it makes a bid for power by means of replacing the mosque committee and the Imam. In France, a number of mosques have already come under the influence of Salafis through the use of this strategy.

What is striking is that (particularly the politically-oriented) Salafis are transparent in their ambitions to spread the da'wa as widely as possible in the Netherlands. This is demonstrated by the fact that the 'Salafi agenda' is freely accessible on the Internet. This agenda not only states towns or cities where readings will be taking place, but often also provides information with regard to the location of the reading, the subject matter and the target group, as well as the name (sometimes aliases) of the preacher. This level of transparency is striking, as the political Salafis are aware that they are under scrutiny by the government and society. It is possible that the intention behind this openness is to give society the impression that they do not have anything to hide and that there are

also no reasons why society should be afraid of them. Although the readings appear on the Internet, there is however a lack of transparency with regard to the message being disseminated and 'strangers' are often unwelcome. The apparent openness may therefore also be a manifestation of the façade tactics employed by the Salafis.

There are around 550 mosques in the Netherlands, approximately forty percent of which can be classed as Moroccan. Salafis are currently in contact with around thirty Moroccan mosques. This means that Salafi preachers are active in at least fifteen percent of the Moroccan mosques in the Netherlands. It is not unusual for around one hundred young Dutch Moroccans to attend these types of readings. It should be noted in this regard that the influence exercised may vary in intensity. In some mosques, readings are regularly carried out by Salafi preachers. In other mosques the influence remains limited to one or a small number of readings each year.

With regard to trends in radicalisation amongst individuals of a markedly right-wing persuasion, it is possible to report that in Lelystad, a group of five nationalist youths were found guilty of carrying out arson attacks and attempting to carry out arson attacks on an Islamic supermarket, a synagogue, squatted premises and an Islamic school in Almere and Amsterdam at the end of 2006. The youths claim that their actions were motivated by their nationalistic beliefs and that they were acting as 'protectors of national culture'. The judge declared that he had taken a grave view of the feelings of social unrest that they had caused and that strong action must be taken against extremist activities, which contribute towards further radicalisation. These types of issues reflect the current anxiety with regard to the extreme right.

2. International developments

European Union

The European Union (EU) also forms an important multilateral framework for collaboration for the Netherlands in the field of counter-terrorism. It turned out to be highly satisfactory when, following a period in which the position of EU Counter-terrorism Coordinator lay vacant, a Belgian, Gilles de Kerchove, was appointed the new coordinator in September 2007. The Counter-terrorism Coordinator plays a key role within the EU in terms of coordinating and implementing counter-terrorism measures. As the EU representative in this field, he also plays an important role in collaborations with third countries. The States General have already been informed by letter by the Minister of Justice dated 3 October 2007 of the mandate of the new coordinator, which is essentially the same as that of his predecessor².

European Union documents containing core principles relating to the issue of terrorism include the counter-terrorism strategy of December 2005 and the accompanying action

² Lower House, session year 2007-2008, 34 490, no. 472

plan, which was updated in April 2007. One of the responsibilities of the EU Counter-terrorism Coordinator is to oversee the implementation of this strategy and to monitor the agreements with third countries. The most recent report (21 May 2007) on the implementation of the strategy was actually prepared by the previous coordinator, the Dutch citizen Gijs de Vries, but was not completed until after his departure. This report states that further progress is now being made with regard to the implementation of the strategy and the transposition of measures into national legislation. At the same time, the report argues in favour of even closer cooperation and an increase in the exchange of information between Member States for the purpose of combating both terrorism and ordinary crime. Against this background, it is a positive step that the Portuguese presidency has declared combating terrorism to be one of the top priorities during this term, and that the current presidency is making efforts to ensure that further measures are instituted in this area.

In the EU, partly due to encouragement on the part of the Netherlands, a great deal of attention is also being paid to the issue of radicalisation. It is extremely important to tackle dangerous types of radicalisation and prevent these from leading to terrorist acts. With this in mind, December 2005 saw the adoption of an EU strategy and action plan for the purpose of combating radicalisation and recruitment. This action plan was updated in February 2007. Under the current presidency, there is a particular focus on tackling radicalisation amongst young people, and on the role of frontline workers and education in this context. Special attention should also be paid to the Internet, which, amongst other things, plays a major role in the dissemination of radical propaganda. This is further reinforced by the recent arrests in Spain of the members of a Jihadist network, which used the Internet for the purpose of communication and attempting to recruit volunteers for Jihad. The Internet has been the subject of extensive debate within the EU, under both the German and Portuguese presidency. These discussions have focused in particular on the more stringent monitoring of sites which incite violence, and on increasing the exchange of information in this respect, on the basis of the project "Check the Web". Expert meetings on this subject are regularly held in collaboration with Europol. Furthermore, the European Commission is in the process of developing proposals to supplement the "Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism" of 2002 in the form of provisions in respect of the misuse of the Internet for terrorist purposes.

Work is also being undertaken at a European level on preparations for a second round of mutual assessments in order to further investigate provisions in preparation for a potential attack. These assessment visits, which will take place in 2008, will result in recommendation and examples of best practices.

In addition, the Commission has announced that it will soon present a package of measures, including an action plan in respect of the security of explosives and detonators. The security of explosives, precursors and detonators is one of the priorities of the current presidency. With regard to the implementation of measures in this

context, the Commission is reverting back to sources of information such as the Commission notice dated September 2005 (COM (2005) 329) and a special task force for the safeguarding of explosives, which issued recommendations during the first half of 2007, as well as the outcome of a conference on the security of explosives that took place in July of this year in Braga, Portugal. These recommendations relate to improvement in the exchange of information, development of threat assessments, research, training of personnel, regulation and monitoring of transactions, identification and detection. These recommendations form the basis for the EU action plan that the Commission has announced and that is expected to be published in November. The Netherlands endorses this initiative and will provide the input required in order to ensure that the security measures are implemented effectively.

It should also be noted that on 11 July 2007, the European Commission published the Green Paper on Bio-preparedness. The Commission used this Green Paper to consult with authorities and private institutions with regard to ways of limiting the risk of bio-terrorism, as well as ways of improving preparations for and responses to this risk ('bio-preparedness'). The government welcomes the Green Paper on Bio-preparedness and endorses the need for a common European approach. The Netherlands supports the "all-hazards approach" proposed by the Commission for the purpose of restricting all potential biological risks. A global strategy is of course also required in order to combat the threat of bioterrorism. The government response to the Green Paper was presented to the House on 5 October 2007³.

The government considers it important for the European Union to project a pro-active image in its external relations, and this also applies to the field of counter-terrorism. The issue of terrorism forms an important point on the agenda in the discussions held by the EU with third countries and with other regional organisations. The EU is also a driving force within the United Nations (UN) and relevant specialist UN organisations such as the UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). Moreover, the EU also provides bilateral technical assistance in the context of combating terrorism to a number of developing countries, including several countries in the Maghreb. In July 2007, the EU also declared that it was prepared to lend financial support to the African Centre for Study and Research on Terrorism, based in Algiers. Special mention should be made of the dialogue between the European Union and the United States with regard to terrorism issues, in which there is also a particular emphasis on human rights and the protection of personal data.

During negotiations on 27 June 2007, the European Commission and the German presidency reached an agreement with the United States regarding the text of a new agreement on the processing and transfer of passenger data, usually referred to as "Passenger Name Records" (PNR). An agreement was also reached with regard to the accompanying correspondence between the United States and the European Union, in

³ Lower House, session year 2007-2008, 22 112, no. 571

which the necessary assurances on the part of the United States were laid down with regard to the processing of personal data (Treaty Series 2007, 129). The new agreement will be valid for a term of seven years⁴. The content of the text that formed the subject of the negotiations largely corresponds with previous agreements between the between the EU and the US. The government is of the opinion that the negotiations have led to a balanced agreement which meets the previous guidelines and which can be regarded as a positive result negotiated by the presidency of the Commission. In accordance with the provisions of Article 15, paragraph four, of the Approval and Publication of Treaties (Kingdom) Act [*Rijkswet goedkeuring en bekendmaking verdragen*], the abovementioned treaty was provisionally applied on 26 July 2007. Once a recommendation has been obtained from the Council of State, the treaty will be submitted to the Lower House of the States General for express approval⁵. A further important point in this regard is that the European Commission has proposed the introduction of a European PNR system, as part of the package of new counter-terrorism measures announced on 6 November.

Terrorism lists within the European Union and the United Nations

In the form of the motion proposed by Francken et al⁶, the Upper House has asked the government to make efforts in order to achieve “a transparent and sound procedure” for the placing of individuals or organisations on the terrorism lists held by the United Nations and the European Union. The motion also made reference to the procedure for de-listing individuals. In January, March and on 10 October 2007, the Upper House received information by letter on the improvements made by the European Union to the procedure listing individuals and entities to which the financial sanctions referred to in Regulation 2580/2001 apply (the so-called ‘exogenous list’). The Netherlands played an active role in bringing about these improvements. In the first instance, the level of legal protection was increased through the introduction of a procedure in which both sides of the argument are heard. If an individual or organisation is listed, he, she or it will be provided with further information regarding the reasons behind this listing, the competent national authority that has taken a decision to this effect within the meaning of Article 1(4) of Common Position 931/2001, as well as regarding the procedure by means of which any arguments or evidence in favour of de-listing can be brought forward to the Council. In order to avoid undermining the effectiveness of the preventative measures, individuals and organisations added to the list will be informed once the measure has taken effect, as they would otherwise have the opportunity to siphon off funds before the measure is enforced. Improvements have also been made during the periodic review of the list. If the Council intends to retain individuals or

⁴ Lower House, session year 2006-2007, 30 861, no. 5

⁵ Lower House, session year 2006-2007, 30 861, no. 6

⁶ Lower House, session year 2006-2007, 28 764, E

organisations on the list, they will receive advance notice of this and will be granted the opportunity to submit comments to the Council. In the event that comments are submitted, the Council will take these elements into account in its review. If the final decision of the Council is to continue to list the individual or organisation, the Council Decision and explanatory memorandum (the so-called "statement of reasons") will be sent to said individual or organisation together with information on the possibility of lodging an appeal with the Court of First Instance.

In order to further increase the degree of legal protection offered, the Council has also decided that the decision-making process will from now on take place during regular meetings of a Council Working Party. This will ensure that the process becomes more transparent. The activities of the new Council Working Party will be in the public domain and it will therefore also be possible to request the documents involved in the decision-making process pursuant to Regulation 1049/2001, except where these are classed as state secrets. This working party is known as the "Council Working Party on Implementation of Common Position 2001/931/CFSP", abbreviated to the CP 931 Working Party.

It was reported in the sixth progress report that the UN Security Council had, by means of resolutions 1730 and 1735, made changes to the UN procedures with regard to listing and de-listing on the UN terrorism list. As announced in the abovementioned letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the president of the Upper House dated 10 October, the government shall, in collaboration with like-minded countries, continue to work on further improving UN procedures.

United Nations

As reported in the fifth progress report, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the "Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy" by consensus in September 2006. An action plan was also attached to this strategy. It is important for the UN to be able to make progress with regard to the implementation of this global strategy and the accompanying action plan. A useful instrument for achieving this is the "Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force" (CTITF), chaired by Assistant Secretary General Robert Orr. This task force brings together the various ranks of the UN involved in combating terrorism. The Netherlands has declared its willingness to the chairman of the CTITF to lend its support to the CTITF's activities in selected areas in the form of knowledge, expertise and financial assistance. Furthermore, an important recommendation made by the "Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy" related to the provision of assistance with regard to increasing the ability of developing countries to combat terrorism. This also includes the ability of these countries to comply with obligations in this context imposed by the relevant UN treaties and resolutions. The Netherlands is active on a number of fronts in this area. Collaborations have, for instance, recently been entered into with Morocco and Algeria.

Conference on radicalisation

From 22 to 24 October 2007 inclusive, the NCTb, on behalf of the Minister of Justice and the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, organised an international conference on countering radicalisation. The conference brought together around two hundred people from many countries. The event was attended by representatives from countries such as Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Pakistan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, a large number of EU Member States, Canada and the US. Official representatives from the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the UN, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Presidency of the EU were also in attendance. The aim of the conference was to instigate an exchange of experiences between academics, governments and non-governmental players, with regard to counter-measures introduced in order to counter radicalisation. Representatives of and from Arabic and Islamic countries naturally also took part. A further aim of the conference was to contribute towards the development of the UN strategy with regard to combating radicalisation. The results of the conference in the form of "the Chairman's conclusions" will be elaborated further by the UN and the OSCE. The Netherlands will also play a role in the global implementation of the UN strategy in this area, which was drawn up in September 2006.

Bilateral cooperation

Morocco forms one of the Netherlands' priority countries for cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism. In order to give concrete form to this cooperation, the first Netherlands-Morocco convention on combating terrorism was held in July 2007. Issues covered related to the combating of radicalisation, the financing of terrorism, the role of the Internet in radicalisation and terrorism, document fraud with regard to terrorism and the detection and disarming of explosives. This conference, which was for both sides a type of initial investigation, yielded positive results. Opportunities for closer cooperation and technical assistance were identified in a number of areas. Further details are currently being specified.

The Netherlands has also entered into collaboration with Algeria, focusing on the transfer of knowledge with regard to protecting major ports.

For some time now, the Netherlands has supported the development and professionalization of the Indonesian police organisation. The Dutch police provides, for instance, training courses for Indonesian police officers in a number of areas, including the protection of airports and air traffic.

3. Combating polarisation and radicalisation

The government is continuing its broad approach towards combating terrorism. The importance of this approach is also evident from the DTN summary. The government's approach has been broadened to include the combating of polarisation. In August 2007, the Polarisation and Radicalisation 2007-2011 action plan was submitted to the House, together with the government's proposals in this area⁷. The action plan was discussed with the House on 11 October 2007.

More specifically, attention has been paid in recent times to the mapping out of Salafi religious movements in the Netherlands and the development of policy with regard to how to deal with this group, which in some cases can form a breeding ground for violent radicalisation. In October, the government position on dealing with Salafism in the Netherlands was submitted to the House at the same time as the report drawn up by the General Intelligence and Security Service [*Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst, AIVD*] entitled *Radicale dawa in verandering* [Changing Nature of the Radical Da'wa]⁸. When dealing with Salafi groups, the government employs a three-track policy: to make society resilient so that it is able defend itself against the radical Salafi movement. To confront and 'de-legitimise' the hard-line statements and manifestations of the ideology of radical Salafi groups in order to encourage public debate in this area. And to ensure that enforcement takes place where criminal offences are committed. Each of these three tracks are being implemented in the form of various activities and projects, some of which are already in progress and some of which are due to commence in the coming period. Further details of the government position were set out in a letter dated 17 October 2007, which described a number of activities and projects in the field of policy with regard to Salafi groups⁹. The AIVD report, the accompanying government position and the further details of this were discussed with the House on 18 October 2007.

One of the initiatives seeks to increase direct contact between the national government and municipalities that are dealing with travelling Salafi preachers from the hotbeds of radicalisation and young people who are receptive to this Salafi message, or where problems of radicalisation are starting to occur. In June 2006, the mayors of these municipalities were invited to an informative meeting at which they were provided with information on the mode of operation of Salafis and preachers in particular. In September and October of this year, discussions took place with a number of municipalities. During these discussions, the government and the communities explored means of determining the spread of Salafism, the problems that (may) arise from this, the response thus far on the part of the municipality and how, by making a joint effort, we can prevent and combat anti-integration and anti-democratic tendencies and radicalisation. Experiences of combating radicalisation at a national and regional level

⁷ Lower House, session year 2006-2007, 29 754, no. 103

⁸ Lower House, session year 2006-2007, 29 754, no. 106

⁹ Lower House, session year 2006-2007, 29 754, no. 108

during the past few years were used during the discussions. The government is able to assist municipalities in developing a regional strategy for the purpose of tackling radicalisation. It is also able to supply instruments and methodologies. A focus on tailor-made solutions is of course essential in this regard. The municipalities are currently looking at what actions should be undertaken as a result of the discussion.

Combating the use of the Internet for radical and terrorist purposes

The use of the Internet for radical and terrorist purposes is being tackled from various angles. It is important in this respect to obtain and maintain an overview into the nature and scale of the problems so that the appropriate measures can be taken. The projects in the field of monitoring, surveillance and the Cyber Crime Reporting Website are examples of this. Decisions will be taken during the first half of 2008 with regard to the continuation and/or further structuring of these initiatives. The focus in combating the use of the Internet for radical and terrorist purposes lies in preventing certain comments and information from being posted. It is not currently deemed likely that attacks will be carried out by means of, or against, the Internet; the results of a survey that recently appeared in the news regarding information security did not provide any evidence to the contrary.

Partly for the purpose of implementing the aim of the Coalition Agreement, investments are being made in the development of measures to block comments or information on the Internet. To this end, a widely applicable system is being elaborated in collaboration with Internet providers in order to make websites or their content inaccessible. Research is specifically being carried out into the suitability of this type of system to radical and terrorist contents. In this context, it is important to take into account a number of legal and practical issues that require further elaboration and that are determining factors in the decision as to whether or not to block a website or its content. In accordance with the commitments entered into during the General Consultation on 10 October 2007, the House will be informed by separate letter during the first quarter of 2008 about the conditions under which it is possible to block radical and terrorist content on the internet. As an extension of this, a memorandum will also be drawn up on law enforcement on the Internet in general. The findings made in this regard will be included in the above-mentioned letter.

Finally, efforts are being focused on establishing and reinforcing collaborative arrangements with other countries. Within the EU, the Netherlands is taking part in a project with regard to the exchange of information on trends and developments that is generated by means of monitoring the Internet. In addition, it is important for countries to cooperate more closely in combating content on the Internet. This is vital in order to increase the effectiveness of measures. The Netherlands supports the European developments in this area. European cooperation must however contribute in particular towards obtaining and maintaining an insight into the nature and scope of the problem.

4. Effective organisation and instruments

Person-specific approach

The previous progress report examined the person-specific approach in great detail. As announced in that report, we have informed the House in a separate letter of the legal basis, responsibility and authority in relation to the person-specific approach.¹⁰

CBRN terrorism / Home-made explosives

The threat assessment drawn up in the spring of 2007 by the intelligence services indicates that these services believe that the risk of an attack in the Netherlands using biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) weapons is low, but that it is, however, still an actual threat. This assessment leads to the conclusion that, in view of the disproportional effects that a CBRN attack could produce, coordinated efforts focused on minimalising the risk of CBRN terrorism continues to be vital. The process to increase CBRN security that is already underway will gain an additional boost, as € 96.8 million has been made available for the period 2008-2013. The great majority of the funds will be used to increase security at high-risk CBRN research institutions, such as hospitals, laboratories and universities. € 76 million will be dedicated towards this for the entire period 2008-2013. During this period, € 20.8 million will also be available to increase the opportunities for forensic investigation in the field of CBRN. This will include expanding the investigative services, therefore enabling a more effective response in the event of an incident.

The home-made explosives project was set up as a result of the observation that the majority of all (attempted) attacks in Europe are carried out with explosives using chemicals that are freely available. The aim of the project is to make it more difficult to manufacture and deploy home-made explosives. In theory, innumerable chemicals can be used to make explosives. A study carried out by the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment [*Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu*, RIVM] and the Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research [*Nederlandse Organisatie voor Toegepast Natuurwetenschappelijke Onderzoek*, TNO], which has now been completed, identified these precursor chemicals and, based on careful research, a shortlist has been compiled. An investigation is currently being carried out, in collaboration with the business community, to determine what measures are effective and proportional for what chemicals. This could include the reporting of suspicious transactions and the imposing of restrictions on the sale of certain quantities and purities to consumers. The Dutch approach to combating explosive precursor chemicals is running in parallel to the aforementioned European Action Plan on the safeguarding of explosives, which is due to be published by the European Commission on 7 November 2007. Measures to combat the fabrication of home-made explosives will only be meaningful if agreements are made in this respect at a European level. The Netherlands has actively contributed towards the drafting of this action plan and is

¹⁰ Lower House, session year 2006-2007, 29 754 and 30 977, no. 104

investing in the European approach in this area.

Criminal enforcement

On 17 September 2007, the Amsterdam Court of Appeal convicted Samir A. of the possession of items that were clearly intended to be used for the purpose of carrying out an attack. Samir A. had on 18 November 2005 in the second instance been acquitted by the Court of Appeal in The Hague of charges including preparing to carry out one or more bomb attacks on (government) buildings. In response to this acquittal, the Public Prosecutor's Office at the Court of Appeal in The Hague brought an appeal to the Supreme Court on 24 November 2005, specifically directed against the acquittal in respect of the preparatory activities. On 20 February 2007, the Supreme Court ruled that the disputed judgment be declared null and void and referred the case to the Amsterdam Court of Appeal. The Court imposed a sentence of four years on Samir A., less the period spent in pre-trial detention. The Court was of the opinion that in assessing the items of which Samir A. was found to be in possession, particular attention must be paid to what aim he had in mind when obtaining these items. If this aim was to carry out an attack, the possession of items that are in themselves not (yet) dangerous can indeed constitute an offence.

5. Security measures

Findings with regard to civil aviation incidents

During the verbal question time on 12 October 2004, the Minister of Justice undertook to inform the Lower House about the findings with regard to civil aviation incidents, particularly in relation to procedures, communication and routes. As a result of the precautionary landing at Schiphol airport of a passenger aircraft belonging to British Airways carrying a potential explosive device on 30 September 2004, an evaluation report on how the incident was handled was drawn up under our responsibility. This evaluation showed that the procedures for the relevant parties are, in principle, clear. However, there was a need for further clarity with regard to the division of responsibilities between the various parties involved, the coordination of the provision of information, as well as the organisation of the information. All recommendations made in the evaluation report have now been followed.

The procedures for dealing with civic aviation incidents are rehearsed on a regular basis. The rehearsals have revealed that there have been significant improvements in the lines of communication. Furthermore, the State Secretary for Transport, Public Works and Water Management [*Staatssecretaris van Verkeer en Waterstaat*], in consultation with Air Traffic Control Netherlands [*Luchtverkeersleiding Nederland*] and the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, has drawn up further rules and procedures regarding air traffic services, the division of responsibilities and the potential restriction of the use of runways and routes in the event of interceptions.

Protecting civil aviation

In the context of research and development, research is being carried out into improving the technological applications with a view to increasing the effectiveness of security measures. On 14 May 2007, security scanners were introduced on a trial basis at various locations within Schiphol for the purpose of carrying out both security checks and customs inspections. For the duration of the trial, individuals will pass through the security scan on a voluntary basis. Passengers are given the choice between the standard inspection and the security scan. The results of the trial indicate that the security scanners show a qualitative improvement in comparison with the current standard security.

In addition, new equipment will be trialled in the context of research and development for the purpose of improving hand luggage checks on the initiative of the NCTb and Amsterdam Schiphol Airport.

6. Emergency response

Exercises

The NCTb and the vital economic sectors in the Netherlands have worked together to develop a broadly functioning warning system for terrorist threat, the Counter-Terrorism Alert System [*Alerteringssysteem Terrorismebestrijding, Atb*]. One of the pillars of the ATb is an extensive programme of drills and exercises. The ATb exercise cycle for each sector involved consists of a workshop, a "tabletop" exercise for the purpose of practicing decision-making procedures and an operational exercise involving the practical implementation of measures. The evaluations of the operational exercises held in the 'Rail' and 'Drinking Water' sectors during the first half of 2007 have now been concluded and the lessons learned have been discussed in detail with the sectors in question. The results of both exercises were regarded as positive by all those who took part. In June, an operational ATb exercise was held for the 'Airports' sector. The measures to be taken were implemented in practice at Schiphol airport. An operational exercise for the 'Nuclear' sector will be organised in the spring.

The decision-making process in relation to the deployment of the Special Interventions Service [*Dienst Speciale Interventies, DSI*] was rehearsed as part of the Voyager emergency drill on 3 October 2007.

At the end of October, a rehearsal of the 'Renegade Procedure' was carried out for the second time this year in collaboration with the Royal Netherlands Airforce Air Operations and Control Station¹¹. This procedure involves the thorough consideration of the need for and the type of action to be taken in the event of aviation terrorism.

¹¹ Regulation 5348913/505 of 20 April 2005 "on the provision of military assistance for the purpose of monitoring Dutch airspace and the use of defence resources against terrorist threats from the air"

7. Communication & the provision of information

In February 2006, the NCTb launched a long-term mass media public campaign under the name of '*Nederland tegen terrorisme*' [Netherlands against Terrorism]. The campaign is helping to raise awareness amongst citizens with regard to terrorism and measures to combat terrorism, as well as helping to increase confidence in the steps that the government is taking to combat terrorism. It also provides information on what citizens themselves can do to contribute towards achieving this. Each of the campaign periods targets 'the professionals' who, each in their own way, contribute towards combating terrorism in the Netherlands. This spring, the campaign will focus on various professionals from local authorities, the youth work services, the police and the education sector.

The campaign has a high total reach amongst the general public and the business community target group. At the height of the campaign, 92% of the general public were able to recognise at least one of the campaign slogans. The general annual study into the perception of terrorism shows that confidence in the government with regard to the combating of terrorism is continuing to increase.

The level of anxiety in relation to terrorism and terrorist attacks has significantly decreased, falling from 29% last year to 12 % this year. It is striking that in the case of radicalisation, which is often linked to terrorism, the trend actually pointed in the opposite direction; increasing from 12% to 21 %. In general, it can be stated that people feel reasonably safe in most locations. The large cities, public transport and major events are however still considered to be the areas at the greatest risk of a possible attack. Nonetheless, there has in fact been an increase in perceived safety on board aircraft from 61% to 69%.

Local authorities

The campaign website was expanded in September with a new chapter for regionally-based professionals. The aim is to support these individuals when combating terrorism at a local level. The information on <http://www.nederlandtegenterrorisme.nl/lokaalbestuur> has been taken from the publication entitled 'Counterterrorism at Local Level – A Guide'¹². Professionals at a local level have been made aware of this information by means of advertisements in professional publications.

Youth workers, community police officers and teachers

In addition, November 2007 will see the launch of a new mass media campaign period that will outline the work of three groups of professionals who are specifically faced with the issue of radicalisation amongst young people. The campaign will actually follow two tracks in this regard. The role of youth workers, community police officers and teachers will be highlighted by means of television and radio commercials, as well as (print)

¹² Lower House, session year 2005-2006, 29 754, no. 68

advertisements. Furthermore, material is being developed and provided that may be of particular assistance to teachers in terms of facilitating classroom discussions on the subject of radicalisation. During the preparations for this campaign period, focus-group research was carried out amongst the three abovementioned groups of professionals; the findings of these studies have been incorporated in the further development of the campaign.

The Minister of Justice,

The Minister of the Interior
and Kingdom Relations,