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Peacemakers

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A Dutch Dartmouth: Ernst van Eeghen's Private Campaign to Defuse the Euromissiles Crisis

Abstract: This article offers a case study that addresses two themes central to the notion of a New Diplomatic History. The first concerns the wish to expand the spatial dimensions of diplomatic history, in the sense of expanding the range of those whom we can arguably identify, in terms of their behavior, motivations, and interactions, as 'diplomats'. The second concerns the practice of diplomatic history itself, which in the Netherlands has largely been dominated by orthodox representations of the profession marked off by strict boundaries. From this perspective, 'high politics' is not a domain for the uninitiated, and this attitude was long perpetuated by both the academic and diplomatic professions themselves. The subject of this article, Ernst van Eeghen, due to his unique contacts and level of expertise, was able to challenge these boundaries and for a period of five years was able to place himself near the centre of negotiations on East-West security relations. He did so out of a combination of motivations: religious, commercial, and personal.

Keywords: Euromissiles, Ernst van Eeghen, Cold War, informal diplomacy

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This article offers a case study that addresses two themes central to the notion of a New Diplomatic History. The first concerns the wish to expand the spatial dimensions of diplomatic history, in the sense of expanding the range of those whom we can arguably identify, in terms of their behaviour, motivations, and interactions, as "diplomats". The second concerns the practice of diplomatic history itself, which in the Netherlands has largely been dominated by orthodox representations of the profession marked off by strict boundaries. From this perspective, "high politics" is not a domain for the uninitiated, and this attitude was long perpetuated by both the academic and the diplomatic professions themselves. The subject of this article, due to his unique contacts and level of expertise, was able to challenge these boundaries and for a period of 5 years was able to place himself near the centre of negotiations on East–West security relations.

Ernst H. van Eeghen was an entrepreneur and philanthropist who ran one of the oldest family business operations in the Netherlands – the global banking, shipping, and trading concern the van Eeghen Investment and Trade Company – across three decades from the late 1960s onwards. Motivated by his religious beliefs, in the 1980s he also became a determined peacemaker between East and West. Van Eeghen's move into "informal diplomacy" did have a business dimension – his interest in the Soviet Union was partly motivated by the pursuit of interest in the chemical trade. Yet there was also his Mennonite (Anabaptist) belief, and specifically his attachment to the Anabaptist sect's commitment to conflict resolution: his personal motto was "A Christian must work towards peace." Based on this outlook, van Eeghen determined that the family enterprise should limit its annual profits, with "excess wealth" transferred to the family's own philanthropic account, the LVE Fund. It was this that provided the means for his political philanthropy. Lastly, there was his self-confidence as a member of one of Amsterdam's oldest trading families, and so part of the nation's socio-economic elites that he could and should take on this self-professed role as peacemaker at the highest levels.[1]

Situating van Eeghen

How to place him as an international political actor? Back in 1976, in *The Web of World Politics*, Mansbach, Ferguson, and Lampert presented a typology that covered six forms: the IGO, the INGO, the nation-state, the governmental non-central actor, the intrastate non-governmental actor, and, lastly, individuals. This last category is worth quoting:

> Individuals in their private capacity are, on occasion, able to behave autonomously in the global arena. Such "international" individuals were more common before the emergence of the nation-state, particularly as diplomatic or military mercenaries.
>
> (Mansbach, Ferguson, and Lampert 1976, 41)

Examples given are Andrew Carnegie and Che Guevara, and one could add more recent celebrities such as Bono or Google's Eric Schmidt. But it is the reference to such individuals being pre-nation-state that fits the example of van Eeghen the best.

The immediate cause for his peacemaking activities was the targeting of the Netherlands by Soviet SS20s in the late 1970s. Van Eeghen supported the strengthening of conventional forces, but his deep concern was that the rising Soviet-

1 For the historical background to the van Eeghen family's business interests see Wennekes (1989, 11–44).

American tensions at the end of the 1970s could escalate out of control. In particular, the NATO decision in 1979 to modernize its intermediate nuclear forces (INF) through the deployment of Gryphon and Pershing missiles to Western Europe (and specifically 48 to the Netherlands) was for van Eeghen a potentially catastrophic move. In response he sought to establish a Dutch equivalent to the Dartmouth conferences between American and Soviet experts of nuclear strategy, making use of his Berkenrode estate outside Haarlem. Dartmouth was important because, as its chronicler James Voorhees has put forward, "it was a channel that Washington and Moscow used to transmit information and clarify perspectives when official channels seemed insufficient" (Voorhees 2002, 4). Both Norman Cousins and Landrum Bolling would provide support for his initiatives. For van Eeghen, Dartmouth was the model for breaking through not just the East–West nuclear impasse of the early 1980s but also the diplomatic impasse presented by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs that was unwilling to accept an outsider's "meddling" in such matters of national importance.

Published sources on van Eeghen's "half-diplomacy" (his own words) are scarce. The source of inspiration for this research was a brief reference in Remco van Diepen's boek *Hollanditis*. On page 328 van Diepen describes how, in the middle of the intense political deliberations prior to the 1 November 1985 deadline for deciding on whether or not 48 Gryphon cruise missiles would be deployed on Dutch soil, the deputy chair of the Soviet council of ministers Nikolai Ryzhkov sent a telegram inviting Dutch Minister President Ruud Lubbers to Moscow for last-minute talks. Lubbers apparently took the offer seriously enough to propose to parliament on 31 October that any agreement with the Americans on cruise missile deployment could be postponed until he had gone to Moscow. It was only the determined resistance from senior Christian Democrat and Liberal figures in his cabinet on the morning of 1 November – the day of the decision itself – that prevented Lubbers from first taking the plane to see Gorbachev. At 8.30 pm that evening, the deployment decision was finally taken. What makes this moment of political theatre all the more interesting is that Ernst van Eeghen is mentioned as the source of the telegram (van Diepen 2004, 328).

van Diepen does not go further into van Eeghen's role and cites one or two media reports from the time on which to base his story.[2] Other published sources on the Netherlands and the Euromissile crisis also pass over van Eeghen's role. A paragraph in Benschop and Ten Cate's *De Dans om de Kruisraket* claims that Gorbachev was only willing to talk to the Dutch at all due to "the activities behind the scenes of the Amsterdam businessman van Eeghen." But these are passing references only. He does not make it into the index of either Albert

2 For instance Veltman (1980); Dulmers (1999).

Kersten's major biography of Joseph Luns, or Anet Bleich's comprehensive study of Labour party leader Joop den Uyl (Kersten 2010; Bleich 2008). As it stands, therefore, the Dutch historical narrative has accepted van Eeghen into the Euromissiles story, but it's no more than a walk-on part. The fact that he apparently came close, as a non-diplomatic outsider, to brokering a deal on an issue of high politics as significant as nuclear security has so far not been taken seriously.

The fullest "insider" account comes from the journalist Willem Oltmans in his book *Zaken Doen* (Oltmans 1986, 13–54). Oltmans is a controversial figure, a self-publicist of undoubted talent who was able to make friends and generate enemies in equal measure, and whose greatest claim to fame was ultimately winning a defamation case against the Dutch state, 4 years before his death in 2004, involving him receiving the unheard-of sum of 8 million Dutch Guilders. Inevitably, Oltmans and van Eeghen fell out after an initially close partnership focused on establishing business contacts in Moscow. But the journalist does at least provide some insight into the moves made by van Eeghen during the crucial 1982–1985 period, and a taste of the negotiations that took place at that time.

The first encounters

Oltmans first picks up the story in November 1980, when the journalist and the businessman by chance run into each other in a Parisian hotel. Their mutual interest in Soviet affairs became the basis for future contact. Oltmans, at the time putting together a book on Soviet foreign policy, then introduced van Eeghen to his co-author, Gyorgy Arbatov, the director of the USA Institute at the Soviet Academy, in March 1981. This led to van Eeghen's first attempt to intervene in the nuclear issue: an offer, transmitted via Arbatov, whereby the Soviet Union would back away from directing SS20s against Dutch targets if the Dutch government rejected the offer to station cruise missiles on its territory. Moscow was not used to considering a unilateral deal with a single NATO member state, but van Eeghen saw an opportunity for a precedent that could reverberate across Europe. A Dutch delegation, with representatives from the Christian Democrat, Labour and Liberal parties, the head of the Netherlands Institute for Peace Research, and van Eeghen himself, travelled to Moscow in October 1981, but it was not a success – the Kremlin showed little interest in the Netherlands as a discussion partner on such matters of nuclear security. Neither were all of van Eeghen's delegation willing to accept that an opportunity for dialogue really existed, and the record of what was actually said was adapted to suit the

pro-cruise lobby in the Netherlands.[3] Caught up in the inevitable political intrigue in The Hague, and not least the suspicion of Foreign Minister Max van der Stoel who wanted to avoid any hint of a separate peace deal splitting NATO, the visit did not lead to anything other than a follow-up (and equally unsuccessful) parliamentary delegation without van Eeghen in December 1981.[4]

Unrelenting in his pursuit of peace, van Eeghen switched to organizing a US–Soviet meeting at his Berkenrode estate. Positive signals from Senators Sam Nunn and Mark Hatfield indicating that they would attend a Berkenrode tête-à-tête with a Soviet delegation were torpedoed first by Secretary of State Al Haig and then his successor, George Schultz, who, like van der Stoel, regarded such informal contacts with the Soviets as potentially undermining the diplomatic process. Both the United States and Soviet embassies in The Hague also failed to cooperate with these plans. The official diplomatic networks of the United States, Soviet Union, and the Netherlands were thus opposed to these moves towards informal peacemaking. By this stage van Eeghen was beginning to shuttle between Washington and Moscow, trying to coax American support and at the same time avoid being drawn out of his independent position by Soviet patronage. The Dutchman used his trips to Moscow to smuggle bibles in his luggage, something that, since his visits were always choreographed by the KGB, gave him "much pleasure".[5] The Soviet Committee for Security and Cooperation in Europe became his new contact point in Moscow, with its vice president, Eugene Siline, being well connected with among others A.P. Shitikov, president of the Supreme Soviet. Other allies were emerging: Anatoly Dobrynin, the long-time Soviet Ambassador to Washington DC, and Nikolay Dagayev, president of the Soviet War Veterans Committee. Plans for an informal dialogue between the Soviets and the West Germans opened the opportunity for a Dutch follow-up. But van Eeghen was now entering the smoke and mirrors of the late Brezhnev and immediate post-Brezhnev period, with opposing camps nervously forming around the issue of US intentions and whether or not to enter a serious dialogue with the Reagan administration. A point of

3 Henk J. Neuman, the chair of the NIVV, issued a report together with NIVV colleague Huib Hendrikse on the Moscow visit – *Verkenning in Moskau: verslag van het bezoek dat een groep Nederlanders van 24 tot 29 oktober 1981 heeft gebracht aan de hoofdstad van de Sovjet Unie* (1981). The report altered the statement by Valentin Falin that should a conflict break out involving both superpowers somewhere in the world, the USSR would launch an attack against all "first-strike" weapons in the West, thus including Dutch-based Cruise missiles. The report made no mention of the Netherlands being included in such a strategy. See Oltmans (1986, 22–23).

4 The second delegation's visit is briefly recorded in van Eekelen (2000, 236).

5 E. van Eeghen to Tom Getman (Chief Legislative Assistant to Senator Mark Hatfield), 20 September 1982, File: Correspondence 1981–1985, Van Eeghen Family Archive (hereafter VEP).

resistance was Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, wary of any move that would give greater legitimacy to alternative channels of dialogue and so undermine his position.

How did van Eeghen secure his entrance to the highest circles of the Soviet establishment? One way was via the World Veterans Federation, of which van Eeghen was a member since fighting in both the liberation of the Netherlands at the end of WW II (with the Canadians) and in serving with the Dutch military in the East Indies in 1946–1947 (his wounds in that conflict effectively ended a possible military career). Another was via the Conference of European Churches (CEC) founded in Geneva in 1959 to facilitate dialogue and reconciliation between the Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, and Catholic churches at a time of Cold War tension. Van Eeghen had previously served as chair of the finance committee for 8 years, and it was via a CEC meeting in the Soviet Union that he first visited that country. Both avenues gave him access to influential Soviet circles. When asked by Arbatov's number two, Radomir Bogdanov, what his motivations were because "some people in Moscow had asked why I did what I did," Van Eeghen replied – as recorded in a letter to Sam Nunn – that his Christianity provided the motivation:

> I felt it my duty in these apocalyptic days to do whatever possible to get the two parties together. Official talks had failed since nearly 40 years, and the stock of nuclear arms had increased on both sides at a scale nobody could have the faintest idea of what this really meant. I had clearly felt that through the Conference of European Churches and my intimate contacts with the Soviet War veterans Committee God had led me to some top people in the Soviet administration.[6]

The informal meeting between the West Germans and the Soviet delegation did take place in late 1982. A proposed US–Soviet follow-up, involving influential diplomats Valentin Falin and Vadim Zagladin, and General Chernov on one side, and Senators Nunn and Hatfield and former Joints Chiefs of Staff (JCS) David Jones on the other, was put in motion. Van Eeghen wrote the invitation for Siline to pass on, but from the American side Schultz queried the Netherlands as the location for the meeting, and the death of Brezhnev on 10 November caused upheaval in Moscow. Van Eeghen would lament that his communiqué, dated 19 November, missed creating a breakthrough by 2 weeks. Gromyko was able to push aside those such as Siline, Falin, and Zagladin who had tried to take advantage of Brezhnev's ailing health to bypass the Soviet Foreign Ministry, re-asserting his power at the centre.[7] The scale of anti-nuclear protests across Western Europe and North America had taken the Soviet leadership by surprise,

6 E. van Eeghen to Sam Nunn, 10 February 1983, VEP.

7 E. van Eeghen to Tom Getman, 19 January 1983, VEP.

giving the hard-liners the hope that they could drive political wedges between Europe and the United States on security issues.[8] With Siline losing influence, attention shifted back to Gyorgy Arbatov who possessed a direct line to Brezhnev's successor, Yury Andropov. In mid-April 1983 van Eeghen and Arbatov met in Paris, where the Russian announced Andropov's support for pursuing a dialogue. In van Eeghen's words:

> Andropov had asked who I was because he was surprised that someone from a small country, not a diplomat, but a businessman with no professional interest in the Sovjet Union [sic], was playing a role in this matter.[9]

Oltmans' record of this meeting is different, with Arbatov referring to his Dartmouth talks and van Eeghen concerned that he would be pushed to one side as superfluous. Oltmans would also continue his contact with Arbatov, who considered van Eeghen to be "a nice guy" but questioned his value (Oltmans 1986, 39, 45). Nowhere in van Eeghen's correspondence is Oltmans mentioned. Oltmans does record in his diaries that van Eeghen was receiving visits from the BVD in this period and speculated that he was being side-lined. The two drifted apart from this time on.

Van Eeghen continued to pursue his peace-making activities apace. With the US–USSR nuclear talks in Geneva at a standstill, there were signs that both sides were beginning to look for new avenues for negotiations. Brent Scowcroft was quoted in the *Washington Post* in March saying that "one way to break out of the considerable depths of suspicion would be to initiate some private kind of talks, away from the spotlight, where neither side has to worry about being perceived as caving in or making concessions" (*Washington Post* 1983). At that time Arbatov, already a regular at the Dartmouth conferences, now became co-chair of its Arms Control Task Force along with Paul Doty, as well as being a member of the Palme Commission on Disarmament and Security since 1981 (Voorhees 2002, 159; Evangelista 1999, 161–62). He was thus one of the principle informal interlocutors in dealing with the West. In June 1983 van Eeghen and Arbatov met again, this time at Berkenrode. Arbatov put forward the Palme Commission's line of "mutual security" between the nuclear superpowers, and once again reiterated that the Dutchman's credentials in Moscow "were exceptional." van Eeghen wrote to Sam Nunn: "His friends are convinced that I speak the same language in Moscow as in Washington."[10] Throughout 1983 and early 1984 van Eeghen shuttled between Washington and Moscow, recording his movements

8 See Wettig (2009).

9 Memorandum on Meeting with Professor Arbatov in Paris on April 15th 1983, VEP.

10 E. van Eeghen to Sam Nunn, 20 June 1983, VEP.

and discussions with in detail to Sam Nunn and David Jones, who both acknowledged the usefulness of these communications. He clearly saw himself as an intermediary in between the superpowers, and his level of access was quite remarkable. On the Soviet side, via Arbatov, Shitikov, and Dagayev, he had direct access to the Kremlin and the military top brass (but not to Gromyko or the Foreign Ministry). On the American side, direct contact with Senators Nunn and Hatfield, Walter Mondale, David Jones, Brent Scowcroft, National Security Council (NSC) Europe desk chief Ty Cobb, and the peace campaigner and Dartmouth regular Landrum Bolling.[11] Siline first invited him to join the International Committee for European Security and Cooperation based in Brussels and then in late 1983 to become its president, but the Committee's reputation as a Soviet front organization caused van Eeghen to decline.

The Heemstede conference

By early 1984 van Eeghen was promoting the idea of dropping Cruise deployment in favour of a major strengthening of Dutch conventional forces. This would both deflate the political impasse in the Dutch parliament and shift attention away from the nuclear issue and back to Mutual Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR), where progress could then be made. David Jones and former Defence Secretary James Schlesinger were prepared to back this up, but Nunn recommended going via the Reagan administration. A meeting between van Eeghen and the NSC's No. 2, Ron Lehman, followed, wherein Lehman eventually agreed that such a nuclear-conventional deal with the Netherlands could be a good step forward. The Dutch Minister of Defence Job de Ruiter also agreed and was willing to take it to the cabinet.[12] But van Eeghen's plan was bypassed by hard-liners among the Christian Democrats and their coalition partners the Liberals, including the Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek, who forced through a decision on 1 June 1984: deployment would be decided on 1 November 1985 and would depend entirely on whether the number of Soviet SS20s aimed at European targets had been increased. For van Eeghen this meant no deployment at all – opinion polls showed the Christian Democrats facing a big loss at the next national elections, with the anti-Cruise Labour party set to enter government.

In late November 1984 van Eeghen finally succeeded in arranging a Berkenrode seminar, but between a Dutch and a Soviet delegation, without the Americans. The Soviet group, originally under the guidance of Falin, was

11 E. van Eeghen to Sam Nunn, 9 December 1983, VEP.

12 "Memorandum", n.d. [May 1984], and E. van Eeghen to Sam Nunn, 30 May 1984, VEP.

led by Arbatov's No. 2, Radomir Bogdanov, who used the occasion to propose "that the Netherlands and the Soviet Union should work together on a code of conduct of behavior of nuclear countries. The Helsinki act was much too vague. A new code would not be against the Helsinki act but should support it in detail." A follow-up was proposed for the following summer in the Soviet Union, and it looked as if this could finally be van Eeghen's personal "walk in the woods" with a Soviet counterpart. Bogdanov was keen to get van Eeghen to Moscow to meet Gorbachev, by then a strong contender to succeed Konstantin Chenenko as Communist Party General Secretary.[13] The seminar, a unique event in Dutch–Soviet relations, propelled van Eeghen to Washington DC in January–February 1985 and a series of top-level informal discussions, including with Dartmouth founder Norman Cousins. Van Eeghen: "I have learnt a lot from him that will be useful for Berkenrode. He will ensure a close relationship between Dartmouth and Berkenrode."[14] March found him in Moscow, pushing to ensure a total number of SS20s below the limit of 396 in order to call the bluff of the Dutch government and prevent Cruise deployment. Verifying the actual number was a difficult matter – the Dutch government would be relying on US-supplied figures, which the Soviet Union would naturally contest. Van Eeghen returned from Moscow with the message that "the Soviet Union would be willing to enter into talks (not negotiations) with the Netherlands Government on the number of deployed SS20s and *the verification of same*." Considering verification was one of the touchiest issues for the Kremlin, involving the surveillance of their territory, and that any agreement on this had to come from the very top, this was a remarkable result.[15] Stalled by the advisor to Dutch Minister President Ruud Lubbers, J.P.M.H. Merckelbach, van Eeghen wrote directly to Lubbers to pass on the Soviet thinking and point out that his peacemaking efforts were being openly obstructed by the Foreign Ministry: "It is doubly regretful that the Berkenrode group can indirectly orientate itself around the American government but not around the Dutch."[16] The fact that the Dutch delegation to Berkenrode had been personally coached by Dartmouth members David Smith and Noel Gaylor did not overcome official suspicion of such "informal diplomacy". Neither did it help that the official Soviet offer on verification never

13 E. van Eeghen to Sam Nunn, 27 November 1984, VEP.

14 "Bezoek USA 21 Januari tot 15 Februari 1985", 19 February 1985, VEP.

15 E. van Eeghen to Sam Nunn, 22 March 1985, VEP (emphasis in original). The key person for this, aside from Gromyko, was Zamiatin, chief of the Department of the International Information Bureau of the Central Committee. The fact that Arbatov was able to arrange a 2-hour meeting with him within a day suggests that the Dutchman was taken seriously as a messenger for the Soviet cause.

16 E. van Eeghen to Ruud Lubbers, 28 March 1985, VEP.

came, leaving van Eeghen once again with empty hands. The attempted intervention in late October 1985 involving the Ryzhkov telegram was therefore the final throw of the dice of a remarkable 5-year period of private diplomacy.

Conclusions

How were van Eeghen's activities viewed by Dutch media and politics? In general, there seems to have been a mixture of suspicion and incredulity. Accusations of his use as a tool of Soviet intrigue were to be expected in a nation deeply divided by the Cruise missile issue, but more interesting is the inability to know how to place this "independent actor" within the top levels of diplomatic negotiation. The Netherlands' largest circulation (right-wing) daily *De Telegraaf* took a special interest in his activities. It reported during the first Berkenrode seminar that "the Soviet Union is trying via informal channels to prevent the Netherlands from deploying Cruise missiles." Four days later the paper – probably informed by the BVD – also pointed out that Bogdanov was a KGB officer temporarily stationed with Arbatov's institute, something the Russian was obviously not keen to publicise (Hagers 1984a, 1984b). Van Eeghen used the regional *Leeuwaarder Courant* for a long interview in response, where he flatly denied that commercial gain stood behind his efforts (*Leeuwaarder Courant* 1984). But the *Telegraaf* journalist Henk de Mari had decided to investigate further, producing deeply sceptical articles on "the latest courier of the Kremlin" and using Oltmans himself as a critical source to discredit van Eeghen's activities (de Mari 1985a, 1985b). From beginning to end the Dutch Foreign Ministry had also either ignored or obstructed van Eeghen's efforts, down to the final moment on 1 November where Minister Hans van den Broek acted directly to prevent the Soviet "peace initiative" to Lubbers from going ahead. This official resistance was given good coverage in the media.[17] In a recent interview, Lubbers acknowledged van Eeghen being "very ethically motivated" but said "I had to be consistent in not letting my Minister of Foreign Affairs down," and for van den Broek van Eeghen was "ethical but irrelevant" and someone to be blocked on principal at every turn.[18]

Van Eeghen's motivations for his peacemaking efforts seem to fall into three categories. Firstly, his religious beliefs cannot be discounted. His Soviet counterparts undoubtedly played on this: both Arbatov and Bogdanov expressed sympathy for Christianity in private moments, Bogdanov claiming to have come

17 See for instance Vermaat (1985).

18 Ruud Lubbers, telephone interview with the author, 4 April 2013.

under the spell of Billy Graham during one of the latter's visits to the Soviet Union.[19] But a sharing of Christian morals when it came to nuclear weapons cannot be discounted either. Secondly, while his business interests were indeed in the background, the van Eeghen Chemicals and Minerals Group had previously exported materials for the Soviet bloc electronics industry which had, apparently, drawn a reprimand from the BVD (the Soviet trade representative in Amsterdam through whom this was arranged was exposed as a spy by the BVD in July 1982) (Mari 1985). Thirdly, his genuine knowledge of military affairs – nuclear and conventional – combined with his refusal to accept the multiple overkill facing both East and West through possible conflict escalation. Some of van Eeghen's proposals – the verification issue, the attempt to strengthen Dutch conventional forces at the expense of extra nuclear tasks, the need to explore what a minimal deterrent would actually involve for both sides (the "Finite Deterrent", something already considered in the last year of the Eisenhower administration)[20] – were potentially ground-breaking, but as an outsider he was unable to gain the necessary momentum for them at key moments. Nevertheless, he came very close on several occasions.

In terms of how van Eeghen was perceived by the Americans and the Russians, one cannot deny that he was able to gain remarkable access to policy-making circles on both sides. Once established, he had a use-value for both. He was clearly used more by the Soviet side, in particular Arbatov, as a means to send signals to the United States, reflecting the desperation of the early 1980s in Moscow with a faltering leadership and a bellicose Reagan administration. Van Eeghen had wanted to bring the Americans and Russians together for a general rapprochement, but the Berkenrode conference of November 1984 ultimately involved only the Dutch and the Russians in an attempt at a bilateral arrangement. Further research is required to test how both sides perceived him as a diplomatic player.

Obstructed by official diplomacy, in the late 1980s van Eeghen moved away from nuclear issues but stayed focused on Soviet matters. In March 1987 his direct intervention secured the release of the Russian Baptist dissident Vladimir Khailo from incarceration in a Soviet mental asylum, a success that gave him increased credit in the United States.[21] By founding the Burght foundation he

19 E. van Eeghen to Sam Nunn, 10 February and 20 June 1983, VEP.

20 "How Much is Enough?": The U.S. Navy and "Finite Deterrence," National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 275, available online at <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nukevault/ebb275/#asterisk>

21 Dulmers (1999); Spencer (2010); W. van Eeghen, interview with the author, Amsterdam, 11 June 2012. See also van Eeghen (2001).

then created a new platform for conflict resolution in the post-Soviet states, including involvement in Russian-Ukrainian relations surrounding the future of the Crimea.

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