

From: H <hrod17@clintonemail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2012 1:58 PM
To: 'Russorv@state.gov'
Subject: Fw: Dutch politics

Classified by DAS, A/GIS, DoS on
 10/30/2015 ~ Class: CONFIDENTIAL ~
 Reason: 1.4(D), B1 ~ Declassify on:
 02/09/2032

Pls print.

From: Sullivan, Jacob J [mailto:SullivanJJ@state.gov]
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2012 12:18 PM
To: H
Subject: FW: Dutch politics

See below – a useful assessment of the Dutch politics memo.

From: Gordon, Philip H
Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2012 11:46 AM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: RE: Dutch politics

I asked our Chargé in the Netherlands to comment, without telling him anything about the source of the memo. Comments below:

The present government of the Conservative Party (VVD) and Christian Democrats (CDA) is a minority government. To get a majority on the issues they consider important, they signed a contract with the PVV of Geert Wilders (Party for Freedom, Partij voor de Vrijheid). With this support they have a majority of one vote in parliament.

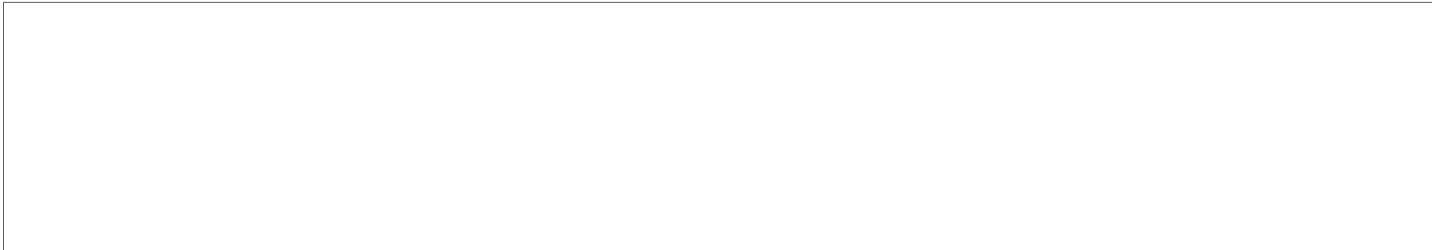
True

Wilders gave his support in exchange for government support for his priorities: against Islam and Islamic people, against EU, against arts & culture, no compassion with minorities, in favor of being tough on criminals, against the left, etc. In this respect it looks like (political) business as usual. But it isn't. Wilders has a complete control on the government, as without his support the coalition will no longer be in charge.

Accurate as far as it goes. The Rutte government needs Wilders votes to give it a parliamentary majority on budget issues. To date, Wilders has delivered that support exactly as he said he would in the coalition agreement. He hasn't, however, demanded anymore than outlined in the agreement or seriously threatened to bring down the government. On non-confidence issues, foreign policy for example, Rutte has been able to build alternative majorities with some of the opposition parties. The police training mission in Kunduz, for example, was not supported by Wilders or anyone in his party, but the government built a majority with smaller centrist and center-left parties. [REDACTED]

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From three different sources (a former Prime Minister – who is close to HM the Queen, an acting Director General, and a former head of protocol to the Vice Prime Minister) I have been told that Prime Minister and Vice Prime Minister meet with Mr. Wilders once a week, they go through the list of issues and nominations, and he has to give his consent on every topic that it is part of the agreement between the coalition and Mr. Wilders. In practice this means that he has full control on all major political decisions and important nominations. It is a brilliant position as he doesn't have to take the heat for being responsible (as he is not in the government but controls the government!).

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In practice it means that everybody with a leading position (including all civil servants) must keep in mind: “what does Wilders want.” There has developed a sphere of fear, self-censorship and censorship.

It's clearly a factor, but he doesn't (from what we've seen) exercise a veto on policy or appointments.

To give a few examples: A candidate for the Dutch Supreme Court was no longer allowed to be candidate when it became public that during the trial against Wilders he had written a critical memo against Wilders.

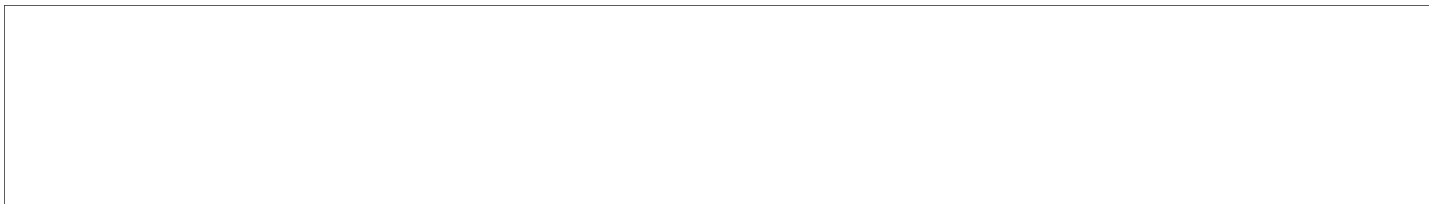
As all public media are depending on government subsidies, you'll not hear any critical voice against Wilders as he has make the threat that financial support will be withdrawn. One of the tragicomic consequences is that when Wilders' second man and party-ideologue, Martin Bosma, published his idiotic book in which he claims that Hitler was a leftist, and so the left/liberals are the fascists, he really could get away with all of this nonsense, as all talk shows complied to his demand that *no other guest* was allowed to come when he appeared.

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One of the consequences is a kind of internalizing of “Wilders-thinking” on all levels. As a result the Prime Minister can say, after he wins regional elections: “Finally we can give back the Netherlands to the Dutch people” (as at any time in the last decade this country no longer belonged to the Dutch people). And the Vice Prime Minister could make this argument: “I understand the worries of the Dutch people. With foreigners, you get foreign food and with foreign food foreign diseases...”

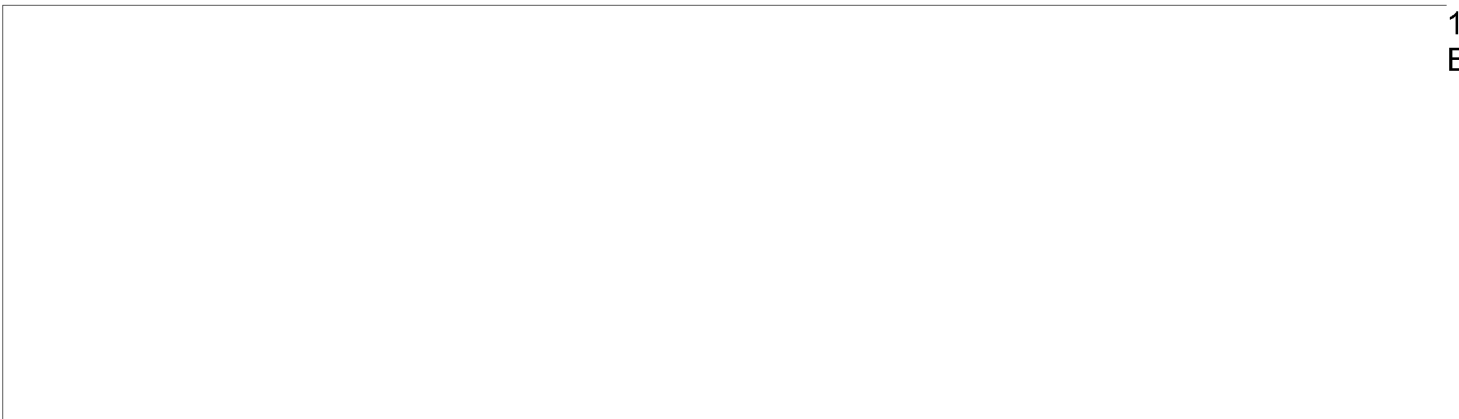
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The biggest problem is that Wilders and his neo-fascist ideas have become so much accepted, that indeed it has become unacceptable to criticize him. Breivik, the Norwegian fascist and mass murderer, mentions Wilders over 30 times as his great hero, example etc. Wilders' line of defense: “Breivik is insane. I have nothing to do with him. But responsible for the acts of Breivik are the Muslims because they drove him to these actions...” The argument is absurd, but again, it is widely accepted.



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In the latest polls, however, he is losing a bit of support. This might be because Wilders made one comment about the Queen, which was even for a majority of his voters too much. But it is way too soon to say that he is over the top. He is in control, he decides how long this cabinet is allowed to exist, and he has proven again and again to be the most brilliant politician we have had in decades.



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