

FOREIGN AND DEFENCE POLICY VIEWS OF THE DUTCH FAR-RIGHT PARTIES AHEAD OF 2025 DUTCH GENERAL ELECTIONS

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DOI: 10.24193/subbeuropaea.2026.1.12

Published Online: 2026-06-22

Published Print: 2026-06-30

Abstract: *With multiple military conflicts and crises occurring around the globe, combined with the incumbent US administration's isolationist drift, calls for restoring European strategic autonomy have intensified. Consequently, foreign policy and defence have once again gained in salience and moved to the forefront of political debates in Europe. Meanwhile, parties representing the far right of the political spectrum continue to surge in popularity and gain higher influence in national legislatures. So far, the research on the far right and foreign policy has predominantly focused on European integration, while their views on broader foreign affairs and defence have garnered less attention. This article aims to address this lacuna by focusing on the Netherlands, an important EU and NATO member state with a diverse and proliferating far-right scene. Drawing on party manifestos collected from the Repository of the Documentation Centre of Dutch Political Parties, the article presents an overview and analysis of the foreign policy and defence views of Dutch far-right parties ahead of the general elections scheduled for October 29, 2025. Findings suggest that parties' views are generally aligned with the core ideological tenets of the far right (nativism, authoritarianism, populism). Specifically, their views on the EU are primarily motivated by their nativism and populism, while their views on defence are primarily motivated by their authoritarianism. As for other foreign policy issues, their degree of commitment to these core tenets (radical right vs. extreme right) stands out as a potential explanatory factor.*

Keywords: *foreign policy, defence policy, far right, radical right, extreme right.*

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Introduction

The political landscape in the Netherlands has become less stable over the last decade. The country, previously known for its consensus-based decision-making tradition (known as “polderen” in Dutch), is currently undergoing significant transformations, whereby three consecutive governments fell due to scandals and intra-coalition disagreements in 2021, 2023, and 2025, respectively. After surviving just 11 months in the office, the Schoof cabinet submitted its resignation on June 3, 2025, as a result of disagreements over asylum policy.² Consequently, new elections took place on October 29, 2025.

One of the main trends underlying contemporary Dutch politics is the continuing rise of the far-right parties. While initially represented by LPF (Lijst Pim Fortuyn – List of Pim Fortuyn) and then by PVV (Partij voor de Vrijheid – Party for Freedom), the last decade has seen the proliferation of the far-right in the Netherlands.³ As of today, the Dutch parliament has three parties representing this family, with FvD (Forum voor Democratie – Forum for Democracy) and JA21 (Juiste Antwoord 21 – Just Answer 21) being the others, as well as the BBB (BoerBurgerBeweging – Farmer Citizen Movement) that has recently been dubbed as the “borderline case.”⁴ After the last general election in November 2023, these four parties together gained an astonishing number of 49 seats, almost a third of the entire legislature.⁵ Two of them, PVV and BBB, joined the Schoof Cabinet. Such an increased influence over

² NOS, “Kabinet-Schoof is nu demissionair, zo gaat het verder”, June 3, 2025, <https://nos.nl/collectie/13996/artikel/2569826-kabinet-schoof-is-nu-demissionair-zo-gaat-het-verder>.

³ Sergiu Mișcoiu, Oana-Raluca Crăciun, Nicoleta Colopelnic, *Radicalism, Populism, Interventionism: Three Approaches Based on Discourse Theory*, Cluj-Napoca: EFES, 2008; Gerrit Voerman, Léonie de Jonge, “Wie speelt welke kaart? Het uiterst rechtse kwartet van 2025”, Montesquieu Instituut, https://www.montesquieu-instituut.nl/9394000/1/j9vllwqzvjxdyx/vmqj8y8xdv1?pk_kwd=vmqj8y8xdv1.

⁴ Léonie de Jonge, Matthijs Rooduijn, Andrej Zaslove, “The Evolution of Populism in Dutch Politics”, in Sarah de Lange, Tom Louwerse, Paul 't Hart, Carolien van Ham (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Dutch Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2025, p. 368; Matthijs Rooduijn, Andrea L. P. Pirro, Daphne Halikiopoulou et al., “The PopuList: A Database of Populist, Far-left, and Far-right Parties Using Expert-informed Qualitative Comparative Classification (EiQCC)”, in *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 54, no. 3, 2024, pp. 969–978.

⁵ Kiesraad, “Tweede Kamer – 22 november 2023 – verkiezingsuitslagen”, <https://www.verkiezingsuitslagen.nl/verkiezingen/detail/TK20231122>.

policymaking offers a closer warrant of their views as the far-right party family is known for its challenging of decades-long established paradigms of liberal democracies.⁶

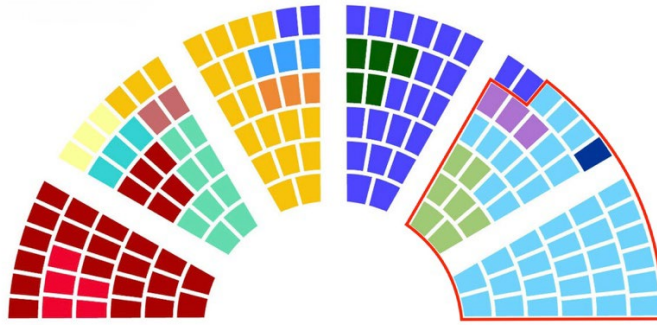


Figure 1. Composition of the Dutch House of Representatives since the last General Elections in November 2023. Circled in red: PVV (37 seats), BBB (8 seats), FvD (3 seats), JA21 (1 seat). **Source:** NOS, 2023.⁷

With a notable exception of the globalization and the European integration, wider foreign policy as well as the defence views of the far right gained less attention in research.⁸ Yet, with the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, the ongoing war in Gaza, as well as the incumbent Trump administration's

⁶ Tarik Abou-Chadi, Werner Krause, "The Causal Effect of Radical Right Success on Mainstream Parties' Policy Positions: A Regression Discontinuity Approach", in *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 50, no. 3, 2020, pp. 829–847; Tim Bale, Christoffer Green-Pedersen, André Krouwel, Kurt Richard Luther, Nick Sitter, "If You Can't Beat Them, Join Them? Explaining Social Democratic Responses to the Challenge from the Populist Radical Right in Western Europe", in *Political Studies*, vol. 58, no. 3, 2010, pp. 410–426; Nicolas Bichay, "Come Together: Far-right Parties and Mainstream Coalitions", in *Government and Opposition*, vol. 59, no. 3, 2024, pp. 633–654; Anna-Sophie Heinze, "Strategies of Mainstream Parties towards their Right-wing Populist Challengers: Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland in Comparison", in *West European Politics*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2018, pp. 287–309.

⁷ NOS, "Nieuwe Kamerleden beëdigd: 67 zaten nog niet eerder in de Kamer", December 6, 2023, <https://nos.nl/artikel/2500551-nieuwe-kamerleden-beedigd-67-zaten-nog-niet-eerder-in-de-kamer>.

⁸ Simon Bornschier, "Globalization, Cleavages, and the Radical Right", in Jens Rydgren (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018; Catherine E. de Vries, *Euroscepticism and the Future of European Integration*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018; Hanspeter Kriesi, "The Politicization of European Integration", in *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 54, S1, 2016, pp. 32–47; Dani Rodrik, "Why Does Globalization Fuel Populism? Economics, Culture and the Rise of Right-wing Populism", in *Annual Review of Economics*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2021, pp. 133–170.

affinity with isolationism, and the calls to restore European strategic autonomy, foreign and defence policies are once again at the forefront of political debates in Europe. By focusing on the Netherlands, this article aims to contribute to this literature by asking the following question: *What are the foreign and defence policy views of the Dutch far-right parties ahead of the upcoming general elections in October 2025?* With the available manifesto data from the Repository of the Documentation Centre of Dutch Political Parties (Repositories Documentatiecentrum Nederlandse Politieke Partijen – DNPP), this article provides an overview and an analysis of the Dutch far-right parties' agendas in the wake of the upcoming October elections.⁹ The far-right parties that are not currently represented in the House of Representatives (e.g., BVNL; Belang van Nederland – Interest of the Netherlands) will not be taken into consideration.

The article has the following structure. First, it defines the far-right, the far-right foreign and defence policies, and sets theoretical expectations. Second, it gives an overview of the political developments in the Netherlands over the last few years. Third, it outlines the foreign and defence policy agendas of each party. Fourth, it provides an analysis of these agendas followed by a discussion. Finally, the article ends with concluding remarks.

Far right and the far-right foreign and defence policies

Over the last years, “far right” emerged as an umbrella concept to encompass actors located at the right edge of the political spectrum.¹⁰ This article follows Mudde's (2019) classical definition, where the far right is generally characterized by nativism, authoritarianism, and populism. Nativism posits that the nation state “should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group”.¹¹ Authoritarianism is a preference for a “strictly ordered society, in which infringements on authority are to be punished severely.”¹²

⁹ DNPP, “Repositories Documentatiecentrum Nederlandse Politieke Partijen (DNPP)”, <https://dnpprepo.ub.rug.nl/>, accessed October 15, 2025.

¹⁰ Cas Mudde, *The Far Right Today*, Cambridge: Polity, 2019; Andrea L. P. Pirro, “Far Right: The Significance of an Umbrella Concept”, in *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2023, pp. 101–112.

¹¹ Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 19.

¹² *Idem*, *The Far Right Today*, p. 29.

Populism is a 'thin ideology' that "considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite,' and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people."¹³ The far right is furtherly divided into two sub-groups: the radical right and the extreme right. The extreme right is anti-democratic and supportive of violence.¹⁴ On the other hand, radical-right actors are not against democracy, but rather contest its liberal features, such as the rule of law, separation of powers, and pluralism.

Speaking of the far right and foreign policy, Verbeek and Zaslove accurately highlight that the IR field traditionally ignored political parties due to its general disinterest in them and "focus on states as unitary actors."¹⁵ However, they argue this view is shortsighted as the last few decades dominated by globalization and European integration has made foreign policy a more salient issue for political parties. It is especially relevant for the far right as both processes profoundly impacted the domestic political landscape and consequently triggered a reaction from them.¹⁶

Among the numerous recent attempts to theorize this phenomenon, De Sa Guimaraes and De Oliveira e Silva and Wojczewski claim that protecting the nation-state and the national identity of the in-group are the core objectives of the far-right foreign policy. De Sa Guimaraes and Oliveira e Silva expect far-right actors to voice opposition to supranational institutions and international organizations, and to employ pro-sovereignty frames by criticizing international law as well as the Manichean worldview where international actors are divided into friends and enemies.¹⁷ Wojczewski goes further by arguing that authoritarian instincts also shape the far-right foreign policy. In practice, this may manifest itself in increased militarism that "calls

¹³ *Idem*, "The Populist Zeitgeist", in *Government and Opposition*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2004, p. 543.

¹⁴ Anders Ravik Jupskås, Eviane Leidig, "Knowing What's (Far) Right", 2020, [C-REX], p. 4.

¹⁵ Bertjan Verbeek, Andrej Zaslove, "The Impact of Populist Radical Right Parties on Foreign policy: The Northern League as a Junior Coalition Partner in the Berlusconi Governments", in *European Political Science Review*, vol. 7, no. 4, 2015, p. 526.

¹⁶ Simon Bornschieer, "Globalization, Cleavages, and the Radical Right", in Rydgren (ed.), *op. cit.*; de Vries, *op. cit.*; Kriesi, *art. cit.*, pp. 32–47.

¹⁷ Feliciano de Sá Guimarães, Irma Dutra de Oliveira e Silva, "Far-right Populism and Foreign Policy Identity: Jair Bolsonaro's Ultra-conservatism and the New Politics of Alignment", in *International Affairs*, vol. 97, no. 2, 2021, pp. 345–363.

for a strong army to defend national sovereignty” and “the propagation of military values within society, such as discipline, strength, and comradeship.”¹⁸

In such a configuration, views on the defence policy should not be decoupled from the foreign policy, as in the ongoing geopolitical context, the article expects to see a higher convergence between the two policy fields. Arguably, such an increased convergence may give new opportunities for far-right parties to formulate policies that are more consistently embedded into their worldview along the lines of securitization, stricter social order, and the protection of national identity.¹⁹ However, it should be noted that defence views of the far right are also a matter of controversy, with some members of this party family (specifically the extreme-right ones) being critical of the US, NATO, and the liberal international order (LIO) while having sympathies towards political figures as Vladimir Putin (e.g., Lega, AfD, RN).²⁰

Combining these insights, the article expects the following elements in the far-right foreign and defence policy agendas. It expects nativism to be generally expressed via policies that prioritize the national sovereignty and the autonomy of domestic political institutions over the multilateral arrangements and policies ‘imposed’ by supranational institutions and IOs. Therefore, it expects parties to support the superiority of national law over European and international law. Additionally, it expects parties to employ sovereigntist narratives as “taking back control” and to motivate policy choices with nativist reasoning, that is, to protect the national interest and the interests of citizens.²¹

¹⁸ Thorsten Wojczewski, “Theorizing Far-right Foreign Policy: Insights from Germany”, in *Political Studies*, vol. 73, no. 3, 2025, pp. 1169–1193.

¹⁹ Rosa Balfour, Janis A. Emmanoulidis, Heather Grabbe, Timo Lochocki, Cas Mudde, Juliane Schmidt, Catherine Fieschi, Christopher Hill, Marie Mendras, Mari K. Niemi, Corina Stratulat, “Europe’s Troublemakers: The Populist Challenge to Foreign Policy”, Brussels: European Policy Centre, 2016.

²⁰ Miku Matsunaga, Thomas Winzen, “Strengthening Mainstream Consensus? The Effect of Radical Right Populist Parties on the Defense Policies of Left Parties”, in *Political Science Research and Methods*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2025, pp. 629–644; Maria Snegovaya, “Fellow Travelers or Trojan Horses? Similarities across Pro-Russian Parties’ Electorates in Europe”, in *Party Politics*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2022, pp. 409–418.

²¹ However, the limits of this approach are underlined by several contributions. See, for example, Sergiu Gherghina, Monika Mokre, and Sergiu Mişcoiu, “Deliberative Democracy, Under-Represented Groups and Inclusiveness in Europe”, in *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, vol. 34, Issue 5, 2021, pp. 633–637.

Considering the increasingly vulnerable state of global affairs, it is also expected that parties will offer a more authoritarian and securitized vision for society as a means of protecting it from external threats. It may entail an increase in defence spending, introducing some form of conscription and military training, and advocating for a higher presence of the military in society. Finally, populism can manifest itself in general scepticism towards global and continental governance structures, where citizens are framed as “the pure people” and institutions like the European Union or the United Nations as “the corrupt elite.”

As for more concrete issue areas, it is expected that parties will be more aligned in their views towards the EU and defence policy. Specifically, there is a higher likelihood of nativism and populism being expressed in party views towards European integration, and authoritarianism being expressed in defence policy. Conversely, there is no expectation of uniform views on wider foreign affairs. Taking into account the heterogeneity of far-right parties (i.e., the radical right and the extreme right), some degree of divergence is expected to be seen.²²

The Dutch Context

Starting from 2010, the Dutch politics has been dominated by the mainstream right VVD (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie – People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy) under the leadership of Mark Rutte. The first Rutte cabinet was a coalition government among VVD, CDA (Christen-Democratisch Appèl – Christian Democratic Appeal), and PVV, which made an electoral breakthrough that year. The government didn’t last long due to disagreements over fiscal policy and collapsed in 2012. The second Rutte cabinet was a stable one with PvdA (Partij van de Arbeid – the Labour Party). The last two cabinets (2017 -2024) consisted of VVD, CDA, social-liberal D66 (Democraten 66 – Democrats 66), and the Christian left party CU (Christen Unie – Christian Union).

These last two Rutte cabinets were unstable, with several scandals and protests wrecking the usually peaceful modus operandi of Dutch politics. Starting from 2019, farmers’ protests have been an inseparable part

²² Mudde, *The Far Right Today*; Jakob Wondreys, “Putin’s Puppets in the West? The Far Right’s Reaction to the 2022 Russian (Re)invasion of Ukraine”, in *Party Politics*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2025, pp. 299–309.

of the political life.²³ The protests have erupted in reaction to the nitrogen emission crisis declared by the Dutch government on the one hand, and the adoption of the European Green Deal on the other. This period led to the establishment of the Farmer-Citizen Movement, which started gaining ground and capitalizing on the crisis.

Paradoxically, the third Rutte government did not fall as a result of these events. It fell due to the childcare benefits scandal, where it was revealed that the Dutch Tax and Customs Administration (Belastingdienst) wrongfully accused thousands of families of trying to fraudulently claim the childcare benefit.²⁴ In doing so, the authorities have resorted to discriminatory practices that disproportionately affected the population with a foreign background. The following elections in 2021 did not change the political equilibrium drastically, and the same parties ended up creating the fourth Rutte Cabinet. However, the fundamental problems that were shaking the previous cabinet did not go away. In fact, quite the contrary has happened.

As the Dutch government continued to press for progressive environmental policies, this gave the impetus for the farmer protests to continue and for the BBB to grow further. In March 2023, BBB became the biggest party in the Provincial Elections with almost 20% of the vote share.²⁵ BBB's popularity came at the expense of the mainstream right CDA that used to be the party widely supported by farmers and the agricultural sector.²⁶ CDA's polling has furtherly tanked due to the emergence of a new breakaway party, NSC (Nieuw Sociaal Contract – New Social Contract), led by the former CDA rebel MP Pieter Omtzigt, who quit the party after exposing the government's wrongdoings that led to the childcare benefits scandal.

²³ NOS, "Boerenprotest Den Haag voorbij, 2200 trekkers terug naar huis", October 1, 2019, <https://nos.nl/liveblog/2304125-boerenprotest-den-haag-voorbij-2200-trekkers-terug-naar-huis>.

²⁴ *Idem*, "Hoe het derde kabinet-Rutte steeds meer verstrikt raakte in de toeslagenaffaire", January 15, 2021, <https://nos.nl/collectie/13855/artikel/2364574-hoe-het-derde-kabinet-rutte-steeeds-meer-verstrikt-raakte-in-de-toeslagenaffaire>.

²⁵ Kiesraad, "Provinciale Staten – 15 maart 2023 – verkiezingsuitslagen", <https://www.verkiezingsuitslagen.nl/verkiezingen/detail/PS20230315>.

²⁶ NOS, "Bekijk hier alle uitslagen van de Provinciale Statenverkiezingen", March 15, 2023, <https://nos.nl/collectie/13923/artikel/2467604-bekijk-hier-alle-uitslagen-van-de-provinciale-statenverkiezingen>.

Seeing that the childcare benefits scandal and the farmer protests led to the loss of voters from the mainstream right to the breakaway centre-right parties, VVD decided to divert attention by politicizing the issue of migration. In July 2023, VVD pressed for tighter restrictions on family reunification schemes that met resistance from two other coalition partners, D66 and Christen Unie.²⁷ The intra-coalition disagreements led to the collapse of Rutte IV, with the new elections scheduled for November 2023. The Netherlands was heading to elections that were dominated by the topic of migration.

After Mark Rutte retired from Dutch politics, the new VVD leader Dilan Yeşilgöz-Zegerius opened the door for PVV to become a viable coalition partner. Seeing this, Geert Wilders also moderated his tone on issues like Islam (i.e., no more calls for banning the Koran and Mosques) and the EU (i.e., no more calls to organize NEXIT). The media called him Geert “Milders”.²⁸ The consistent normalization of the far right throughout the entire campaign led to an electoral outcome where PVV gained almost a quarter of all votes and seats, and became the biggest party for the first time.²⁹ All in all, while the Dutch mainstream right wanted to get voters back from breakaway parties by diverting attention from the benefits scandal and environment, it ended up losing voters to the far right by diverting attention to migration.

With increasing political fragmentation, coalition-building in the Netherlands became burdensome. The results were unexpected, with PVV and the breakaway parties (BBB, NSC) being the major winners, while the mainstream right (VVD, CDA) was the major loser. The negotiations were preoccupied by debates around PVV’s commitment to liberal democratic principles and the rule of law. Finally, the coalition agreement was struck in July 2024 among the major election winners (PVV, BBB, NSC) and the VVD.³⁰

²⁷ NOS, “Hoe Rutte vriend en vijand verraste: reconstructie van de val van Rutte IV”, July 8, 2023, <https://nos.nl/collectie/13942/artikel/2482044-hoe-rutte-vriend-en-vijand-verraste-reconstructie-van-de-val-van-rutte-iv>.

²⁸ Cas Mudde, “The Netherlands Underestimated the Far Right – and Geert Wilders’ Victory Is the Result”, *The Guardian*, November 23, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/nov/23/netherlands-far-right-geert-wilders-victory-mark-rutte>.

²⁹ Kiesraad, “Tweede Kamer – 22 november 2023”.

³⁰ Simon Otjes, Léonie de Jonge, “The Netherlands: Political Developments and Data in 2024: An Experimental Government with the Radical Right”, in *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook*, published online June 4, 2025.

The short-lived Schoof Cabinet was remembered with constant infighting among the coalition partners, again mostly coalescing around PVV's commitment to liberal democratic principles and the rule of law. After several months of clashes and infighting, PVV unilaterally left the government, citing disagreements over its proposed asylum policy.³¹ PM Schoof offered his resignation shortly after.³²

Compared to migration and environment, foreign policy and defence-related matters have been politicized by the far right to a lesser extent. In spite of PVV's initial opposition, coalition members agreed to continue supporting Ukraine.³³ A notable exception here is the parliamentary vote that narrowly rejected participation of the Netherlands in the ReArm Europe. The motion was raised by the JA21 leader Joost Eerdmans.³⁴

Foreign and Defence Policy views of the Dutch Far Right

Documentation Centre of Dutch Political Parties (DNPP) is an institute established within the University of Groningen that, among others, has established a repository of documents related to the political parties active in the Netherlands.³⁵ Party manifestos analysed in this article have also been collected from this repository. Consequently, a qualitative analysis of the manifesto chapters concerning foreign and defence policy has been conducted.

Party for Freedom (PVV – Partij voor de Vrijheid): the consistent one.

The PVV manifesto is the shortest. It is mostly based on brief theses and bullet points on each policy domain. The chapter of the PVV manifesto that talks about foreign policy starts with a plea for sovereignty and direct criticism of the European Union. Among others, the party is against the "European superstate," the EU enlargement (and Turkish accession in

³¹ Geert Wilders, "Geen handtekening voor onze asielpannen. Geen aanpassing Hoofdlijnenakkoord. PVV verlaat de coalitie", [Tweet], June 3, 2025, <https://x.com/geertwilderspvv/status/1929799143486017814>.

³² NOS, "Kabinet-Schoof is nu demissionair."

³³ Otjes, de Jonge, *art. cit.*

³⁴ Tweede Kamer, "Motie van het lid Eerdmans over Nederland niet laten deelnemen aan ReArm Europe", March 4, 2025, <https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/detail>.

³⁵ DNPP, "Repositories Documentatiecentrum Nederlandse Politieke Partijen (DNPP)", <https://dnpprepo.ub.rug.nl/>, accessed October 15, 2025.

particular), defence initiatives driven by the EU, Eurobonds, the digital Euro, taxation, and the European Parliament having two headquarters.³⁶ While PVV's goal is to transform the European Union 'from within,' the manifesto lacks any further elaboration on how exactly this should happen except for the extensive use of veto power. The party is also willing to seek an opt-out from the migration and asylum pact, budgetary, and environmental regulations.

At the same time, PVV supports increasing defence capabilities. However, it should only be used to protect the Netherlands (and its borders), and defence spending should be part of the national spending plan, prioritizing local industry, rather than being part of an EU-led effort. NATO membership is supported. Despite Wilders' proximity to the current US administration, the US is not mentioned in the manifesto. So is China, and the ongoing tensions between China and Taiwan. Russia is briefly mentioned as an aggressor, whereas Ukraine's fight for its sovereignty is also briefly acknowledged and supported.

Israel is given full support where it is framed as "the only true democracy in the Middle East."³⁷ Criticism towards Israeli actions is framed as "antisemitism," and PVV believes that the Netherlands should neither contribute to Gaza's reconstruction nor accept any Palestinian refugees. Their proposed solution is to pass those responsibilities on to Arab countries and countries that "support Hamas." Additionally, PVV wants to quit ICC, move the Dutch embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, and abolish the representation in Ramallah by claiming that the Netherlands already has an embassy in "the capital of the only true Palestinian state," which happens to be Amman, the capital of Jordan.³⁸ Finally, citing the inefficiency of development aid given to the Global South, PVV is willing to abolish foreign aid in any form, including to Ukraine. In short, PVV's manifesto does not contain anything novel, and the party has been quite consistent with these exact policy ideas for almost two decades of its existence.

Forum for Democracy (FvD – Forum voor Democratie): the extreme one.

Forum voor Democratie (FvD) has two chapters in its manifesto: one concerning "the European Union and Sovereignty," and the other concerning

³⁶ PVV, "Verkiezingsprogramma", <https://www.pvv.nl/verkiezingsprogramma.html>, pp. 30-31, accessed October 15, 2025.

³⁷ *Ibidem.*

³⁸ *Ibidem.*

“Geopolitics, Defense, and Foreign Trade.” The party hints that they differentiate between the EU and other foreign affairs. They also fiercely criticize the EU and state their willingness to quit the EU. FvD offers a solution by proposing an EFTA membership like Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland. They call this an “intelligent exit.”³⁹ FvD is also more specific in its criticism. They argue that the EU is not a free trade area, but a customs union, and over time, it ended up controlling numerous aspects, such as trade agreements and interest rates, among others. Therefore, they want to quit the Eurozone and oppose the digital Euro.

In general, FvD is more isolationist. They focus on transparency, sovereignty, and, more importantly, on self-reliance. They want Dutch law to be superior to European legislation and international treaties; they want any international treaty negotiations led by the Netherlands to be subject to the Open Government Act, and they reject the idea of the US and NATO being a security guarantor. If nothing, they want to hold a referendum on NATO membership and the Dutch military to improve based on their own judgment, rather than on multilateral arrangements. FvD is also quite critical of multilateralism. They want to negotiate bilateral trade agreements, reject the prevalence of SDGs as policy guidelines, and are interested in terminating treaties and quitting organizations that are not in line with Dutch national interests. Just like PVV, FvD is also in favour of protecting the national borders with the army. They also support a wide range of generous welfare benefits for the Dutch military and the veterans.

FvD is also in favour of scrapping foreign aid except for emergency aid in case of natural disasters elsewhere, but also for the protection of Christian communities in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Speaking of the Middle East, FvD appears as one of the few parties of the far right that takes a more critical stance on Israel. The party believes that the Israeli response to October 7 is unacceptable and supports the two-state solution. Ukraine is barely mentioned, with FvD calling for the normalization of the relationship with Russia by lifting sanctions imposed on it.

What is peculiar about FvD is that its nativism is not limited to the Netherlands. Not only does FvD support stronger ties with the Dutch

³⁹ FvD, “Partijprogramma”,

https://res.cloudinary.com/fvdcdm/image/upload/v1759824498/FVD_verkiezingsprogramma-2025_A4_FORMAAT_digitaal-DEF-V5_t8qcsr.pdf, p. 26, accessed October 15, 2025.

Caribbean and Suriname, but it also advocates for stronger ties with the Dutch diaspora and people of Dutch ancestry in countries like the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. By showcasing a more ethnocentric approach, the party supports the expansion of diplomatic activities in these countries and even assists people of Dutch ancestry in acquiring Dutch citizenship. Additionally, FvD wants to turn the Dutch Caribbean into the “Florida of the Netherlands.”⁴⁰

Compared to other parties, FvD’s views on both foreign policy and defence stand out, specifically concerning the USA, NATO, and Israel-Palestine conflict. It is also the only analysed party that openly calls for NEXIT. Combined with their calls for more self-reliance and isolationism, FvD seems like the more extreme party of the Dutch far right.

Right Answer 21 (JA 21 – Juiste Antwoord 21): the Eurorealist one.

Within the section “Defence and Foreign Policy,” JA21 starts by arguing that they are “the defence party” of the Netherlands, whereby they have been campaigning to spend 2% of GDP on defence since their inception.⁴¹ As a general observation, among all parties analysed in this article, JA21 seems to have the most sophisticated views towards defence. The party necessitates this approach by acknowledging the drift toward a multipolar order where Russia, China, and the middle powers have more influence in global affairs. In their view, such a development makes the Netherlands, being a crucial trading nation, vulnerable. Therefore, JA21 also voices support for the 5% (3.5% core defence + 1.5% defence and security infrastructure) defence expenditure plan by 2035, recently agreed in the NATO Summit in the Hague, by also reaffirming its “loyalty” and support for NATO.⁴²

Apart from supporting the improvements in the national defence infrastructure and industry, as well as the increased defence procurement, JA21 is also willing to expand the Dutch armed forces to have around 200,000 personnel (including reservists). Furthermore, JA21 is the only party analysed in this article supporting the mandatory conscription of 5% from those who complete the annual defence survey (the party refers to it as “the

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 77.

⁴¹ JA21, “Programma”, <https://ja21.nl/partij-programma>, p. 55, accessed October 15, 2025.

⁴² NATO, “Defence Expenditures and NATO’s 5% Commitment”,

https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49198.htm, accessed October 15, 2025.

Scandinavian model"). These proposals are complemented by various financial and career-oriented benefits for the veterans and reservists, and educational programs intended to boost civilian preparedness.

Beyond defence, JA21 calls for a "realistic" foreign policy by focusing on two areas: security and trade. This approach manifests itself in various ways. For instance, the party speaks unfavourably of development aid and is willing to limit it strictly to humanitarian aid. They criticize previous Dutch governments that spent billions in aid to "countries like Pakistan that decided to invest in their nuclear arsenal rather than in education."⁴³ Instead, JA21 believes that developing countries should be integrated into global trade networks. While other countries can be assisted in enacting governance reforms, these should be done carefully, not to be perceived as "neo-colonial."

JA21 showcases its clear stance by supporting Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan in "their existential struggles" and is critical of Russia, Iran, and China.⁴⁴ To counterbalance the destabilizing influence of these powers, the party offers to foster stronger ties with the Americas. Yet, some caveats are worth mentioning here. While JA21 supports Ukrainian sovereignty, it is against its admission into the EU and NATO. With China they offer to be cautious and be mindful of national security without getting too adversarial. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, JA21 believes in the impossibility of the two-state solution in the ongoing circumstances.

As for the European Union, JA21 wants the EU to limit itself to an economic union. They believe in the EU, which negotiates trade deals with other countries and blocs while also enacting business-friendly reforms within the Union (e.g., Capital Markets Union). At the same time, the party is critical of regulations, eco-friendly economic reforms, an increase in the EU's budget, an increase in staff, and joint borrowing. The EU enlargement should be strictly monitored, while the member states' veto right should remain.

In sum, JA21 is trying to portray itself as pragmatic and technocratic by offering specific policy proposals. One can also frequently see the word "realistic." The party showcases a quite committed transatlantic stance by remaining somewhat sceptical towards the European Union. In fact, it is possible to conclude that their views are predominantly consistent with the so-called "Eurorealism," an idea that combines economic liberalism, national

⁴³ JA21, "Programma", p. 57.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

conservatism, and Atlanticism, championed by the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), a member of which JA21 was until 2023.⁴⁵

Farmer-Citizen Movement (BBB – BoerBurgerBeweging): the undecided one.

BBB also states its commitment to NATO and supports the increased defence spending in principle. Yet, they are being cautious regarding finances and are not ready to commit to such a big spending increase, as it may damage other things they view as more important, such as social security, healthcare, and improving the countryside. Instead, they believe this burden should be shared fairly (not through the EU debt).

BBB emphasizes increasing the combat power. Interestingly, in their view, it can be achieved via abolishing “politics-biased training and ideological reading lists.”⁴⁶ They also support further acquisition of military equipment, such as tanks and drones, construction of microreactors and satellites, and support for the local military industrial complex. More importantly, they want to make these changes more visible in society. Among others, they support the transformation of reservists into the national guard with part-time employment, want to introduce a minor in defence to students in higher education, to build barracks all over the Netherlands, to increase the number of armed forces in urban areas (especially in Randstad), and to launch training areas in the agricultural lands.

According to the BBB, the EU should also be limited and deal with several issues, such as the economy and migration. At the same time, BBB opposes trade deals that undermine the interests of the Dutch agriculture sector. They are also against the federalization of Europe, support the veto right, and the national governments to have more say in EU affairs, and the strict application of the Copenhagen criteria for EU enlargement. They are also in favour of fewer financial contributions to the EU, against funds as the “Corona Recovery Fund,” joint borrowing, and the digital Euro.

⁴⁵ Martin Steven, *The European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR): Politics, Parties and Policies*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020; Martin Steven, Aleks Szczerbiak, “Conservatism and ‘Eurorealism’ in the European Parliament: The European Conservatives and Reformists under the leadership of Poland’s Law and Justice”, in *European Politics and Society*, vol. 24, no. 5, 2023, pp. 585–602; Wondreys, *art. cit.*, pp. 299–309.

⁴⁶ BBB, “Verkiezingsprogramma”, <https://boerbürgerbeweging.nl/tweede-kamer/verkiezingsprogramma/>, p. 88, accessed October 15, 2025.

The party is sceptical about the Dutch membership in international organizations, including those hosted by the Netherlands. The party is willing to support NATO's Eastern flank by deploying a brigade in Poland or Lithuania. In Ukraine, BBB wants the end of the war, the Netherlands to actively participate in its reconstruction, and is not supportive of its NATO membership. As for the Ukrainian EU membership, BBB believes that accession can be possible based on strict adherence to the Copenhagen Criteria.

In the Middle East, they are against terrorism, against Iran getting nuclear weapons, and while welcoming their democratization, support securing minority rights in post-Assad Syria. They also support the two-state solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by calling for the release of all hostages. The Netherlands should be more supportive of Taiwan, considering its importance for the Dutch economic interests (i.e., semiconductor production). BBB also wants to deter Venezuela due to its proximity to the Dutch Caribbean. BBB is also interested in cutting foreign aid and wants to limit it to humanitarian crises and small-scale ad-hoc interventions. Interestingly, they are interested in development aid towards the EU neighbourhood (Balkans, Caucasus, MENA), departing from a belief that this may help to stabilize migration flows.

Analysis

In light of the recent geopolitical instabilities, the article expected to see an increased convergence between foreign and defence policies. Indeed, the evidence can be easily found in the way parties have structured their manifestos. PVV and JA21 have outlined their policies in both fields within the same chapter. FvD has a separate chapter for the EU, while having other foreign policy and defence views in the same chapter. Though BBB has separate chapters for defence and foreign policy, its policy proposals in defence illuminate several of its foreign policy views.

As predicted by the theory, it is expected that far-right parties will express their nativism by prioritizing sovereignty, putting Dutch law above European and international law, and motivating these choices to protect the interests of Dutch citizens. In practice, these should be particularly reflected in party views towards the European Union. Similarly, authoritarianism is to be expressed in defence policy by supporting views propagating a higher presence of the military in social life. At the same time, parties are expected

to have more diverging views on wider foreign affairs. The analysis reveals that manifestos indeed are in line with the theoretical expectations, though with varying degrees. Party views are summarized in **Table 1**.

Issue/Party	PVV	FvD	JA21	BBB
European Integration				
Overall stance on the EU	Negative	Negative	Negative	Negative
Preferred model for the EU	Reform from within	EFTA > EU	Economic union only	Limit EU to few areas (economy; migration)
EU Army	Opposed	Opposed	Opposed	Opposed
EU Enlargement	Opposed	n/a	Opposed to Turkish membership	Support based on strict application of Copenhagen Criteria
EU/NATO membership for Ukraine	Opposed	Opposed	Opposed	Maybe EU
Foreign Affairs				
Multilateralism/Bilateralism	Bilateralism	Bilateralism	Mixed (supports EU trade deals)	Mixed
Foreign aid	Abolish	Abolish (few exceptions)	Humanitarian aid only	Humanitarian aid; development aid limited to the EU neighborhood
USA/NATO	Support	Skeptical; Referendum on NATO membership	Support	Support
Russia	Moderately negative	Moderately positive	Negative	Negative
Russia-Ukraine war	Somewhat pro-Ukraine	Somewhat pro-Russia	Pro-Ukraine	Pro-Ukraine
China	n/a	n/a	Cautious cooperation	Cautious cooperation
China-Taiwan relations	n/a	n/a	Pro-Taiwan	Pro-Taiwan
Israel-Palestine conflict	Pro-Israel	Two-state solution	Pro-Israel	Two-state solution
Defense				
Defense orientation	NATO	NL	NATO	NATO
5% (3.5%+1.5%) NATO spending plan	No clear position	Opposed	Support	Support for 3.5%
Defense spending orientation	Support for domestic defense industry	Support for domestic defense industry	Support for domestic defense industry	Support for domestic defense industry
Conscription	Opposed	Opposed	Support (Scandinavian model; 5%)	Opposed unless necessary

Table 1. Summary of Foreign Policy and Defense views of the Dutch Far-right Parties

Nativism, Populism, and the European Integration

Unsurprisingly, all four parties are generally aligned in their views towards the European project. They are outright against any initiative that could lead to an 'ever closer union.' These include, but are not limited to, the EU enlargement, Digital Euro, EU-wide borrowing, defence and military initiatives, bureaucracy, budget, and regulations.

At best, parties can somewhat tolerate the EU to stay the same. Ideally, they all want to see a smaller and more limited EU. PVV wants to "change it from within," FvD wants to replace the EU membership with an EFTA membership. JA21 and BBB are economy-oriented and would like the EU to limit itself to these domains. This being said, BBB is more cautious in trade deals the EU negotiates due to potential damage to Dutch interests (e.g., the EU-Mercosur deal and its potential negative impact on Dutch farmers). What unites all parties is the willingness to retain the veto right and use it wherever possible to protect the Dutch national interest. Also, parties are united in abolishing the current arrangement where the European Parliament resides in both Strasbourg and Brussels.

All parties are against the EU army and view it with mistrust. Interestingly, parties indirectly hint that what an EU army means in practice is that it will deploy Dutch military units in areas that do not serve the national interest and, most importantly, without the mandate of the Dutch people. As for EU enlargement, the views are similar in the sense that they all share scepticism towards it, yet they are different in the degree of scepticism. FvD does not talk about it at all, as they are willing to leave the EU altogether. PVV wants to halt all accession negotiations, JA21 is against the Turkish accession, and BBB may potentially support it based on the strict application of accession criteria for the prospective members (including Ukraine).

Parties (except JA21) stress the importance of the superiority of Dutch law. They (except PVV) express the importance of stronger ties with other constituent countries of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. With more isolationist and ethnocentric policies, FvD stands out with a higher degree of nativism. Parties showcase their populism with mistrust of global governance structures and international treaties. PVV wants to 'take back control,' get more opt-outs from the EU, and quit ICC. FvD requires

transparency in negotiating treaties, wants to push for more bilateral treaties, and disregards SDGs, and BBB talks about “healthy scepticism.” Among the four parties, JA21 stands out as a relatively less populist one.

Authoritarianism and Defence

Parties decouple the EU and NATO on security and defence matters. They view NATO (except FvD) as a guarantor of the Dutch national security. As expected, parties not only support more military spending and boosting military capabilities but also motivate it with a nativist reasoning. Money should be spent to support the local defence industry, and parties (except JA21) support the idea that the army should protect the national borders, even though the mainland Netherlands borders with fellow EU and NATO member states. BBB goes even further with its plans to deploy military units in Randstad and introduce defence in higher education. This plea for a more securitized and ordered society is furtherly complemented by policy proposals that are willing to boost the socioeconomic status of the military (except PVV).

Other Foreign Affairs

The analysis uncovers a peculiar pattern in other foreign policy issues. For instance, in how parties view the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war, as well as the tensions between China and Taiwan. On the one hand, JA21 and BBB are clearly supportive of Ukraine and Taiwan and critical of Russia and China. On the other hand, PVV and FvD do not mention China and Taiwan in their manifestos at all, while FvD frames the Russo-Ukrainian war as “an American proxy war” and calls for normalization with Russia. More importantly, PVV has watered down its traditional pro-Russian sympathies and at least nominally supports Ukraine by describing Russia as an aggressor.

A similar pattern is observed in regard to how parties view the US and NATO. Here as well, JA21 and BBB state their committed support for NATO (including the defence spending plan) and call for increased cooperation with the US, Canada, and even Australia and New Zealand. PVV nominally supports the US and NATO without further details. FvD is sceptical of the US, wants to hold a referendum on NATO membership, and is against the 5% defence spending. The Israel-Palestine conflict is the only major issue

where this alignment has shifted, with PVV and JA21 formulating clearly pro-Israeli positions and FvD with BBB supporting the two-state solution.

As mentioned in the theoretical discussion, parties that represent the extreme-right subgroup of the far right tend to be known for their scepticism towards the US and the US-led liberal international order, while parties that are merely radical-right are known for being less critical.⁴⁷ It also means that their views on wider global conflicts are shaped by this belief.⁴⁸ From this perspective, JA21 and BBB are evidently more moderate, PVV seems to balance in between (arguably due to its previous coalition experience; see Bichay, 2025),⁴⁹ and FvD voices more extreme policies.

Discussion

What does this all mean for the future of Dutch politics and the post-election dynamics? The analysis describes PVV as consistent, FvD as extreme, JA21 as Eurorealist, and BBB as undecided. After PVV quit the coalition, most parties have pledged not to cooperate with PVV. While some have done so for ideological reasons, others (e.g., VVD) have done so due to PVV's unreliability.⁵⁰ As things stand now, PVV's return to the government seems unlikely, and the party appears to be more interested in being loyal to its principles and voters. The party's manifesto seems to be generally consistent with its traditional views (except for nominal support for Ukraine). Looking at the pre-election opinion polls, this strategy seemed to be paying off, considering that PVV's polling has remained stable at around 30 seats (20% of the vote share) since it quit the government.⁵¹ Eventually, PVV slightly underperformed the polls by getting 26 seats and becoming the second biggest party.⁵²

⁴⁷ Steven, *op. cit.*

⁴⁸ Wondreys, *art. cit.*, pp. 299–309.

⁴⁹ Nicolas Bichay, "Converging to the Mean? Moderating Ideologies of Far-right and Far-left Parties in Government", in *Party Politics*, published online May 2025.

⁵⁰ Jon Henley, "Dutch Centre-right Party Rules out Coalition with 'Unbelievably Untrustworthy' Wilders", *The Guardian*, June 10, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/10/dutch-vvd-rules-out-coalition-with-unbelievably-untrustworthy-wilders>.

⁵¹ EenVandaag, "Zetelpeiling: zo staan de politieke partijen er voor", October 30, 2025, <https://eenvandaag.avrotros.nl/peilingtrends/zetelpeiling-zo-staan-de-politieke-partijen-er-voor-160080>.

⁵² NOS, "Uitslagen Tweede Kamer 2025", October 29, 2025, <https://app.nos.nl/nieuws/tk2025/>.

The same can be true for FvD. It is extreme in the sense that its views are further to the right than those of the other far-right parties. Indeed, describing the Russo-Ukrainian war as an “American proxy war,”⁵³ calling for a referendum on NATO membership, and being critical of Israel have not been popular views even among the far-right lately (let alone the political mainstream). Yet, what is remarkable about FvD is that it also successfully maintains its consistency with its marginal but stable voter base. Over the last few years, FvD has polled consistently at around 3-5 seats.⁵⁴ It is probably accurate to conclude that FvD seems to be satisfied with this status quo, as their connection to their base is crucial for them. The party also has the highest membership rate in the Netherlands.⁵⁵ FvD’s ethnocentric approach, with its special attention to the Dutch diaspora, is a relevant case in point here. These findings are in line with recent scholarship arguing FvD is more than a political party, having features of a subculture, a phenomenon recently called “the movement party.”⁵⁶

As for the other two parties, JA21 and BBB appear to have views more in line with other mainstream parties, yet in different ways. JA21 is specific, pragmatic, and offers technocratic solutions. It seems that JA21 was playing strategically and tried to portray itself as a reliable and ‘koalitionsfähig’ alternative for PVV to increase its chances of ending up in a coalition. Even more accurately, JA21 placed itself between PVV and VVD.⁵⁷ Looking at the polling, the strategy seemed accurate as not only did JA21 surge in the polls, but its surge also went in parallel with VVD’s collapse, and there was a high

⁵³ FvD, “Partijprogramma”, p. 74.

⁵⁴ EenVandaag, “Zetelpeiling: zo staan de politieke partijen er voor”, October 30, 2025, <https://eenvandaag.avrotros.nl/peilingtrends/zetelpeiling-zo-staan-de-politieke-partijen-er-voor-160080>.

⁵⁵ DNPP, “Ledentallen Nederlandse politieke partijen per 1 januari 2025”, March 10, 2025, <https://www.rug.nl/research/dnpp/uitgelicht/ledentallen/ledental-2025>.

⁵⁶ Pietro Castelli Gattinara, Andrea L. P. Pirro, *Movement Parties of the Far Right: Understanding Nativist Mobilization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024; Léonie de Jonge, “Is the (Mass) Party Really Over? The Case of the Dutch Forum for Democracy”, in *Politics and Governance*, vol. 9, no. 4, 2021, pp. 286–295; Léonie de Jonge, Elizaveta Gaufman, “The Normalisation of the Far Right in the Dutch Media in the Run-up to the 2021 General Elections”, in *Discourse & Society*, vol. 33, no. 6, 2022, pp. 773–787.

⁵⁷ Though not mentioned in the article, the author has also analysed VVD’s manifesto. The JA21 and VVD manifestos are abundant in converging views.

likelihood that both parties would get a similar share of seats (around 12-15).⁵⁸ Yet, VVD was able to recover days before the election which also meant that JA21 slightly underperformed the polls by getting 9 seats only.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, JA21 still has chances of ending up in a coalition.

Finally, BBB may also be strategic and hint at their willingness to negotiate with bigger parties. All in all, BBB has so far been more concerned with the rural Netherlands. Yet, a competing explanation is worth mentioning here. As a relatively new political party, BBB may be interested in leaving its “single-issue party” reputation behind and is trying to develop a platform encompassing a wider variety of issues than agriculture and environment. Arguably, BBB is undecided because it has no clear idea of what it wants to become and which direction to take, and for now, remains as the “borderline case.”⁶⁰ Yet again, because it is a new political force, BBB also possibly lacks the relevant personnel in their ranks who would help in formulating a more coherent platform in areas as foreign policy and defence. What is evident, though, is that its efforts to step into an already crowded field do not seem to be paying off electorally, as the party hovered around 4-5 seats and got 4 seats at the elections.⁶¹

Concluding Remarks

This article questioned the foreign and defence policy views of the Dutch far-right parties ahead of the 2025 General Elections. Recently released party manifestos have been analysed to answer this question. Findings are predominantly in line with previous theoretical explanations of far-right foreign and defence policy that primarily argue that members of this party family formulate their policies along the core components of the far-right ideology: nativism, authoritarianism, and populism. Indeed, the evidence for this can be seen in parties’ views on European integration and defence. Interestingly, things are more complicated when it comes to other foreign policy issues. Previous literature suggests that, among others, radical-right

⁵⁸ EenVandaag, “Zetelpeiling: zo staan de politieke partijen er voor”, October 30, 2025, <https://eenvandaag.avrotros.nl/peilingtrends/zetelpeiling-zo-staan-de-politieke-partijen-er-voor-160080>.

⁵⁹ NOS, “Uitslagen Tweede Kamer 2025”, October 29, 2025, <https://app.nos.nl/nieuws/tk2025/>.

⁶⁰ de Jonge, Rooduijn, Zaslove, *art. cit.*, in de Lange, Louwerse, Hart, van Ham (eds.), *op. cit.*

⁶¹ EenVandaag, *art. cit.*

and extreme-right parties also differ in their foreign and defence policy views. The analysis reveals the evidence for this as well.

This radical-right vs. extreme-right dichotomy could also be used to explain the difference among far-right parties' views generally, since, for example, not all Eurosceptic parties are Eurosceptic to the same degree. Another example here would be the slightly diverging or differently framed solutions that different far-right parties offer to the EU and other issues (Table 1). However, a competing explanation here would be the salience of some foreign policy issues over others. For example, it is evident that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is more salient for PVV than the Russo-Ukrainian war or the tensions at the Taiwan Strait. The research in this area is strikingly rare, though.

Findings in this article contribute to our general knowledge of far-right foreign and defence policies during a crucial time, where the world has become less secure and more volatile. Among others, this volatility has been largely provoked by various far-right political actors holding the decision-making power in these two policy fields in autocracies (e.g., Russia), backsliding democracies (e.g., Hungary, India, Turkey), as well as the established democracies (e.g., the US).⁶²

This further illuminates a potential area for future research that should focus on the relationship between far-right incumbency, foreign policy, and democratic backsliding, and can be connected to a wider discussion on illiberalism and the threats it can cause for the rules-based liberal international order. At the same time, the research on the far right and defence policy remains scarce, and future research on this topic would be of great importance.⁶³

⁶² Sandra Destradi, Johannes Plagemann, Hakkı Taş, "Populism and the Politicisation of Foreign Policy", in *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, vol. 24, no. 3, 2022, pp. 475–492; Jonny Hall, "In Search of Enemies: Donald Trump's Populist Foreign Policy Rhetoric", in *Politics*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2021, pp. 48–63; Mihai Varga, Aron Buzogány, "The Foreign Policy of Populists in Power: Contesting Liberalism in Poland and Hungary", in *Geopolitics*, vol. 26, no. 5, 2021, pp. 1442–1463; Hakkı Taş, "The Formulation and Implementation of Populist Foreign Policy: Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean", in *Mediterranean Politics*, vol. 27, no. 5, 2022, pp. 563–587.

⁶³ Miku Matsunaga, Thomas Winzen, "Strengthening Mainstream Consensus? The Effect of Radical Right Populist Parties on the Defense Policies of Left Parties", in *Political Science Research and Methods*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2025, pp. 629–644.

Even though foreign and defence policies are once again becoming more salient, their potential influence on the political debate and the electoral outcome in the upcoming Dutch general elections should be ‘taken with a pinch of salt.’ The country headed for yet another election dominated by migration and cultural issues. The last few weeks have seen unprecedented protests demanding a crackdown on immigration and asylum seekers. On September 20, large groups of far-right protesters marched through the Hague.⁶⁴ The protest has led to violent clashes, including the attack on the headquarters of D66. As the elections approached, various anti-immigration protests were held across the Netherlands on a regular basis.

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⁶⁴ NOS, “Anti-immigratie-protest in Den Haag escaleert, ruiten D66-kantoor ingegoooid”, September 20, 2025, <https://nos.nl/artikel/2583277-anti-immigratie-protest-in-den-haag-escaleert-ruiten-d66-kantoor-ingegoooid>.

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