
Interview: Major General (Ret.) William Walthuis of the Netherlands

We must have an alternative to MAD

Major General William Walthuis (ret.) is editor of Militaire Spectator, an official publication of the Royal Dutch Army, and director of Mars in Cathedra, the publication of the Royal Society for the Advancement of Military Science. The general has been knighted, and served in the Dutch Resistance during World War II. Although he retired as a brigadier general, he was recently advanced to the rank of major general, in recognition of his services to the defense of the Netherlands. He is an adviser to the OSL Foundation (Foundation for Political Consciousness) and its Political and Military Opinion Periodical Sta-Vast. (This is a conservative organization similar to the American Legion.) General Walthuis has been very active in the cruise-missile fight, and supports the U.S. beam defense initiative. He was interviewed by Dean Andromidas of EIR's Wiesbaden bureau.

EIR: The Soviet Union has been conducting an unprecedented military buildup in Central Europe with their massive deployment of SS-20s, SS-21s, SS-22s, and SS-23s. NATO, on the other hand, has deployed no more than 18 Pershing IIs while the MX program has been all but emasculated by Congress. Could you please comment on this disparity and its implications for Western Europe in general and the Netherlands in particular?

Walthuis: From a military point of view, the present disparity between the military capabilities of the Soviet Union and the NATO countries of Western Europe is undoubtedly a matter of grave concern. Generally speaking, a limited imbalance could be acceptable, considering the fact that the Soviet military doctrine—similar to our own views—stipulates a 3:1 or, even better, 4:1 superiority of the attacking over the defensive forces as a prerequisite for success. However, recent force comparisons show that the strength of Soviet conventional forces has gone far beyond these recommendations. Especially the ratio of the in-place forces has given rise to anxiety, because the manifest superiority in that field enables the leadership of the Soviet Union to seize the initiative at any given moment in order to subjugate the peoples of Western Europe. By now the only means to restore the balance would be the wielding of the nuclear sword, but the Soviet Union has no hesitation in demonstrating its disregard for such an eventuality since it decided to rely on systematically evading MAD. Thence Western European

military experts are convinced that the Soviet threat has grown considerably with the massive deployment of intermediate range missiles, in particular since NATO is lagging behind in that field.

The implications of this development for Western Europe are quite serious: By hesitating too long, instead of taking the necessary measures to counter the unprovoked multiplication of Soviet missiles aimed at targets in Western Europe, this part of the Alliance did increase its vulnerability to nuclear blackmail. Moreover, the risk of the Soviets playing their conventional trump cards has not in the least diminished, principally in consequence of the obvious lack of unanimity as to the NATO policy to be pursued. Needless to say that this applies chiefly to the Netherlands' position, so much more in view of the fact that within the framework of the common defense the Netherlands Army Corps will have to try and stem the advance of Warsaw Pact forces in the North German Plain which is considered as the main avenue of approach toward Western Europe.

EIR: In many circles, the March 5 *Time* magazine article of Henry Kissinger was seen as a clear signal that if he were once more in the government he would promote a policy of decoupling Western Europe from the United States. Do you see a real danger of decoupling?

Walthuis: Decoupling Western Europe from the United States would mean that the European NATO partners would have to provide for their own security without the usual certainty of immediate physical assistance being given by U.S. forces. Whereas Western Europe until now has grown accustomed to the idea of comfortably sheltering itself under the American umbrella, it would soon find out that the decoupling operation resulted in the removal of the umbrella's stick and ribs, leaving only a mere piece of cloth of doubtful repellent quality. In that situation, it stands to reason that the Kremlin's interpretation of any decoupling will be that it has been granted a free hand in Europe "by courtesy of the United States." And that interpretation would be the real danger indeed.

EIR: The United States has embarked on an unprecedented effort to shift the strategic doctrine of the Alliance from that of Mutually Assured Destruction to that of Mutually Assured

Survival through the implementation of the Strategic Defense Initiative [SDI] and the concept of a beam weapon based anti-ballistic missile [ABM] defense system. Secretary of Defense Weinberger has also introduced the idea into NATO circles. Do you see an SDI-type program for Western Europe as a viable solution for nullifying the Soviet missile threat?

Walthuis: The strategic doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction [MAD] has always been something like a gamble. Should any one of the parties concerned succeed in protecting its population with an adequate shield, then the threat of annihilation on which the strategy is based would be ineffectual. Reliable information from behind the Iron Curtain has revealed that the Soviet Union has exerted itself over a considerable period to try to evade the consequences of MAD. It installed a special staff to head its civil defense organization, and transferred a number of its highest ranking generals to act as civil-defense managers, and in addition to that enhancement of the organization's leadership, it started an elaborate program aimed at the dispersion of its industries and the evacuation of population centers that could be selected as potential targets for counter-city retaliation.

That situation calls for a better solution than MAD, the strategy in which Western Europe in reality did not participate because it never planned for waging war but, on the contrary, for preventing war. Consequently, the idea of a comparable shield is contrary to the deterrence philosophy. Therefore, two options should be considered: First, to persuade the Soviet Union on no account to materialize its missile threat to Western Europe. That option should be regarded as an illusion. That leaves only the second option, namely, in one way or another to remove the lethal sting from the missiles after they have been launched. The only feasible method to do so would be by means of an efficient and possibly infallible ABM defense system that could deal with scores of missiles being launched concurrently. Such a system could very well be a beam-weapons system.

EIR: Given the fact that if a real war broke out in Western Europe, West Germany would be reduced to nuclear rubble, why do you think there is such opposition to the beam defense concept, particularly in official government circles in West Germany and the Netherlands?

Walthuis: The strong opposition in government circles in the Netherlands stems chiefly from two factors. In the first place, the Netherlands' foreign policy always has shown distinctive neutralistic tendencies. That traditional attitude proved to be rather profitable during World War I, but turned out to be disastrous in World War II, mainly because the Netherlands' Armed Forces were totally unable to provide the essential backbone for the country's neutral position. In the second place, most political parties do not have military experts at their disposal and consequently the political debate generally lacks a sound basis when strategic problems are discussed. The prime minister reportedly stated during the period in which his cabinet formation took place: "I do not

want any general to hold an office in my cabinet!" Given that aversion to military leadership, it is an open question whether or not the expert advice of the Chiefs of Staff is really given the attention it deserves. Recent handling of the cruise missile problem gives reason for strong doubts. As far as beam weapons are concerned the Netherlands' government does not oppose the idea of a beam defense concept: It only is ignorant of its strategic value.

EIR: All observers agree that there is a profound pro-neutralist shift in particularly the West German Social Democracy to the Egon Bahr line of a security partnership with the Soviet Union. Similar tendencies I am sure exist in the Netherlands.

Walthuis: Politicians in the Netherlands who believe in a security partnership with the Soviet Union represent only a minor percentage of the population. Social Democrats, of the Labor Party headed by former Premier Den Uyl, tend to stand up for a friendly attitude toward the U.S.S.R. because of its "socialist" basis. Yet advocates for a possible partnership can

The strategic doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction [MAD] has always been something like a gamble. The only feasible method . . . would be by means of an efficient and possibly infallible ABM defense system. . . . Such a system could very well be a beam-weapons system.

be found only in the extreme left circles such as the Communist Party of the Netherlands (CPN) and the Pacifist Socialist Party (PSP). Any other adherents indulge in wishful thinking.

EIR: We have expressed concern over the refusal of the Netherlands government to participate in the NATO Patriot program which can also function as anti-missile systems. Do you share this concern?

Walthuis: I do share the concern. The refusal has been based upon economic considerations: The Minister of Economic Affairs, together with his colleagues of Social Affairs and of Finance, try to persuade the Minister of Defense to negotiate for as much compensation orders as possible. In the beginning of this year, the Netherlands' Parliament approved the purchase of 20 Patriot launchers for air defense against aircraft flying at or above medium heights. The Labor Party—the biggest opposition party—objected: Its spokesman Mr. Van den Bergh, who happens to be the chairman of the

Second Chamber's standing Committee on Defense, alleged that the Netherlands' contribution to NATO would not comply with the real growth of 3% in the coming fiscal years and that, therefore, it would be unwise to bind oneself to expenditures amounting to over 840 million guilders [approximately \$262 million]. The Liberal spokesman thereafter blamed the responsible Undersecretary of State for what he called a "vanishing trick," hinting at \$33 million R&D costs which will be left unpaid for. When put to the vote, the plan nevertheless gained an indisputable majority.

EIR: The leadership of the Soviet Union has stated openly that U.S.-Soviet relations are worse than they have been since World War II, which is to say worse than the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Berlin Crisis.

Walthuis: For the deterioration of international relations the responsibility lies with the Soviet Union which is striving—at Lenin's command—for world domination and, as a means to achieve that goal, for overall military superiority. It therefore is, and will be, invariably open to discussion whether the Soviet Union will be ready once more to "retreat" as it did in the Cuban crisis (which was, *nota bene*, for the very first time in its struggle against our system which resulted from Lenin's declaration of war in 1917!). In order to understand the fundamental elements of the overall war situation one should take a good look at the world globe instead of—as most Europeans tend to do—looking at the geographic map in Mercator projection; People should realize that the geostrategic position of Cuba as the Soviet Union's counterpart behind Uncle Sam's back, is identical to that of Turkey as the United States' ally in Iran's rear. That is why Khrushchev tried to trade his Cuban missile bases for the removal of NATO missile-launching sites in Turkey. At present, Western Europe is in no position whatsoever to speculate on a similar swapping offer at any time in the future.

EIR: The Netherlands is in the midst of a security crisis over the deployment of the cruise missiles. If the outcome goes against the deployment this could cause a chain reaction throughout the Alliance particularly in Belgium and West Germany.

Walthuis: The Netherlands' government succeeded once more in actually delaying its inevitable decision to deploy the cruise missiles. The present state of affairs is that deployment will be effective as from mid-1986, if the Soviet Union will have added one single SS-20 to its June 1, 1984 total by Nov. 1, 1985. Introducing this new criterion postpones the decision to Nov. 1 of next year. Military experts in the Netherlands deplore that procedure very much. Principally because it depicts the total lack of unity of doctrine within the Alliance. Moreover, these political maneuvers threaten the cohesion of NATO. There is no reason to fear a possible chain reaction in Belgium or the Federal Republic of Germany: In these countries politicians and military leaders seem to present a common front.

EIR: The Dutch peace movement is one of the most active in Western Europe. Do you see it driving the Netherlands toward a neutralist course?

Walthuis: As I indicated already, quite a few people in the Netherlands are traditional neutralists. The Inter Kerkelijk Vredesberaad (Inter-Church Peace Deliberation, IKV) is no exception to that rule, nor is it a specific neutralist lobby. Its attractiveness derives mainly from the emotional approach its leaders present to the general public. The masses are not at all interested in a rational decision-making process: slogans, phrases, and intuition-based subjective ideas suit them better than analytical judgments. Thence the IKV-leaders know how to handle their followers. Yet their influence is decreasing, mainly because the public feels fed up with too much of the irrational stuff.

EIR: Mrs. Helga Zepp-LaRouche, who chairs the European Labor Party, has established the Schiller Institute as a means to stop the decoupling of the United States and West Germany, and hence the entire Alliance. The Institute aims at re-establishing the Alliance based on the republican ideas of the Weimar Classic tradition in Germany and the American Revolutionary period, when Benjamin Franklin mobilized support for the American republican effort as expressed in such projects as the League of Armed Neutrality. In the Netherlands, this tradition was best expressed in the struggle of William the Silent and the Dutch republicans to overthrow the tyranny of Hapsburg rule. Do you believe that these same sentiments could be mobilized in the Dutch population in support of a revitalized Western alliance?

Walthuis: I doubt very much if it will be possible to achieve a mental and moral mobilization. The Netherlands' tradition, as mentioned earlier, is primarily a matter of national history. Present-day Dutchmen are partly proud of that history, but, on the other hand, they are afraid to live through a repetition of the historical mistakes and failures again. Nonetheless, the people of the older generation remember very vividly the role Allied Forces have played in the 1944-45 liberation process. They do deplore, at the same time, that they have been unable to convey their feelings of gratitude to the next generation. Apparently that generation gap cannot be bridged. Younger people do not realize that war between communism and our system is not something imaginary, but a reality since 1917, albeit this war until now has been fought in sectors other than the military one. So, it will appear a very difficult task indeed to convince the population as a whole that the danger is imminent, and if the Soviets were to start smiling instead of rattling their swords, the greater part of the people would be inclined to regard those experts who earnestly warn of the impending disasters as hawks, whereas the peace-loving Soviets will be adored as genuine doves. That may be a pessimistic view. I see hardly any reason for optimism as far as the opinion of the masses is concerned; moreover, we should not forget that it is the general public who installs the politicians in office!