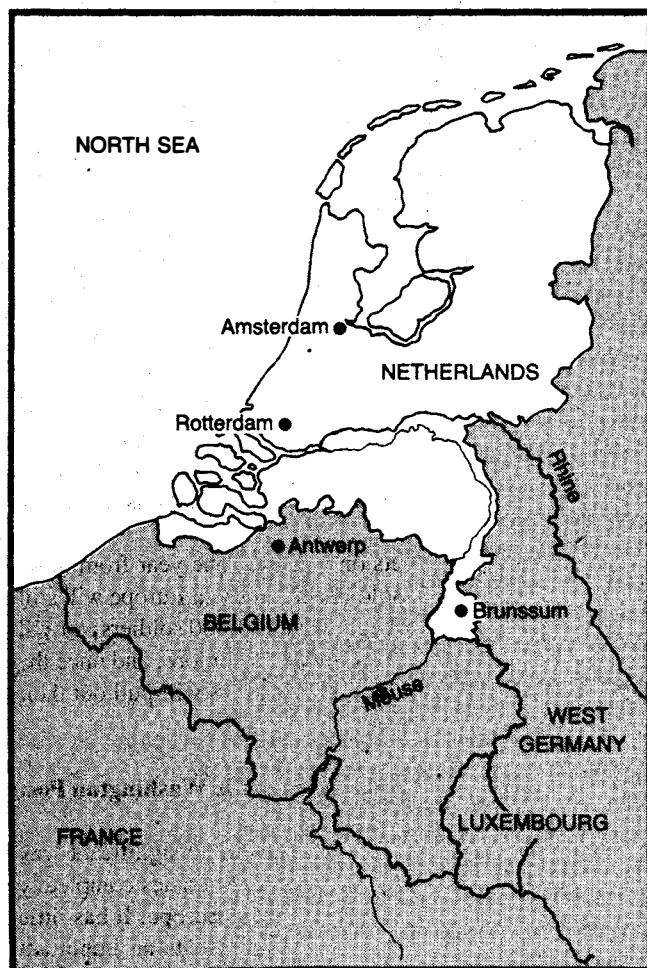


# Dutch general warns of spetsnaz threat

by Dean Andromidas

A top former NATO officer, Lt. Gen. Gerard Berkhof of the Netherlands, has charged that Soviet spetsnaz and other military intelligence units were conducting major operations around one of NATO's most important facilities. The Feb. 21 issue of *De Telegraaf*, Holland's leading daily, reports that General Berkhof's charges the Soviets are preparing for the very war that "zero option" supporters on both sides of the Atlantic think they are avoiding by supporting Moscow's latest arms-control initiative.

## AFCENT countries



General Berkhof, one of the Netherlands' highest ranking officers, was dismissed three months ago from his position as chief of staff of NATO's Allied Forces Central Europe (AFCENT), the wartime command center for all NATO troops based in West Germany and the Benelux countries in the city of Brunssum in the southern region of the Netherlands bordering West Germany and Belgium. Although the official reason for his dismissal was his "personality conflict" with his commanding officer, Gen. Leopold Chalupa of the West German Army, closer to the truth was General Berkhof's concern with the tremendous vulnerability of AFCENT headquarters to attack by Soviet spetsnaz forces, the Red Army's elite troops trained to conduct sabotage, assassination, and terror behind allied lines. This threat involves not only Soviet and East bloc trucks, river barges, and other classic espionage means, but also interfaces with organized crime sex-and-drug networks used to penetrate one of the most sensitive of NATO's command centers.

In earlier interviews with several leading Dutch weeklies, General Berkhof said that he had been looking into Soviet plans to sabotage the headquarters by infiltrating spetsnaz troops into abandoned coal-mine tunnels, which cross underground no more than 10 meters beneath the base, and which can be entered from outside the perimeter of the base.

## Soviet first strike target

A glance at the map reveals that the city of Brunssum, located in the Dutch province of Limburg, commands a position at the very center of NATO's Central European Front and astride the major East-West corridor linking NATO's forces in West Germany with the ports of Rotterdam and Antwerp, NATO's main ports of entry for reinforcement and supply from the United States. The region has been of great strategic importance in every European war since Caesar's Roman legions built formidable fortifications in the region to protect the outer perimeter of the Empire, over 2,000 years ago.

Underscoring the region's potential as a first strike target in the Soviet war plan, and linking it to spetsnaz operations and terrorist attacks on the NATO communications and logistics network, General Berkhof stated: "Yes, Holland is directly involved. When bunkers are broken open, sending towers blown up, pipelines cut, that could all be incidents, but there is a thread which ties them together. Besides, the area of Limburg is very interesting for the enemy. There are numerous areas which would be considered in a first strike. It is also a natural corridor with great strategic worth, and has always been so. Once you're through here, the roads to the beaches in the west are open; from Boulogne to Kijduin [north coast of the Netherlands]. Moreover, the area is traversed by the big East-West super highway, from Antwerp to Venlo to Berlin; and half of all the truck freight of Europe is carried by Eastern Europe and we know that among the drivers there are spetsnaz, and that sometimes these trucks

are full-of listening and detection devices.”

It is a well-known fact that East bloc and Soviet trucking throughout Western Europe is routinely used as a cover by not only Warsaw Pact spetsnaz troops but also by Red Army tank commanders and armored personnell carrier drivers for surveillance of, and training in, the regions of Western Europe they would be fighting in under current Soviet war plans. The use of East bloc river barges, which freely navigate the dense network of rivers and canals throughout Western Europe for the same purposes, is also well known. Last year a Romanian truck, trailed by Dutch intelligence from the Dutch-West German border, took five days to traverse the 140 miles to the port of Rotterdam. Although under current international treaties such East-bloc traffic can be strictly regulated and confined to specific routes, no such action has been taken—despite the fact that such East bloc activity escalates sharply during NATO maneuvers.

### Drugs and subversion

In the *De Telegraaf* interview, General Berkhof goes even further, linking spetsnaz and other operations directly to Soviet drug-running, indeed pointing to how they intimately are linked up with other subversive activities. In spring 1986, a huge narcotics trafficking operation was cracked by Dutch and West German authorities. The network, involving nearly 100 individuals, including NATO military personnel, was running heroin from Southeast Asia and cocaine from Colombia into the Brunssum region, which was then distributed by a network encompassing both the military and civilian community in the Brunsum region and reaching as far as the headquarters of U.S. Army Europe in Heidelberg, West Germany!

Linking such drug operations to the celebrated *Kapitan Tomson* case, the Soviet ship which carried 220 kg of heroin from Afghanistan and was seized in the port of Rotterdam, General Berkhof charged: “In May 1986, the *Kapitan Tomson* shows up in Rotterdam. A few days later, the heroin is found. Nothing further is said and the ship is allowed to depart. Only three months later, on the 18th of August, this hit the front pages of *De Telegraaf*, and then the police spokesmen came forward with the amazing declaration: ‘The facts were right, but it was not clear that the captain, let alone the Soviet authorities, were aware of the situation’ . . . .”

“I think it is a little naive that this could come 5,000 km through the Soviet Union and that no one would know about it. I don’t know if the Soviet Union, by way of the KGB, deliberately uses drugs to destroy the ‘capitalist bloc,’ which I have from a British and an Italian source. I do know that career military men are an interesting target group for drug dealers: They have high salaries, relatively a lot of free time—and it is a fact that at Brunsum I bumped into significant drug deals.

“Imagine if you were a mafioso or KGB concerned with spreading drugs, what would you do? . . . Organize a coun-

try-and-western evening with some attractive girls from the Limburg sex parlors. Well now, such evenings are regularly held in the area surrounding Allied headquarters. I’m interested in *who* is organizing this, and if indeed you come out in Eastern Europe when you investigate this. . . . I don’t know, I’m only an investigator, and if no one else is going to do it, then I will try myself.

“The same holds true for the *Kapitan Tomson*. Two things are clear: A Dutch ship would have been locked up tight, but this ship was allowed to leave and the investigation stopped. The only people in Holland who have the power to do this are the politicians. But who? And why? I don’t know. But I would like to find out. And there are a lot of questions. Why does the Soviet Union want so badly to have a consulate in Rotterdam? Why does the Russian ‘Transworld Marine Agency’ want to buy a pier at Waalhaven [a section of the port of Rotterdam]?”

### The KGB’s 16th Directorate

General Berkhof told *De Telegraaf* how he worked to link the above to the so-called 16th Directorate of the KGB, which is responsible for developing plans for infiltration of various Western facilities via tunnels, a stratagem the North Vietnamese found devastatingly effective during the Vietnam War. The hypothesis had great credibility, given the fact that the Limburg region, extending well into the industrial Ruhr of West Germany, is the most extensive coal mining area in all of Western Europe. Many of the coal miners are of Polish origin.

He explained to the *De Telegraaf* journalist: “According to Western sources, there is a division of labor in the East bloc for this and Poland got the responsibility for the Netherlands.” Having found no information in NATO files, General Berkhof started his own investigation. “You get a hypothesis. You begin to look for indicators. And then you discover that in Greater Limburg, between the Ruhr and the Meuse river, from long before the war, there is a colony of two and a half million Poles. Many mineworkers from Silesia have long ago become naturalized Dutch citizens, but are still very much oriented to their own group. Through the Polish community, regular dance and sports clubs come from Poland, and what a coincidence, everyone in security knows that many spetsnaz have a cover in sports or dance groups. One day, I had the idea to photograph them all and send their pictures with a letter to the Polish embassies in all the NATO countries . . . but I was not allowed to do it.”

An independent investigation by *EIR* backed up General Berkhof’s leads. Representatives of the Polish ex-combatants’ associations, the leading Polish veterans organizations outside Poland, confirmed that the Polish embassy has used the Union of Polish Catholics to conduct a vigorous campaign in the Polish exile community not only to win support for the current Warsaw regime, but to cover for Warsaw Pact intelligence operations.