

A Dutch Perspective On Battling Terrorism

Frits Hoekstra is a former officer of the Dutch internal security service, Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst, or BVD, which was the forerunner of the current Algemene Inlichtingen Veiligheidsdienst, currently incorporating both the foreign and internal services. He is the author of In Dienst van de BVD, the first memoir by a Dutch Secret Service officer of his activities working for the service. Dean Andromidas and Rüdiger Rumpf interviewed Hoekstra on Aug. 31.

EIR: Having read the *EIR* documentation, “Cheney’s Spoon-Benders’ Pushing Nuclear Armageddon” [*EIR*, Aug. 26], what is your professional assessment of this problem?

Hoekstra: This “MindWar” concept seems to me to be, more or less, science fiction, but I agree with you that it is very dangerous for people who believe in these types of things, to hold high positions, as does General Shoomaker, the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army. The idea that they are considering a nuclear attack on Iran, is so dangerous, that I can hardly imagine that in the U.S. government there are no people who have the power to neutralize these people. If corrective measures are not taken, the United States under the Bush Administration, as leader of the world, will be seen as even more of a disaster than it already is.

I found it horrifying that up to the events of 9/11, [“Earth Battalion” martial-arts instructor] Bert Rodriguez was instructing, without knowing what he was doing, the people who took command of two of the three aircraft that were involved in 9/11.

By looking back in history, you always see more than in the present and the future, of course; but it is in the typical effect of looking back that you can put things together far more easily than when you are looking at the present and the future.

EIR: What would you see as the implications for Europe of an attack on Iran?

Hoekstra: I think, at least I hope, that the leadership of Europe will be unified and take a similar position as the Germans and French had taken toward the Iraq War. I think there is a good chance that the European Union, maybe with the exception of the United Kingdom, will be unified against this policy.

If this policy is carried out, it will be a disaster. It will



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Fritz Hoekstra: "It is the government that is degrading the quality of our democratic system, not the terrorists."

cause a far-reaching destabilization of the Middle East. It will be disastrous for oil prices, and therefore for the world economy.

The Bush Administration has the tendency to believe it can overrule international law, overrule the United Nations Security Council, as well as NATO. In fact, the NATO alliance, at the behest of the United States, had declared the 9/11 attacks as an attack against NATO as a whole; yet, the Americans ignored the institutions of NATO and the NATO's military organization in the war against terrorism. They, in fact, do it themselves with the so-called "coalition of the willing."

In my days in intelligence in the 1970s and 1980s, I saw a similar tendency by the Americans in Iran, when the Central Intelligence Agency requested information from our service about Iranian students studying at Dutch and German universities. The CIA was then supporting the Shah of Iran and cooperating closely with his SAVAK secret service. Because we were aware of the reputation of the SAVAK, including the practices of torture and liquidation that had been revealed by Amnesty International, we rejected these requests. That was seen as a black spot in the mind of American intelligence. They were astonished at the fact that we did not follow them in their opinion about the Shah of Iran.

EIR: Since 9/11, the Bush Administration has been creating a new enemy image out of Islam, not to mention Osama bin Laden and Iran. This is an anti-Islamic campaign.

Hoekstra: Sometimes for me it is questionable whether Osama bin Laden actually exists.

EIR: In the 1980s he worked with the CIA in Afghanistan.

Hoekstra: Exactly. And it is incredible that such a power as the United States is unable to detect where he is, where he lives, and where he hides. In fact, I think they know exactly where he is, and they leave him alone. Or maybe he doesn't exist at all. But after all of his video messages appearing on al-Jazeera and other TV stations, an intelli-

gence service like the CIA is unable to trace back the origin of these video messages and the location where they are produced? Now that is incredible. I cannot believe it.

The CIA has a worldwide network, and has a long history in the region and enjoys a strong position within the region. They have had long-standing ties with Pakistan that predate 9/11. These ties go back especially to [Pakistani President] Zia ul-Haq, who in the 1980s had very strong links with the American services. So to say they can't find bin Laden is not credible, not at all.

EIR: We have seen this Islamophobia spreading throughout Europe, threatening a clash of civilizations. In your own country we saw the reaction to the murder of the movie producer Theo van Gogh. We are seeing a similar hysteria in France. Security specialists have told us that this type of hysteria is very dangerous. Could you comment on that?

Hoekstra: That has always been my message in articles and books and the media interviews I have given. It is very bad that the presently responsible political leadership in Europe is doing just the opposite of what we, in the Netherlands, had done in the '70s and '80s. At that time we had to deal with terrorist attacks by the South Moluccans, the Rode Hulp and their support for the Red Army Faction, and so on. At that time, we saw that our main duty was to calm down the people, and thereby avoid creating hysteria against any ethnic group or against a generation of young people—young people who held leftist political views.

This was especially the case concerning the Moluccans. We had six serious Moluccan terrorist incidents in the 1970s, including two hijackings of trains. We worked with the leadership of the Moluccan community—including the leader of the Moluccan government in exile, the Republic of Free Moluccans, Mr. Manusama—some of whom were the main negotiators with the hijackers of the train. The first attack was resolved peacefully, but the second ended in bloodshed, when Dutch Marines recaptured the train. In explaining to the public what was happening, we gave a prime position to the Moluccan leadership, so they could condemn the acts of the young terrorists.

But what we see now is that people in positions of responsibility are continuing to use words such as "Islamic terrorism" and linking terrorism to a faith. Now the linking of religion and terrorism creates a very explosive mixture. You always have to make clear that terrorist acts are not religious acts, that religion is being used by the terrorists to justify their acts, and that it is especially important to cooperate with the leaders of the Islamic community.

On the other hand, these acts have a social and political context. They could be the result of frustration with their position in our society, fed by what they see as serious acts of injustice in the Middle East against the Palestinians by Israel, and against the Iraqi people by the United States. So

these actions have an international context as well. You have always to make clear that this is not the mainstream opinion of the Islamic community; but the problem is that most of the people in government and also in the press do not put enough emphasis on this.

It is true that there is a certain threat of young people from the second generation of Moroccan and other Arabic people in the Netherlands, but that is not because of their links with al-Qaeda or other such networks. The danger of that group only exists by the fact that they have not a fair chance to share in the wealth of our nation, despite the fact that they are well educated. But nevertheless, they are the first to be kicked out when there are job reductions.

For example, here in the Netherlands, in order to get an apprenticeship in the construction industry, a young man with the name of Dirk Frenstra, a very common Dutch name, has a five-times better chance of getting a position, than someone with the Arabic name Ali ben Said, despite having the same level of education and curriculum vitae. And that is despite the fact that Ali ben Said was born in the Netherlands. We have a Minister for Intergration who is almost totally neglecting the Dutch side of this problem. She is just busy kicking out people, many of whom have been living here for ten years, only because they do not have the right refugee status.

This is what causes the danger, and what creates the basis for these young people to be attracted to the teachers of the Islamic Koran Schools. They see in that a means to fight against a society that is so unfriendly toward them. I am very concerned about this development in our society, and in the leadership we have, which continues to use the words "Islamic terrorism" and so on.

EIR: Do you see this as part of a "strategy of tension"?

Hoekstra: The idea of a strategy of tension is so dangerous, I wonder who, as a sane leader of a country, would adopt a policy in favor of that. It would be so counterproductive for their own position.

EIR: But isn't what you explained, in terms of the way the van Gogh incident was dealt with, a strategy of tension?

Hoekstra: Yes, yes, but it is not outspoken; it is a hidden strategy.

EIR: Some have pointed to events in Europe over the last year: the attacks in Madrid, those in the Netherlands, Britain, and Egypt as part of a strategy of tension.

Hoekstra: In reality there have been no terrorist acts in the Netherlands. The so-called terrorist acts in the Netherlands have been more or less created. We have seen this one incident, the killing of one filmmaker, Theo van Gogh. There was also the politician Pim Fortuijn, but he was killed by a white lunatic. Now Theo van Gogh was killed by one single Islamic youngster, who felt himself, in his

faith, offended by Theo van Gogh. We have seen this emotion being a motive for murder in many cases. So it is just one Dutchman killing another Dutchman. That is not a terrorist act. It has been made into a terrorist act by the government, by opinion-makers; but in actual fact, it is not a terrorist act. A terrorist act is what happened in Madrid or London. Those are terrorist acts involving the killing of innocent people.

EIR: But would you say that by turning that into a terrorist act, you are creating a strategy of tension?

Hoekstra: Yes, and this is further aggravated by the adoption of laws that are degrading the quality of our legal system. They are now adopting laws that make it possible to detain and imprison suspects for up to two years without bringing the case before a judge.

EIR: I am told that your own secret service people are opposed to these laws.

Hoekstra: Yes, because we, as members of a national secret service, have the mission of defending our democratic justice system. We have the mission to defend it from terrorist attacks; but now, this democratic justice system is under attack by our own politicians, by our own government, not by the terrorists. It is the government that is degrading the quality of our democratic system, not the terrorists.

I was very happy with a speech given last April by the head of our secret service, where he declared that he was not happy with being given extraordinary powers, because these new powers are endangering the system we are supposed to be defending.

EIR: Do you see a connection with the neo-conservatives in the United States?

Hoekstra: Although I don't believe there are direct links, nevertheless we do have the same tendency in our own society. This is despite the fact that our Prime Minister has done his utmost to please the Bush Administration by sending troops to Afghanistan, including sending Dutch special forces to reinforce those of the Americans. So, now our own special forces are committing the same war crimes as the Americans. They are capturing people and sending them to Guantanamo without giving them any juridical status. They are not designated as prisoners of war, but rather have been given the special term "illegal combatants." They are then denied their rights under the the Geneva and Hague conventions.

I am very much against this, as are many people in the Netherlands. But our government, as a reward for cooperating with the Bush Administration, received the position of Secretary General of NATO, an organization which is just an administrative organization, which no longer has any real power, since the Americans do not use the NATO structure in their fight against terrorism.