

[beleefdheids formule]

I kindly seek your assistance in resolving a politically sensitive issue for my Minister of Defense with respect to the alleged participation of Netherlands forces in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan.

A recent Dutch public radio program named Argos, stated that members of the military Special Forces (SF) of the Netherlands participated in OEF in Afghanistan late 2001 or early 2002 without Ministerial and/or Parliamentary approval. To prove this statement the journalists also referred to "official US documents":

- The first reference cited is the report "Unclassified Documents from Marine Task Force 58's Operations in Afghanistan", which can be found on the website <http://www.strategypage.com/articles/tf58/default.asp> . In this report "Dutch" forces are mentioned twice as being present in Kandahar in late 2001 or early 2002 as part of the coalition forces of OEF.
- The second reference, a document published by the Naval Education and Training Command, is "Sea Power and Maritime Affairs (12-02)", Change 2 (12-04) - Enclosure 3. In the diagram found on page 179 of this document, Dutch forces are mentioned as being part of TF K-Bar. This document can be found on the website <https://www.cnet.navy.mil/cnet/nrotc/cig.html> . The same diagram can also be found on page 53 of the publication "Naval Science for the Merchant Marine Officer" published by the Naval Service Training Command (June 2005), nr. SF 060513.

To the best of my knowledge Dutch public radio incorrectly concluded that Dutch SF participated in OEF operations in 2001 or 2002. As I am sure you understand, this matter is politically very sensitive. The Netherlands government, by law, has the obligation to inform Parliament in advance of Dutch military operations abroad.

Our Defense Attaché in Washington, RADM M.B. Hijmans, has already made inquiries concerning the cited reports to your staff. He has received a preliminary reply by email stating that indeed both reports mistakenly mention the "Dutch" as being part of the coalition forces of OEF. However, in order to allow me to officially inform my Minister of Defense, and, in turn, for him to inform Parliament, I kindly request answers to the following questions:

- What is the official status of the unclassified report of Task Force 58 mentioned above?
- Is there a classified report and if so, what does that report state regarding Netherlands ("Dutch") participation?
- Did, to the best of your knowledge, Dutch ground forces or Special Forces participate in ground operations in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001 or 2002?

More specifically:

- Were Dutch ground forces or Special Forces present in Kandahar in late 2001 or early 2002?
- Did Dutch forces participate in Operation Anaconda in March, 2002?
- Did Dutch forces participate in Task Force K-Bar in 2001 or 2002?

Your cooperation in this matter is of great importance and value to the Netherlands government and therefore highly appreciated.

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