

# Strategy of Tension Now Targets the Netherlands

by Dean Andromidas

On the eve of the May 15 national elections, the Netherlands was hit by the assassination of Pim Fortuyn, an anti-immigrant populist who was expected to win as much as 20% of the vote. The killing of Fortuyn comes in the wake of several assassinations, mass murders, and other attacks in recent months, which form a “strategy of tension” targetting Western Europe. Since the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, nine major terror attacks and assassinations—a pace of one a month—have occurred in nearly every country in Western Europe (see box). As a result of the assassination of Fortuyn, political observers predict that the paralysis that overtook Dutch government with the resignation of Prime Minister Wim Kok, will continue after the elections. This could knock out an important member of the European Union, when grave strategic crises, particularly in the Middle East, require strong decision-making by Europe.

Fortuyn was a 54-year-old, avowedly homosexual, sociology professor and newspaper columnist only recently in politics. Like his populist counterparts in other European countries—France’s Jean-Marie Le Pen and Austria’s Jörg Haider—Fortuyn has agitated on an anti-immigration, anti-Islamic, and anti-European Union platform. He came into the international limelight when his party, Lijst Fortuyn, as part of a broader populist coalition called *Leefbaar Nederland* (Loveable Netherlands), won 35% of the vote in the election for the Rotterdam City Council last March. Fortuyn and his party were thrown out of the coalition when he began attacking Muslim immigrants, particularly from Turkey and Morocco. Nonetheless, in May, his party was expected to win at least as much as Le Pen did in France. Lijst Fortuyn remains on the ballot and could easily gain a larger vote as a result of the assassination and subsequent sympathy demonstrations.

## Assassination Sharpens a Crisis

In a country where political assassinations are almost unheard of, Fortuyn was killed on the evening of May 6 after leaving a TV interview. His assassin skillfully evaded security around the parking lot of the Netherlands’ most important media park in Hilversum, just outside Amsterdam, and shot him five times in the chest, neck, and head, in an execution style that would have been admired by the hit teams of the Mossad or the Mafia. And the killer was not from an Islamic group, but an “eco-terrorist,” who appears to be of the “second generation” of the terrorist networks that operated in Ger-

many and the Netherlands in the 1970s and 1980s. In this, Fortuyn’s killing is similar to the March 19 assassination of Italian government consultant Marco Biagi—sharpening a government-labor crisis in that country—by the so-called “Red Brigades,” which have been dormant for over ten years.

The alleged killer, Volkert Van der Graaf, 32, is a leading member of an animal rights group called *Milieu Offensief* (“Environmental Offensive”). The name is a take-off on that of a less radical group with the name *Milieu Defensief*. He has been in the animal rights movement since he was a young student and is a strict vegetarian. Van der Graaf was articulate on legal questions involving animal rights, and was involved in proceedings against farmers for allegedly violating animal husbandry laws. The police have not revealed how he got his gun or weapons training. While the media are portraying him as a left-wing psycho, one source who is a lawyer and involved in many anti-environmentalism cases, told *EIR* something different: “First, this man is not a lunatic, who woke up one morning and got it into his head to kill Fortuyn, but a fanatic who acted with cold-blooded deliberation. He is also not a leftist, but a greenie eco-terrorist, and that is an important difference. And this is strange since his victim, Pim Fortuyn, did not deal with environmental issues.”

That the motive did not fit the victim is a point underscored by Fortuyn’s former spokesman Rene Warmerdam, who challenged media “explanations” that Fortuyn was slain because of an alleged comment last year, that if elected he would work to lift the ban on breeding animals, like mink, for fur. Warmerdam quoted from Fortuyn’s recent book where he wrote, “Animal welfare must be a priority, and we need to switch to less industrial production methods.” Even an animal rights group called “Pigs in Need” released a statement saying, “Fortuyn believed that the new agricultural policy needed to be animal-friendly.”

## Secret Service Involvement?

Van Der Graaf’s attorney is Dr. Britta Böhler, a German national practicing law in Amsterdam, well known for having been one of the attorneys representing Abdullah Ocalan, the head of the terrorist Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) who is now sitting in a Turkish prison. Böhler’s law firm included Pieter Bakkerschout, who in the 1970s and 1980s defended members of the German terrorist Red Army Faction. The firm has represented activists of the Netherlands’ own radical terrorist and anarchist scene; and in recent decades, some of the Netherlands’ top drug barons.

Although the government asserts that Van Der Graaf had no criminal record, Dutch press reports indicate that he was well known to the Dutch intelligence services, who follow these groups closely, but never repress them. One source speculated that Van Der Graaf’s motivation for killing Fortuyn may have involved links to a renegade Dutch or other state or private intelligence network. If so, it would not be unprecedented. In the early 1990s, Holland was rocked by a series of

## Europe Raked by New Terrorist Upsurge

**Sept. 27:** A gunman killed 14 people and himself at the Canton assembly in Zug, Switzerland.

**March 18:** Former Belgian politician Alain Van Der Biest committed suicide amid new allegations that he was involved in a massive international arms trade and operations of the NATO-linked “Gladio” network.

**March 19:** Marco Biagi, an Italian government adviser on widely protested labor laws, was gunned down in an attack attributed to the Red Brigades.

**March 21:** Basque ETA separatists assassinated a Spanish socialist councilman.

**March 26:** A city council meeting in Nanterre, France, turned into a bloodbath, when a man said to be suffering from “furious dementia” killed eight people and seriously wounded 30 others. The killer, apparently a police informant, subsequently “fell out of the window” to his death, while being interrogated at the Paris police headquarters.

**April 11:** Eight German and French tourists were killed in a terror attack on a synagogue in Tunisia.

**April 18:** An Italian pilot flew his small airplane into Milan’s Pirelli Tower, killing himself and two others.

**April 26:** Robert Steinhäuser killed 17, including himself, at a school in Erfurt, Germany.

**May 6:** Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn was assassinated.

scandals linking the country’s secret services to questionable operations. At the end of the 1980s, there was the famous “Bosio” case, in which the secret services were using a private export-import company as a front for joint operations with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, allegedly for weapons purchases linked to the Iran-Contra Affair. Another case in the early 1990s revealed that one of the key leaders of the Kraakers, a radical house-squatters’ movement, was an informant of the secret services.

The political blowback should not be underestimated. A leading Dutch constitutional law expert, Prof. Ales Koekoek, suggested to Dutch TV that, after the national elections on May 15, a national unity government of all the parties, including Lijst Fortuyn, should be formed. Such suggestions could produce, in effect, a government of paralysis, which would have strategic repercussions on European policy-making. Such a government is unlikely to take a leading position on any significant issue, such as the Middle East crisis.