

Dutch know-how may have gone into arms of mass destruction

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The Dutch government has admitted that technology from the Netherlands may have been used to develop weapons of mass destruction in Iran, Pakistan or Syria.

Dutch intelligence services have received "indications in a number of cases" that "Dutch technology was used in programmes of weapons of mass destruction or for the means of transmission in Iran, Pakistan or Syria", the outgoing ministers of defence, foreign affairs and foreign trade said in a letter published overnight Wednesday.

In such cases, customs officials can launch investigations which may lead to prosecutions, they added in their reply to a question posed in parliament.

Dutch intelligence services "every year uncover a substantial number of attempts by foreign entities to obtain know-how and materials for weapons of mass destruction", they wrote.

An MP from Prime Minister Mark Rutte's VVD party had raised the issue in parliament after revelations made by the head of military intelligence Onno Eichelsheim in an interview with the Dutch news agency ANP last month.

Eichelsheim said the Netherlands was "almost a supermarket for countries that want to develop these types of weapons" and warned that Dutch businesses and scientific establishments were perhaps not fully

aware of the extent of the problem.

Even small businesses selling such things as ball bearings or heat-resistant materials should be alert to the dangers, Eichelsheim said, according to the public broadcaster NOS.

"Dutch companies must be aware that third countries may have an interest in products and high-quality technology services which could be used to manufacture" such arms, the ministers said. They added they are actively working to try to halt such exports in suspect cases.

While the Dutch government does not draw up its own blacklist of people or entities known to act as go-betweens in the sale of such [technology](#), it highlights the existence of international blacklists and sanctions.

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