

Britain on red alert: Who goes there, true friend or tovarich

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by John Witherow

Isle of Wight will be led by the Russians this. This world exclusive was eyed to the Soviet troops. a few days ago: since then have been in a frenzy mbling a 32ft yacht, an ge rubber dinghy, a wind- and several maps. All is lost, however. Our lads are and waiting. They just the exact time and

is, of course, is all part of e Defender, the war game tclass all others. The Isle of it will indeed be "invad- but only by seven men our own loyal Royal lery who will nip across the nt and paddle ashore from ill-assorted vessels. There, erything goes according to, they will be pounced upon trussed up like Christmas eys.

ll over the country similar es are being enacted this end and during the next days as Britain mounts its est home defence exercise e the second world war, y thousand soldiers, ranging y the Guards regiments to t the Ministry of Defence calls a "Super Dad's y", will attempt to see off 0 enthusiastic regulars pos- as the Soviet Union's ial forces, the spetsnaz.

he scenario as perceived by planners goes something this:

t a time of rising tension

between Nato and the Warsaw Pact the vast bulk of Britain's army will be sent over to reinforce troops in West Germany. This will leave Britain vulnerable to sabotage raids by the spetsnaz, inserted into the mainland by submarine, ship and parachute. They will aim to disrupt the war effort by assassinating political and military leaders and destroying conventional and nuclear bases, power stations and communications centres.

At the same time, civil authorities and army reserves might deal with demonstrations and disruption from an alarmed population, peace groups and subversives. The aim of Brave Defender is to train the Territorial Army, reservists and the newly-formed Home Service Force in protecting vital installations. American troops using Britain as a staging post will also be expected to defend their bases.

Information about the spetsnaz first emerged a few years ago from a Soviet defector using the pseudonym Viktor Suvorov. He told Western intelligence of a 30,000-strong Russian force aimed at creating havoc behind enemy lines during a build-up to war. The force was apparently trained on SAS lines and even used Olympic athletes who spied out the land on trips abroad. About 1,000 troops would be expected to infiltrate Britain, after training that

included familiarisation with British customs and even learning local dialects.

Assisting them would be "sleepers" - agents who would emerge only during a crisis to provide safe houses, cover, transport and any other help to get the spetsnaz to their targets.

A huge effort has gone into making Brave Defender as authentic as possible. Political limitations, however, have imposed some restrictions. Troops will not wear chemical protective clothing (as they would in a real attack) and nuclear bases are not being "defended" to avoid CND demonstrations.

Aside from that, the organisers appear to have thoroughly enjoyed themselves. It's almost as if they had created a complicated board game called "War Plan UK" with dozens of trick cards, dead-ends and "in" jokes.

The planners have attempted to make life as complicated as possible for commanders defending "key points". Not satisfied with the spetsnaz

heaving themselves over the wire with daggers between their teeth, they have introduced the British public in their most capricious mood.

They have, for example, invented four radical and disruptive groups. They have given each group fictional leaders (complete with nicknames and clandestine love affairs), complicated policies, histories stretching back to the 1930s, slogans, placards and pamphlets printed on lurid purple paper.

Their names are tongue-in-cheek: Freedom in God's Sight (left-wing vicars), Artisans Versus Radical Unionists (right-wing loonies), Peace in our Time (wishy-washy liberals), and Defend our Rural Areas (anti-establishment conservationists). Soldiers posing as their national leaders, including Harry Winkinslaw of Dora ("ruthless and power-hungry"), will apparently tour the country fomenting unrest.

These groups, placards and all, will stage small demonstrations on Defence Ministry land outside key targets. They will start off peacefully but as tension increases resort to violence, from "chucking rotten fruit" to firing blanks. But if genuine demonstrators turn up they have orders to move off.

The defenders' nerve will be further tested by a string of "alarmed locals". Thespian

Photographs by
Bryn Colton

Subversives locked in cages in war exercise

By JANEY HULME

THE MILITARY intend to use prison "cages" in the event of war to hold "undesirables" and "Russian infiltrators."

The army yesterday showed off to the press a temporary holding cage (above) being used to incarcerate 4 Paras V (TA volunteers) disguised as Russians and taken prisoner during the current cold war home defence exercise "Brave Defender."

The cage consisted of several barbed wire compounds which had been rapidly erected in 24 hours. There were six male and three female sections holding approximately 33 prisoners with the same amount again already released.

Three "prisoners" had attempted to escape by using a camp bed to flatten the barbed wire and two were "shot" by 33 rounds of machine gunfire after being challenged.

A third did manage to escape into woodlands to a safe house. Throughout the exercise 88 soldiers have been "killed" with 126 "casualties". Approximately 35 Soviet enemy "spetsnaz" have been "killed" with 85 "casualties".

spetsnaz from the heather were carried out by cadets from Sandhurst which included air drops from helicopters of rescue troops.

Earlier Colonel Rob Webster had shown video clips to demonstrate some of the "problems" likely to be faced by troops and police in a lead-up to war - in which the "enemy" is always seen as the Soviet Union.

A Scottish base was shown with anti-nuclear demonstrators shouting outside. When asked if those in the film were supposed to be CND members, Colonel Webster replied: "They are not meant to be anyone in particular - they are people who stand outside bases like that - making noises like that."

No one would say exactly who would be classed as subversives apart from the "enemy" Russians.

The cage would only be used for a day or two as a temporary holding and then the prisoners, according to one army officer, would be removed to a large camp to "somewhere like Westdown Plantation on Salisbury

ldiers will pose as trouble- me- MPs, concerned priests, straight wives, interfering ayors, dishonest journalists, mpathetic pop groups and ything else they can dream up attract troops.

The spetsnaz, some of them S and SBS soldiers, will be g into hides overlooking key ints. At a given time they will nch covert raids, planting xplosives" when they have passed patrols and penetrated ees around installations, gging from radar sites to ion-pack depots.

Judging from an encounter in mpshire with 159 Colenso ld Battery, 26 Field Regi- nt Royal Artillery (alias tsnaz), all these jinks are ng taken very seriously. This ludes a warning that the visional IRA or the Irish tional Liberation Army ght use the exercise as cover a genuine attack. "The uble is that we don't know if s is part of the exercise," an iceer said. "We just have to ume it's real."