

## **US Nuclear Weapons in the Netherlands: A First Appraisal**

Discussion published by Malcolm Byrne on Tuesday, January 26, 2021

### **January 1960 Agreement Led to Nuclear Sharing Arrangements**

### **Public Access to Key Historical Records in Doubt after Dutch Courts Affirm Secrecy Regime for U.S. Nukes**

**Edited by Cees Wiebes and William Burr**

**Washington, DC, January 15, 2021**—The stationing of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe remains a controversial issue on both sides of the Atlantic. One of the less well-known cases involves the Netherlands, which first accepted atomic weapons shortly after the two governments signed a secret stockpile agreement in January 1960. That accord is part of a compilation of declassified documents posted today – most for the first time – by the National Security Archive.

That the U.S. has authorized deployments to numerous NATO states is one of those secrets everybody knows – Dutch former Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers acknowledged the facts of the matter involving his own country in 2013. Nevertheless, the arrangements are an official secret, as is the number of weapons currently in the Netherlands, and obtaining access to the historical record is a major challenge for historians. Recently the Dutch government confirmed its stance when scholar Cees Wiebes went to court to induce the declassification of documents on the origins of the deployments. Wiebes lost his case but in the process raised legitimate questions about excessive secrecy, which he addresses in a sidebar to this E-book.

The main body of today's posting consists of records Wiebes obtained in the course of his research. The materials trace the story of the U.S. deployments from the inception of the nuclear stockpile plan in the late 1950s to their restructuring in the mid-1970s. While only a small piece of the larger history, the documents help provide a clearer picture of a still-controversial matter.