

Policy brief: Nieuw kernwapen, nieuwe capaciteiten

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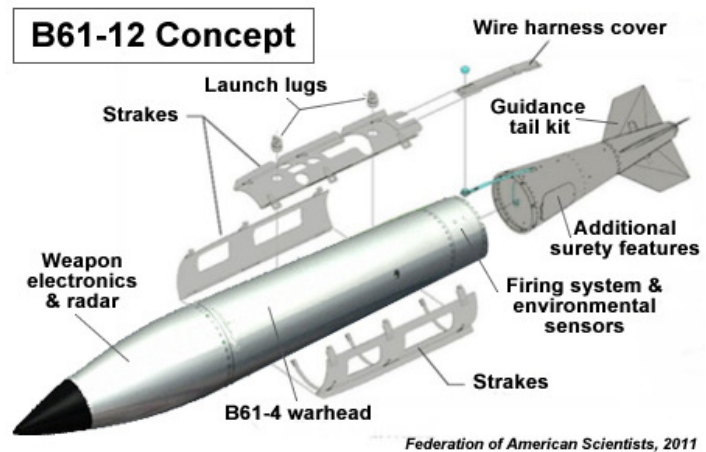
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Aanleiding

Tijdens het algemeen overleg over nucleaire ontwapening van 29 januari jongstleden gaf minister van Buitenlandse Zaken Timmermans aan dat naar zijn informatie de nieuwe kernwapens die in Nederland gestationeerd zullen worden (B-61/12) **geen** nieuwe capaciteiten zouden hebben. Hij nodigde de Kamer uit hem informatie voor te leggen waaruit het tegendeel zou blijken. Onderaan deze Policy brief staan een aantal passages uit artikelen en andere bronnen waarin bevestigd wordt dat de B61-12 een *precision guided tailkit* zal hebben en waaruit blijkt dat de zogenaamde 'modernisering' er toe leidt dat de kernwapens nieuwe capaciteiten krijgen. Het is slechts een begin, er is veel meer informatie beschikbaar.



Achtergrond

Tijdens de hoorzitting die de Kamer organiseerde op 27/1/14 ging Hans Kristensen van de *Federation of American Scientists* uitgebreid op deze nieuwe capaciteiten in. Het is algemeen bekend dat de nieuwe B61's een zogenaamde *precision guided tailkit* krijgen zoals wij eerder al beschreven¹. Deze *tailkit* maakt het mogelijk om meer doelgericht en dus meer adequaat een doelwit te kunnen raken. De zogenaamde 'modernisering' is dus niet slechts een operatie om de toekomstige veiligheid van het wapen te kunnen garanderen, maar een upgrade die het wapen nieuwe capaciteiten geeft.

Als de modernisering bedoeld is om de levensduur van de huidige bom met de huidige capaciteiten te verlengen, dan zou het wapen na deze update dezelfde *tailkit* hebben als de B-61's die nu in Europa zijn gestationeerd. Dit is niet het geval. De reden waarom de Amerikaanse luchtmacht er voor kiest een *precision guided tailkit* toe te voegen aan de B-61/12 is om er voor te zorgen dat dit nieuwe kernwapen meer accuraat haar doel kan raken.

Hans Kristensen vatte het puntig samen: "You can't add a guided tail kit to a bomb without getting increased accuracy - unless there are other laws of physics in Europe".

Analyse en aanbevelingen

Bij de initiële plaatsing van kernwapens in Nederland, was er op zijn best gezegd sprake van een zeer gebrekkige parlementaire controle. Het zou wat Pax² betreft voor de hand liggen om nu, nu de oude kernwapens Nederland verlaten om plaats te maken voor nieuwe kernwapens met nieuwe capaciteiten, wel een volwaardige parlementaire controle uit te oefenen.

¹ <http://www.nonukes.nl/media/files/factsheet-modernisering-kernwapens-in-nederland.pdf>

² voorheen IKV Pax Christi

De Kamer heeft al in december 2012 in de motie Omtzigt geconstateerd dat de modernisering van de in Europa aanwezige tactische kernwapens 'zeer kostbaar zal zijn' en uitgesproken van mening te zijn dat 'deze middelen niet zouden moeten worden geïnvesteerd in nutteloze en gevaarlijke wapens'.³ Deze kosten zijn opgelopen en bedragen momenteel naar schatting 11 miljard Amerikaanse dollar⁴. Pax verwelkomt de motie Omtzigt en vindt dat het Kabinet de plaatsing van nieuwe kernwapens in Nederland tegen moet gaan. Simpelweg melden dat deze modernisering de verantwoordelijkheid is van de Amerikanen is niet acceptabel; wetende dat er sprake is van het toevoegen van nieuwe capaciteiten ligt het in de rede dat de Nederlandse regering daar een eigenstandig standpunt over in had genomen en dit aan de Kamer had voorgelegd.

Naast de motie Omtzigt heeft de Kamer de motie Van Dijk aangenomen waarin de minister wordt verzocht de nucleaire taak die Nederland heeft te beëindigen als de JSF de taken van de F16 overneemt.

Pax is van mening dat het Kabinet aan zet is om uit te leggen waarom zij de toevoeging van een *precision guided tailkit* niet als een nieuwe capaciteit ziet en vooral om er voor te zorgen dat deze nieuwe kernwapens niet in Nederland geplaatst worden, nu duidelijk is dat de Kamer van de nucleaire taak af wil.

Achtergrondartikelen

Onderstaand enkele passages uit artikelen en andere bronnen waarin bevestigd wordt dat de B61-12 een *precision guided tailkit* zal hebben en waaruit blijkt dat de zogenaamde 'modernisering' er toe leidt dat de kernwapens nieuwe capaciteiten krijgen:

- **US Government Accountability Office: the refurbishment is an opportunity to change military performance requirements of the B61**

In April 2010, DOD and the NATO allies reached agreement on key military characteristics of the bomb, including the yield, that it be capable of freefall (rather than parachute-retarded) delivery, **its accuracy requirements when used on modern aircraft and that it employ a guided tailkit section**, and that it have both midair and ground detonation options. They further agreed that the weapon should be capable of being carried by both existing and modernized fighter aircraft, including the F-35, and be compatible with current weapon storage vaults abroad. Subsequently, after U.S. Strategic Command expressed a requirement for a different yield, U.S. European Command and SHAPE agreed to the proposal.

(..)

While NNSA is responsible for refurbishing the bomb's nuclear and many of its nonnuclear components, the Air Force is responsible for acquiring a new guided tailkit section for the refurbished B61. The new bomb tail section is estimated to cost \$800 million and **is designed to increase accuracy, enabling the military to achieve the same effects as the older bomb, but with lower nuclear yield.**

'However, for the current B61 life extension program, the Nuclear Weapons Council instructed the joint Air Force and NNSA project officers group that it should pursue not only the complete

³ Kamerstuk 33400 V nr 65, <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/kst-33400-V-65.html>

⁴ Meerdere bronnen, o.a. <http://www.ploughshares.org/blog/budget-busting-b61>

refurbishment of the bomb, but also opportunities to improve other characteristics **affecting the bomb's safety, security, and performance, as well as investigate alternative design concepts untried during prior life extension programs**'.

Source: United States Government Accountability Office, US GAO GAO-11-387 Nuclear Weapons, may 2011
<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d11387.pdf>

- **NNSA Reaches B61-12 Life Extension Program Milestone: First Full-System Mechanical Environment Test Completed Successfully**

'This is also the first test of the integrated component and sub-system hardware, **including the Tail Kit Assembly provided by the U.S. Air Force**, of the B61-12 test unit.

Source: National Nuclear Security Administration www.nnsa.energy.gov February 10th 2014

- **Department of Defense: The B61 LEP includes a guided tailkit**

'B61 Life Extension Program (LEP): The B61 LEP will extend the service life of the weapon. In accordance with Air Force Materiel Command mission assignment memo (17 Feb 2011) and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA)-Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center (AFNWC) Memorandum of Understanding (28

June 2012), the USAF is responsible for **development, acquisition & delivery of a guided tailkit assembly (TKA)** and All Up Round (AUR) technical integration, system qualification & fielding of the B61-12 variant'.

Source: Department of Defense FY 2014 President's Budget Submission, Air Force justification book (pag 887) - April 2013 (PE 0101125F: *Nuclear Weapons Modernization* UNCLASSIFIED Air Force)
<http://www.saffm.hq.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-130408-066.pdf>

- **Department of Energy: A tailkit will be added**

'Joint system integration activities with the Air Force will continue, including finalization of interface control documents (ICD) between NNSA's bomb assembly and **the Air Force provided tail kit assembly (TKA)** and aircraft-to bomb ICDs to implement a digital interface to assure compatibility with legacy and modern aircraft'.

Source: Department of Energy FY 2014 Congressional Budget Request
<http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2013/04/f0/Volume1.pdf>

- **DOE: The Life Extension Program is a lot more than just enhancing the future safety of the B61:**

'NNSA intends to start replacing B61 mods 3, 4, and 7 in 2020. NNSA intends to combine these mods into a single bomb, the B61 mod 12. **The Life Extension Program (LEP) will refurbish the warheads with new firing, arming, and safety components, updated radar components, permissive action link components and equipment, modified power supplies, thermal batteries, join test assemblies,**

weapon trainers, and test and handling gear. The LEP will also modify the B61 for compatibility with the new Joint Strike Fighter. The LEP will extend the life of the B61s for 30 years’.

Source:

- Department of Energy Fiscal Year 2012 Congressional Budget Request, National Nuclear Security Administration, February 2011
- <http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/USNuclearModernization#xx>

- **ELN: In combination, the F-35/B61-12 weapons system represents a formidable increase in nuclear capabilities for NATO**

‘The key to the B61 LEP is the replacement of the B61’s current parachute delay deployment system (intended to give DCA crews time to fly clear of the nuclear blast) with the B61 Tail Subassembly (TSA) a guidance mechanism similar to those used to convert conventional munitions such as the Mk84 unguided bomb into a precision guided Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM), the GBU-31. **The JDAM bolt-on guidance package uses GPS technology to deliver accuracy on the scale of the low tens of meters or less from intended target, even when GPS data is denied in combination with the nuclear warhead in a B61-12, the impact using a JDAM-like guidance package will be considerably greater than with unguided versions, equivalent to much greater explosive yields and thus will be far more effective at destroying hardened targets.**

The F35 Lightning II, for its part, designed as the DCA replacement to the F-16, makes use of state of the art ‘low observable’ (i.e., ‘stealth’) technology to enhance its survivability within and through the modern battle-space. **In combination, the F-35/B61-12 weapons system represents a formidable increase in nuclear capabilities for NATO – one which could even overcome what are widely seen at present as rather incredible roles and missions for NATO’s tactical nuclear arsenal in Europe’.**

Source: Escalation by default? The future of NATO nuclear weapons in Europe
May 2012 – Nato Policy Brief nr 2 - European Leadership Network - Ted Seay

- **CESIM: The LEP will make the weapons more operational:**

(..) ‘the replacement of obsolete parts of the weapon with more modern ones should also provide greater reliability and greater accuracy, which could now verge on that of a conventional Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM), namely 5 to 30 metres, according to the targeting mode. Combined with more modern aircraft (F-35s, and possibly EF -2000s, replacing PA-200s and F-16s), **these weapons will thus be more operational, in the sense that they will have the same effect as older models with a much lower charge, particularly against reinforced or buried targets’.**

Source:

- **CESIM - Centre d’Etudes de Sécurité Internationale et de Maîtrise des armements**
<http://www.cesim.fr/observatoire/eng/71/article/50>

- **FAS: General Confirms Enhanced Targeting Capabilities of B61-12 Nuclear Bomb**

The former U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff, General Norton Schwartz, confirmed last week that the B61-12 nuclear bomb planned by the Obama administration will have improved military capabilities to attack targets with greater accuracy and less radioactive fallout.

The confirmation comes two and a half years after [an FAS publication](#) first described the increased accuracy of the B61-12 and its implications for nuclear targeting in general and the deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe in particular.

The confirmation is important because the 2010 [Nuclear Posture Review](#) (NPR) pledged that nuclear warhead “Life Extension Programs...will not support new military missions or provide for new military capabilities.”

Confirmation of the enhanced military capability of the B61-12 also complicates the political situation of the NATO allies (Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey) that currently host U.S. nuclear weapons because the governments will have to explain to their parliaments and public why they would agree to increase the military capability.

(...)

The United States has never before deployed guided nuclear bombs in Europe but with the increased accuracy of the B61-12 and combined with the future deployment of the F-35A Lightning II stealth fighter-bomber to Europe, it is clear that NATO is up for quite a nuclear facelift.

Source: Federation of American Scientists - 23 January 2014

<http://blogs.fas.org/security/2014/01/b61capability/#more-6201>

- **FAS: B61 LEP: Increasing NATO Nuclear Capability and Precision Low-Yield Strikes**

A modified U.S. nuclear bomb currently under design will have improved military capabilities compared with older weapons and increase the targeting capability of NATO's nuclear arsenal.

The B61-12, the product of a planned 30-year life extension and consolidation of four existing versions of the B61 into one, **will be equipped with a new guidance system to increase its accuracy.** As a result, if funded by Congress, the U.S. non-strategic nuclear bombs [currently deployed](#) in five European countries will return to Europe as a life-extended version in 2018 **with a significantly enhanced capability to knock out military targets.**

Add to that the stealthy capability of the new F-35 aircraft being built to deliver the new weapon, and NATO is up for a significant nuclear upgrade.

The upgrade would also improve the capability of U.S. strategic bombers to destroy targets with lower yield and less radioactive fallout (...).

It is U.S. [nuclear policy](#) that nuclear weapons “Life Extension Programs...will not support new military missions or provide for new military capabilities.” According to this policy stated in the Obama administration's Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), the B61-12 cannot have new or greater military capabilities compared with the weapons it replaces.

Yet a [new report](#) published by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) reveals **that the new bomb will have new characteristics that will increase the (..)targeting capability of the nuclear weapons deployed in Europe.**

How Russia and NATO allies will react remain to be seen, but increasing NATO's nuclear capabilities at a time when the United States is trying to engage Russia in talks about limiting non-strategic nuclear weapon seems counterproductive.

Source: Federation of American Scientists, 15 juni 2011

<http://blogs.fas.org/security/2011/06/b61-12/>