The Global Security Newswire (GSN) has reported that four protesters broke into a nuclear-arms base in the Netherlands days before 53-nations met in The Hague to develop strategies to assure the security of nuclear materials.

GSN said the protestors from the “Disarm” group photographed the exterior of a building believed to be used to hold B-61 nuclear gravity bombs from the United States. The building is located within Volkel air base, one of six similar bases in Europe.

Jeffrey Lewis, a leading arms control and nonproliferation expert at the Monterrey Institute for International Studies, said in a blog commentary that he was amazed that repeated break ins at nuclear-arms facilities in Europe have not caused a public uproar demanding removal of the bases.

“The incursions would seem to demonstrate the 2008 finding by the Air Force Blue Ribbon Review of Nuclear Weapons Policies and Procedures that ‘most sites [in Europe where US nuclear weapons are stored] require significant additional resources to meet DoD (Department of Defense) security requirements’”, he wrote in the blog.
Protestors break into Dutch nuclear base prior to Nuclear Security Summit

GSN, quoting disarmament activists, said the four protestors were arrested at 8:30 a.m. on the Tuesday before the Summit, held the 24th and 25th of March in The Hague. One activist told GSN the timing of the infiltration of the nuclear-arms base was tied to the Nuclear Security Summit.

Wilbert van der Zeijden of the antinuclear group PAX said the activists wanted to point out that the Nuclear Security Summit would only deal with nuclear materials that are used for civilian and peaceful purposes. There is no agreement to include nuclear materials at military installations, which represent 85% of all nuclear materials, in talks on securing nuclear materials against use by terrorists or other non-state actors. GSN said NATO is poised to spend more than $154 million in improvements at B-61 storage sites in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Turkey. However, a number of critics have pressed for withdrawal of the arms.