

Questions on tax evasion via Antilles

THE HAGUE--Three Dutch Labour Party PvdA Members of Parliament (MPs) are seeking clarity on reports that US defence companies and possibly even the Pentagon use the Netherlands Antilles, Aruba and the Netherlands to evade taxes.

PvdA MPs John Leerdam, Paul Tang and Angeliën Eijssink posed a series of questions to caretaker Minister of Finance Jan Kees de Jager and State Secretary of Defence Jack de Vries late last week, following the publication of the January 2010 report "Defence Contracting" of the US Government Accountability Office (GAO).

According to this report, a large number of US defence companies such as Lockheed Martin and General Dynamics, but possibly also the Pentagon itself, moved large sums of taxable income via offshore companies.

In their questions, the three also mentioned an article published in the Dutch magazine Vrij Nederland last month headlined Aruba, tax-free haven for US defence companies. The MPs asked if it concerned subsidiary companies or offshore companies in the Netherlands Antilles and/or Aruba, and whether only defence companies were involved, or also the Pentagon.

They further wanted to know if the companies in question had subsidiaries in the Netherlands, and whether the use of tax constructions via offshore companies and daughter companies in the Dutch Kingdom could influence decisions on the purchase of matériel policy for Dutch defence.

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