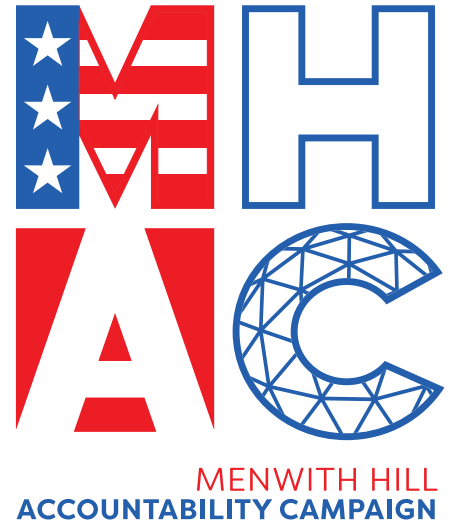


MHAC NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 9 SUMMER 2022



What role for NSA/NRO Menwith Hill now?

What role for NSA/NRO Menwith Hill now?

Menwith Hill is a so-called RAF base under the control of the United States National Security Agency. The US National Reconnaissance Office operates space-based surveillance and reconnaissance systems at Menwith Hill to collect and deliver intelligence - to advance US interests.

“With the Russians, it’s good knowing what they are doing, of course it is. I’m not against intelligence gathering, but we want to know the operations, capacity and general nature of the intelligence gathering at Menwith Hill, who is controlling it? Do the British bother to question the Americans?”

“If it’s there to know what the Russians are thinking, that’s good, but we don’t know whether it’s that or wasting time on other things,” said Richard Norton-Taylor, after the onset of the war in Ukraine.¹

1. Richard Norton-Taylor, Board member of Declassified UK (<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/declassified-uk/>) and former Guardian defence and security editor. Quoted in: The Stray Ferret, 04/03/2022, Thomas Barrett, “What role is the US spy base at Menwith Hill playing in the war in Ukraine?” <https://thestrayferret.co.uk/with-war-in-ukraine-does-raf-menwith-hill-make-us-safer/>

A continuing role in targeted killings?

In 2013 documents leaked by the NSA whistle blower Edward Snowden confirmed that Menwith Hill was directly involved in the planning of targeted drone strikes in

Yemen, Syria, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In January 2022 US Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin

directed the US military to take steps to prevent

civilian deaths from such strikes and to improve how it investigates and acknowledges civilian casualty claims. A two-page memorandum was published, delayed by the US withdrawal from Afghanistan and a continuing and alarming stream of civilian casualty claims.²

“The U.S. military no longer interviews victims and witnesses, choosing instead to rely on their own intelligence information that helped develop strikes that led to civilian deaths,” said Marc Garlasco of PAX for Peace, who has worked in an NGO consortium with the Pentagon on this issue. “We owe it to

the countless dead civilians of the past two decades to change how we wage war. Russia is showing us how not to do it. Now it is time for the U.S. to lead.”

In April 2022 a criminal complaint was filed in Italy accusing the commander of a US base of murder, prompting Reprieve’s Jennifer Gibson to say: “This community is saying to the Italian government and the American government that enough is enough. . . . Under the Italian domestic code, this strike amounts to murder. But what communities in Yemen and Libya are also saying to European governments is that you’re also responsible if you facilitate the drone program. If Ramstein can only carry out lawful strikes, there are no more strikes in Yemen. If the drones can’t launch from Sigonella, they don’t hit this community in Ubari.”³

As the US military increases its boot print across the world, including in the Middle East and Africa, is there a message here for us at Menwith Hill?

2. The Intercept, 03/03/2022, Nick Turse, “U.S. Airstrike killed 11 Libyan civilians and Allies, Human Rights Groups Say,” <https://theintercept.com/2022/04/03/libya-airstrike-civilian-deaths-lawsuit/>
3. Quotations from The Intercept, 03/03/2022, Nick Turse, “U.S. Airstrike killed 11 Libyan civilians and Allies, Human Rights Groups Say,” <https://theintercept.com/2022/04/03/libya-airstrike-civilian-deaths-lawsuit/>

Is NSA/NRO Menwith Hill shrinking or expanding?

The last MHAC newsletter confirmed that, during 2021, four new radomes were constructed at Menwith Hill.

An alder tree planted in 1994 near the main gate of Menwith Hill in memory of Bob Cryer (MP for Bradford South) has now been relocated to enable a major development of the main gate area (see p. 6 for more about the alder).

In January 2022, we learnt that Menwith Hill is to be upgraded as part of a £2.8 billion project to improve US military bases in the UK.⁴

The UK Ministry of Defence confirmed that the aim of the £2.8bn United States Infrastructure Programme is to establish a US Air Force F-35 capability in the UK and consolidate the USAF’s footprint in the UK.⁵ \$300 is to be spent upgrading USAF Fairford;⁶ developments are also planned at USAF Mildenhall.⁷



And what about USAF Lakenheath, the UK home of the US F-35?

The return of US nuclear weapons to the UK?

The US F-35s now arrived at USAF Lakenheath in Suffolk will be nuclear-capable.⁸

In April 2022 we received the news that **US nuclear weapons are possibly to be stored again in the UK, most probably at Lakenheath where nuclear weapons were stored until 2008.**⁹ US nuclear weapons storage sites in the UK are being upgraded.



Stop US nukes coming to Lakenheath! Protest organised by CND at Lakenheath on 21 May 2022, attended by supporters of MHAC.

4. Mace Group, 11/01/2022, “Mace Consult, Turner & Townsend and Atkins secure defence win on US Visiting Forces”, <https://www.macegroup.com/media-centre/221201-mace-consult-secures-defence-win-on-us-visiting-forces>
5. The Stray Ferret, 28/01/2022, Thomas Barrett, “Menwith Hill upgrades part of 2.8bn programme”, <https://thestrayferret.co.uk/menwith-hill-upgrades-part-of-2-8bn-programme/>
6. Parliamentary Written Question 109334 answered on 26 January 2022 by James Heappey MP, <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2022-01-21.109334.h>
7. Air Force Magazine, 02/08/2022, Greg Hadley, “Saved from Closure, RAF Mildenhall Starts Planning: ‘What Should Tomorrow Look Like?’” <https://www.airforcemag.com/saved-from-closure-raf-mildenhall-starts-planning-what-should-tomorrow-look-like/>
8. Air Force Times, 27/10/2021, Rachel S. Cohen, “The F-35 is one step close to carrying nuclear bombs. What’s next?” <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2021/10/27/the-f-35-is-one-step-closer-to-carrying-nuclear-bombs-whats-next/>
9. Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, 13/04/2022, “CND condemns return of US nukes to Britain”, <https://cnduk.org/cnd-condemns-return-of-us-nukes-to-britain/>

What questions have been asked about this horrific development?

In April, Caroline Lucas, MP for Brighton, tabled the following written parliamentary question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the underground storage vaults at RAF Lakenheath are being upgraded (a)

generally and (b) specifically to allow the storage of B61-12 nuclear bombs; and if he will make a statement.¹⁰

The following answer was received on 25 April – from Jeremy Quin, MP for Horsham, Minister of Defence Procurement (Ministry of Defence).

The answer shows the complete lack of accountability to the UK parliament:

“The Ministry of Defence is unable to comment on US spending decisions and capabilities, which are a matter for the US Government. It remains longstanding UK and NATO policy to neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons at a given location.”

And on 16 May, five more written parliamentary questions received the same answer. These questions were formatted by Lindis Percy (co-founder of the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases) and asked by Alex Sobel, MP for Leeds North West and Shadow Minister (Environment, Food and Rural Affairs).

The questions asked the Secretary of State for Defence for details of discussions he or his Department has had about the storage of nuclear weapons at Lakenheath: with ministers and MPs; with Emergency Contingency Planning Departments and Emergency Planning Officers; and with Local Accident and Emergency Departments, Police Fire and Ambulance Services and the police.

They also asked who will make the final decision on storage of US nuclear weapons at USAF Lakenheath and what estimate his Department has made of the potential cost to the public purse of storing US nuclear weapons at USAF Lakenheath.¹¹

And, on 17 May, the same answer was yet again given to Bell Ribeiro-Addy, MP for Streatham, who had asked the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he had had with the US Government on the potential use of RAF Lakenheath as a special weapons storage site.¹²

10. <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2022-04-20.156418.h&s=caroline+lucas>
11. <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2022-05-11.934.h>
12. <https://www.parallelparliament.co.uk/mp/bell-ribeiro-addy/dept/ministry-of-defence/writtenanswers>

More UK involvement in US missile defense?

Menwith Hill hosts three radomes in the US Space-Based Infrared System, part of US missile defense,¹³ under the control of the US Space Force.



Image of Menwith Hill, courtesy of Dave Webb

So-called RAF Fylingdales is a radar station in the US Solid-State Phased Array Radar System, a US Space Force radar, computer, and communications system for missile warning and space surveillance.



Solid State Phased Array Radar (SSPAR) at Fylingdales, North Yorkshire, photo by Cherubino (Diskussion), used under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported

The data obtained by Fylingdales is shared fully and freely with the United States. US Space Force maintains a liaison officer at Fylingdales.¹⁴

In March 2022, the US State Department approved a £533 million sale to the UK of a Ballistic Missile Defense Radar and Command and Battle Management and Communications equipment. The new system may be installed at a site in the UK such as Fylingdales or possibly in Cyprus.¹⁵

Jeremy Quin’s answer to written Parliamentary Question [148357] tabled by Alex Sobel on 28 March did not confirm that the radar and equipment were to be used at Fylingdales: “While the Ballistic Missile Defence Programme remains in the Assessment Phase we are unable to confirm specific locations of the Radar or Command and Battle Management and Communications equipment.”¹⁶

In April 2022, UK Space Command signed an Enhanced Space Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding with US Space Command. According to Air Vice-Marshal Paul Godfrey, commander of UK Space Command, the MOU “allows us now to look at . . . how we collaborate”. UK military budgets are far smaller than the US, “so I’ve got to make sure that where we go in capability terms, we really do add value,” he said.¹⁷

“The U.S. is the global allied leader in space,” Godfrey said. “And so I could go off and spend that billion and a half on all sorts of different things. But if I talk about it being a little cog, and if we can put our little cog in the U.S. machine in exactly the right place, that will make it more efficient.”

Both UK dependence on the US and an accelerating and expensive space arms race are clear.

13. Parliamentary Written Question 32502 answered on 19 July 2021 by James Heapey MP, <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-13/32502>
14. Space Operations Command, 15/08/2018, “Space Delta 4”, <https://www.spoc.spaceforce.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/2334034/space-delta-4>
15. UK Defence Journal, 18/03/2022, George Allison, “UK purchasing Ballistic Missile Defence System”, <https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/britain-purchasing-ballistic-missile-defence-system/>

16. <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-03-28/148357/>
17. Space News, 18/07/2022 Sandra Irwin, US-UK special relationship deepens in space, <https://spacenews.com/us-uk-special-relationship-deepens-in-space/com/us-uk-special-relationship-deepens-in-space/>

Calling for peace in a time of war – protest at NSA/NRO Menwith Hill

Anni Rainbow

It is with great sadness that we share the news of Anni’s death on 24 June 2022, two days after her 73rd birthday. Anni was involved in the peace movement for many years including anti-Vietnam war protests, such as the 1968 protest where mounted police charged protestors in Grosvenor Square, and at Greenham Common. She was co-founder of the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases (CAAB) and worked tirelessly with Lindis Percy and others. Those who knew Anni will remember her as an ardent campaigner for peace who was generous, courageous, committed and witty, with a wicked laugh.



Anni Rainbow protesting near the yellow line at the main gate of Menwith Hill at a 4th July Independence FROM America demonstration organised by CAAB

A full obituary will appear in the next newsletter. There is to be a Memorial Meeting at Harrogate Quaker Meeting house in September. If you would like to receive details of this Meeting or wish to share your memories of Anni to contribute to the next newsletter, please email mail@themhac.uk.

The Tuesday evening protest, now run by MHAC, was started by CAAB in 2000.

Global Days of Action Against Military Spending

The Global Day of Action on Military Spending has been taking place across

the world since 2011, to coincide with the release of the SIPRI figures on world-wide military spending.¹⁸ Since 2017 the event has expanded to Days of Action.

The focus for 2022 was a call for peace in Ukraine and an end to the spiralling arms race. Billions in new funding have been allocated to weaponry, ostensibly to deter Putin. The problem is NATO already outspends Russia 18:1. We need a new strategy based on developing common security.¹⁹

On 12 April 2022, more than twenty people joined the weekly vigil outside the main gates of Menwith Hill. This event - an annual visit by Yorkshire CND including the making and eating of pancakes - had been planned for some time.



Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the knowledge that Menwith Hill will be providing information to inform NATO's response gave the protest an additional sharp focus with placards calling for peace in Ukraine: "Russia get out now. NATO stay out." "War is never the answer."

Also as part of the GDAMS, the weekly protest on 26 April supported the campaign to Stop Lockheed Martin.

By far the world's biggest weapons dealer, arming many of the most oppressive governments,²⁰ Lockheed Martin is involved in US and UK nuclear weapons;²¹ the contractor for the BMD Radar that the UK is purchasing from the US;²² and the producer of the F-35.²³

Independence from America Event on 2nd July 2022

The annual Independence from America event (started in the 1980s) was held this year on the grass verge outside the Main Gates of Menwith Hill. The Main Gates were closed to all traffic because of the major infrastructure upgrade being undertaken.

Opening the proceedings, Hazel Costello

reminded us of the great contributions to peace work of Anni Rainbow, Bruce Kent and Dave Knight.

Dave Knight, who died in February 2022, was a member of Grassington and District Peace Group in the 1980s when he helped set up a major demonstration and festival outside Menwith Hill. He was Chair of Yorkshire CND in the 1990s and of National CND from 1996 to 2001. Last year he was one of those who protested outside the base on 4th July.

A minute of silence gave space to think of them and of others who have given so much.

Molly Scott Cato talked about preparing for peace. Tools for peace are so easily set aside in favour of military options. Understanding the causes of conflict is essential for preventing conflict: "no climate justice, no peace", she emphasised.



Tim Devereux (chair of the Movement to Abolish War) reminded us that at one time the abolition of slavery was thought to be impossible, but it has largely been achieved. Now let's do the same for war.



Dave Webb, who has done so much for CND and the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, spoke of the sheer number of satellites and the miscellaneous debris in orbit around the earth. Nations and corporations spend valuable time and effort adding to the carbon footprint on earth and the hazardous clutter in space.



Martin Schweiger



The East Lancs Clarion Choir



Microphone Jack Performance Poet

DATES for your diary

21 September

RE-DEDICATION BY ANN CRYER OF THE ALDER TREE

The alder tree planted in 1994 near the main gate in memory of Bob Cryer and relocated to enable the development was originally planted by his wife, Ann Cryer (later Labour MP for Keighley). Bob Cryer, who died on 12 April 1994, was dedicated to working for peace. We are planning the re-dedication of the alder tree in memory of Bob Cryer.

16 October

KEEP SPACE FOR PEACE DEMONSTRATION

A demonstration organised in coordination with national CND is planned at Menwith Hill for this final day of the CND conference.

Any Tuesday 6-7:30 pm

We look forward to seeing you any Tuesday for the regular demonstration 6-7:30pm. The weekly protest now takes place at the base's Nessfield Gate. Please contact us for further details of any of these events: mail@themhac.uk

What role for MHAC now?

Do let us know what you thought about the report "Menwith Hill in 3D: Domes, Data and Drone Strikes", launched last October.

The report's author, Barnaby Pace, had various suggestions for how we could focus our campaign more effectively.



Contact us if you'd like to be involved in conversations about the way forward: mail@themhac.uk.

Whatever our roles, let's cooperate well - for safer space.



New merchandise available soon via the website

MONEY MATTERS

There are several ways of supporting MHAC financially (see the MHAC website). Accounts can be seen by application to the Treasurer.

MHAC Account No: 50095311

Sort Code: 089229

The Cooperative Bank,
1 Balloon Street, Manchester, M60 4EP

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Please send a cheque, payable to MHAC, to MHAC Honorary Treasurer, Judith Rushby, 31 Blossomgate, Ripon, HG4 2AJ

Please also enclose your address so that we can write to thank you!

DONATE USING BACS

BACS payments are also welcome to our account with the Cooperative Bank:

Sort code: 089229.

Account number: 5009531100

WHO'S WHO AT MHAC?

Hon. Treasurer: Judith Rushby,
31 Blossomgate, Ripon, HG4 2AJ
(Bank signatories Judith Rushby and Sarah Swift)

Website coordinators: Ray Middleton and Martin Schweiger

Coordinator of meetings: Hazel Costello

Facebook administrator:

Brigid-Mary Oates

Twitter administrator: Claire Nash

Newsletter distributor: Christine Dean

Graphic designer: Paul Wood

Designer of merchandise: Sarah McEvoy and Katie Edwards

Monitoring planning applications:

Laila and Rob Packer

Contact email: mail@themhac.uk

Coordinator of weekly demo and of newsletter: Sarah Swift Tel: 01765 600928



search for

Menwith Hill Accountability Campaign



@MenwithCampaign

We'd like to give a special mention in this newsletter to someone who has made regular monthly donations for many years. In June 2022 Olive Pope was 100 years old. Congratulations and many thanks to Olive!

Data Protection

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter by post or by email, please email mail@themhac.uk to update your preferences.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO CONTINUES TO SUPPORT US.

Please contact us if you would like more information about items in this newsletter or if you would like to help in any way.

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