

MENWITH HILL
ACCOUNTABILITY CAMPAIGN

Changes in the wind at NSA/NRO Menwith Hill?

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KEEP SPACE FOR PEACE DEMONSTRATION AUTUMN 2018

WHAT IS NEW ABOUT SPACE FORCE?



On Tuesday 9 October 2018 supporters of CND and of Menwith Hill Accountability Campaign (MHAC) met for a demonstration at the main gates of Menwith Hill US military and surveillance base. Menwith Hill is run by the US National Security Agency (NSA) and National Reconnaissance Office (NRO).

This demonstration was part of *Keep Space for Peace* week, called by the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, in which protests take place at many bases worldwide.

Dave Webb (Chair of CND and convenor of Global Network) spoke about the proposed US Space Force, part of the militarisation of space. Although Space Force itself will not operate at Menwith Hill, Menwith Hill has important intelligence roles in the US military space programme.

Colin Archer spoke on behalf of the Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) and detailed some of the UK firms that are selling their wares to operations such as Menwith Hill.

Below is the text that Dave used as his starting point.

US President Donald Trump's June [2018] announcement that he had directed the Pentagon to develop a 'Space Force' – a new branch of the US military, "separate but equal" to the US Air Force – to ensure the "American dominance in space" has proved to be highly controversial. Not that controversy is particularly unusual for Mr Trump's ideas or for his defence and foreign policies but the possible consequences are extremely serious. The US defence budget for 2019 included funding for the development of space-based missile interceptors, which could lead to a major increase in global arms spending and edge the world even closer to a nuclear war.

The idea of a sixth branch of the US armed forces to deal with space is not new. In June 2017 the House Armed Services Committee voted to create a US 'Space Corps' to incorporate the current space

missions of the US Air Force (USAF). In fact the USAF Space Command was established as long ago as 1985 to coordinate the space forces of the Army, Navy and Air Force. In June 2002 it was merged into US Strategic Command (STRATCOM) in Nebraska under a scheme to transform the military by the then Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld. Rumsfeld had previously chaired a 'Space Commission', which released a report in January 2001 recognising the vulnerability of military space assets and warning of a "Space Pearl Harbor", a reminder of the dangers of a lack of preparation in 1941. The recommendation of the Commission's report was to weaponise space!

The US intention to dominate is clearly shown by the uniform badge of the US Air Force Space Command's 50th Space Wing, which declares them as "Masters of Space". The same slogan is also proudly displayed above the entrance to their building at Schriever Air Force Base in Colorado and emphasised in the US Space Command's 1998 'Long-Range Plan' (LRP) and their 'Vision for 2020' (the year that the US Vice-President, Mike Pence, recently announced for the establishment of the new US Space Force). These documents spoke of "new military capabilities for operation to, from, in and through space" and "full-spectrum dominance" of the US in the air, on land, at sea, in space and of information – as if Mr Trump had written them himself!



How did space become so important to the military? The first



A MESSAGE FROM PAUL MOBBS WHO SPOKE AT THE KEEP SPACE FOR PEACE DEMONSTRATION IN NOVEMBER 2017

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0c1x5dc>

Targeting Yemen: The Fight Against Al Qaeda



Safa Al Ahmad reports from Yemen on the escalation of America's covert war against Al Qaeda. She meets survivors of US attacks and finds evidence of undeclared civilian casualties and blunders by US special forces.

Paul directed us to watch the programme:

'Then think that the drone strikes and special-forces operations in Yemen are being run from Camp Lemmonier in Djbouti, which relies for its operation on high-capacity data links operating through USAF Croughton on the Northamptonshire/Oxfordshire border, as well as signals intelligence from other sites in the UK such as Menwith Hill.'

Visit <http://www.fraw.org.uk/croughtonwatch/index.shtml>



significant use of space technology for war fighting was probably during Operation Desert Storm in Iraq in 1991, when satellites were used to target and guide so-called smart weapons. This use was extended during the war in former Yugoslavia in 1999 and the aerial bombardment of Serbia has been described as the first space-enabled war. From the War on Afghanistan in 2001 through to Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, space technology has been tested and used for battle management, intelligence gathering, reconnaissance, targeting and weapons guidance. The US has spent billions of dollars on militarising space – on satellites, ground-based stations and new technologies such as armed drones, controlled through satellites. The US military (and that of other states) has become almost totally dependent on space technology.

It is perhaps surprising then that Donald Trump's Space Force announcement attracted so much media attention. It may have been the staged flamboyant and macho delivery that created the impact – in any case it has demonstrated the level of importance that is attached to military space activities. It also brought to light some major disagreements over the issue.

The idea of a new Space Force has been ridiculed in the US media and has not been widely welcomed in Washington nor in some areas of the US military. There has been some support, however, from advocates such as Republican Congressman Mike Rogers from Alabama, a state that includes Huntsville (the US military space capital). Rogers has received hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations from aerospace contractors in his state and a former executive of Boeing, the US Undersecretary of Defense, Patrick Shanahan, is another supporter. Shanahan was responsible for Boeing's \$5 billion Airborne Laser project – a laser mounted on a Boeing 747 supposedly to intercept missiles in their boost phase (soon after launch) – which failed and was cancelled in 2012. A major push for a Space Force is coming from the corporations that will profit from increased spending on military aerospace projects irrespective of whether they are needed or will ever work.

Cost is one of the major issues cited by those arguing against the Space Force. The detailed plan for its implementation prepared by the USAF estimates that it would cost \$12.9 billion for the first five years.

The Trump administration and Congress have already increased defence spending to \$716 billion and further increases would be difficult to justify to a population already suffering from severe public-spending cuts. The USAF is also worried that Space Force funding would be found at its expense. So, while those with ties to military space contractors have been pushing for a Space Force, the Air Force has taken an opposite view. They want to retain control of space and the funding that goes with it. Some key players from the aerospace industry not involved in space technology have also come out against the force, for similar reasons.

However the most worrying development in all of this is that Congress has approved spending on the



development of space-based missile interceptors and is expecting a working prototype by 2022. The past development of space weapons has proved expensive and has been plagued with failures. President Reagan's space-based laser project, part of his 'Strategic Defense Initiative' (and proposed by Edward Teller, the 'father' of the H-bomb), cost billions and was cancelled in 2002. In 1993 President George H.W. Bush cancelled 'Brilliant Pebbles' – a space-based project to defend against an all-out ballistic missile attack from the Soviet Union. It proved to be too difficult to do and too expensive. Instead, a smaller space-based system called Global Protection Against Limited Strikes (GPALS) was undertaken to protect against limited ballistic-missile threats from smaller powers such as Iraq, Iran and North Korea. The current US land- and sea-based missile-defence systems positioned in Europe, South Korea and Japan use space technology for missile detection and targeting but the interceptors are Earth bound.

It is not clear whether Congress will agree to creating a Space Force, but Donald Trump seems determined

to push for it to please his supporters, his ego and parts of the military-industrial complex. The call on the Pentagon “to develop a space-based intercept layer” seems to ignore a 2012 study by the American Physical Society (APS). They estimated that 650 space-based missiles, at a cost of \$300 billion, would be needed to keep a particular launch site in range and intercept even a small number of missiles in their boost phase. Placing such weapons in space would also likely lead other powers to assume that their satellite and deterrent systems were at risk, resulting in the extension of anti-satellite systems and an increase in nuclear arsenals. Such an arms race would increase the chances of mistakes occurring in systems on hair-trigger alert and risk a disastrous nuclear exchange.

In addition, placing anti-satellite weapons and/or missiles in space undermines what is left of international arms-control agreements, increasing suspicion and increasing tension. If dealing with threats from space is an issue, then Congress should consider engaging with (not disengaging from) and strengthening international agreements. In 1967, just five years after the wake-up call of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the US and the Soviet Union signed the Outer-Space Treaty, which banned the siting of weapons of mass destruction in space, and, together with 120 other nations, designated space a Global Commons – reserved for peaceful purposes. Since then there have been attempts in the UN to expand the Treaty. In the 1980s Canada, Russia and China pushed hard for a Treaty to Prevent an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) and to ban all weapons from space. However no US president has been willing to sign it. In 2008 China and Russia submitted an updated draft to the UN General Assembly, which the US has continued to oppose.

If nuclear weapons are the problem, then the US should be encouraging (not discouraging) states to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. In 1986, at the height of the Cold War, Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev met in Reykjavik and eventually agreed to scrap thousands of intermediate- and short-range nuclear weapons [the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces treaty (INF) with Russia]. This meeting



Firing the Pershing missile https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MGM-31_Pershing

came about because of the widespread protests against the siting of Pershing and Cruise missiles in Europe. A similar outcry is needed now to bring world leaders together. To really increase security the Trump

Administration must meet and work with other nations on a treaty to demilitarise space and redeploy the skills and knowledge of scientists and engineers to tackle the global threat of climate change.

Every year the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space calls for a particular week of action and education on these issues – *Keep Space for Peace Week*. We have a chance to focus attention on the problem and protest at the places in the UK that form a part of the US military space programme. The US interception, intelligence-gathering and targeting base at Menwith Hill, the missile-defence and space radar at Fylingdales (both in Yorkshire) and the communications, data-gathering and analysis centre at Croughton near Oxford will be centres of attention. We need to show the strongest opposition to the weaponisation of space.

POSTSCRIPT/UPDATE

The USAF has now won control of the Space Force and problems over Space Force’s funding seem now to have been overcome as far as the US administration is concerned. In any case, spending on military and spy-agency intelligence, including on classified space projects, has spiked in recent years.¹

On 20 October 2018 President Trump said that the US would withdraw from the INF treaty with Russia. This withdrawal was made official in February 2019.

For more about Washington’s rejection of the INF treaty watch this video by Will Griffin, veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and founder of The Peace Report (<http://thepeacereport.com/>) <http://space4peace.blogspot.com/2019/02/washington-walking-away-from-another.html>

The US Missile Defense Review was also formally introduced by President Trump at the Pentagon in January and called for research and investments to ensure America’s ‘security’ for the next several decades: laser technology, the F-35 as an ICBM killer, and potentially putting interceptors in space. Expensive, uncertain missile ‘defense’ making the world less safe.

AND WHAT ABOUT THE NEW CYBER COMMAND?

Possibly difficult to untangle from the development of the ‘new’ Space Force is the development of the new-status Cyber Command.² This will certainly also involve significant spending:

“Also of significant importance is DoD cyberwarriors gaining their own infrastructure to plan and launch attacks separate from the National Security Agency, which uses its systems primarily for espionage... [O]ne critical condition to splitting is the development of DoD-specific tools, systems and infrastructure”.³

New offensive cyber authorities have been provided by the US executive branch but there are legal grey areas and questions about whether they will provide better security:

“The side effects of the strategy of ‘persistent engagement’ and ‘defend forward’ [in cyberspace] are still ill-understood... A United States that is more powerful in cyberspace does not necessarily mean one that is more stable or secure.”⁴

1. Marcus Weisberger, ‘Will Space Force Give an Extra Boost to

Satellite Spending?’, *Defense One*, 29 January 2019 <https://www.defenseone.com/business/2019/01/will-space-force-boost-already-rising-spending-satellites/154507/>

2. Oriana Pawlyk, ‘Pence Won’t Rule Out Nuclear Weapons in Space as Plans for New Force Begin’, *Military*, 23 October 2018 <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2018/10/23/pence-wont-rule-out-nuclear-weapons-space-plans-new-force-begin.html>
3. Mark Pomerleau, ‘DoD ramps up development of a “cyber factory”’, *Fifth Domain*, 10 January 2019 <https://www.fifth-domain.com/dod/2019/01/10/dod-ramps-up-development-of-a-cyber-factory>
4. Max Smeets and Herb Lin of Stamford University, quoted in Justin Lynch, ‘Are more offensive cyber operations actually a deterrent?’, *Fifth Domain*, 5 December 2018 <https://www.fifth-domain.com/dod/2018/12/06/are-more-offensive-cyber-operations-actually-a-deterrent/>

WHAT ELSE HAS HAPPENED AT DEMONSTRATIONS AT MENWITH HILL?

ARRESTS

The last newsletter (Issue 3 Summer 2018) reported how an activist was arrested on 12 July 2018 as she continued a weekly spontaneous protest that she has done since the attempt to bring in Dispersal Powers by the Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) on 8 March 2016. She challenged this and Harrogate Magistrates found in her favour.

On 12 July 2018 she was charged with obstruction of the highway.

Just as the last newsletter came out, the Crown Prosecution Service discontinued her case. The reason given for the decision to discontinue was: “not enough evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction”. This was in spite of CCTV coverage around the base.

Since then the activist has been arrested on another two occasions as she has continued her weekly spontaneous protest.

The last newsletter also reported how another protester at the regular weekly Tuesday MHAC demonstration was arrested on 24 July and charged with obstruction of the highway and obstruction of a police officer in her duty.

Her case was also discontinued and the same reason for the decision to discontinue was given.

Shortly afterwards three other activists at the weekly demonstration were arrested and then released pending further investigations. The protest continues.

VERY WELCOME VISITS

MANY THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO HAS BEEN ALONG AND SUPPORTED DEMONSTRATIONS THIS WINTER. YOUR PRESENCE HAS BEEN VERY MUCH APPRECIATED.

On Tuesday 22 January 2019 four supporters of Calder Valley CND for Peace and Justice joined the weekly demonstration. The visitors were particularly struck by the sign ‘Welcome to Royal Air Force Menwith Hill’ because the base is actually run by the US NSA and NRO.



Photo by Beverley Beck

Come along and support the demonstration! You are welcome to protest in any peaceful way in which you feel comfortable.

We sometimes vary the day we demonstrate. Please contact us if you’re thinking of coming.

MARTIN SCHWEIGER

Martin went through a thirteen-hour operation on the day of the Keep Space for Peace demonstration. He says he is now in a transitional phase and hopes to be at the demonstration some time in the future when the weather is warmer! We send him and his wife, Liz, our very best wishes for his full recovery.

PLEASE JOIN US ON 4 JULY TO CALL FOR INDEPENDENCE FROM AMERICA. (MORE DETAILS BELOW.)

AND WHAT ABOUT OTHER US BASES?

More than 800 US bases worldwide and some new ones ...

Jeju, the World Peace Island, has endured “the nightmare of a Fleet Review”. And a US nuclear aircraft carrier was the first ship to officially use the cruise terminal, the civilian part of the so-called Civilian-Military Complex Port for Tour Beauty, another name for the Jeju naval base, a de-facto US base.

Please support the protesters at Gangjeong Village, Jeju, South Korea, who write, “Our task to close the Jeju navy base and to demilitarise Jeju and its seas is now more urgent than ever.”

For more information and their newsletter visit: <http://www.SaveJejuNow.org>

On the island of Okinawa the Japanese government has started work on the construction of a controversial new US base – before a forthcoming referendum on whether the base should be built. Just over 70% of Okinawan voters – or 434,000 people – opposed the new base. The governor of Okinawa has urged President Abe to halt the work.

Here in the UK USAF Lakenheath will become the first permanent base for USAF F-35 fighter jets in Europe.

USAF Alconbury and nearby JIAC Molesworth were scheduled to close in 2023, along with 13 other European US bases. However the US government has decided to retain the JIAC at Molesworth and there will be new facilities on the site. (The US is still spending a further £200m to develop a new JIAC at Croughton – see the last newsletter, Issue 3 Summer 2018, for details.)

No Naval Base on Jeju!

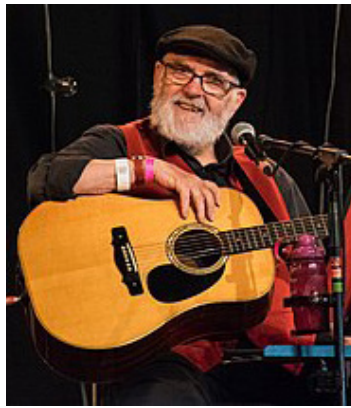


A postcard from Gangjeong Village, Jeju

WHO WILL INSPIRE US ON 4 JULY THIS YEAR?

REMEMBERING ROY BAILEY

20 October 1935 – 20 November 2018



Roy Bailey was a legendary protest folk singer and humanitarian. He cared deeply, for example about injustice, denouncing war, political repression and the impoverishment of working people and minorities.

He first studied Economics, then changed to Sociology and played a significant role in the development

of sociology in Britain. As a sociologist he was a strong supporter of the polytechnics as a means of bringing university-level education to a broader audience.

Roy was a committed socialist – “a beautiful word”. He teamed up with his friend Tony Benn to perform together round the country.

In 2000 Roy was awarded an MBE. However he returned the award in 2006 in protest against British support of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

CAAB organised the annual *Independence FROM America* demonstration on 4 July for many years. We invited Roy to come and sing. He came without hesitation and went on to become a fixture for several years. He struggled for more than 30 years with heart failure and in the end he could come no longer.

The world has lost a beautiful, caring and talented man, who contributed so much for a fairer, just and peaceful world.

Roy sang this moving piece – Palestine – on 4 July 2011: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlhsgl7UB1g>

By Lindis Percy – Co-Founder of the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases – CAAB

THE FUTURE OF PEACE, DISARMAMENT AND CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

Supporters of MHAC attended this inspiring meeting on 13 December 2018 at the University of Leeds, which discussed the Labour Party proposal in 2016 to establish a Minister for Peace and Disarmament if it formed the next government.

The main speaker was Fabian Hamilton MP, current shadow Minister for Peace and Disarmament and shadow minister for the Middle East and North Africa. (Fabian spoke at Menwith Hill on 4 July 2015.)



Celia McKeon
Photo by James Millar
www.jamesmillar.uk.com

Celia McKeon is coordinator of Rethinking Security, a network of organisations, academics and activists that aims to promote debate about the problems with the UK's current approach to security and to build support for other possible approaches. She listed three actions that could help – engaging with the dominant national-security narrative, democratising policy-making by identifying opportunities for public engagement and changing policies by transitional steps.

Find out more from Celia on 4 July!

**Independence FROM America
demonstration Thursday 4 July 2019
4.00 – 7.30pm**

This will be organised jointly by MHAC and Yorkshire CND. (Some transport available from Bradford/Leeds: please contact YCND nearer the time.)

We will hand in a letter to the Base Commander and read the Declaration of Independence FROM America.

Speakers will include Sweta Choudhury from Conscience, the Peace Tax Campaign, and Celia McKeon, coordinator of Rethinking Security.

We welcome back the East Lancs Clarion Choir and Reason Breeds Monsters to provide the music.

There will be delicious vegan and vegetarian food from Bondgate Bakery in Otley.

Please bring warm and waterproof clothing. A portaloos will be available.

Come along and bring your friends!



“The problem is war, not U.S. war, but war. The U.S. is the biggest weapons dealer and the biggest warmonger, so it is the biggest piece of the problem. But the problem is war. And we don't have decades left to dick around with medieval balances of power. The earth's climate is already doomed. Militarism is both the biggest cause of climate collapse and the only industry given a waiver in major environmental agreements.” *David Swanson*

David, author of several books including *War is a Lie* (2010), spoke at Menwith Hill at the 4 July *Independence FROM America* demonstration in 2014 organised by CAAB.

Visit: <https://worldbeyondwar.org/>

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

GIVE BY POST:

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!

GIVE USING BACS:

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

Sort Code: 089229

Account No: 50095311

WHO'S WHO AT MHAC

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MHAC IS ON FACEBOOK: search for 'Menwith Hill
Accountability Campaign'

AND ON TWITTER: [@MenwithCampaign](https://twitter.com/MenwithCampaign)

DATA PROTECTION

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter by post or by email,
please email info@themhac.uk to update your preferences or
contact **MHAC** at **64 Magdalens Road, Ripon, HG4 1HT**.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support us.

Please contact us if you would like more references for statements made in this newsletter or more information on the issues raised, or go to the MHAC website: www.themhac.uk

Please also contact us if you have other well-sourced information on any of the issues or if you would like to join the campaign. We need your energy and ideas, whether you are an activist or have clerical, academic, professional or artistic expertise!

MHAC has regular meetings advertised on the website. Let us know if you would like to be contacted by telephone or email about them.

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