4th July Independence From America demonstration near Menwith Hill US base

About forty people from across the country joined the Menwith Hill Accountability Campaign and Yorkshire Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament on the evening of 4th July - for the annual Independence From America demonstration near Menwith Hill US base, Harrogate.

The event was both entertaining and informative, aided by fine weather, good food, and extensive views across Nidderdale.

The Declaration of Independence from American Militarism at NSA Menwith Hill, first composed by supporters of the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases in the style of the original American Declaration of Independence, was first read aloud. The Declaration remains poignantly relevant, expressing no hatred of the American people but calling for independence and justice as they did.

Peter Burt of Drone Wars UK (author of *Joint Enterprise: An overview of US-UK co-operation on armed drone operations*, 2020) reminded us of Menwith Hill’s role in US and UK drone operations. Civilian casualties are ten times more likely from drone strikes than they are from manned attacks.

Fiona Macaulay (Professor, Gender, Peace and Development, Bradford University) spoke of gender issues in peace campaigning, of how women at Greenham Common foregrounded the need to talk about security; about how nuclear weapons and other military operations in the name of security do not in fact make us safer.

Dave Webb (chair of Yorkshire CND and chair of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space) explained how the UK is assisting the US military in their stated aim to dominate outer space. Menwith Hill is an important part of US/UK collaboration in collecting data for surveillance and tracking and targeting space objects (along with the powerful radar at Fylingdales). Both these last speakers emphasised the importance of continuing to invoke international law, to exert some restraint on military operations.

Many thanks also to the Clarion Choir, Foxwood Panyard steel band, Beau and Slick Satirical Cowboys, Microphone Jack. All were brilliant performers, Beau and Slick and Microphone Jack making sharp satirical points about the dangers of US imperialism and militarism – and making us laugh out loud.