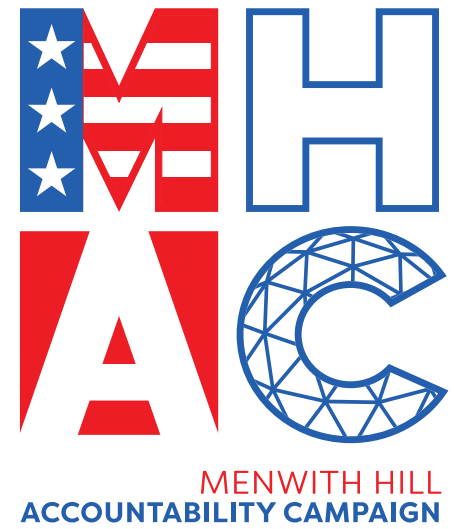


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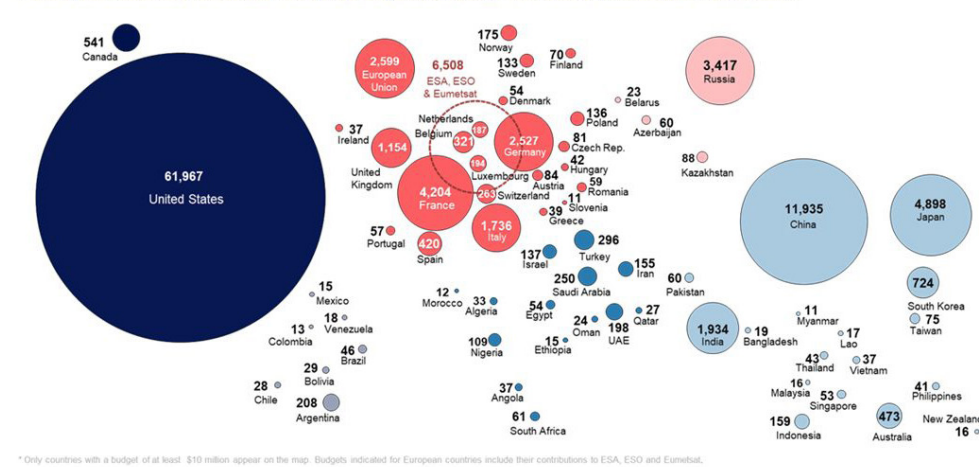


Time to rethink NSA/NRO Menwith Hill?

Photo Trevor Paglen © Trevor Paglen

Why is it high time to rethink NSA/NRO Menwith Hill?

World government expenditures for space programs in 2022* for a total investment of \$103 billion



*Only countries with a budget of at least \$10 million appear on the map. Budgets indicated for European countries include their contributions to ESA, ESO and Eumetsat.

Bombardment and forced displacement of civilians

Dave Webb, chair of CND 2010-2020 and convenor of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, writes:

Every Tuesday at 6pm, rain or shine, a small group of protesters stand outside a US base in North Yorkshire with banners and flags. Supporters of the Menwith Hill Accountability Campaign (MHAC) are there to protest at the unaccountable and highly secret activities that go on inside the US spy base nominally called 'RAF' Menwith Hill but run by the US National Security Agency (NSA). In recent weeks the focus has been on the UK's role in events in Gaza.

Just how is the UK government involved in Gaza? According to the Campaign Against the Arms Trade, the UK has consistently sold arms to Israel since 1967. Thousands of Palestinians have been killed by Israeli military actions supported by UK arms exports. Israel's bombardment of Palestinians in Gaza and the forced displacement of innocent civilians fly in the face of international humanitarian law, and the UK is assisting in these war crimes in more ways than one. One way will be through the activities at Menwith Hill. Operatives there are busy supplying the US intelligence services with



Bradford CND, Yorkshire CND and Calder Valley CND for Peace and Justice with MHAC at Menwith Hill (13 February 2024)

information, some of which will be used to help the Israeli Defence Forces target their attacks in Gaza.

In 2016 top secret documents obtained by Edward Snowden showed that Menwith Hill collects and analyses satellite data obtained by intercepting electronic communications (emails, texts, telephone calls, etc) and passes on anything of interest to the US National Security Agency (NSA). The Snowden documents revealed that, in the past, the NSA has used the powerful eavesdropping technologies at Menwith Hill to provide "continuous coverage of the majority of the Eurasian landmass," where they can readily intercept "tactical military, scientific, political, and

economic communications signals."

In the past, the information gathered has helped target armed drone strikes across the Middle East and North Africa and Menwith Hill has provided support for British and American military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. It has also been used to assist with covert missions in countries where the US has not declared war. As Ryan Gallagher wrote in The Intercept, "NSA employees at Menwith Hill have collaborated on a project to help 'eliminate' terrorism targets in Yemen, for example, where the US has waged a controversial drone bombing campaign that has resulted in dozens of civilian deaths". In 2021 MHAC and Yorkshire CND jointly published a booklet called "Menwith Hill in 3D: Domes, Data & Drone Strikes" which explores the issues around the legality of the activities of the base, including the disclosures made by Edward Snowden.²

Documents leaked by Snowden have revealed that the NSA "maintains a far-reaching technical and analytic relationship with the Israeli SIGINT National Unit (ISNU)" and the documents show that the NSA and ISNU are "sharing information on access, intercept, targeting, language, analysis and reporting."³ There can be little doubt then, that Menwith Hill will have been working all hours over the last few weeks to provide information to help the Israelis attack particular targets identified by the intercepted information.

Matt Kennard and Mark Curtis, writing in Declassified UK, have described how the UK military and intelligence services may be aiding Israel's attack on Gaza.⁴ In December 2020, a military cooperation agreement was signed by Britain and Israel. Despite the UK MoD describing it as an "important piece of defence diplomacy" which "strengthens" military ties, the British parliament and public have never seen what is in it.⁵ The MoD has refused to publish it and has only briefly mentioned it in parliament once, in a response to a direct question from an MP.

Declassified UK also revealed in November that, since the bombing of Gaza began, the RAF had made over 30 military transport flights to Tel Aviv.⁶ The MoD is now censoring requests for information by

MPs about flights from the RAF base at Akrotiri in Cyprus, which is only 40 minutes from Tel Aviv by plane.⁷

There are also reports that the US is using RAF Akrotiri to send arms to Israel.⁸ RAF Akrotiri has, for a long time, been the base from which British bombing campaigns have been carried out across the Middle East and it was recently revealed that 129 US airmen are permanently based there.⁹ The government has denied sending 'lethal aid' to Israel, the censoring of MPs' requests indicates that RAF Akrotiri is being used for just that purpose.

So, the UK is helping Israel's slaughter of Palestinians not only by supplying arms, but also by supplying intelligence information to help target the attacks. The protesters standing outside the Menwith Hill base in the cold and the rain are reminding the British public and politicians that the US spy base at Menwith Hill continues to play a crucial role in conflicts that are of concern to the US - which means any conflict, anywhere on Earth.

1. The Intercept, Ryan Gallagher, 6/9/2016, "Inside Menwith Hill", <https://theintercept.com/2016/09/06/nsa-menwith-hill-targeted-killing-surveillance/>
2. <https://www.themhac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-10/MHAC%20Domes%20Data%20and%20Drones%2003.08.21.pdf>
3. Declassified UK, Matt Kennard, 1/12/2023, "U.S. spies have 'wide range' of facilities on UK's Cyprus base near Gaza—and share material 'daily' with Israel", <https://www.declassifieduk.org/u-s-spies-have-wide-range-of-facilities-on-uks-cyprus-bases-near-gaza-and-share-material-daily-with-israel/>
4. Declassified UK, Matt Kennard and Mark Curtis, 3/11/2023, "The ICC must investigate British ministers for Gaza war crimes. Here's how." <https://www.declassifieduk.org/the-icc-must-investigate-british-ministers-for-gaza-war-crimes-heres-how/>
5. <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-19/4041/>
6. Declassified UK, Matt Kennard and Mark Curtis, 10/11/2023, "RAF admits to making 17 military flights to Israel since Gaza bombing began", <https://www.declassifieduk.org/raf-admits-to-making-17-military-flights-to-israel-since-gaza-bombing-began/>
7. Declassified UK, Matt Kennard and Mark Curtis, 20/11/2023, "UK government blocks MP questions about Gaza-related activity at its Cyprus base", <https://www.declassifieduk.org/uk-government-blocks-mp-questions-about-gaza-related-activity-at-its-cyprus-base/>

8. Declassified UK, Matt Kennard and Mark Curtis, 17/11/2023, "U.S. military is secretly supplying weapons to Israel using UK base on Cyprus", <https://www.declassifieduk.org/u-s-military-is-secretly-supplying-weapons-to-israel-using-uk-base-on-cyprus/>
9. Declassified UK, Matt Kennard, 1/2/2023, "Revealed: America's secret military deployment on British Cyprus", <https://www.declassifieduk.org/revealed-americas-secret-military-deployment-on-british-cyprus/>

Innocent civilians killed without acknowledgement or compensation



Global Hawk and Reaper drones, photo courtesy of Drone Wars UK

The US is still not properly compensating civilian victims of drone strikes such as those enabled by intelligence supplied by Menwith Hill.

This January, Rep. Sara Jacobs, D-Calif., took up with the Pentagon the case of a Somali family: a drone strike in 2018 killed Luul Dahir Mohamed and her 4-year-old daughter, Mariam Shilow Muse.¹⁰ The deaths have been admitted but the Pentagon has still neither apologised nor offered compensation.

In December 2023, the Pentagon released its long-awaited "Instruction on Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response":

The document . . . directs the military to "acknowledge civilian harm resulting from U.S. military operations and respond to

individuals and communities affected by U.S. military operations" including "expressing condolences" and providing so-called ex gratia payments to next of kin.

The case of Luul and Mariam is not an isolated incident: "[V]ictims, survivors, and their families often face significant obstacles to getting answers and acknowledgment from the U.S. government, let alone amends for what happened," Jacobs said.

The UK, meanwhile, has neither admitted killings, paid compensation to victims of strikes nor launched policy reforms. "The UK public position on airstrikes is that they are done as part of a coalition and the UK doesn't kill any civilians [on its own]."¹¹

10. The Intercept, Nick Turse, 9/1/2024, "Rep. Sara Jacobs urges Pentagon to make amends to family of drone strike victims", <https://theintercept.com/2024/01/09/pentagon-somalia-drone-strike-reparations/>
11. Lydia Day, advocacy director at the Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights NGO, quoted in Airwars, 21/3/2023, "The hidden casualties of Britain's war", <https://airwars.org/investigation/britain-uk-civilian-casualties-iraq-syria/>

Dangerous crowded orbits



In October 2023 the focus of Keep Space for Peace week – a week of action called for by the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space – was the dangers of crowded orbits. "NASA scientists fear growing space debris and likely cascading collisions in orbit. This, called the Kessler Syndrome, would endanger space activities and the use of satellites which so much technology relies on to function."¹²

Military and intelligence satellites are proliferating, and satellites are highly vulnerable. The US Space Force controls radomes at Menwith Hill in the US Space-Based Infrared System, part of US missile defense. Who can tell what would happen if a satellite connected to the US SBIRS was destroyed, possibly just accidentally?

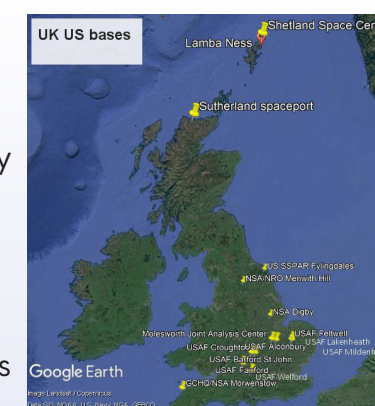
12. <https://space4peace.org/keep-space-for-peace-week/>
13. <https://isc.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/ISC-Annual-Report-2022-2023-Press-Release.pdf>
14. The Guardian, Matthew Weaver, 5/12/2023, "MPs and peers rebuke Sunak over lack of national security oversight", <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/dec/05/mps-and-peers-rebuke-sunak-over-lack-of-national-security-oversight>

Concerning news from the network of US bases in the UK

USAF Fairford

The US Air Force have submitted plans to the Civil Aviation Authority to fly US Global Hawk drones from Fairford. It has put an application to fly US Reaper drones from the base on hold, presumably until a decision is made on the Global Hawk flights.¹⁵

Chris Cole of Drone Wars writes: *If this change is agreed there will be very little chance of the public knowing when or where these US drones will be used operationally. While the government has said previously that combat operations from US bases in the UK are subject to "joint decision"¹⁶ in reality the government has little say or control over operations from US bases as the framework under which they operate – the 1951 Status of Forces Agreement – gives jurisdiction to the US, not the UK.¹⁷*



UK US bases

Inadequate UK parliamentary oversight

The UK parliament Intelligence and Security Committee is supposed to have oversight of NSA/NRO Menwith Hill. However the ISC has accused Rishi Sunak and his predecessors since 2014 of disengagement from the ISC.

In its annual report the ISC said the government was in effect blocking "all attempts to ensure effective scrutiny by parliament" in many areas such as the intelligence policy department in the Foreign Office.¹³

Sir Julian Lewis, the senior Tory MP who chairs the ISC, said "the current lack of oversight" in these areas was "a matter of serious concern".¹⁴

. . . Allowing US drones to operate from Fairford directly involves the UK in the US' worldwide drone operations which have killed hundreds, possibly thousands of innocent civilians. Any legal action arising for these strikes could well involve the UK.¹⁸

USAF Lakenheath

Amid more news coverage of US plans to bring US nuclear weapons to the UK, CND has challenged the planning rights for the nuclear weapons facilities development at Lakenheath.¹⁹ Kate Hudson of CND said: *"USAF has ploughed ahead with construction at the airbase by purportedly relying on planning rights that assume that the development won't have significant environmental effects. But in doing that they've completely ignored the risks that stationing nuclear weapons would entail and therefore might arguably be operating unlawfully in breach of planning control."*

Solicitor Ricardo Gama said: *"The planning process is one way for members of the public to make representations on these controversial plans."*



Bradford CND at Menwith Hill on 23 September 2023

Join us in calling on MPs to oppose the renewal of the US-UK Mutual Defence Agreement (MDA) – the world’s most extensive nuclear sharing agreement, up for renewal this year.²⁰

USAF Mildenhall

Evidence strongly suggests Israel and the US may be using Mildenhall to move weapons to Israel.²¹ However the Ministry of Defence has told Declassified: “We cannot comment on or provide information relating to foreign nations’ military aircraft movements or operations.”

Molesworth Joint Analysis Center

Contractor Skanska will deliver USAF European Infrastructure Consolidation (EIC) works for the US military at Molesworth. Skanska’s part of the contract is worth £153 million.²²

NSA/NRO Menwith Hill

The development of the main gate area is now almost complete. It is estimated that the new main gate will be opened in April or May.

Planning permission has been given for a new facility on the base and it is intended to enlarge the access at Steeplebush gate (on the B6451 just south of Nessfield Gate) – to enable the delivery of especially large loads (specifics not provided).

15. Drone Wars, Chris Cole, 18/12/2023, “Accident waiting to happen: UK opens skies to large military drones as crashes continue”, <https://dronewars.net/2023/12/18/accident-waiting-to-happen-uk-opens-skies-to-large-military-drones-as-crashes-continue/>
16. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06808/SN06808.pdf>
17. <https://cnduk.org/resources/military-bases-us-bases-in-the-uk-and-uk-bases-overseas-what-they-are-and-what-they-do/>
18. Drone Wars, Chris Cole, 27/7/2023, “US military drones set to fly from UK from 2024”, <https://dronewars.net/2023/07/27/us-military-drones-set-to-fly-from-uk-from-2024/>

19. <https://www.leighday.co.uk/news/news/2023-news/campaign-for-nuclear-disarmament-legally-challenges-planning-rights-for-nuclear-weapons-facilities-development-at-raf-lakenheath-in-suffolk/>
20. Declassified UK, Kate Hudson, 15/02/2024, “MPs must oppose US/UK nuclear arms accord”, <https://www.declassifieduk.org/mps-must-oppose-us-uk-nuclear-arms-accord/>
21. Declassified UK, Matt Kennard, 1/2/2024, “Exclusive: Israeli military planes have landed at four locations in Britain since 7 October”, <https://www.declassifieduk.org/exclusive-israeli-military-planes-have-landed-at-four-locations-in-britain-since-7-october/>
22. <https://www.construction-europe.com/news/skanska-wins-153m-deal-to-build-new-us-air-force-facility-at-uk-base/8030072.article>



Martin Schweiger writes:

The sun shone as people gathered for the annual Independence from America Event.

Hazel Costello welcomed us and showed a copy of the original Declaration of Independence from America, to be presented to the Peace Museum when it reopens in Saltaire. Moira Hill and Peter Kenyon read the 2023 Declaration of Independence from America.



An invitation had been sent to the Director at NSA Menwith Hill. Inspector Holly Nicholls of North Yorkshire Police kindly accepted a letter to pass on to him. The letter contained a request to meet the Director so we could learn his name and

something about the American perspective of the American control of Menwith Hill.

Peter Burt from Drone Wars UK spoke about the role of Menwith Hill in developing Common Intelligence, with vast amounts of data being collected, processed and utilised for example for targeted drone strikes.

Photo by Colin Archer

International law is clearly frequently broken, but, Peter concluded, international law progresses through violations.

The singing of the East Lancs Clarion Choir



was as always joyful, carrying messages about peace that need to be heard.

Professor Fiona Macaulay has a long history of working for peace and is now based within the Department of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford. She spoke of how large military installations can gradually be accepted as normal. Among other things we cease to be aware of the destruction of the environment, and environmental destruction is a source of tension and conflict. There are many examples of women holding people to account working across long time periods.

A rousing, vibrant performance from Victoria Jaquiss and the Foxwood Panyard



Steel Band was much appreciated and guitar, singing, repartee and jokes made Beau and Slick the Satirical Cowboys quite unique. References to Menwith Hill were brilliantly effective.

Dave Webb spoke of how the UK is assisting the US military in their stated aim to dominate space. Menwith Hill is an important part of US/UK collaboration. The war in Ukraine has demonstrated how important space assets are in conflict and Menwith will be playing a key role.

The carbon footprint of the world’s military is substantial and the launching of space craft makes matters worse. The UK is developing at least three space ports – with US military involvement.

The last act was Microphone Jack with his engaging and challenging poetry. Beau and Slick were brought back on to frame his performance dressed as armed guards protecting bright yellow barrels of radioactive waste.



Special thanks to Joan West for bringing the giant tent, putting it up and taking it back to Manchester for so many years.

Save 4th July 2024 for the Independence FROM America demonstration at NSA/NRO Menwith Hill, 5 – 8pm at the Kettlesing layby: presentations, music, information and a chance to meet people concerned about Menwith Hill and other Peace issues. **More details at <https://themhac.uk/events/sat-02102024-1203/independence-america-event-2024>**

Re-dedication of the alder tree planted in memory of Bob Cryer MP

The re-dedication of the alder tree has been delayed by the closure of Menwith Hill Road for the development of the main gate area. It is now intended to dedicate the replacement alder planted when the original tree was relocated for the development.

The original alder was planted in 1994 near the main gate of Menwith Hill by Bob Cryer’s wife, Ann Cryer (later Labour MP for Keighley). Bob Cryer was dedicated to working for peace, bringing the activities of Menwith Hill to the attention of a wider public.

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 St,
Manchester, M60 4EP

Donate by post:

Please send a cheque, payable to 'MHAC',
to

MHAC Honorary Treasurer, Judith Rushby, 11,
The Crescent, York, YO10 5EF

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 No: 5009531100

Any Tuesday 6 - 7:30 pm

This regular weekly protest was started by the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases (CAAB) in 2000. It is taking place at the base's Nessfield Gate until the new main gate is open.

We look forward to seeing you any Tuesday. Please contact us for further details of any of these events and/or a map of how to get to Menwith Hill: **mail@themhac.uk**

Thank you for your support in questioning and challenging the activities of this US base.

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.

Newsletter designed by Katie Edwards Design
www.katieedwardsdesign.uk

WHO'S WHO AT MHAC?

Hon. Treasurer: Judith Rushby,
11, The Crescent, York, YO10 5EF
(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

Designer of merchandise: 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

MHAC is on **Facebook:** search for 'Menwith
Hill Accountability Campaign'



and on



Twitter: @MenwithCampaign



Data Protection

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