



Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases

No. 56 Spring 2015

Raising public awareness, scrutiny and accountability of US Visiting Forces and their Agencies in the UK and world-wide

Brief look at local, national and international news:

Dear friends

We have a slightly different format for this edition so as to draw your attention to some of the contents. The newsletter is only eight pages (we can't afford any more and anyway there is a limit on what we can digest!) and have much information to choose from.

One of the articles (by Seumas Milne) is about the bubbling conflict between Ukraine and Russia. This has been fuelled by years of aggression and undermining of Russia specifically by the US (and NATO); a very dangerous 'game' is being played.

In 2002 George W Bush unilaterally tore up the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABMT). What would have happened if the tables had been turned on the US and Russia had unilaterally discarded this important Treaty? What if, for example Mexico had positioned multiple batteries of anti-ballistic missiles and bases along the US borders? The US just might feel somewhat threatened. There are NATO exercises going on in the Baltic Sea as this is published.

The US Missile Defense System (which is an offensive system) replaced the ABMT and so ratcheted up the arms race between the US and Russia (and other countries round the world).

The ABMT kept the balance of power between the two 'super powers' until 2002. Under the terms of the Treaty, both parties were limited to two ABM

complexes, each of which were to be limited to 100 anti-ballistic missiles around Moscow and Washington.

The US has built a battery of missiles and bases along the borders of Russia. Both countries have nuclear weapons. They are being talked about by the US and NATO as conventional weapons of war.

In an interview recently, with the German weekly news magazine *Der Spiegel*, the former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev said the crisis in Ukraine could lead to large-scale war in Europe or even a nuclear war. "We won't survive if someone loses their nerves in the current tension". Where are the voices of peace, diplomacy and cooperation coming from now?

[We apologise that no CAAB newsletter has appeared since the last one in the Autumn 14. This was due, partly to Christmas and also the Editor being away for the month of January 2015].

ITEMS of INTEREST in this NEWSLETTER

- Where are the US bases? (all in England)
- The extent of the US Visiting Forces and their Agencies in the UK.
- Briefly - what is the NSA/NRO?
- Good and bad news at NSA/NRO Menwith Hill
- Expansion at USAF Croughton and USAF Lakenheath
- USAF will close 15 bases in Europe - announcement of closure of three US bases in England
- A long term price to pay - Martin Schweiger (CAAB facilitator, doctor Quaker and activist)
- Article by Seumas Milne of the Guardian: The demonization of Russia risks paving the way for war.
- What happened at 'the CAAB Conversation' in December 2014?

It's impossible to produce a newsletter of 8 pages (due to cost) giving anything but a taste of the huge and complex issues involving 'all things' to do with US hegemony, US military policy and the US military industrial complex. For more information, the CAAB website is a good resource and gives some up to date news, information, videos, articles and links: www.caab.org.uk. We are always pleased to receive constructive comments or suggestions.

AROUND A FEW OF THE US BASES (UK) (and a few facts)

UK: (defined as being occupied and controlled by the US Visiting Forces and their Agencies)

(All US bases here are officially referred to as "RAF" which is misleading. CAAB refers to them by their truthful name).

USAF Alconbury, near Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire

USAF Barford St John, near Banbury, Northamptonshire

USAF Croughton, near Brackley, Northamptonshire

Deep Space Tracking Center and Near Space Facility, near Thetford, Norfolk

USAF Fairford, near Letchlade, Gloucestershire

USAF Lakenheath, near Brandon, Suffolk

NSA/NRO Menwith Hill, near Harrogate, North Yorkshire

USAF Mildenhall, near Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

Joint Analysis and Intelligence Center at Molesworth, near Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire

USAF Welford, near Burghfield, Berkshire

The DoD uses nearly 177,000 structures throughout the world, valued at over \$125 billion and with over 87% of them owned by the Department of Defense [US Base Structure Report Fiscal Year 2014).

There are approximately 10,000 US Visiting Forces in the UK.

The American occupied and controlled base at Menwith Hill is run by the National Security Agency of America and the National Reconnaissance Office.

What is the NSA?

(from their website):https://www.nsa.gov/careers/life_at_nsa/explore.shtml



NSA headquarters is midway between **Baltimore, Maryland and Washington, DC in Fort George G. Meade, Maryland** *[and is secretive and unaccountable - Ed].*

The National Security Agency (NSA) is a world leader in the protection and exploitation of intelligence. We gather and analyze foreign

intelligence to produce vital information for U.S. policy makers and warfighters. And we protect American intelligence from the ever-listening ears of our adversaries, giving our Nation a decisive edge.

Our Vision

Global Cryptologic Dominance through Responsive Presence and Network Advantage.

Our Values

We will protect national security interests by adhering to the highest standards of behaviour.

And ... what is the NRO?

(from their website: <http://www.nro.gov/about/index.html>)

Develop. Acquire. Launch. Operate.

When the United States needs eyes and ears in critical places where no human can reach – be it over the most rugged terrain or through the most hostile territory – it turns to the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO). The NRO is the U.S. Government agency in charge of designing, building, launching, and maintaining America's intelligence satellites. Whether creating the latest innovations in satellite technology, contracting with the most cost-efficient industrial supplier, conducting rigorous launch schedules, or providing the highest-quality products to our customers, we never lose focus on who we are working to protect: our Nation and its citizens. *[interestingly no mention of anyone else! Ed].*

From our inception in 1961 to our declassification to the public in 1992, we have worked tirelessly to provide the best reconnaissance support possible to the Intelligence Community (IC) and Department of Defense (DoD). We are unwavering in our dedication to fulfilling our vision: Vigilance From Above.

GOOD AND BAD NEWS AT NSA/NRO MENWITH HILL NEAR HARROGATE, NORTH YORKSHIRE:

The school at NSA/NRO Menwith Hill is closing, 500 US military and civilians will go by October 2016 and the Burger King Bar closed a few years ago. However we learnt that an application for another radome was submitted to Harrogate Planning office late last year and this has now been approved. Work has not yet started as far as we know. The rationale, they say is that new technology can do the 'mission' instead. They are also saving money.

The cost of maintaining US bases world can be seen in this excellent article published in March 2001: <http://monthlyreview.org/2014/07/01/were-profiteers/>

US BASES TO CLOSE IN THE UK (AND EUROPE):

USAF Alconbury, USAF Mildenhall and the Joint Analysis and Intelligence Center at Molesworth are to close. The Pentagon hopes to save \$500m (£330m) a year from the moves across Europe. In the UK, it will result in 190 locally hired staff losing their jobs, with around 370 MoD civil servants being redeployed. Some of the roles performed at the three UK bases will be moved to USAF Croughton which is to be massively developed.

NEWS FROM USAF MILDENHALL AND USAF LAKENHEATH:



About 3,200 military personnel and 400-50 UK civilian staff are based at USAF Mildenhall

The USAF KC-135 tanker fleet based at Mildenhall will be moved to Germany. USAF Mildenhall is used as a transport hub by the USAF and is home to air refuelling tankers and special operations forces.

USAF Lakenheath, with two squadrons of new F-35 jets (48 of them) will be arriving by 2020 and will be the aircraft's only European base.

The Pentagon said the loss of about 2,000 US military and civilian personnel is due to relocation from Mildenhall, but would be offset by the addition of about 1,200 people stationed permanently at Lakenheath.

The US Department of Defense (DoD) has been reviewing its requirement for bases across Europe as part of (its) European infrastructure consolidation review."

USAF BASES – ANALYSIS by Jonathan Marcus, BBC Defence and Diplomatic Correspondent 8 January 2015

For some years now the US military has been reviewing its bases in Europe, eager to reduce its footprint to rationalise and cut costs. In part it is due to budget constraints but it is also driven by

strategic changes as the Pentagon turns its gaze increasingly towards the Asia-Pacific.

RAF Mildenhall has been an important base for the Americans since the early 1950s when it was home to strategic bombers. Currently it houses US Air Force Special Forces and a fleet of air-to-air tankers.

The latter, though less glamorous than fast jets, are some of the most important elements of the USAF, described by one analyst as the "kryptonite" of modern air power. They enable combat and support aircraft to reach their targets and to remain over combat zones for the time needed to carry out their missions. It is likely that the KC-135 tankers from Mildenhall will move to a US base in Germany.

British defence sources are eager to stress that the base closures here - two US-run communications stations at RAF Alconbury and RAF Molesworth in Cambridgeshire are also to shut down - do not represent any dilution of Washington's commitment to European security. Indeed RAF Lakenheath is due to host two squadrons of new F-35 aircraft when they enter service.

Over recent months the Americans have deployed small but significant reinforcements to Europe to reassure NATO allies like Poland and the Baltic republics in the wake of Russia's actions against Ukraine.

The US had hundreds of tanks in Europe during Cold War but there was a brief moment after 2013 when all US tanks had been withdrawn from Europe.

Today about a battalion's worth are back in Europe exercising with allies.

But the Pentagon has plans to store an armoured brigade's worth of equipment - some 150 tanks along with other armoured vehicles - in Europe by 2015.

The USAF has about 750 military personnel at the two Cambridgeshire bases, with a further 1,500 civilian employees and dependents...end.

Discontinued charges at USAF Croughton: The CPS brought proceedings against Lindis Percy, arising out of two incidents in April/May last year of peaceful protest at the American base at USAF Croughton near Northampton. She was arrested and charged with the alleged offence of 'aggravated trespass', alleged offence of 'wilful obstruction of highway with a non-motor vehicle' and one alleged

offence of 'obstruction/disrupt person engaged in a lawful activity'.

The case was set for trial for two days on 7/8 May at Northampton Magistrates' Court before a District Judge. Nine witnesses were to be called (including three American personnel) and summons were to be issued against Jayne Robertson (RAF Liaison officer at USAF Croughton) and Eileen McAdam (Senior Ministry of Defence Police officer at USAF Croughton) who were to be called to give evidence.

Lindis had submitted a Skeleton argument and Defence Case Statement to the court setting out her defence at the last hearing when the date for trial was set. There were important legal arguments involved which the District Judge acknowledged at the last hearing.

At the beginning of February Lindis was informed by the CPS that the case was discontinued. The reasons Keith Taylor (reviewing lawyer) gave (standard for CPS when discontinuing cases) was that 'the decision to discontinue had been taken because there was not enough evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction (alleged aggravated trespass charge) and the prosecution is not needed in the public interest (alleged obstruct the highway charge)'.

When contacted by Lindis, to ask why this case had been discontinued Keith Taylor said that he had looked at the Defence arguments and all but agreed that the CPS must concede that the area leading up to the base at USAF Croughton is a highway (he said it was a 'grey area' of law) and therefore the prosecution would not probably succeed.

Comment by Lindis: "It is perhaps unusual for the Defendant to want a case to be continued. However it was important that these issues concerning the legality of the area of the peaceful protest were aired in court as they would have an impact on the right to peaceful protest. The case was very much in the public interest as it might have revealed something of the illegal activities of this secret and unaccountable US base. The CPS and presumably the US authorities did not want this in court. It was the whistle blower Edward Snowden who exposed the extent of the illegal activities of this most secret and unaccountable US military base. There was a chance to get to the truth which has now been denied".

Lindis will continue to go to USAF Croughton to

protest at the activities of this base (as she has done for many years) and will be back to engage once again in peaceful protest. Complaints have been made about the actions of the Ministry of Defence police.

A LONG TERM PRICE TO PAY by Martin Schweiger: (CAAB facilitator, Quaker, doctor and activist).

The February 2015 issue of the National Geographic magazine devotes 23 pages to the effects of blast trauma. We are told that hundreds of thousand of US combat personnel who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan are effected by this unseen trauma that strikes deeply into a soldier's mind and psyche. Increasingly sophisticated research has shown that blast shock waves can cause long term damage as the brain is repeatedly shaken violently in a very short space of time. A few weeks after the blast exposure the brain can begin to show early signs of chronic traumatic encephalopathy, a condition that ultimately leads to cognitive impairment, dementia and death.

We begin to understand that what was called Shell Shock in the first World War may be a true description of the cause of a condition that impaired the lives of many of those who fought in the trenches.

In the United States some imaginative programmes are working out ways of reducing the mental consequences of blast trauma using face masks to describe inner feelings. This therapy does not mitigate the physiological damage to the traumatised brain.

The article makes no reference to civilian casualties who have no access to any form of therapy, perhaps because they are just more collateral damage.

Who is the new Joint Coordinator of CAAB?

A message from Brigid-Mary Oates:

I seem to have always thought differently to others and always been horrified by wars and the terrible things that happen during wars. I was raised by a convicted murderer who served a prison sentence during the war and never served in the 2nd World War, he was a good man and he was so well thought of, he paid for his crime.

My Uncle always maintained that War and violence was wrong and instilled this into me from a very young age. Had he not have been in prison he would have refused to fight in the war. He was my inspiration.



I met Lindis many, many years ago as we both worked for the Health Service. Lindis at that time was in the news quite a lot for her activism and as I left the Health Service I kept up to date with what Lindis was up to. I have been an activist for many years, usually anti-war and of course anti cuts, I guess I like to think I can stand up for others who struggle to stand up for themselves.

My concern with how the American government are trying to build bases all over the world came to the forefront as I learned about Guantanamo. I am very passionate about the release of prisoners and have supported Save Shaker and London Guantanamo and have joined in many protests at Menwith Hill which have focused on the shame of Guantanamo.



This led me into the way in which America is inflicting their bases on all of us. I re-kindled my friendship with Lindis (Joint Coordinator) and began to attend the Tuesday vigil and was so taken by how this vigil has survived so long and been kept going with such passion. I wanted to learn more. I am still learning and I have a long way to go. What I love about CAAB is that CAAB has many qualities in what it represents.

Today we are faced with so many wrong doings that need to be opposed but peace and being able to live without surveillance by those that abuse our freedoms are most important to me. I hope

I can be useful to CAAB. Lots of love Brigid-Mary Oates.

We are delighted that Brigid-Mary has agreed to take on this role. She is a huge help and addition to the work of CAAB and among many skills is excellent at networking! You may well bump into her!

The weekly Tuesday evening demonstration (6.00-7.30 pm) will be into the 16th year of being at the gates of NSA/NRO Menwith Hill. We started in July 2000 and have missed just five protests in that time. Please come and join us.



The Tuesday pm demo one evening in March 2015 – EDWARD SNOWDEN THANK YOU

Showing of CitizenFour in York: CAAB is pleased to announce that we are hosting a showing of the award winning Oscar film (Best Documentary Category) at CityScreen York on SATURDAY 11 April at 12 md. To buy tickets: <https://www.ourscreen.com/screening38668>. Menwith Hill is explicitly talked about in the film as being a major hub of surveillance and intelligence gathering on us all. We will also be organising a showing in Bradford.



THE DEMONIZATION OF RUSSIA RISKS PAVING THE WAY FOR WAR by Seumas Milne (The Guardian 5 March 2015)

Politicians and the media are using Vladimir Putin and Ukraine to justify military expansionism. It's dangerous folly.



*Nasim International News Agency
Cartoon: Mohammed Kargan*

A quarter of a century after the end of the cold war, the “Russian threat” is unmistakably back. Vladimir Putin, Britain’s defence secretary Michael Fallon declares, is as great a danger to Europe as “Islamic State”. There may be no ideological confrontation, and Russia may be a shadow of its Soviet predecessor, but the anti-Russian drumbeat has now reached fever pitch.

And much more than in Soviet times, the campaign is personal. It’s all about Putin. The Russian president is an expansionist dictator who has launched a “shameless aggression”. He is the epitome of “political depravity”, “carving up” his neighbours as he crushes dissent at home, and routinely is compared to Hitler. Putin has now become a cartoon villain and Russia the target of almost uniformly belligerent propaganda across the western media. Anyone who questions the dominant narrative on Ukraine – from last year’s overthrow of the elected president and the role of the Ukrainian far right to war crimes carried out by Kiev’s forces – is dismissed as a Kremlin dupe.

That has been ratcheted up still further with the murder of the opposition politician Boris Nemtsov. The Russian president has, of course, been blamed for the killing, though that makes little sense. Nemtsov was a marginal figure whose role in the “catastroika” of the 1990s scarcely endeared him to ordinary Russians. Responsibility for an outrage that exposed the lack of security in the heart of Moscow and was certain to damage the president hardly seems likely to lie with Putin or his supporters.

But it’s certainly grist to the mill of those pushing military confrontation with Russia. Hundreds of US troops are arriving in Ukraine this week to bolster the Kiev regime’s war with Russian-backed rebels in the east. Not to be outdone, Britain is sending 75 military advisers of its own. As 20th-century history shows, the dispatch of military advisers is often how disastrous escalations start. They are also a direct violation of last month’s Minsk agreement, negotiated with France and Germany, that has at least achieved a temporary ceasefire and some pull-back of heavy weapons. Article 10 requires the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Ukraine.

But NATO’s hawks have got the bit between their teeth. Thousands of NATO troops have been sent to the Baltic states – the Atlantic alliance’s new frontline – untroubled by their indulgence of neo-Nazi parades and denial of minority ethnic rights. A string of American political leaders and generals are calling for the US to arm Kiev, from the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, General Martin Dempsey to the new defence secretary Ashton Carter. For the western military complex, the Ukraine conflict has the added attraction of creating new reasons to increase arms spending, as the US army’s General Raymond Odierno made clear when he complained this week about British defence cuts in the face of the “Russian threat”.

Putin’s authoritarian conservatism may offer little for Russia’s future, but this anti-Russian incitement is dangerous folly. There certainly has been military expansionism. But it has overwhelmingly come from NATO, not Moscow. For 20 years, despite the commitments at the end of the cold war, Nato has marched relentlessly eastwards, taking in first former east European Warsaw Pact states, then republics of the former Soviet Union itself. As the academic Richard Sakwa puts it in his book *Frontline Ukraine*, NATO now “exists to manage the risks created by its existence”.

Instead of creating a common European security system including Russia, the US-dominated alliance has expanded up to the Russian border – insisting that is merely the sovereign choice of the states concerned. It clearly isn’t. It’s also the product of an alliance system designed to entrench American “leadership” on the European continent – laid out in Pentagon planning drawn up after the collapse of the Soviet Union to “prevent the re-emergence of a new rival”.

Russia has now challenged that, and the

consequences have been played out in Ukraine for the past year: starting with the western-backed ousting of the elected government, through the installation of a Ukrainian nationalist regime, the Russian takeover of Crimea and Moscow-backed uprising in the Donbass. On the ground, it has meant thousands of dead, hundreds of thousands of refugees, indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas and the rise of Ukrainian fascist militias such as the Azov battalion, supported by Kiev such and its western sponsors, now preparing to “defend” Mariupol from its own people. For the bulk of the western media, that’s dismissed as Kremlin propaganda.

Minsk ceasefire breaks down, as it surely will, there is a real risk that Ukraine’s proxy conflict could turn into full-scale international war.

The alternative is a negotiated settlement which guarantees Ukraine’s neutrality, pluralism and regional autonomy. It may well be too late for that. But there is certainly no military solution. Instead of escalating the war and fuelling nationalist extremism, western powers should be using their leverage to wind it down. If they don’t, the consequences could be disastrous – far beyond Ukraine.

RECOMMENDED

Symposium: The Dynamics of Possible

Nuclear Extinction

February 28 - March 1, 2015

A unique, two-day symposium at which an international panel of leading experts in disarmament, political science, existential risk, artificial intelligence, anthropology, medicine, nuclear weapons and other nuclear issues contribute.

Theodore Postell is one of the contributors (expert on US Missile Defense).

<http://totalwebcasting.com/view/?id=hcf>

MONEY MATTERS:

The CAAB accounts for the year 2014 are now available for anyone who would like to see them – just ask!

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Parliament was in recess over Christmas and because of the lead up to the General Election no questions have been asked by Fabian Hamilton (Labour MP Leeds East) on behalf of CAAB ... except this one. We will be compiling a list of PQs as soon as the Election is over.

Q: Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has been informed of the building of another radome at NSA/NRO Menwith Hill; and what recent discussions he has had with his US counterpart and others on this matter.

A: Mark Francoise (Minister of State MOD):

The US authorities did formally notify the Ministry of Defence of the proposal to construct a further radome at RAF Menwith Hill. This matter is being handled by officials from the Defence Infrastructure Organisation who recently submitted a planning application to the Local Authority for the new radome on behalf of the US. (Hansard source (Citation: 16 December 2014)

Q: Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has been informed of the plans for development of (A) USAF Croughton and (b) USAF Barford St John; and what discussions he has had with his US counterpart and others on this matter.

A: Mark Francoise: (Minister of State MOD).

The Ministry of Defence is aware that the US is considering their future use of bases in the UK, including RAF Croughton and RAF Barford St John as part of a wider European wide basing review. They expect the US to announce the outcomes of this review in the new future. (Hansard Source) (Citation:)

16 December 2014)

[The ‘answers’ to these PQs show that the US authorities do what they like with scant regard to the ‘host nation’ (as defined in the Visiting Forces Act 1952)].

CAN CAAB SEND BRIGID-MARY TO KYOTO? from Martin Schweiger

As stated earlier, each Tuesday evening we have a presence outside Menwith Hill. Menwith Hill is crucially connected to the US Missile Defense System and the militarisation of space (one of many concerns about this base). As a result of these developments the Global Network (GN) Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space was set up many years ago: www.space4peace.org

The GN has arranged conferences in the US and round the world since 2000 and is once again arranging a conference bringing together like minded groups. This will take place from 29 July to 2 August 2015 in Kyoto, Japan.

We are dealing with an international problem and wish to continue making contacts and links with others around the world. It would be really good to have CAAB represented at the conference so we can share our experiences and learn what others are doing. The good news is that Brigid-Mary is willing to go. But to cover transport, accommodation and conference fees we will need to raise about £1000.

Lindis Percy is on the Board of Advisors of GN on behalf of CAAB and has represented CAAB at these excellent conferences many times since.

Can/would you help by sending a donation to CAAB? Please do so if you can.

FINALLY...

About 25 people came to 'CAAB conversation' which was held on 2 November 2014. It was very successful with renewed energy, ideas and help forthcoming. The session was ably facilitated by Robert Gibson who offered to do this again in 6 months time – thank you to everyone.

MONEY MATTERS: There are several ways of supporting CAAB financially (CAAB website) It is now possible to donate to CAAB by using the Paypal account which has been set up to make it much easier to donate money for the work of CAAB.

CAAB Account No: 50095311 Sort Code: 089229 The Cooperative Bank , 1 Balloon Street, Manchester M60 4EP

Donate by Post: Please send a cheque, payable to "CAAB", to

CAAB Honorary Treasurer, Judith Rushby,
31 Blossomgate, Ripon, HG4 2AJ

Donate Using BACS: BACS payments are also welcome to our account with the Co-operative Bank:

Sort Code: 089229.

Account Number: 5009531100

WHO'S WHO AT CAAB?

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