https://www.thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/news/26609393.peace-rally-moves-oxford-city-centre-amid-us-tensions/?ref=nativeshare



Dave Webb's speech

It's great to be in Oxford, although we were supposed to be outside the gates at Croughton, well done everyone for reorganising everything at such short notice.

The reason to be at Croughton of course is that it is an important US intelligence facility in the UK, used to relay CIA and NSA communications. It helps target drone strikes and is home to hundreds of US spies playing a key role in the eavesdropping and intelligence-gathering network in Britain.

That network includes bases at Molesworth and Alconbury in Cambridgeshire and Menwith Hill in North Yorkshire – near where I live – where GCHQ and the NSA intercept all types of electronic communications from satellites, fibre optic cables and mobile phones.

It also includes Fairford which hosts US bombers and has been in the news rather a lot recently!

In 1999 the United Nations General Assembly declared that October 4-10 every year would be designated as 'World Space Week' to "celebrate the contributions of space science and technology to the betterment of the human condition" – this year it is more important than ever to join with the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space and recognise this as a time to Keep Space for Peace

The situation in space is a reflection of what is happening on the ground - and you will be fully aware of how that's going. There is a lot in the media about a war with Russia and calls for Europe to unite and arm itself to the teeth.

The U.S. says that the main threats in space come from China, although Russia is a concern too, of course! They go to great lengths to show how much they are being challenged for leadership in that domain. But for President Trump and the US military,

leadership in space is not nearly enough - they want complete control and domination. As far back as 1998, the U.S. Space Command released its "Vision for 2020" which stated "U.S. Space Command — dominating the space dimension of military operations to protect U.S. interests and investment."

So, that's not to protect freedom, human rights, justice etc (the often quoted reasons for conflict) but to protect U.S. 'interests and investment'!

The U.S. cites threats by China as the reason for spending huge amounts on space militarisation, but at around $80 billion a year, it spends 4 times more than China, while Russia's plans are to spend around $6 billion a year over the next 10 years.

Anything the US accuses China or Russia of doing in space, they have already done.

Then, a couple of weeks ago U.S. Secretary of the Air Force Troy Meink disclosed that the U.S. has deployed weapons in space. This confirmed what many had suspected for a long time. It was no real surprise as the U.S. has been exploring anti-satellite (ASAT) systems since the launch of Sputnik in 1957.

The type of weapon(s) that the US has placed in space has not been specified – but it would be irresponsible to deploy kinetic weapons, such as missiles, to destroy satellites, as the debris produced would add to the 15,800 tonnes already circling Earth and increase problems for all space users. It could even lead to the Kessler Syndrome - where collisions between objects in low Earth orbit create debris faster than it decays naturally, creating a self-sustaining chain reaction that could make key orbits unusable for generations.

Non-kinetic weapons, such as lasers and electronic warfare weapons, could be used to damage electronic equipment and jamming systems could disrupt communications between satellites and with the ground.

China and Russia have condemned the stationing of weapons in space but, if they respond in kind, space could soon become a battlefield.

Space is vital to the military and is widely recognised to have become a war-fighting zone. The previous commander of UK Space Command, Major Paul Tedman, described space as the "central nervous system" of military operations, playing crucial roles in communications, targeting, and weapons guidance.

The importance of space systems to NATO was demonstrated in 2021 when Article 5 (an attack on one member is an attack on all members) was extended to include attacks in or from space. This means that, if a satellite were to malfunction or be hit by a meteorite and at a time of international tension, it was misinterpreted as a first strike - it could lead to a devastating nuclear war.

In August the U.S. Space Command published "The Space Warfighting Environment 2040" which describes how the US is preparing to enforce control. The US military wants networks that can continue providing communications, navigation, missile warning and intelligence even after being jammed, damaged or attacked.

Space Command wants more flexibility, which means more manoeuvrable and replaceable satellites, distributed ground stations, deeper integration with commercial providers and allies, and the faster acquisition of new capabilities.

And the UK is keen to follow the US. Paul Tedman stated in 2025 that “the U.K. must now be more assertive in defending our national interests and our freedom of action in space... We must be able to control space, defend our assets, and — if required — deny its use to hostile actors”.

So, defence priorities, flexible procurement, and space strategies are shaping the global space economy and commercial and military programmes are becoming interwoven. Space budgets are rising, driven to a large extent by Trump’s Golden Dome project, European defence allocations, and moon missions - including prospects for mining the moon and asteroids and placing military bases on the moon. The US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Dan Cain even declared that the Pentagon must prepare for war around or even on the moon.

And there is no international consensus on the prohibition of weapons in space. Although the 1967 Outer Space Treaty calls for the peaceful use of outer space, it only forbids the stationing of weapons of mass destruction in orbit. For years the U.S. (accompanied by Israel and, at times, the U.K.) have repeatedly voted against U.N. General Assembly resolutions to Prevent an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS). The U.S. has also consistently voted against a resolution on “No first placement of weapons in outer space” – surprise! China and Russia have always supported the resolutions.

The space weapons announcement may even be preparation for the ‘Golden Dome’ project which includes the stationing of hundreds of interceptor missiles in Earth orbit. Development of the ‘Golden Dome’ will also include US bases in the UK such as Menwith Hill, Fylingdales and the DARC (Deep Space Advanced Radar Capability) proposed for Pembrokeshire. The latter two radar systems would be used to track and target missiles and ‘unfriendly’ satellites.

Billions of dollars are being spent already, and in April U.S. Space Force awarded BAE Systems $11.8 million to demonstrate satellite to satellite communications for Golden Dome – and other UK companies are vying for pieces of this lucrative pie.

According to thenew U.K. Space Strategy, the government plans to spend £7.8 billion on space over the next 4 years, to bring commercial and military space enterprises closer together and to continue to cooperate with the US across the space domain.

The RAF has just revealed that it has been jamming or blocking satellite communications from other countries and from 1st September the Royal Air Force’s headquarters is to be known as “Air & Space Command”, reflecting the increasing importance of the space on the UK military.

The RAF has also established a new specialised Space Squadron to counter threats to UK satellites and three more are planned for “Space Tactics and Training”; deep space advanced radar (DARC) and “Space Defence” as part of the new “Integrated Air, Space and Missile Defence Operations Centre”

U.S. bases in the UK host US bombers and supply intelligence and to the US and Israel for military operations in Gaza and Iran. In April Declassified UK revealed that a UK photoreconnaissance satellite named Tyche had been positioned over the Middle East and was probably relaying data to the US/Israel, further implicating the UK in “offensive” rather than only “defensive” participation in US wars.

Rather than stationing participating in an arms race in space the US and UK should seriously work to demilitarise the space domain and towards cooperation and sharing rather than duplicating space resources that profit the few.

In particular, the UK must now disassociate from the illegal and dangerous military actions of the U.S. We must close all U.S. bases in the U.K. and do so much more to "Keep Space for Peace".

Croughton talk By Peter Burt
Oxford, 3 October 2026

We usually have these demos at Croughton US base which is a CIA spy base and US military comms base.

It's a shame we can't do so today but it's lovely to be among good people here in Oxford.

The UK government is proud of what it calls its 'special relationship' with the US government, but what does a relationship look like when one side is the mightiest superpower in the history of the world and holds an overwhelming stake in the other's economy and digital infrastructure?

What happens to independence when critical control over a government's strategic assets is placed into the hands of US tech giants.

The peace movement knows about the UK's military dependence on US for intelligence, nuclear weapons, and modern military equipment, and how this dependence allows US to manipulate UK, for example in terms of foreign policy and how US military bases in this country are used.

But the US has far more powerful means of control over the UK than military dependencies.

Most of the UK's digital infrastructure is owned by US companies: the tech corporates which provide hardware, software, and online services.

Everything from phones, laptops, apps, email, data and operating systems is provided to this country, its government, companies, and citizens by US tech companies.

The big five US tech companies – Meta, Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, and Alphabet have a stranglehold on communication via their platforms. They hold massive quantities of data about customers and markets.

There are no significant UK-owned tech companies, and certainly none to rival the big five. In fact, there is only one true tech company in FTSE 100 - Sage

Over recent decades UK technology and communications companies have been systematically sold off to US interests, often with the encouragement of the UK government.

In the 1980s STC (Standard Telephones and Cables) was a major player in the telecommunications sector, and was the company that developed and patented fibre optic cables. STC was sold to a Canadian company in 1991 and was eventually bought out by consortium led by Apple and Microsoft.

You may remember the Psion Organiser – a miniature computer which was a forerunner to smartphone. Psion was a British company but was bought by Motorola in 2012.

Arm Holdings was a national tech champion that developed chips and software that allowed computers to run faster and with less power, but was sold overseas a couple of years ago and is now listed on NASDAQ in NY.

The Deepmind artificial intelligence company was bought in 2014 by Google for only £400m – it's now worth tens of billions of dollars.

And locally, the Sophos cybersecurity company from Abingdon was sold for $4bn in 2020 to the Thoma Bravo US private equity company.

This means the UK government is now in a position where nearly all its IT and computer systems are provided by US companies: Microsoft, Oracle, IBM.

Even UK companies like BT sell on US systems such as routers, cloud services, and software from Cisco, Amazon, and Microsoft.

Most UK government websites and data storage are hosted on the Amazon Web Services data cloud. Amazon Web Services dominates UK government cloud spending, and hosts and controls nearly all UK government's public facing websites.

Amazon Web Services controls 40% of UK data storage market and its competitors are Microsoft Azure and Google Cloud Storage.

Even at the most basic level, the UK government depends on US tech companies for its communications and IT. Government social media channels are on Meta and Microsoft platforms such as Instagram and LinkedIn.
Ministers and civil servants use WhatsApp messaging just like everyone else.
AI systems used by the government are operated by US companies – from ChatGPT for everyday use to purpose built military and healthcare systems provided by Palantir.

US tech companies are deeply embedded in UK, and it's the American president who decides which countries the tech giants are allowed to sell to around the world. You can see where this is leading to.

We're here today to mark Keep Space For Peace week, and space is the latest frontier of competition between the tech billionaires.

Elon Musk controls SpaceX launch services and the Starlink internet satellite network, and has plans to place millions of orbital data centres in orbit.

Geoff Bezos has the Blue Origin launch company, Amazon LEO internet satellites, and wants to launch his Terawave orbital data centre network,

Google, Nvidia, and OpenAI are also planning space based AI infrastructure

The tech companies are staking their claims to space, claiming it could be cheaper to operate AI infrastructure from space than on the ground.

Their plans aren't feasible, economically or environmentally, but that's not the point. The point is that they are targeting and planning for the control of all services in space in future.

In the UK Inmarsat, a UK satellite communications company, was acquired by the US satellite company Viasat in 2023.

Even when the SaxaVord Spaceport in Shetland opens soon, the launch of UK-owned satellites will depend on services provided by SpaceX or the European launch company ArianneSpace.

The UK is a strong contender in the manufacture of small satellites, but 90% of commercial satellites are still manufactured by US companies.

GPS, the Global Positioning Service, on which many business and military systems are dependent, is owned and controlled by US Space Force.

US technology also controls our payments. 90% of payments in the UK are now cashless.

Electronic payments take place only through US companies – Visa, Mastercard, Amex, Google Pay, Apple Pay. These companies are constantly trying to expand the share of monetary transactions they control, for example through tap on arrangements on buses.

They have the support of the UK government in trying to eradicate cash from society – the government wants to make money traceable and reduce tax evasion

In France and Germany this is not the case - cash is still in widespread use. There are big benefits in the use of cash in remaining aware of your spending and avoiding getting into debt

Payment processes between banks are controlled by Worldpay, owned by US private equity company GTCR.

The hard reality is that US tech companies are deeply embedded in the UK and take a profit from virtually every transaction that is made.

As we saw when Trump was inaugurated, the US tech sector has aligned itself with the US government administration. The American president decides which countries US companies, including the tech giants, are allowed to sell to. That is why the US has a total veto on everything the UK government does, and why the UK government will never do anything which goes against US interests.

If they did, and the US decided to play rough in return, it would be impossible to continue to live

life the way we are used to in the UK.

When the UK left the EU we semi-consciously took a big step into the US sphere of influence.

We don't control the critical technology in our own country.
We don't have access to technology from multiple independent sources.
We're shackled to technology from monopoly suppliers from a single country – the USA.

We're locked into a new kind of colonialism enforced not by military might but economic dependence. That's what makes the UK a vassal state of America.

It will take a long time and be a difficult struggle to break out of this, but we can start now and we can all play a role

Next time you do shopping, use online an service such as Amazon or WhatsApp, think. If you can pay by cash, do so. If there's a better alternative – such as visiting a shop or using Hive, a more sustainable company than Amazon, then use it. And don't waste your time messing around on Instagram and TikTok - live your life in the real world. It's far more exciting.

More details: see 'Vassal State: How America Runs Britain' by Angus Hanton
https://vassalstate.co.uk/

Shel McDonagh, Fairford Action

Thank you all for joining us today. I'm Shel, I've been coorganising the demos at RAF Fairford this year alongside Oxford CND, Oxfordshire Peace Alliance, and Drone Wars UK, and we've seen hundreds of people demonstrate at the base thanks to the support of CND UK and Stop the War.
We are in the early days of building a greater alliance of groups, organisations, and individuals to build the movement around shutting US bases down. We are grateful to all those who have been joining the Fairford Action demonstrations.

So, RAF Fairford is also a USAF base - you might have heard of it, highlighting one of the biggest concerns of having US bases in the UK - it does make us a legitimate target in the US's illegal wars. Under international war, an attack on the UK would not be seen as terrorism as it is a legitimate target. That is extremely worrying.

Let's look at the bigger picture here: the US Military and their almost 1000 bases worldwide. The US Military IS an Empire, and look at it's leader... It needs to be stopped.

It is by far the world's greatest destroyer of life and the environment, while contributing to the climate crisis we also find ourselves in, 5 heatwaves isn't normal and it's getting worse.
The US has been involved in over 30 wars of aggression since WW2, ALWAYS the aggressor. With an estimated death toll of 5-10 million. The US is enabling a genocide, with RAF Lakenheath and Mildenhall being used to train Israeli pilots and transit aircraft through that the US has loaned to Israel. Fighter jets are taking off for Iran regularly from Lakenheath - one was shot down in Iran earlier this year, and fighter jets are returning with nose art on them, signally they have been involved in attacking missions.

RAF Fairford has been active regularly since the end of February for "defensive" missions: it has a runway long enough for the heavy B1 & B52 bombers to take off - the only runway in Europe the US can use, so it is a strategic base in their illegal wars in the Middle East.
The Locals have been constantly disturbed day and night by the booming engine noises from these bombers, they feel the vibrations, they smell the fumes to the point of regularly being told to keep windows shut. It's polluting the air and water. It's putting their very safety at risk as it is used in another illegal war.

And to all of us, this illegal war has seen diesel prices rise to the highest they've ever been hitting £2 per litre yesterday. Fuel costs have risen by over 40% since the end of February this year. We are directly experiencing rising energy and food costs in a cost of living crisis and instead our government is increasing "defense" spending while our NHS, education system and our public and care services crumble.

But there are people who gain from this, who our government would rather enable than act for it's people: the arms companies. They are recording record profits. Profits from murder and terror. The oil companies and those gaining from market speculation continue to thrive in these illegal wars and Trump's erratic behaviour. And the billionaires who thrive by creating fear and division.

This must stop. We the people must come out together, offer what we can, and organise to get the US Military out of the UK and ensure our government focuses on building our local communities and economies one again. It must address the fuel and food cost crisis we are spiraling into, and invest in our public services, housing, transport, national infrastructure, instead of lining the pockets of billionaires.

We see repression on our right to protest increase to dystopian levels, but we can stand against this together.

We come out regularly in our thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, together we are growing stronger.
We've seen over 3700 arrests under the terrorism act for peacefully opposing genocide, and those cardboard terrorists keep going.
And we see hundreds taking direct action against the arms industry directly impacting the supply chain that enables these illegal wars and genocides.
And we will see more people take direct action as our government fails to follow its obligations under international law - so we the people have a moral obligation to take nonviolent action to mitigate for this harm, and continue to beautiful legacy of peace activism we've learnt and grown from, and ensure we organise to enable resistance to grow for the people, our safety, our communities, our environments, and all those around the world for JUSTICE and LIBERATION, not just peace. For the people, not the billionaires.

Hands off Iran, and Free Palestine, Lebanon, Sudan, the DRC, and all those under occupation and being persecuted.

One step towards this justice and liberation is getting the US bases out. And we will.

Solidarity.



Read more in CND's article by our main speaker on Saturday, Dave Webb: https://cnduk.org/us-weapons-confirmed-in-space

