

of unions that represent professionals, managers and white collar workers. In post-war Britain the TUC can claim to represent more of the British 'working population' than it did in the Twenties, but at the price of less and less intellectual coherence. Similarly, the growth of white collar sections within unions that were previously exclusively blue collar has blunted the egalitarian drive of some of them. Finally, many of the lowest paid workers – notably female part-time workers – are in no union at all. Their voice is not heard when the TUC discusses pay policy.

But these institutional inhibitions are not a sufficient excuse. The history of unions' attitude to low pay legislation has been one of equivocation. The most recent and stark illustration of this equivocation occurred in 1977. There had been two years of flat rate policies. The £6 limit of 1975-76 had been followed the year after by the 5 per cent policy with a minimum of £2.50. In 1977 the TUC Congress rejected a proposal that negotiators should be encouraged to bargain in the coming pay round with a £60 minimum wage in mind. Len Murray moved the General Council's recommendation to reject the proposal. He said:

After two years of very deliberate weighting in favour of the low paid, it would not be right at this stage to seek to commit unions to a universal minimum target of this sort . . . different groups will have different priorities and wish to attach different rates to them.

The government's economic policy had hardly been conducive to creating a climate of co-operation. But it was a pretty sorry reflection on the unions that a low pay policy could only last two years before the pressure of anomalies became impossible to ignore. (Ironically enough subsequent research has shown that the relatively well-off did far better during the flat rate period than did the low-paid: the rich merely sidestepped pay policy.)

The TUC has now tried every policy to help the low-paid except a statutory policy. It has tried unionising the low-paid: but, once recruited, the low-paid have had little collective muscle. It has tried (in 1968) to seek a voluntary agreement with the CBI on a minimum target: the CBI did not want to know. It has tried appealing to independent statutory bodies such as (in 1967) the National Board of Prices and Incomes: the Board said it would be impossible to deal with low pay in large settlement groups such as the NHS 'without placing an unreasonable burden upon the tax payer.' It has tried the Clegg Standing Commission on Pay Comparability, only to find that low-paid workers were locked into a cycle of poverty by being compared with similar low-paid workers in the private sector.

The best answer would seem to be a binding minimum wage negotiated annually by unions. The best forum would be the tripartite discussions already outlined in the idea of national economic assessment. A central bargain of this sort would have two additional advantages. It would give the unions a role, and it would make explicit the conflict and the choices over distribution of wealth. □

NUCLEAR WAR

America's base motives

Duncan Campbell reports on plans to create a new American war headquarters at High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire

DOCUMENTS OBTAINED by the *New Statesman* confirm that the United States 'Air Station' at High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire is the location of the 20,000 square feet underground bunker, which is to be modernised as a new war headquarters for the US European Command.

Heavily censored details of a Congressional committee hearing indicate that the site selected for the new bunker already contains a suitable, vacant 'underground building of approximately 20,050 square feet, in excellent condition'.

According to the US Air Force 'Inventory of Military Real Property', High Wycombe is the only US site in Britain with a vacant operations building of that size. The 'Inventory', which gives comprehensive details of almost every US base around the world, shows that in 1980 the base included a hardened 'Land Operations Building' of 23,300 square feet, of which at that time just over 3,000 square feet were in use.

However, the role of US headquarters will not be the only function of the High Wycombe base. It has already been designated as the third cruise missile centre in Britain. A new unit, which will control the nuclear targets for the cruise missiles due to be installed at Greenham Common and Molesworth (and also for the F-111 long-range bombers based at Lakenheath and Upper Heyford) was set up inside the same bunker in early 1981, originally built as the US air force Command Post during World War 2. This unit is the US Air Force 7555th Theater Mission Planning Squadron.

This Squadron prepares the target 'instructions'. (Included on the target lists intended for cruise missiles are 'logistic' and industrial targets in Warsaw Pact countries, like the Gdansk shipyards and the Stettin steelworks.) Its programmers are assisted by detachments of nuclear bombing specialists from the headquarters of Strategic Air Command in Omaha, Nebraska, and from the 20th Tactical Fighter Wing, at Upper Heyford.

The new headquarters is part of the US European Command, currently based at Vaihingen, near Stuttgart in West Germany. The original report that it was being built, in

the *Guardian* last week, implied that the entire command would move to Britain. This would not be the case, either in peace or war.

The US Air Station at High Wycombe incidentally is unconnected with the construction of an RAF 'Permanent Static War HQ' on National Trust land at Bradenham, nearby. The RAF site is five miles to the north of the American base, on the opposite side of the town of High Wycombe.

The original US World War 2 bunker was re-opened in October 1952 as the underground command centre of the 7th Air Division, operating nuclear bombers from eight British bases. But these were replaced by longer range B52s based in the United States itself and the bunker was closed again in June 1965. It was reactivated in 1980 when new computers and communications equipment were installed, according to local British Telecom staff.

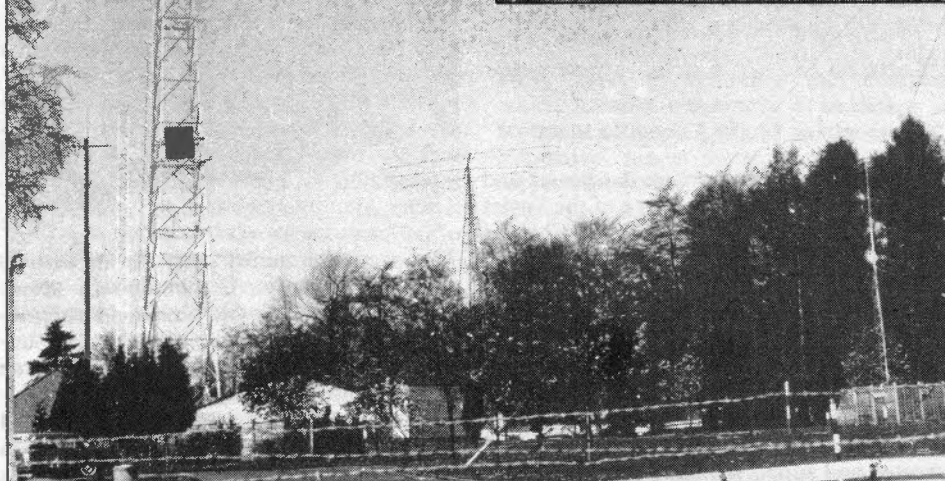
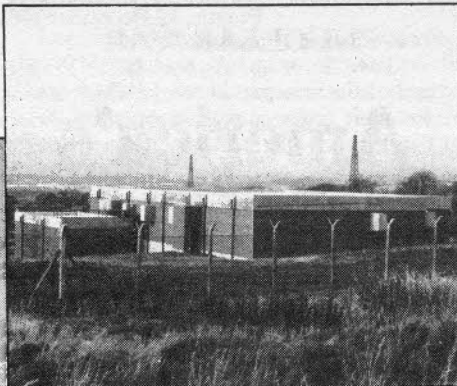
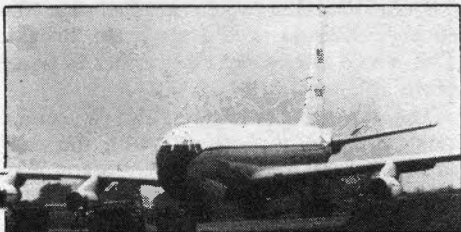
The new HQ appears to be intended as a 'rear' field HQ for the US European Command. So long as 'forward' or alternative headquarters survived, it would only administer and control logistic movements of personnel, fuel, and ammunition. If all other headquarters were 'taken out', it would become the US European control centre.

Britain is already the base for the European Command's flying war rooms, stationed at Mildenhall in Suffolk. Known as *Silk Purse*, one of the four flying EC135 war rooms – converted Boeing 707s crammed with communications equipment – is always ready for instant take-off. When the US was falsely 'detecting' Soviet missile attacks in 1980, Mildenhall was one of the first bases in the world to get the 'warning', because of the key role of *Silk Purse* in the US defence system.

The US European Command ('EUCOM') has three main components. US Air Forces in Europe are run from the Ramstein air base in southern Germany. (A war headquarters is underground nearby at Boerfink, shared with NATO.) The US Army is based around Heidelberg in West Germany, but in war would be commanded from NATO bunkers at Feudenheim and at Hensbroek, near Brunssum in the Netherlands, the headquarters of NATO Allied Forces Central Europe. The US Navy's European Command has its headquarters at Grosvenor Square in London. Under war conditions it would shift to a *Silk Purse* flying war room, or to the NATO naval HQ at Northwood.

High Wycombe is already well provided with US-controlled communications links. A dominant feature of the base is its tall microwave radio towers, which connect it to the Upper Heyford bomber base, and to Hillingdon in West London, where another US communications centre has been built in part of the underground headquarters from which the Battle of Britain was directed.

Both Hillingdon and another British base – Martlesham Heath near Ipswich – are key centres in the US 'Autovon' telephone network. This not only provides US bases with their ordinary telephone systems, but also all the emergency lines for direct communications between the US National Command Authority (the President, or anyone



The US underground bunker at High Wycombe Air Station (above) is to be refurbished to provide a new US war headquarters in Europe. Direct microwave links to important US communications centres in Britain dominate the site; below ground, computers installed two years ago 'support USAF (nuclear) missile and aircraft route planning in the European theatre' — including cruise. Another new NATO war bunker has just been completed, with rather less publicity, than High Wycombe, at Pitreavie Castle near Dunfermline in Scotland (above right). Inside the thick concrete walls, and underground, is a NATO communications centre known as TARE, which switches messages between hundreds of military units. The US European Command also has a British outpost already at Mildenhall (above left), where windowless EC135 aircraft remain on alert to provide instant airborne European battle headquarters.

else authorised in an emergency to give the order to press the nuclear button) and US military control centres. A US satellite communications and radio station at Croughton, near Banbury, is a European centre in the Autodin network, which links US military computers worldwide. In the last two years, the Pentagon has also installed an entire new communications network in Britain — Digital European Backbone III — directly connecting European Command HQ in Stuttgart to High Wycombe, Grosvenor Square, Hillingdon, Upper Heyford and Croughton.

The exact functions of US headquarters in Europe are always complicated by their varying relationships to integrated NATO commands, each often having alternative war HQs, peace HQs, mobile HQs and flying HQs. Combined with the billions of dollars now being spent on so-called C³ (command, control, and communications), it is intended to ensure the survivability of the military command system in a spreading nuclear war.

In war, the US EUCOM commander, General Bernard Rogers, in his NATO hat as Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) would in theory operate from a Situation Room and communications complex inside SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe), at Casteau, near Mons in Belgium. General Rogers is one of

the three 'major NATO commanders', each of whom answers directly to the NATO Council and Military Committee for the control of a 'Theatre of War'. The other two are: the Atlantic, commanded by a US Admiral from Norfolk, Virginia; and the Channel, commanded by a British Admiral, Sir James Eberle, from Northwood, Middlesex.

More NATO flying war rooms are based with SACEUR at Casteau, code-named 'Live Oak'. The British contingent with *Live Oak* includes about 30 servicemen, mostly from the RAF.

The distinction between unilateral US command and NATO command is a fine one. In some highly classified contingency plans, the United States has envisaged launching a 'pre-emptive attack' and an invasion of Eastern Europe in order to 'liberate' East Germany and Czechoslovakia. This EUCOM Operations Plan, or OPLAN, number 100-6, was leaked to various Western European media during 1980, but did not receive wide attention. OPLAN 100-6 envisaged circumstances in which the US European Command would need to have its own command bunkers separate from NATO, since it recognised that 'all of NATO may not elect to participate in these operations'. It was, however, expected that Britain would remain loyal to the US, even in the event of a pre-emptive American nuclear attack on Eastern Europe. □



In the beginning?

Word has come from the people who run the Space Shuttle that they plan to launch a capsule containing the complete known story of the world.

The complete story?

An intriguing prospect: hours of diversion for an extra-terrestrial with time on its tactile appendages.

Most earth-bound readers, however, have memories of less than megabyte proportions.

So rather than go into voluminous detail, Mobil will use this column — and those to follow — to talk briefly about oil in general, our company in particular, and the things we do with the money we earn.

In coming weeks we hope to inform, enlighten, and perhaps even amuse.

But always in the most down-to-earth way, of course.

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