

PRESS RELEASE 001



Press Release: PARC Against DARC Campaign Launch 29th May

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BEGINS:

Heading:

New Campaign launches to oppose US Military's plans to create 27 giant radar dish array on St Davids peninsula

Body:

A new campaign calling itself PARC Against DARC has announced its official launch today, Wednesday 29th May, aiming to stop the UK/US Military's plans to create a 27 dish 'Deep Space Advanced Radar Concept' - 'DARC' high-power radar station at Cawdor Barracks, Brawdy, Pembrokeshire, in the heart of the St Davids peninsula.

Their brand new website, www.parcagainstdarc.com comes as part of the launch and states that the proposals are "One of the most Health-Hazardous, tourism-ruining, skyline blighting military installations ever proposed anywhere in the UK".

As part of 'AUKUS'—the three-way security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—the military plans are to build three DARC radar installations around the world, one in each of the three countries. The radars would track foreign countries' communications and military satellites in space, so that British, US and Australian aircraft could then destroy them with anti-satellite missiles at will.

This prompts the question on the PARC Against DARC website: "When did Dewisland, Pembrokeshire or humankind ever vote for the US military to control all of space?"

A scoping report was submitted to Pembrokeshire County Council last year and in attempts to sell the project in a press release the US/UK military made claims that the project would create one hundred new jobs. However, campaigners say these jobs would be mostly for American specialists and not locals, so in real terms this equates to a massive 300 job loss at the existing site.

PARC Against DARC is launching what it describes as an "extremely robust campaign website, 'ram-packed' with calls to action" along with social media pages, a petition, a campaign crowdfunder as well as lobbying tools. The website outlines several key arguments against DARC including the a Security argument, an Environmental argument and a Health argument, in which it describes "a litany of potential health risks", stating: "The science is crystal clear, and decades of research show it: The higher incidence rates of cancers and other health complications experienced by residential populations in the closest vicinity of some particularly higher-powered, long range

broadcast-capable radiofrequency installations are undeniable.”

The campaign launch comes in response to announcements from the UK Government’s Defence Minister Grant Shapps last December that St Davids is their ‘preferred UK site’ for the DARC (Deep Space Advanced Radar Concept) radar array.

Campaigners point out that while the MOD might usually be shrouded in secrecy, it simply wouldn’t be right for it to use this lack of transparency to push through dangerous and potentially hazardous plans such as these. Therefore the onus and responsibility is squarely on the MOD to prove the safety of such a vast and environmentally impactful infrastructure proposal. They have a duty of care to do so.

PARC Against DARC will host a public launch meeting at Solva Memorial Hall at 7 pm on Thursday 27th June where speakers and experts will update on the unfolding situation. There will also be an open discussion at the meeting where all concerned parties can discuss plans to oppose the proposals and to get involved in the campaign. Organisers invite all residents, local businesses and elected representatives who have concerns about DARC to attend the meeting and make their voice heard.

Second time around for PARC!

This isn’t the first time this battle has been fought!

PARC (Pembrokeshire Against Radar Campaign) was originally set up back in 1990 when the US Military attempted to build a similar radar installation on the Dewisland peninsula back then. However, the PARC Campaign was so successful and achieved such strong support both locally and nationally that in 1991, Margaret Thatcher (the then UK Prime Minister) was forced to publicly announce cancellation of the project in Parliament. Campaigners say that the strength of public opposition to the radar also led to the sitting Conservative MP Nicholas Bennett losing his seat in Parliament.

The revamped 2024 operation already boasts an impressive and formidable level of support ranging from local, Welsh and UK organisations such as CND and Stop the War Coalition, as well as individual supporters such as Leanne Wood, Labour’s Beth Winter (MP for Cynon Valley), Plaid Cymru’s Heledd Fychan MS for South Wales Central, and Mairead Canavan of the National Education Union’s National Executive as well as Anthony Slaughter the leader of the Welsh Greens. Campaigners say they especially encourage local businesses organisations and individuals to add their name to the growing list of supporters, highlighting that this support will be vital to demonstrate a vast and diverse range of opposition to the proposals.

One notable local business person who’s already declared their support for the campaign is Keith Griffiths, architect and owner of Roch Castle, Twr y Felin and Penrhiw Priory known collectively as the Retreats Group, who commented: “27 satellite dishes at MOD Brawdy will be a huge eyesore to the National Park and of no economic benefit locally. Brawdy is huge and central to the St Davids peninsula. Any new use should benefit the local economy and respect the beauty of the surrounding Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.”

Anthony Slaughter, leader of Wales Green Party, said, “Wales Green Party fully supports

the PARC campaign and will work together with them and others to resist the proposed Deep Space Advanced Radar Concept (DARC) being built in Pembrokeshire. The proposed facility will make this part of Wales vulnerable to future attacks as part of any resulting conflict triggered by its use and represents an unacceptable militarisation of space. In an increasingly unstable world with multiple conflicts raging across the globe and impacting heavily on the poorest and most vulnerable communities the UK government should not be cooperating in this drive to extend these wars into space. Governments at every level have a duty to work towards creating a fairer, more equal and peaceful world for future generations and should play no part in this dangerous escalation of warmongering.”

“We also note the potential health risks and environmental damage that this project would cause which also underline the urgent need for this campaign to be supported at both local and national levels.”

Jill Evans who is a former Plaid Cymru MEP & current Vice Chair of CND Cymru is also involved with the campaign and highlighted: “The government claims DARC is a response to the increasing danger of space warfare and a key objective of the UK Defence Space Strategy 2022. Yet again, the UK wants to use our land for its war plans.

“There are over 60 Ministry of Defence establishments and bases in Wales. There are also training areas, such as Sennybridge on Mynydd Epynt, taken over for military use in 1939. With 31,000 acres, and 6,000 acres of forested land, it is the biggest military training area in the UK.

“Pembrokeshire has already been exploited for military purposes. Castlemartin covers 6,000 acres in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. The Air Defence Range Manorbier is also within the National Park and can fire the High Velocity anti-aircraft missile. Penally Camp near Tenby is adjacent to the National Park and has a training area within the Park boundaries. Another 404 acres make up the Templeton Training Area in south Pembrokeshire.

“The UK Government wants to increase the defence budget to 2.5% of GDP. The average global level of investment in the military is 1.95% of GDP. We have a choice. Wales could become a Nation of Peace and play a leading role in achieving nuclear disarmament. Wales has the resources and ability to create green, sustainable jobs and communities and that is the vision we want to make reality.”

A spokesperson from PARC Against DARC concluded: “The fight is on! We fully intend to win the battle to stop the radar as they did in the 90’s. The MOD are making out as if it’s just a formality to gain planning permission for this huge project, even insinuating in their press that they just need to ‘run it past the local parish council’ or suchlike. This is simply not the case; we know that major infrastructure projects like these require specialist planning permission which can only be granted by Pembrokeshire County Council, and that there will be several environmental impact assessment stages they’d have to clear long before they could ever begin building.”

“Our plan is to fight them at every level and on every front to make absolutely sure that these proposals are never passed by our elected representatives in County Hall. We will build on the strong history of the previously victorious campaign and echo all of its

strengths & successes. Last time there were huge rallies, marches and demonstrations and ultimately the entire county stood strong together to fight off the proposals. We are absolutely confident that we will create this avalanche of opposition once again so that these plans will never see the light of day.”

ENDS.