

Revealed: U.S Secret Military Deployment on British Cyprus

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Global Research, February 02, 2023

[Declassified UK](#) 1 February 2023

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British Cyprus

Akrotiri and Dhekelia, officially the **Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia**^[2] (**SBA**),^[a] is a British Overseas Territory on the island of Cyprus. The areas, which include British military bases and installations, as well as other land, were retained by the British under the 1960 treaty of independence, signed by the United Kingdom, Greece, Turkey and representatives from the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, which granted independence to the (then) Crown colony of Cyprus. (Wikipedia)



The US Air Force has had a base on British territory on Cyprus for nearly half a century, but its size is kept secret from the public on both sides of the Atlantic. Declassified now reveals the increasing US military presence on the Mediterranean island.

- **US Air Force is expanding its deployment on RAF's Cyprus base to 129 airmen**
- **New 147-room installation is being built by US military across 1.5 acres of British base to house its personnel at cost of \$27m**
- **US spy force, 1st Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, is permanently deployed at the British base**
- **UK Ministry of Defence refuses to disclose number of US military personnel on the British territory—or if American bombing missions are flown from it**
- **Pentagon claims it only has one airman on Cyprus—and ignores *Declassified's* request for clarification**
- **Top secret GCHQ document notes: "Cyprus hosts a wide range of UK and US intelligence facilities"**
- **Cypriot working on the UK base area tells *Declassified*: "There is a big US presence, I don't know how that works or why"**

The US military is planning to deploy at least 129 airmen to British territory on Cyprus by next year, *Declassified* can reveal.

The number of US troops on the UK's so-called Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs), which comprise 3% of Cyprus's landmass, has long been secret.

"We do not propose to release the numbers of US personnel participating in current or future operational activities [on British Cyprus]", the Ministry of Defence (MoD) recently [told parliament](#).

The US Department of Defense (DoD), meanwhile, claims it only has 14 personnel [deployed](#) in Cyprus, including nine Marines and just one airman. The department did not respond to *Declassified's* request for more information and comment.

But *Declassified* has seen a US Air Force (USAF) document with details of a construction project on RAF Akrotiri, the UK's "[extremely busy](#)" air base on Cyprus from which it flies bombing sorties across the Middle East.

The document, prepared in March 2019, notes there were then 87 US airmen deployed to RAF Akrotiri in 2018, including 12 officers.

But the US planned to increase its personnel levels by 48% over the next six years. By 2024, the US plan was to have 129 airmen deployed to the base, 15 of them officers.

The real figure for US military personnel based on British Cyprus is likely to be higher.

There are multiple other garrisons and military installations across the two British SBAs – known as Dhekelia in the east of the island and Akrotiri in the west – and at the UK's so-

called “retained sites” in Cyprus proper. These likely host some US military personnel.

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