

## John Ainslie

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**From:**   
**Sent:** 09 January 2009 15:53  
**To:** John Ainslie  
**Subject:** awe

John,

Good to talk this morning. I am trying to work out the best way into this Aldermaston story which i am hoping to get into the paper next week. Following the stuff from John Harvey about the US use of the dual axis hydrodynamic equipment at AWE I was planning to write a news piece along the lines below with a longer feature about what is happening at AWE attached:

news piece

"The US military is using Britain's atomic weapons centre to develop its next generation of warheads raising doubts over the independence of the UK's nuclear programme. Documents seen by the Guardian show that the US is carrying out crucial research at the Atomic Weapons Establishment [AWE] at Aldermaston near Reading which has seen a 17 fold increase in government funding over the past eight years. Last night opposition MPs and campaign groups warned that the move undermined Britain's claim to have an independent weapons programme and said the UK taxpayer was effectively subsidising America's atomic weapons programme."

Initially the significance of the US research at Aldermaston seemed three fold:


- calls into question the independence of the UK's nuclear weapons system
- undermines the UK's commitment to non proliferation treaty
- UK taxpayer is subsidising US warhead programme.

However after doing a bit more research into the MDA I'm not as sure this is quite as straight forward.

- Is this actually what we would expect the US and UK to be doing and have they been this or similar for a long time. Or is this something new or at least first concrete example of this level of co operation?
- You mentioned on the phone that the 2004 MDA extension was in fact an ammendment allowing even more co-operation. Can you point me in right direction to back this up and is there any evidence of US and UK scientists working on the Reliable replacement warhead over the past few years [and if so is this something new?]
- You also mentioned a planning application in relation to AWE do you have any details on this.
- Finally [for now!]is the use of AWE a way for US officials to get round Congressional restrictions on warhead development at home.

Any help/guidance you can provide would be much appreciated.

all the best

  
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