



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER ALWAYS EXPLOSIVE...

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MAKING A BOMB

SchNEWS LOOKS AGAIN AT THE DEATH-TO-DIVIDENDS ARMS BUSINESS

"We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex." — Dwight D. Eisenhower, US President 1953-1961

Corporations and governments use war to gain power, access to resources and markets, and for domestic propaganda – ultimately it's just a means to an end. For Western governments it's a dangerous game. On the one hand, the exploitation and promotion of global insecurity helps to prop up capitalism, whilst allowing increased authoritarian control over their subjects, but on the other it threatens the security of the core Western capitalist regions, by encouraging terrorism and pushing alternative military power blocs to form (see SchNEWS 551).

It is only the arms industry, looking myopically to the next quarter's share price, that has a direct interest in war above all else. Terrorist attacks in the US or Europe? *Ker-ching!* Shares in British Aerospace rocketed before the dust of the twin towers had settled, and protesters outside the DSEi arms fair in London on September 11th, 2001 (possibly unreliably) reported the sound of champagne corks popping from inside the building as the news came through. US wars of conquest dragging on for years? *Ker-ching!* All those brave soldiers will need feeding, arming and equipping for as long as they're out there.

In the US, whose state and corporations still lead the Western capitalist bloc despite their collapsing society and disastrously aggressive policies, spending on weapons (sorry, "defence") has gone ballistic. Government arms contracts in 2005 totalled \$269 billion, up from a pocket-money sized \$154 billion in 2001. The War Resisters League quotes budgeted military spending for 2007 at \$563 billion, estimating another \$100 billion unbudgeted spending in Iraq and Afghanistan, totalling 30% of the national budget. And that's just at home – US arms exports in 2004 were \$18.5 billion, up from \$5.4 billion in 1990.

The arms trade's growth has far outstripped the rest of the economy - between 2001 and 2005, average profits for the 34 top publicly-traded US arms companies increased by 189%, compared to a 'meagre' 76% average. And arms industry bosses seem to be particularly greedy, even among the feeding frenzy of executive excess. Average pay for CEOs at those companies doubled from \$3.6 million in the three years before 9/11 to \$7.2 million in 2002-2005, while the

overall average pay for corporate execs rose by 6%. Maybe, since they're bringing about the end of human existence as we know it, war profiteers want to spend as much money as possible now while they've still got the chance. Better not to imagine what could be done with that \$563 billion a year towards creating a sustainable world economy that would protect the environment and reduce conflict by using resources more efficiently and fairly, an arrangement that would be in everyone's interests... oh, except for the arms trade and oil barons.

BOOMING PROFITS

While soldiers risk death and physical and psychological damage, and those civilians left alive or uninjured suffer displacement, trauma and the destruction of material and social structure, arms dealer bosses sit at home counting the cash. In 2005, an average US arms company CEO coined in \$7.4 million – that's 44 times more than an experienced military general, and 308 times more than an army private actually taking the combat risks - earning \$25k a year for killing and possibly dying on the front line. As of 2005, the top-paid bloodsucking fat cat arms dealer boss was George David of United Technologies Corporation, who did pass Go and banked \$200 million between 2002 and 2005, including \$88.3 million in 2004 alone. You don't get to the top by playing fair – UTC are currently suing the Pentagon to stop the public learning about them supplying defective helicopter parts in Iraq.

Other top fat cats include Health Net CEO Jay Gellert, who sells military "men-

CRAP JOB OF THE WEEK

Printing SchNEWS Every Friday...

Ever wondered how your friendly neighbourhood subversive newsheet gets printed? Now's your chance to find out...Our regular printer is taking a well-earned break (cheers, Russ) and we desperately need kindly people with a couple of hours every Friday to help keep the ink flowing. If you're up for it, and in Brighton, call the office on 01273 685913 or email schnews@brighton.co.uk

While we're at it, here's a general SchOUT-out for help: writing, distributing in Brighton, sorting website and more... production takes place Tues to Thurs – get in touch!

tal health services" to patch up the shattered minds of those who have witnessed the full horrors of war - and get them back on the front line. His income between 2002 and 2005 increased by a high-explosive 1,134% compared to the previous four years, to a total of \$28 million. Of special interest to SchNEWS is number 9 in the list of top earning US war profiteers, James M. Smith of EDO Corp, the parent company of notorious Brighton arms firm EDO MBM. His personal profit has risen from \$883,200 a year to \$1,783,700 in 2005.

Back in the UK, arms exports totalled \$1.9 billion in 2004, leaving old Blighty 4th in the world arms dealing league. British Aerospace, now called BAe Systems Plc, the world's fourth largest arms firm, earned \$20,344 million in military revenue in 2004. From 1996, BAe notoriously supplied Hawk aircraft to Indonesia, which were used in attacks on East Timor. BAe subsidiary Royal Ordnance has been accused by Amnesty of supplying torture equipment. Other top UK arms companies include Rolls Royce (military sales \$3,069

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LIFE IN THE FASLANE

Fancy a weekend away with a difference? (and one that might actually help make a difference) Sometime during the next year why not pack a (small) bag and head for Faslane in Scotland for an idyllic couple of days helping blockade the Trident nuclear weapons base.

There has been a permanent peace camp at Faslane since June 1982. (For a look back at some of the more recent history type 'Faslane' into the SchNEWS website search facility and you'll get a 100+ hits back!) But with the government shaping up to give the go ahead for a whole new generation of nukes to replace the 'worn out' Trident (well, there are no better ways to spend those billions are there?), it's high time to increase the pressure on the UK to honour trivial things like international law and nuclear limitation treaties - and actually do as it preaches and disarm.

A new concept in peace camp solutions is being rolled out (to put it in corporatespeak!) and it's gonna be all the rage! Faslane365 will be a continuous year-long blockade of the weapons facility. The plan is for activists to drop in to camp for 48 hours at a time, using a rota system to keep up the continuous resistance at the gates, helping to keep everyone fresh and energised.

A wide range of different campaign and protest groups have already signed up and the whole thing kicks off this weekend (Oct 1st) with two days of women only blockades. Full details are on the website, along with an excellent mini-break brochure and local attraction guide, erm, we mean excellent resource guide – with lots of good background info, direct action tactics, tips for dealing with the cops and more... See www.faslane365.org

million in 2004) and QinetiQ, the privatized Defence Research Agency (\$1,399 million). BAe chief exec Mike Turner will earn up to £4.1 million this year – good work old boy, you're well up with those nice Amercian chaps now!

Arms business' influence over governments operates through corporate lobby groups and the 'revolving door' system, where politicians who have done favours for arms companies later get lucrative jobs with the self-same companies. In the UK, one such public servant is Lord Levene, former government Chief of Defence Procurement, and now Chairman of General Dynamics UK and President of the Defence Manufacturers Association.

Another is lard-arse fox-hunting Tory Nicholas Soames, who was Conservative Armed Forces Minister and is now a non-executive Director of Aegis Defence Services. DESO (Defence Export Services Organisation) employs 500 civil servants in Whitehall to find opportunities for arms sales around the world and promote the arms industry's interests across government.*

US authors of the report 'Executive Excess 2006: Defense and Oil Executives Cash in on Conflict' conclude, rather mildly: "Excessive CEO pay in wartime raises the risk of a profit motive for continuing the conflict or getting into new ones in other parts of the world. The vast potential for war profiteering should be of even greater concern during this war [Iraq] than in past ones because of the extent to which the war and the reconstruction effort have been privatized." *Ker-ching!*

* **Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT)** are having a peaceful protest campaigning to close down DESO. 12.30pm, 2-12 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SH. See www.caat.org.uk

MILK THE APPLAUSE

OK, we're all a bit teary-eyed after Tony's farewell speech to the Labour conference and we appreciate just how difficult it can be to 'let go' of power, but we can still manage our now traditional look of some of the typical fringe events playing alongside the main stage.

The Christian Socialist Movement (CSM) started off on Monday 25th with talks entitled, "Is Slavery History?" asking what governments and business are doing about forced labour and poverty in Africa - although we're not sure they came up with the answers 'No' and 'Not much'. CSM's stated sponsorship policy means they "will not work with organisations involved in criminal activity nor those that provide or promote goods and services where the primary purpose is to harm others" - strange then, that the company footing the bills was the world's longest-boycotted company, the ever lovely, caring, Nestle (See SchNEWS 277, 515).

And then there's the Foreign Policy Centre's Africa debate. Entitled 'Continuing the momentum' - a range of policy wonks promising solutions to all the woes of Africa... by opening up the continent to more profit-hungry corporations. Keep that ball rolling! And all this was organised by...? Good old Nestle!

Meanwhile in Kenya, where life expectancy is just 50 and less than 5% of women exclusively breastfeed their new-born babies, Nestle has been at the forefront of baby-formula companies lobbying to prevent any legal restrictions on their dubious sales practices - of products which have been linked to diabetes, lymphatic cancers and animal cruelty. Well they do have a juicy £2.5bn investment in Africa to look after! Honorary chairman Helmut Maucher recommends that we leave Nestle to it, arguing that, "ethical dimensions that injure a firm's ability to compete are actually immoral". So here at SchNEWS we reckon its time for some depraved consumer action to keep Nestle... *Out of Africa*. See www.babymilkaction.org

SIMPOL MINDS

Risking ridicule from all sides; neo-cons, liberals, lefties and cynical radicals alike, some people are nonetheless trying to come up with genuine alternatives designed to correct some of the worst perversities of the global governance game. And not just imagining, but sticking their necks out and publishing - attempting to engage and inspire others to co-operate in developing and pushing the ideas forward.

One example is participatory economics (parecon for short), which involves all members of the community being actively involved in policy and decision-making with regard to matters of economics. While small trials have been undertaken in some places, including Brazil, with some success, there is criticism that it would be unworkable on a larger scale in practice. However, it has provided food for thought to others, launched much debate about the subject and is leading to rival alternate schemes emerging.

And then there's ISPO, the International Simultaneous Policy Organisation (simpol for short, geddit!). This is an idea where large scale structural changes to political systems are, as the name suggests, one day implemented simultaneously around the world. This stops the old 'we'll lose out if everyone else doesn't do it too argument'. While it is easy to criticise or write off some of its current policy suggestions, perhaps this is missing the point. This is open source politics: policies continually evolve and can be shaped by equitable consensus of the public membership. They in turn adopt the ISPO pledge, which recognises that 60% and rising of the world's population live in some form of electoral democratic system, and promise their vote to any political party which agrees to enact the simpol mandate. This wouldn't happen until a critical mass of the world's people had signed up - and, yes as this is still *some* way off, there's plenty of time to improve the that mandate yet.

What ISPO offers is a model of how ordinary people could cooperate to exert their power politically - maybe one day everyone will simultaneously implement some future, more autonomous decentralised economy / democracy - and maybe not. But even if flawed or compromised - in old or completely new ways - working for any positive transformation could be better than sitting on the sidelines, preparing for the end of world. And when it comes to global corporate capitalism, surely it would better the devil we don't know...? Go figure at www.parecon.org and www.simpol.org

* A Brighton man has launched his own political party, aimed at the silent majority who can't stomach any of the electoral candidates, but still want to register their democratic participation. The **Protest Vote Party** want to get 'none of the above' listed on all ballot papers so people can register their true preference. Let them stick that in their focus group and smoke it. See www.protestvoteparty.org

FIVE ALIVE

The two-week court trial of **Margaret Jones** and **Paul Milling** ended without a verdict on September 15th (see SchNEWS 557), and a re-trial was ordered for next year. Now, **Phil Pritchard** and **Toby Olditch** are standing trial next week similarly charged with conspiracy to commit criminal damage to B52 bombers at RAF Fairford, at the onset of the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. These four are part of the 'Fairford Five' who entered the base to damage bomber planes with the intention of preventing a greater crime - the illegal bombing of Iraq. The trial for Phil and Toby starts at Bristol Crown Court on October 2nd, with all invited to gather outside the court at 9am. For more call 07910 329 211 or see www.b52two.org

BRANCHING OUT

Some cheer for **Titnore Woods** protest camp this week (See SchNEWS 558) as West Sussex and Worthing councils seem to have responded to local opposition and found a way to not destroy 200 or so trees during the development. The planned access road straight across the land where the camp is still on the menu however, not to mention the 875 houses and a new Tesco.

Eviction at the camp could still be imminent but despite (or to spite) this, an energetic expansion bid has been launched. To help with this they urgently needed more timber and polyprop rope (6mm is best) and tarpaulins for tree houses etc, plus, on a more down to earth level, supplies of toilet paper and coffee.

If eviction takes place, supporters are being asked to go as soon as possible to the camp, or congregate in Fulbeck Avenue, Durrington, if access is barred. Then on the first Saturday after, there will be a protest against the eviction and development on Fulbeck Avenue, 12pm.

*Financial donations can be made at the camp or by sending a cheque payable to "The Porkbolter" to PO Box 4144, Worthing BN14 7NZ.

*There is a "mass mobilisation" for all opponents of the development on Sat October 7th. Gather 2pm at Durrington rail station. For more see www.protectourwoodland.co.uk or phone the camp on 0780 4245324.

Party & Protest

OCTOBER: 1st is the **Big Lakenheath Demo** against US nukes! Lakenheath in Suffolk holds up to 110 US nukes at any one time. 12-3pm, at Gate 1, RAF (USAF) Lakenheath. Call 01508 550446 or see www.lakenheathaction.org **
7th - Migrants on the march for their rights. In London, assemble 12pm, Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1 6HZ and in Glasgow, assemble 12pm, George Square, Glasgow. See www.ncadc.org.uk and www.openborders.org.uk **
7th - Keep Space For Peace, part of an international week of protest called by the Global Network Against Nuclear Weapons and Power in Space. Action at NSA Menwith Hill, 12-5pm. www.caab.org.uk **
14th - Call for a ban on cluster bombs and raise awareness of disability by joining the good soles at the **Handicap International Pyramid of Shoes** at Hyde Park (Bandstand Area), 10-4pm. Bring a spare pair of shoes to donate to Eastern Europe and Africa. For more call 0870 7743737 or see www.handicap-international.org.uk

...and finally...

Just when you've managed to wipe the grin off your face after recent ads by BP claiming that using their fuels in your car will save the planet, **BAe Systems** - the British arms manufacturing giant - is 'going green' with a new range of environmentally friendly weapons. Next time you're dusting your machine gun down for a bit of a homicidal rampage down at your local high school, how about having a thought for the environment and using BAe System's new 'lead free' bullets - because, as BAe say, lead bullets "can harm the environment and pose a risk to people".

And to help save the planet, BAe Systems will be offering jets, fighting vehicles and artillery with lower carbon emissions. Ahh!

The initiative is backed by the MOD which has also hopped on board the climate change gravy train and proposed "quieter warheads to reduce noise pollution and grenades that produce less smoke." It's nice to know that both corporate and state murderers are coming together and accepting their social responsibility. Anyone know where to get organic Fairtrade anthrax?

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers... if you don't bite the bullet, the bullet will bite you. Honest!

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