

WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER DOLE NOT COAL..



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ONLY FUELS & HORSEPLAY

INTERNATIONAL FOSSIL FUELS DAY OF ACTION ROUNDUP

Vaguely sane people are now well acquainted with the biggest hoax of the day - the corporate/governmental response to climate change. Their solutions to the planet's desperate situation inevitably involve increasing growth and consumption, with the biggest joke of all being energy policy: not only ramping up the nuclear programme (see SchNEWS 618) but by building loads of new coal fired power stations (one a week opening in China, loads going up in the US, and see SchNEWS 623 for the UK attitude). Yes coal, that single most polluting fossil fuel of all - the burning of which from a couple of centuries ago onwards, started all this climate choking in the first place!

So this year, activists around the world decided to have another go at pointing out the madness of it all and one day in particular seemed most appropriate: April Fools Day. All it needed was rebranding for the occasion (set your phasers to pun) as: Fossil Fuels Day.

And pranksters from every global corner rose to the challenge and came out in force. Here's the potted SchNEWS round-up of some many climate-in-jeopardy japes:

POWER PLAYS

WALES: early-bird activists occupied and halted work at one of the biggest opencast coal mines in Europe at Ffos-y-Fran, near Methyr Tydfil. From 6am they barricaded the entrance to the site, with several climbing onto the roof of the coal washery and others chaining themselves to machinery. Later they unfurled a 36 metre banner across the main building saying 'Coal: the black hole in UK climate policy.'

This opencast mine is within 36 metres of local homes - which would be illegal in England or Scotland, and no compensation has been offered for those affected. After being delayed by almost 20 years due to local protests, it is operated by Miller Argent Ltd and will mine 10.8 million tonnes of coal, causing over 30 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. Use of coal power stations has risen by 10% in the past decade, giving the UK higher CO2 emissions than ever. For more see www.thecoalhole.org

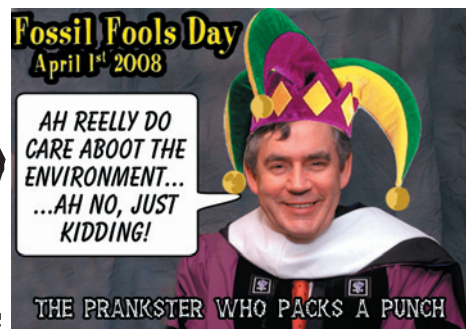
Two days later (3rd), people from Bristol, Bath, Cardiff and Oxford joined forces to successfully blockade Aberthaw power station, Wales's worst polluter. Some locked on to the main gates, halting all deliveries for over five hours and causing tailbacks of a mile and a half. Unamused cops responded by nicking nearly everyone.

NORFOLK: Over twenty activists, at times applauded by locals, blocked both ends of the road leading to the UK's largest off shore gas terminal at Bacton in Norfolk, where 40% of the UK's domestic gas comes in. Whilst unable to take on the heavily militarised facility directly, they were in place from 6.30am, preventing access for construction workers, deliveries and shift workers. As they heard that cops were arresting just about everyone at one end, the other group decided to call in a day and managed to sneak past a roadblock, getting waded through like a recreation of the movie Leon... before their van was later pulled over and they were all nicked. 19 have now been bailed to return to the area on May 2nd - just one day after the date of another callout for action at the terminal...

DAMAGED FOR E.ONS

LONDON: On the South Bank, one bunch of visionary activists launched a new brand of thirst-quenching drink, EV-EON - Un-naturally Carbonated Water. The planet-cooling-but-still-profitable refreshment idea was to use carbon die-oxide captured at the planned new E.ON run coal power station at Kingsnorth (see SchNEWS 623) to make fizzy water in order to store that carbon safely inside consumers - as long as they remember not to burp or breathe it out!

Any confused punters were swiftly educated about the great carbon capture greenwash scam. Hailed as the 'clean' way to burn coal - the technology is nowhere near ready for commercial use (if ever). It was trotted out by the government as justification for going ahead with the Kingsnorth plant, even though they then instantly caved in when E.ON whinged that it wasn't profitable



enough to implement (see SchNEWS 623). For more about the spoof product and some funny madvertising, see www.ev-eon.com

Before all this, Rising Tide had kicked off a day early (31st) by visiting the Football Association headquarters to give them a red card for accepting sponsorship from E.ON.

NOTTINGHAM: E.ON's offices were targeted by 30 people. First thing in the morning, activists covered in green paint - human examples of greenwash - locked on to the front entrance, stopping workers from getting in to start another day's planet-bashing. Police later broke up the demo and arrested two.

PETROLHEADS IN THE SAND

NEWCASTLE: Howay the activists who blocked the gates of a Hummer dealership with a 'Car Culture Kills the Climate' banner. Even though persistent workers were allowed through, one determined job nut rammmed into the people stood across the gates with two ending up on the bonnet of the car after being hit. Cops turned up - only to arrest the protesters for criminal damage to the car! - confiscating all their cameras and video tapes as 'evidence' into the bargain. In a calm, proportional response to the threat, they later raided both arrestees houses taking computers and ripping up floorboards.

EDINBURGH: Tens of gas guzzling 4x4's and swanky sports cars in posh areas of the city were left feeling a little flat after activists attacked them armed only with humble mung beans, placing them in the tyre valves - causing the slow, hissing emission of tyre air.

LANCASTER: 'Rush' hour drivers grid-locked at the town's busiest roundabout were confronted with a banner reading simply: "Worried about Climate Change? Stuck in Traffic? Get a Bike!"

LONDON: Rising Tide ruffians occupied the offices of Y&R, the lovely ad-men behind the latest Land Rover ads (not to mention another new campaign for arms company BAe Systems). They drew attention to the brains behind the spin by distributing a spoof press release claiming Y&R were proud to be dreaming up publicity for a new civilian version of the harrier jump jet. The two creativities involved were arrested. Meanwhile an audience of cockneys and polar bears outside a posh Porsche showroom were treated to a mock 'apology' from the car company, for damaging the environment

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PALESTINE: OCCUPATION FROM WITHIN

THE OUTSOURCING OF OPPRESSION BY ISRAEL TO THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

A SchNEWS correspondent visiting Palestine writes... "I never thought I would miss the intifada, but in many ways the situation in Palestine now is so much worse. From dying on their feet, it's people have been reduced to living on their knees. When I returned to the West Bank after an absence of four years, I was alarmed to discover that talk of resistance is met with scepticism. People have seen it all before: non-violent resistance crushed, armed resistance destroyed, negotiations devoid of substance. After so long now, all that remains, for the vast bulk of people, is just to get by day-to-day, to feed their families and educate their children in the hope that the next generation may have a better chance. While this is the goal of most people, Abbas' Fatah government is quietly getting away with a form of oppression the Israelis before could only dream of achieving.

The Palestinians have been fighting for their rights for as long as any people have. After the Arabs fought alongside the British to rid themselves of Ottoman domination, they were rewarded with division. First the Sykes-Picot agreement divided the Arab nation into puppet states for control by Britain and France. Then the Arabs of Palestine had to face the Zionists, who claimed Palestine as the 'national home for the Jewish people'. It is surprising how little has changed in the intervening decades.

The Palestinians have been resisting so long now, always against a superior force of arms, never on the winning side, always against the Western powers.

The first Intifada was the first time since the great Arab revolt of '36 that the Palestinians took matters into their own hands. Organising themselves en masse, they took to the streets, defied military orders, met tanks with stones, and nearly brought the Israeli army to a standstill. They boycotted Israeli goods, and educated themselves when the Israelis closed down the universities. The generation that has just reached adulthood has no first hand memory of this struggle.

It's deeply unfortunate that the resist-

ance inside Palestine has died down just as resistance abroad has grown stronger than ever. The Palestine solidarity movement in Europe is arguably stronger now than it has ever been, especially in the UK where the boycott of Israel by unions and academic bodies has achieved successes unimaginable just a few years ago.

A LULL IN RESISTANCE?

Coming to Palestine and working in solidarity with the people here is a challenge to say the least. People have their stories of repression and torture at the hands of the Israelis. People see the settlements grow and take their land. When asked what we can do as concerned foreigners, whereas before they said "tell the world what is happening to our people", now they say "we need money and computers". It is not entirely selfish. For seven years or so internationals have been coming to stand in solidarity with Palestinians, dutifully returning home and writing articles for local newspapers and speaking to the concerned. And, seven years later, the official media still has the narrative of 'Israeli security versus Palestinian terrorism', and still refers to the occupation as a 'conflict'. Even as the awareness of the plight of the Palestinians has grown exponentially amongst people in the West, this awareness remains divorced from the policies and public statements of the western leaders (not that the Arab leaders are any better).

This is definitely a 'lull' in resistance. Perhaps it is unrealistic to expect that after being beaten down so hard for so long people are willing to stand up for more of the same. Also, now there is the double threat. Not only from the Israelis, but also from the Palestinian Authority (PA), who are a much more effective oppressor than the Israeli Defence Force (IDF). Despite the Israelis' force of arms they were never able to reach inside the population effectively. After 40 years they never went beyond an army of foreign occupation. The PA with its

network of mukhabarat (secret police, spies and informers) has penetrated into every organisation, every union, every facet of society. 'Every family has a mukhabarat' is not far from the truth now. In return for a salary and preferential access healthcare and education, all that is required is a steady flow of information and the occasional act of disruption. In persuading Fatah and the PLO to do its work, Israel has finally achieved the level of control it has always sought for completion of the Zionist project.

The armed groups, even those allied to Fatah, are being systematically wiped out in close coordination with the Israelis. Even non-violent resistance to the occupation is now feeling the weight of the Bantustan dictatorship upon it. The head of the (stubbornly independent) Stop the Wall Committee, Jamal Jumar, was arrested and briefly imprisoned by the Palestinian security forces during a demonstration in Ramallah against the Annapolis talks. Palestinians who are involved in the boycott movement have been privately warned that what they do is against the interests of the PA. And if none of this was quite blatant enough, when Bush visited one month later the Israelis loaned a couple of their armoured personnel carriers to the Palestinian Authority so that they could better oppress their people.

PREVENTATIVE SECURITY

A recent experience gave me a glimpse into how much more complete the oppression of Palestinians by their own authority can be. I wanted to take a walk in the hills but was stopped by a Palestinian checkpoint. What transpired was to be an education in the reality of modern Palestine. What at first looked like a group of men trying to catch a taxi turned out to be police from the Preventative Security Force. They stopped me and demanded to see my passport. They asked where I were staying. "Where? With who?" I told them. There's little point lying to these cops. Unlike Israeli soldiers, they know the families, the houses, who's related to whom, their occupations and political persuasions.

They went through the same routine as Israeli soldiers, only with that special Palestinian politeness- they smiled a lot, offered me cigarettes, even as they detained me "for five minutes". More questions, and then, unsure what to do, they called for backup. Another 4x4 arrived with the commander, who wanted to know who I was, checked my passport again, and what I was doing here. I explained about the Friendship and Solidarity group that I was working with. They still wanted to know exactly what I did. "I work with the university." They seemed satisfied with this, wrote it down on their

notepads, and asked to look in my bag. It was as if they were playing at being Israelis at a checkpoint, like the kids do here, only these men were armed with Kalashnikovs and uniforms. They've all been stopped at checkpoints, they know the routine. They've had plenty of opportunities to learn from the Israelis. It's telling that the longest time I've been questioned at a checkpoint here, and the only time I have been detained at one, was by Palestinians rather than Israelis.

Earlier I'd had the chance to talk to a member of the Preventative Security, one of the many internal security agencies of the PA. I asked him about his job. " Hamas hate us" He said. "We have to watch them. They're bad news." I said that I'd heard that Hamas have charities, that they run clinics and schools, and provide relief for the poor. Did he have to watch these as well? "Oh yes. If I find someone who's Hamas, I take him to the police station."

APPETITE FOR CORRUPTION

It has been a long journey from Intifada to the current situation. The two lasting political legacies of the first Intifada: the creation of the Palestinian Authority and the rise of the Hamas movement, have both lost their legitimacy. The PA's insatiable appetite for corruption disillusioned people long ago, and Hamas' armed takeover of Gaza was a step too far for most people to accept. Palestine has been torn into two pieces, one piece starved half to death, the other cowed by a Fatah-controlled PA that is more than willing to do the work of Israel and the US in return for concessions (yet to be seen) at the negotiation table.

When the Palestinian Authority was first created on the back of the Oslo talks, it was because the first Intifada had made the Palestinians ungovernable by the occupation forces. The plan, to put the cities under the control of the PLO/PA, did not come from any altruism from the Israelis, but because the Israelis were incapable of doing the job themselves. The post Oslo period began the process of co-opting, binding the PLO to Israel's agenda, but as Israel tightened the grip of the occupation and stalled progress for peace the process inevitably broke down.

Perversely, Palestinian civil society benefited in some ways from the second intifada. By pushing Arafat literally into a corner it meant that the PA and the Palestinians were united against the external threat. By bombing the police stations and killing uniformed policemen, the Israelis gave the Palestinians a dubious gift in that the Palestinian internal security system was simply not able to function, even if it wanted to.

With the self-serving corruption of

al Fatah, Abbas had virtually no support amongst Palestinians, and threw his lot in with the Americans and Israelis. The Annapolis Conference did nothing to raise peoples' hopes, convened as it was more to elevate the status of the failing Bush Administration than it had anything to do with peace or justice here. The undemocratic nature of the latest Abbas government ensures that the people are not privy to the negotiations. Meanwhile, local spectators to the event say that the Palestinians need their own Annapolis, between Hamas and Fatah, the West Bank and Gaza, before they can sit down with Israel and discuss the future with their occupiers.

SLEEPWALKING INTO DICTATORSHIP

Since the Hamas takeover of Gaza gave Mahmood Abbas the excuse to crush dissent in the West Bank, this new Palestine has been sleepwalking into dictatorship. The PA is finally doing the one thing that Arafat, whilst he was still alive, refused to do: turn itself into a colonial police force for the Israelis. Recently Abbas decided to defy Palestinian law and dissolve the (Hamas led) Palestine Legislative Council (the Palestinian 'Senate').

When the Israelis killed 120 people in Gaza last month, it looked like Abbas had had second thoughts about allying himself so closely to Israel when he took the unheard (for him) step of cancelling the negotiations with the Israelis. No matter though, after two days and a visit from Condi Rice and he was back at the table, even as the Israelis continued to bomb Gaza from above.

However, when the PA tortured to death the popular (and Hamas affiliated) cleric Majed Barghouti, riots and demos broke out around Ramallah. This is Abbas and his government's predicament. He needs to rely on Israel and the United States to maintain his position, but the more that he does the more support goes to his rivals. Recent polls suggest that despite (or perhaps because of) the repression that the Hamas movement has suffered they would still win a national election.

It seems that Abbas and the PA have been learning from that master of political cynicism, Nicolo Machiavelli, who said that, given a choice of rule by love or by fear a leader will chose fear, because while the population controls its love, the ruler controls its fear. In this case, that fear is augmented by regular infusions of money, weapons and political backing from the US State Department.

*** For news and updates see also**
<http://electronicintifada.net>
www.maannews.net/en
*** To take direct action see**
www.palsolidarity.org

ONLY FUELS & HORSEPLAY continued...

and lobbying against the higher congestion charge for super-gas-guzzlers.

There were also occupations at an Esso in **PLYMOUTH**, Shell and Waitrose in **SHEFFIELD**, and a Shell in **SOUTHAMPTON**.

BANKING ON DISASTER

CAMBRIDGE: A Royal Bank of Scotland branch in Hills Road was occupied as protesters climbed on to the canopy of the building with a banner re-branding the bank as "RBS - The Oil and Gas Bank: Climate Criminal".

WORTHING: Activists turned to high street theatre to shout about the climate crimes of RBS, Natwest and Thomson travel agents, after which a upset polar bear went into the local Natwest branch and closed down his account in protest.

And there's not even space to tell you about some of the other many actions and spoofery all over the UK, including in Hull, Hastings, Glasgow and Norwich. Or anti-shopping actions by clowns in Edinburgh and fancy-dressers in sleepy Leamington Spa. Not to mention the big Fossil Fools day parade in central Manchester... or the anti-Newhaven incinerator actions in Brighton. So to all you jesters out there - we think that's what you call a good days work.

* To prove that Brits aren't the only one's with a sense of humour, there were similar Fool's day high jinks in Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and America...

For fuller reports on all the april 1st antics see www.fossilfoolsdayofaction.org



Smash EDO Tour

The national Smash EDO Tour 2008 is on - touring the UK (and beyond) and screening On The Verge. It will give those involved the chance to discuss tactics, get feedback, and organise for the future.

Upcoming dates...

April: 9th - **Norwich** - The Workshop, 8pm
 11th - **London** - Housmans Bookshop, 7pm
 14th - **Liverpool** - TBA
 15th - **Newcastle** - Star & Shadow Cinema, Battlefield, Cnr Stepney Bank & Crawhall Road, Newcastle. Ph 0191 261 0066
 17th - **Edinburgh** - The Forest Cafe, 3 Bristo Pl, Edinburgh, EH1 1EY. Ph 0131 220 4538
 18th - **Glasgow** - The Quakers Centre
 19th - **Aberdeen** - Aberdeen Uni
For updates and more info see...
www.schnews.org.uk/on-the-verge

TAKING POLE POSITION

“We got rid of the 'brotherly' Russian army in 90s and we don't want another one in its place.” - Polish anti-military campaigner.

Last Saturday saw the first big demo held in Poland against the US military setting up bases in the country – but it was the morning after the protest that police repression kicked in. Around 1000 demonstrated against the installation of a US missile base near Slupsk, northern Poland at a site due to hold up to ten silo-based long-range missile defence interceptors, part of the ‘Star Wars’ programme. The US are coming in with offers that the Polish govt can't refuse – i.e. having US bases and buying US weaponry into the bargain.

The demo started with an open meeting outside the town hall, with speakers including veterans of World War II, and other locals equally against the US base in their backyard. The day was organised by the Polish Campaign Against Militarism – bringing together the Anarchist Federation, Greenpeace, the Union of Syndicalists, non-affiliated protesters and practically every other anarchist and anti-authoritarian group in Poland. Also out in force were the residents of Slupsk. The demonstration had a ‘No Logos’ rule to avoid political parties using the demo to advertise themselves, but that didn't stop the Young Socialists trying to fly their flag. The demo then followed through the city, with samba bands, street theatre and vegan food by Food Not Bombs.

At the end of the street demo, around 100 peeled off and marched the four kilometres to the site of the future base at Redzikowo, a disused former Soviet base. Riot police were on the gates of the base, and many more arrived in numbers in helicopters and vans. Initially however they couldn't find a reason why the protesters shouldn't be there as there isn't a base, and only threatened to arrest for not following police orders, not trespassing.

Demonstrators moved to the main gate to try and jump it, and police arrived with dogs. When most of the group left, those who remained were attacked by dogs – one woman was bitten, and police started fining protesters for various stupid offences like having a black flag on their car. One

was arrested for ‘cursing’, and fined US\$300.

The real reaction from the state began much later that night, after the post-demo techno party at a pub in Slupsk. At 5am Sunday, after police had followed people back to someone's flat, they broke in – illegally without a warrant – and attacked people who were sleeping, under the pretext that they were ‘disturbing the night silence’. People were gassed and beaten with batons and a total of twenty three were nicked. One man's arm was thought to be broken, and he was taken to hospital but escaped to alert others about the raid. Eight people were charged with ‘insulting police officers’ and ‘violating the untouchability of police’ – a charge regularly used in Poland against people defending themselves against police attack. Fifteen people got fines for “disturbing the night silence”. After 12 hours of interrogation some were released, while the rest were held until 3pm on the Monday.

On Sunday at 1pm a group of 30 arrived at the police station where the arrestees were being held and staged protest, but it's said that due to the media attention none were attacked. Slupsk's cops are notorious for their brutality- soon is the 10th anniversary of the death of thirteen-year-old Przemek Czaja, killed by police on the street which ended in three days of riots. With news of the arrests getting out, spontaneous protests against police brutality took part in Torun and Olsztyn.

Public opinion in Poland against US military bases in the country is firmly against, despite the government propaganda campaign.

Last Friday and Saturday solidarity vigils were held for the Polish protests in Prague, Dublin, London, Hamburg, Moscow, Washington, and the US spy base at Fylingdales, North Yorkshire. In Berlin the Polish Embassy was targeted with spraypaint. There had been various actions all over Poland days before the protest such as fly posting, banner drops and leafleting.

* **Legal support** – financial help is required for the arrestees (about £700 for a solicitor) – email (in English/Polish) to ackpoznan@rozbrat.org

* Email campaignagainstmilitarism@gmail.com.

* For info in English see www.m29.bzzz.net

DODGY EXPORT-IMPORT BUSINESS

Even as the government was declaring its hell-bent intent to keep the troops in Iraq indefinitely – citing the levels of violence that last week killed hundreds, their immigration arm was busy forcefully deporting 55 Iraqis back to Iraq with the laughable-if-it-were-not-so-serious claim that it was ‘safe’ for them to go back.

Early on Thursday (3rd) morning, the Home Office sent in special armed guards to Campfield and Colnbrook detention centres. They rounded up the unlucky refugees and put them on a coach that whisked them off for either a special military or Jordanian Airlines flight.

The hypocrisy of it all is made even plainer when you read the current travel advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office: “We advise against all travel to Baghdad and its surrounding area, the provinces of Basra, Maysan, Al Anbar, Salah Ad Din, Diyala, Wasit, Babil, Ninawa and At-Tamim... We also advise against all but essential travel to the provinces of Al Qadisiyah, Muthanna, Najaf, Karbala, and Dhi Qar. The security situation in Iraq remains highly dangerous with a continuing high threat of terrorism throughout Iraq, violence and kidnapping...”

Since they were taken by the home office goons, six of the detainees have gone missing. They were put on a German plane and then flown to northern Iraq, in the area under the Kurdish Regional Government. Not knowing where they had ended up, they refused the leave their plane before being attacked and pushed off the plane at gunpoint by KRG soldiers. One detainee, Rizar Bahem, tried to reason with the guards, saying “I'm not from Kurdistan, why are you leaving me here?” He received a blow from the butt of a soldier's gun for an answer.

The deportees are not the first to be forcefully deported to the most dangerous place on earth, and, if the government has its way, they won't be the last.

Meanwhile, the same government plans to airlift some 2000 Iraqis who have been cooperating by working closely with the British Occupation forces, taking them directly to sunny Slough (perhaps in the hope that they'll take the first flight home once they've experienced that particular cultural desert).

* For more see www.csdiraq.com

ROMANIACS

In Romania this Wednesday (2nd) riot police violently clamped down on a convergence centre for protests in the lead up to the NATO gathering in Bucharest. In shades of Genoa 2001, the legally rented space was raided by armoured riot police, protesters badly beaten – hospitalising two – and 46 were arrested. Indymedia reports claim that some have been beaten in custody and others have been refused treatment for injuries while in the lock-up. And this attack was before the protests have even begun.

With a 27,000 police out in force across the city to quell protests, all likely-looking people – particularly those coming and going from the convergence centre, and those entering at the borders – have been detained. Known Romanian activists have been visited by police and threatened or their families intimidated.

The NATO summit – complete with the Bush entourage having one of its last European jaunts – is this time all about the expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe, and first off to bring Romania and Ukraine into the fold. Following its complete failure to act to stop the Iraq invasion, it's recently been seen as attempting to carve a new role for itself as global policeman – the recent rhetoric is all about working to counter the ubiquitous ‘terrorist threat’.

For more see http://gipfelsoli.org/Home/Bukarest_2008 and www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2008/04/395456.html

...and finally...

According to one study produced this week a third of British people are ‘paranoid’ - here's one reason they might be right. (And no this really isn't an April Fools story, honest.)

DARPA (the Pentagon's Frankenstein department) have unveiled the results of their latest meddling with nature – cybernetic insects. The HI-MEMS project (Hybrid Insect - Micro Mechanical System) has succeeded in implanting cybernetic devices inside the pupae of beetles and moths. Project manager Amit Lal boasts that “new tissue forms around the insertions, making the bio-electronic interface long-lasting and reliable.” A Manduca moth had its thorax truncated to reduce its mass and a MEMS device added where abdominal segments would have been, during the larval stage.

Then there's the cyborg beetle – re-engineered by DARPA with extra oxygen in an attempt to increase its ‘payload capacity’ with the possibility of full remote control. A robot Hawkmoth is also in the prototype stages. The ultimate goal of the HI-MEMS program “is the delivery of an insect within five metres of a specific target located a hundred meters away, using electronic remote control, and/or global positioning system (GPS)”.

If that doesn't bug you then the real game in the field of nanobiotechnology is that the creepy crawlies become surveillance platforms – with onboard video, audio, chemical sensors, able to transmit data home. And being an insect, it could buzz past unnoticed.

There's only one problem for the boffins, unfortunately early trials demonstrate that insects “may be diverted from their task by stronger influences” - i.e. all that eating, pollinating and reproducing that they've evolved to do over the last hundred million years.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - wise men learn more from fools than fools from the wise. Honest!

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