

OK Tony - this next question is worth 100,000 lives...

I can't ask the audience - I'll phone a special friend



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Free/Donation

Issue 395

WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?

"We back democracy all the way. All the way, that is, up to the point where they disagree with us." - Former US senior State Dept. Official

"We want to be nice to people who are nice, and good to the people who are good to us." - Senior State Dept. Official (must be one of Bush's speechwriters).

The US, aided and abetted by the Coalition of Easily Bought Countries most Willing to ignore Public Opinion (that's Britain, Spain and Bulgaria), are working round the clock to weasel the five remaining 'yes' votes needed from fellow UN Security Council members to pass their second resolution.

With the Security Council split down the middle, the heat is being turned up on Mexico, Cameroon, Guinea, Angola, Chile and Pakistan, as the US steps up its Texas-style 'persuasion' techniques with economic aid carrots and big stick trade threats in order to swing the votes their way.

A leaked US National Security Agency memo urged the gathering of information as to the 'negotiating positions', 'alliances' and 'dependencies' of these countries in order to give 'US policy makers an edge in obtaining results favourable to US goals.' The leaders of the six fence-sitting member states have been bombarded with personal phone calls and visits from Bush, Cheney, Blair and their cronies, eager to impress upon them the importance of a 'yes' vote.

The US has already pledged to punish Germany for its 'treachery' by possibly withdrawing troops and military bases and ending all military and industrial co-operation with the country. From here it doesn't sound much like punishment, but such moves would cost the German economy billions of euros. There's talk in the US of punishing the French by renaming french fries Freedom Fries, while Turkey will no longer receive \$15 billion in economic aid after its parliament refused to allow the use of Turkish soil as a US base for war. "We don't like the way we were pushed around by the Americans," one Turkish MP said.

Cough Up

So, which way will the six go? And what is on offer to help them decide?

Mexican president Vicente Fox, facing an election next year and aware of massive public anti-war support, has already been visited by the Spanish PM Aznar, US officials Marc Grossman and Kim Holmes, and the Godfather himself, George Bush Snr. Mexico depends on the US to buy 85% of its exports and is desperate to resuscitate

agreements surrounding immigration issues. Mexican diplomats have been warned they will 'pay a very heavy price' for non-compliance with US policy on Iraq.

Cameroon and Guinea have no doubt been reminded of the bit in the African Growth and Opportunity Act, under the terms of which both countries receive US aid, that prevents them from engaging "in activities contrary to US national security or foreign policy interests." The Guinean Ambassador to the UN, however, is reported to have said, "We are not going to sell our dignity because we need money or material. Not my country."

Meanwhile, Angolan Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins is underplaying the significance of sudden US promises to assist his war-ravaged country: "For a long time now, we have been asking for help to rebuild our country after [27] years of [civil] war. No one is tying the request for support [to the issue of] Iraq, but it is all happening at the same time." Yes, an amazing co-incidence.

While we await the report-back from our undercover SchNEWS operative in Santiago, all we can reveal about Chile is that the country's leaders are gagging for the US Senate to give the 'go-ahead' to a free trade agreement between Chile and the US, who knows a gagging country when they see one.

And finally we come to Pakistan, which already has billions of dollars in the hole, mainly thanks to their support of the US dropping an orgasm of bombs on Afghanistan. Pakistan is being rewarded in other ways too, such as being allowed to hold on to their nuclear arsenal without signing the non-proliferation treaty, and probably being allowed to abstain from voting on the second resolution. In the face of growing public anti-war sentiment, Pakistani PM Jamali has said that decisions about Iraq should be left to the Iraqi people and asked his parliament to instead focus on 'domestic interests'. Jamali is scheduled to visit the US later this month, during which time he has been invited to Houston to meet 'businessmen' interested in investing in Pakistan.

Still, at the end of the day, whichever way the vote goes, the US are unlikely to back down from attacking Iraq. British Home Secretary Jack Straw's justification for war is that we must all do what America says because otherwise, in the future, we'll er... have to do what America says. Not that he should worry, as White House spokesman Ari Fleischer pointed out, "The vote is desirable. It is not necessary."

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For cycling...

Reza Baluchi, a superfit Iranian who cycled 46,000 miles through 54 countries to spread the message of peace, hit trouble when he got lost near the Mexican/US border and pitched his tent on the wrong side. He was arrested by US border guards for being an illegal immigrant and was sent to an Arizona detention centre for nearly four months. An American judge has now granted Baluchi's application for asylum in the States, but has also ruled that he be forced to remain at the detention facility while immigration authorities decide whether or not to appeal the case, a process which could take several more months. Welcome to America, Reza...

War Briefs

17-23 March has been declared a **week of direct action against the war**. Starting with a national die-in on 17th (www.j-n-v.org, 0845 458 2564) and finishing with national demos at Menwith and Fairford airbases on 22nd - Check out what's going on around the country - www.schnews.org.uk/stopwar/events.htm ** **Reclaim the Bases** - Direct action at a number of military bases on the weekend of 5-6 April, www.reclaimthebases.org.uk ** On Saturday a group of **'civilian weapons inspectors'** sprung a **surprise visit** on a **BAE Systems munitions factory** in Glascoed, Wales, which produces everything from bullets to depleted uranium shells. The protest was part of a campaign by Campaign Against Arms Trade, which is planning to protest at 40 BAE sites throughout the year. 020 7281 0297 www.caat.org.uk ** **150 people were arrested near Antwerp, Belgium** last Saturday before they had even done anything. They were arrested under a new zero tolerance policy dreamt up to prevent people blocking trains taking American weapons to the port of Antwerp. www.indymedia.org ** **Witnesses and video evidence needed for two arrests at Brighton anti-war demos**. Did you see someone in an orange fluoro jacket getting nicked on the 14th Feb demo at about 5pm, Western Road, or the 1st March demo at 4.30pm? Contact Teresa Blades at Kelly's Solicitors 01273 608311 ** **Peace marches next Saturday (15th): Lewes**, meet at County Hall, 10.30am 01273 473912 ** **Leeds**, 12 noon, Leeds Town Hall Art Gallery 0773 488 2567 mickdearuk@yahoo.co.uk ** **York**, 12 noon Clifford's Tower, City Centre www.yorkagainsthewar.org.uk ** **Hertford**, 11am Railway St, hertfordantiwaraction@yahoo.com ** **Portsmouth** 2 pm outside St Mary's Church - corner of Fratton Rd & St Mary's Rd, then to the naval dockyard. 02392 818849 grassroots@loft33.freeserve.co.uk ** **Foil the Base at Star Peace Camp Fylingdales**. A169, North Yorkshire Moors, bring foil, foil balloons, etc. 01287 660067 <http://come.to/somewhere-real>

PEACENICKED

**** As SchNEWS goes to press we have had multiple reports that the B-52's at Fairford are being armed as we type. ****

As US B-52 bombers begin arriving at the Fairford airbase in Gloucestershire, security at the base is being stepped up. USAF security police have now tried to recruit plane spotters in their fight against evil peaceniks. The base has put out a memo asking for spotters to contact them if they see any protesters in the area. But as veteran peace campaigner Lindis Percy proved, security is still very lax once you get inside the base. After scaling the fences on Monday, Lindis managed to spend two hours roaming around the base and two hours under the wing of a B-52 before being arrested for criminal damage. If you'd like to help keep the USAF Security police busy, call them on 07740 609705 or 07876 148170.

Protesters are now maintaining a 24 hr peace watch at Gate 10 of the Fairford airbase, 5 minutes away from the permanent peace camp. More people are needed to stay at the camp, which is now located behind the very welcoming pub in Kempsford village.

There's also a big demo on the 22nd March (meet noon at the junction of High St/Park St., Fairford) Camp mobiles 07905 131020 or 07947 614941 www.gwi.org.uk

* This weekend (8th & 9th) Picnic for Peace, meet High St/Park St., Fairford Village, noon, for a walk to Gate 10 to support the peace watch vigil.

* Transport to the demo on the 22nd is being organised from across the country: www.cynatech.co.uk/gwi/Fairford-travel.htm. Tickets for coaches from Brighton available from Community Base reception, Queens Road, and the Cowley Club, London Road £8/6

* Lindis Percy and Anni Rainbow are at Harrogate Magistrates' Court next Monday (10th) 10am for a five day court case after being nicked for 'aggravated trespass' at Menwith Hill spy station. Support appreciated 01943 466405 www.caab.org.uk

* Police have begun to use Section 60 powers to stop and search protesters at Fairford. A Section 60 gives uniformed police the power to cordon a group of people, search for supposed weapons, and confiscate items that conceal your identity (masks, balaclavas, etc.) If you are stopped under s60, ask who authorised it and what locality it covers. You DO NOT have to give the police your name and address or answer any other questions. If asked anything, it's always advisable to answer NO COMMENT to all questions. They cannot use force to take your photo. And if they do search you (which unfortunately s60 gives them the power to do), ask the officer for their name, number and station. If they don't give it to you, the search will be illegal. Full details: www.wombles.org.uk/files/section60.php

Inside SchNEWS

Long time peace activist TJ Hart has been given the maximum possible sentence for cutting a hole in the fence at RAF Fylingdales, North Yorkshire. She'll be banged up for two months, so send letters of support to her at: TJ Hart, HMP Low Newton, Brasside, Durham. DH1 3YA

Positive SchNEWS

It's Fairtrade Fortnight starting this week with over four thousand events going on around the country. You can go along to tasting parties and stalls and check out coffee and chocolate produced by farmers from the majority world who aren't being ripped off for their produce. For a full listing of events at 020 7405 5942 www.fairtrade.org.uk

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SchNEWS in brief

Next week (12th) is the start of the **Human Rights Watch** film festival at the Ritzy Cinema, Brixton, London. Films include the UK premiere of 'Women in Black', which follows a group of women as they travel to the West Bank to form a human shield around Palestinian civilians. Showings on the 15th, 16th and 19th. Full listing www.hrw.org/iff or call the Ritzy on 0207 733 2229 ** **London No Borders video night**

- videos about the Strasbourg No Border camp, the Publix Theatre Caravan, and video hacktivism against the Schengen Information System. At LARC, 62 Fieldgate St., London E1. Tue 18th, 7.30pm. info@londonarc.org ** **War on Want's Annual Conference**, next Sat (15) speakers include Mary Robinson and Jeremy Hardy. University of Westminster, New Cavendish, London W1. Bookings 020 76201111 www.waronwant.org ** Not content with getting away with killing 20,000 people in the world's biggest chemical disaster, **Union Carbide** (formerly Dow Chemicals) is now suing protesters who shut down their factory last year on the 18th anniversary of the disaster. The company is looking for compensation of \$10,000 for the loss of two hours work. ** There are a number of **court cases coming up soon for people who've been caught at GM actions**. Defendants are asking for support AND help with any costs. The dates are 12 March at Warrington Magistrates Court, Lancashire, Info 07762 098393. 18 March at Cupar Sheriff Court in Fife, 01382 543000, and 31 March-3 April at Chester Crown Court. Info on any of these from GEN 0845 456 9327 ** Events happening for **International Women's day** this Saturday (8) include an anti-war march in London. Meet 11.30am, Parliament Square. There will also be a demo in Camden against the notorious strip club, The Spearmint Rhino. Meet outside Spearmint Rhino, 161 Tottenham Court Road (nearest Tube: Warren Street) at noon. 0207 8407113 www.eaves.ik.com In Ireland, there will be an anti-war demo at Shannon airport outside of Dublin. Meet 2:30pm. Contact: maggie_ronayne@hotmail.com. In Glasgow, there's a three day Frock On! festival chock full of feminism, anarchism, and punk rock! 078 1294 3410 www.geocities.com/frock_on/index.html

SCHOOL'S OUT FOREVER

Last Saturday was the 41st day that Guatemala's teachers have been out on strike. Fed up with being ignored and told by the government that all 80,000 of them would be sacked if they didn't return to work, the teachers decided to turn to direct action. Government buildings (including the Ministry of Education) were occupied, major highways were brought to a halt by Reclaim the Streets style protests, and several important ports were blockaded. The teachers are demanding more pay and more money for the education system

The proportion of the budget that the Guatemalan government spends on education is tiny compared to most countries in Latin America. Even those serial misers, the International Monetary Fund, have told the government to increase its budgets for education and health! www.prensalibre.com (Spanish)

* Thousands of children in the UK bunked off school to join student protests against the war on Wednesday. Over a hundred children gathered outside Downing Street, whilst similar protests happened all over the world. One said, "Tony Blair obviously does not think. Iraqi children are too young to be bombed, so how can we be too young to protest?"

FAT GATS

Last week GATS fat-cats were gutted when their most top-secret documents got leaked and published on the web (nice one Polaris Institute). The papers instantly exposed the true nature of the EU's GATS agenda (see SchNEWS 286) for the next negotiating round: Nothing less than a global takeover of essential services (most notably water) by EU-based transnationals.

The EU - with the full co-operation of the UK government (who have repeatedly given reassurances that water would be excluded from World Trade Organisation agreements) - is targeting state and not-for-profit service provision in the developing world as its new golden goose.

The EU has sent 'requests' to 109 (mostly developing) WTO member countries demanding trade access to water, energy, transport, telecommunications and news services. In some cases, they are targeting countries where European companies have already been booted out by government or public protest.

Each of the 109 'requests' is a strictly classified document with a warning attached: "Member States are requested to ensure that this text is not made publicly available and is treated as a restricted document." The general public was never supposed to know that public services were being traded away in secret negotiations until all the deals had been cut. The deadline for compliance with the requests - sorry, agreements - is 31st March 2003. GATSwatch are organising a national day of action on 13th March. To find out what's happening in your area 0800 328 2153 gatswatch.org.uk. Read the leaked documents: www.polarisinstitute.org

Police "Intelligence"

On Wednesday, a big pile of steaming horse manure was dumped on the steps of Neo-Labour's party offices in London to symbolise the US/UK 2nd resolution for the Iraq war. As one protester said, 'I'll be surprised if anybody notices, as it always smells of shit around the Labour Party'. Next, the cheeky muck spreaders poured fake blood over the steps of the QE2 Conference Centre, where there was a meeting of the Defence Equipment Services Organisation, (those nasty people who promote arms sales abroad). Two people were arrested for criminal damage, but the paranoid police (who didn't get the joke) were only interested to know if the 'blood' was toxic! And as if any more proof were needed that the police can't tell their arse from their elbow... SchNEWS has learned of a man who, by sending a packet of rice to Jack Straw, managed to cause a major terror scare in the Foreign Secretary's office. The office had to be closed for three hours until special police intelligence was brought in to work out the difference between a grain of rice and the nerve toxin, ricin!

...and finally...

The popular comic "Dandy" was recently cleared from the shelves at Birmingham International Airport because it posed a menacing terrorist threat! The most recent issue of the magazine was deemed unacceptable because of a free toy gun that was being given away on the cover. The plastic toy, which punches out a clenched fist, was attached to thousands of copies of that week's issue, leading the airport's expert security personnel to fear it might be used to hijack a plane. A spokesman for the magazine's publishers said, "It might be a bit irritating if a kid fired it at your head over and over, but I don't think a terrorist would get very far if he tried to hijack a plane with a free toy from Dandy."

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all squeeze and tease politicians to grease the palm first. Honest