

# Call the Shots Action Guide



## Part 1: The Revolving Door

You don't need to be a full-time anti-arms trade campaigner to take effective action for this campaign!

### If you have ONE MINUTE:

- Sign and send the enclosed postcard to your MP.
- Send the return card to CAAT, so we know which MPs have been contacted, along with the pop-out key!

### If you have FIFTEEN MINUTES:

- Write a letter to your MP. Use the sample letter below for ideas but remember that hand-written, personalised letters have the most impact.
- Order another 10 postcards/leaflets/packs from the CAAT office to distribute to friends.

### If you have HALF A DAY:

- Organise a stall in your local High Street, library, university, church or other public space. Collect petition signatures and keys (see overleaf for more information) and hand out information about the campaign.

### If you have MORE TIME:

- Read on... this action guide has lots more action ideas!

### Network and mobilise others

Are there any groups you are involved in or have links with locally? Could you give out leaflets at one of their meetings, do a short plug about CAAT and the Call the Shots campaign or even do a longer talk to the group? If you are not involved in other groups, can you find out what groups are out there and tell them about the campaign? For example, many towns have a Catholic diocesan justice & peace group, an Amnesty, WDM or Oxfam group or a Quaker group, all of which would probably be interested.

### Organise a public meeting

This can be a fantastic way to raise awareness about the campaign. The most important elements of a successful public meeting are a central venue, a good speaker and loads of publicity. If you don't feel confident enough to do a talk yourself, CAAT may be able to provide a speaker. We can also help you with publicity, for example by telling CAAT supporters in your area about the event. Don't forget to have a stall

Wednesday 9th March 2005 saw the launch of CAAT's new campaign "Call the Shots" and the first outing of CAAT's latest street-theatre prop, a life-size revolving door. We also had our very own civil servant/arms dealer (played by CAAT supporter David) pushing his way through the door. David was representing Alan Garwood, the current Head of DESO, who is also an arms industry boss. He wore a badge saying 'Alan Garwood, Head of Government Arms Promotion and Arms Company Chief' to highlight the fact that DESO is an example of the revolving door as it always seconds its Head from the arms industry and often returns them

there afterwards. Protestors held a giant banner which read "Lock the revolving door" and depicted a giant key.



The Call the Shots campaign has real potential for all kinds of creative local action and you don't

need to make a life-sized revolving door to make that happen – though it's a fun project if you'd like the challenge! If you don't want to construct a door, you can easily plan a visual protest using an actor dressed up as a civil servant/arms dealer and show his dual roles with badges or placards on his front and back. Just make a banner saying 'Lock the Revolving Door' and you are all set! Or you could use street theatre to illustrate the revolving door spinning... the options are endless! Don't forget to tell your local media what you are planning – order a copy of CAAT's local media guide for tips on getting media coverage.

## Collect keys to lock the revolving door!

One way you can take effective action to lock the revolving door is to collect keys locally! Not ordinary keys, but the pop-out keys you will see on the postcard in this pack. The first step is to send us the pop-out key in this pack. The next step is to collect as many more of these as you can...

An effective way to do this would be to organise a stall in your local High Street where you can ask people to fill in a postcard to their MP and pop out the key at the same time for you to send on to the CAAT office. You could also lay a big sheet on the ground and draw a massive key shape on it, and ask passers-by to draw or paint a key themselves. This is a great crowd-puller, especially for children and their parents!

We want to end up with a huge creative petition that the government can't ignore and that will catch the attention of your local media and members of the public. We will eventually be handing all the keys and pictures

of keys in to the government as a way of showing how much demand there is for locking the revolving door. Meanwhile we hope to put photos of local groups or campaigners collecting keys on the Call the Shots web site. So it is a great solidarity action too!



The keys symbolise both locking the revolving door and also the access to government that we hope to reclaim through this campaign.

### What you will need

- A large sheet.

- A black marker pen (to draw a huge key shape onto the sheet).
- Lots of felt-tip pens or paints (for passers-by to draw/paint their keys with).
- A pop-out key for people to draw around.
- Some information – leaflets, postcards, posters, briefings – to give out to interested people.

### What to do

- Write the slogan "Take the arms companies out of government – lock the revolving door!" on the sheet.
- Draw a giant key on the sheet (for people to draw inside).
- Organise a stall in a good location where people will see you.
- Tell the local press you will be there.
- Take a photo of your group holding the finished sheet up and send a copy to the local press and a copy to the CAAT office (for CAAT's campaign website photo gallery!)

at the back of the meeting for leaflets and other materials. It is also worth having a "sign up for more info" sheet on the stall so that you can send a list of names, addresses or emails to the CAAT office afterwards. You might also want to get people to sign up if they are interested in getting involved in local campaigning – they may be able to help you next time! And lastly, don't forget to invite the local press and/or MPs along.

### Give a talk to a local group or school

This pack should contain everything you need to read up on the issue and help you do a short talk or lead a discussion about it. Use the Happy Families card game as an icebreaker or introduction to the issue – it serves as a useful discussion starter. Don't be scared to say you don't know the answers to difficult questions! Just

say you will try to find out or tell them to get in touch with the CAAT office.

### Play the Happy Families card game!

This is a good, interactive way to introduce the issue. It could be used in schools, peace and justice or church groups, any other meetings you are involved in or, of course, CAAT groups!

### Hold a street stall

This is a simple but effective way to raise awareness in your local area about this campaign. All you need to run a basic stall is leaflets, posters, petitions, a 'sign up for more info' sheet (to send back to CAAT), and a fold-up table. If you are interested in making your stall more interactive, why not get people to draw keys on a

massive sheet (see opposite for more info)! Try to have at least two people to staff the stall.

## Organise a protest at a local arms company

This could include music, street theatre, a mock-up revolving door or could simply be a silent vigil with placards! See below for more ideas.

## Write to your MP

A recent poll commissioned by CAAT shows that most people feel they have little influence over government decision-making on arms exports in comparison to arms companies. It is time we started calling the shots on arms exports! Writing to your MP is an effective way to get your voice heard in government (see sample letter box).

## Other creative action ideas

CAAT's national gathering in 2004 generated loads of great ideas for communicating this issue in a simple and creative way. The following are just some of these ideas:

- Hold a musical protest
- Do a pub quiz – this could even double up as a fundraising event!
- Do some crazy cabaret or street theatre
- Make a model revolving door
- Hold an art exhibition
- Construct a 'mobile' with government officials/Ministers and arms company representatives spinning/revolving from it
- Make a big poster with the question: 'what is the real reason the government supports arms exports?' This could be displayed on a stall and used as a quiz to catch the attention of passers-by. People can put a sticker on the poster by the answer they think is correct. You could have four possible answers: the government's three main justifications ('to contribute to the security of the UK's friends and allies overseas'; 'to help maintain a strong UK arms industry'; 'for jobs and the economy') and CAAT's answer – 'because arms companies have a lot of political influence'. This poster could be sent to your MP afterwards as a local petition.

## Sample letter

Dear (Name of your MP),

I am writing to express my concern at the high numbers of Ministry of Defence ministers and staff seeking employment in arms companies, which amount to a 'traffic' according to the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACBA). Particularly worrying are the high-profile figures: since the start of the 1990s, three Defence Secretaries and three Defence Procurement Ministers have gone on to work for arms companies.

This 'revolving door' phenomenon can mean that government arms export policy, and wider military or foreign policy, is skewed in favour of arms companies. Ministers and government officials might act with a view to securing employment or, having left, take advantage of personal contacts to obtain preferential treatment or privileged access to government.

The revolving door gives rise to grave concerns about conflicts of interest and the abuse of public office for personal gain. The seemingly disproportionate access to, and influence over, government that arms companies enjoy is to the detriment of democracy.

I urge you to call for greater transparency – the ACBA should sit publicly – and mandatory restrictions on the movement of ministers and government officials where there could be a conflict of interest. In particular, I would like to see:

- a five year ban on working for arms companies they have had direct dealings with in the last two years of their public office;
- a five year ban on making representations to any department or individual they have had direct dealings with in the last two years of their service;
- a permanent ban on 'changing sides' in any ongoing proceeding they have been involved in.

Please use your influence to lock the revolving door and take the arms companies out of government.

I look forward to hearing a response from you on this issue.

Yours sincerely...

## Countering the myths surrounding arms exports

A recent opinion poll commissioned by CAAT found that 50.6% of those surveyed oppose the use of 600 civil servants to promote arms exports in the government's Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO). Only 15.8% said they support this.

However, it also showed that many people still believe the myths surrounding arms exports to be true. When asked to give the main reason the government supports arms exports, 21.9% said 'to contribute to the security of the UK's friends and allies overseas', 15.7% said 'to help maintain a strong UK arms industry', and 23.8% said 'for jobs and the economy'. These are the three main justifications the government churns out (see [www.deso.mod.uk/policy.htm](http://www.deso.mod.uk/policy.htm)). 22.8% said the government supports arms exports 'because

arms companies have a lot of political influence'. This can give us hope that while we still need to work hard to keep disputing these myths, many people are beginning to realise that there is a more sinister reason that the arms trade is flourishing.

The opinion poll also showed that the majority of people feel they have little influence over the government's arms export policies in comparison to arms companies. Yet 61.9% of people surveyed think that the government should pay more attention to the views of MPs and the public than the views of arms companies. Only 8.5% thought the government should pay more attention to the views of arms companies. Many people do care about this issue; we just need to convince them that campaigning CAN make a difference.

You can help CAAT raise awareness of the real reasons behind the government's support for arms exports by:

- Talking to people you know. It is important to challenge the myths of the arms trade in our everyday conversations and this can have a big knock-on effect. We are happy to send a free copy of the Call the Shots campaign pack to anyone who is interested;
- Asking if you can put up a display in your local library, church, university, or other public space;
- Inviting a CAAT speaker to any group or organisation that you are involved in, for example a peace and justice group, church group, Women's Institute group, etc.
- Taking other action suggested on this action guide!

This campaign may seem complex at first glance but it has loads of potential for all kinds of creative action. It is what you do locally that will make this campaign engaging and fun. Let us know what you get up to! Send us any write ups and photos and let us know if you'd be happy for us to put them on the Call the Shots web site.

**Call the Shots – take the arms companies out of government**

[www.calltheshots.org](http://www.calltheshots.org)

**CAAT was set up in 1974 and is a broad coalition of groups and individuals working for the reduction and ultimate abolition of the international arms trade, together with progressive demilitarisation within arms-producing countries**