

# Call the Shots Action Guide



## Part 2: Shut DESO

The existence of the Defence Export Services Organisation, a government unit devoted to selling weapons around the world, is shocking – but largely unknown to the public. The first step towards shutting DESO must therefore be to raise awareness of its existence amongst the public, the media and parliamentarians. This campaign aims to create a groundswell of opposition to DESO that cannot be ignored by the government. We need your help to do this.

### Top 3 actions you can take to shut DESO

- Sign and send the enclosed postcards to your MP and the Treasury.
- Tell people about DESO!
- Come to London on 16th October to take part in our mass action day to shut DESO (see overleaf).

### Raise awareness: Expose DESO's dirty dealings

Help us to lift DESO out of obscurity by telling as many people as you can about it. We need to raise DESO's public profile and then persuade the government it is time to shut it. Whether you can give 5 minutes or 5 months to the campaign, local action is crucial to mobilising enough public support to make our decision-makers take notice.

The facts speak for themselves:

- DESO is proliferating arms around the world – and all to make profits for big business;
- DESO is a shocking example of corporate welfare for arms companies – big business being subsidised by the taxpayer;
- DESO is deeply undemocratic – it gives arms companies inappropriate influence over government policies.

We need you to make these facts known and tell people what they can do to help shut DESO. Can you



pledge to tell as many people as possible about DESO? Below are various ways you can do this.

### Tell your friends, family, colleagues

It may be by handing them a leaflet or postcard, by putting a poster up in your office, by inviting them to a public meeting to hear more, or simply by talking to them about this campaign. Whichever ways work for you, don't underestimate the importance of these simple actions.

### Tell the general public

There are lots of ways to get word of DESO out to people you don't know in your area or beyond. The following are some ideas to get you started:

- Have a stall or 'campaign day' in your local high street or other public space (see information sheet on 'how to organise a campaign day' enclosed in the pack)
- Carry out a local opinion poll
- Distribute DESO postcards and/or leaflets
- Organise a public meeting
- Use the internet

**Stalls or 'campaign days'** are a fantastic and easy way to get your message out to a wide audience. In a day, with just one other person, you could easily communicate with between 200 and 400 people about

## Build support for the Shut DESO statement

We want to build a strong popular movement of people and groups calling for DESO's closure. As part of this we are seeking support for the enclosed statement. An up-to-date list of signatories can be found at [www.calltheshots.org](http://www.calltheshots.org).

Can you sign the statement and approach local peace groups or other campaigning groups in your area to ask them to sign it too? There may also be other groups you could approach such as refugee groups or your local trade union branch. Could you also ask your local religious representatives to sign it? DESO is so blatantly appalling that many such groups and individuals should be happy to show their support.

DESO, whether through giving out leaflets, polling people or asking them to sign a petition or postcard.

Undertaking an informal **opinion poll** in your local high street, school, college, university, or at any other event or gathering, is an effective way of starting conversations about DESO and testing public opinion about the arms trade. It is also a good tool for getting local media coverage of the issue. Enclosed in this pack is a sheet containing advice on carrying out a local opinion poll which includes some simple questions to ask people.

Another simple way to raise the profile of DESO, and CAAT's campaign to shut it, is by **distributing our DESO postcards** and/or leaflets locally. Would your local library, community centre, church etc. be willing to display some for you? Are there any relevant events that you could attend to hand out materials?

Organising a **public meeting** is also a great way to raise awareness about the campaign. The most important elements of a successful public meeting are a central venue, a good speaker and lots of publicity. CAAT can help publicise the event and may also be able to provide a speaker.

The **internet** is an incredibly effective tool for disseminating information to a wide audience. Could you start discussions about DESO on relevant blogs or add the Shut DESO campaign site ([www.calltheshots.org](http://www.calltheshots.org)) to your email signature?

## Tell your local media

The media is an easy way to get your message out to a massive audience. Imagine having the resources to get a leaflet to every household in your region. You do: local free papers go through every door – regardless of age, income, education or politics. Regional and local radio and TV also reach hundreds of thousands of people. Local media is vital for the campaign nationally, with the potential to provide far more coverage of DESO's activities than we could hope to get through the national media. After all, more people read each issue of the *Manchester Metro* than read *The Independent*.

But local news has to come from people in the area – from your actions and events, and your opinions. Don't worry if this is something you haven't done before. The local media is extremely accessible, always on the look out for stories with a local angle. If you can find one, the chances are that they will publish or broadcast it.

**Tell the media first:** When you plan an action, make sure you tell your local paper, radio station and TV station beforehand.

**Write letters:** Letters to national papers are an accessible way for you to get your message across. But letters in the regional press with a local focus are also widely read. If there is news coverage of an arms company in your region, write a letter mentioning DESO and your group. Or if there are struggling businesses and industries in your area, ask why they receive so much less state support than the corporate welfare handed out to the arms industry through DESO.

**Look for unusual media outlets:** Radio talk shows taking calls from listeners, online web forums, council newsletters...these are all opportunities for you to get your message across. The key is making the connection between the subject being discussed and the arms trade.

CAAT's local media guide ([www.caat.org.uk/getinvolved/mediaguide.php](http://www.caat.org.uk/getinvolved/mediaguide.php)) explains the mechanics of working with the media. CAAT's press officer can also help you to find a local angle, plan a media stunt, or draft model press releases, and provide contacts for media in your area. Email [press@caat.org.uk](mailto:press@caat.org.uk) or call 020 7281 0297 for any advice or queries.

## Tell your MP

In addition to sending the enclosed postcard to your MP, it would be great if you could arrange to meet him

or her to talk through the campaign. CAAT can offer support and advice on how to do this. Convincing your MP to act upon your concerns is the most effective way to get your voice heard in government. Remember that he or she is YOUR representative in Parliament.

**October, November and December 2006** are designated mass lobby months – we hope as many people as possible will meet their MPs to tell them about DESO within this 3-month period.

To find out who your MP is, call the House of Commons Information Service on 020 7219 4272 or visit [www.locata.co.uk/commons](http://www.locata.co.uk/commons). To order a free Lobby Pack, available from summer 2006, email [ann@caat.org.uk](mailto:ann@caat.org.uk) or call 020 7281 0297.

## Shut DESO action day: Monday 16 October 2006

Join us on Monday 16th October to send a clear message that time's up for the government's gunrunners. We need **170 people** to take part in this mass action – come to London and be one of them! This action day will be the climax of the Shut DESO campaign and aims to bring together the various elements of our campaign. It will be a unique opportunity to take mass action together at DESO's headquarters, to learn about DESO and how to communicate the main points to others, to engage with the public, and to lobby your MP. Not to mention the chance to meet other campaigners and have a fun day out...

### 11am – Rally and preparation for action

Hear the latest on DESO and the campaign to shut it and prepare together for the day ahead. This session will include information and training on talking to the public about DESO and lobbying your MP. Tea and coffee will be provided.

### 12.30pm – Shut DESO action

We will be making a human chain around the headquarters of DESO in Central London, to designate the department a 'global danger zone'. By joining hands and encircling the building, we will show that ordinary people are closing in on this violence at the heart of government. Through this peaceful action (CAAT's nonviolence guidelines can be found at [www.caat.org.uk](http://www.caat.org.uk)) we aim to expose the government's arms sales unit for what it really is: a huge obstacle to world peace and one of the key ways through which arms companies are able to call the shots on government policy. This will be a key opportunity to raise public awareness – this symbolic action should

## Targeting key decision-makers

CAAT is targeting the Prime Minister and the Treasury through its postcard campaign, raising the ethical and the economical reasons for shutting DESO.

The decision to shut DESO is ultimately in the Prime Minister's hands so it is vital that he is pressured from all sides to do this. Through a popular awareness raising campaign we aim to generate widespread criticism of DESO from the public, media and parliamentarians that the Prime Minister will be unable to ignore.

We will also be calling on the Treasury to apply pressure on the Prime Minister to close DESO. During 2006 there will be preparation for the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review in which the Treasury assesses the needs of each department. Through our postcard campaign we are highlighting the shocking waste of resources that DESO represents, as well as its damaging effects.

gain the attention of passers-by and the media as well as DESO's staff. Please join us – we need 170 people to encircle DESO. If you can, please wear something white to symbolise unity and peace.

### From 1.30pm – DESO poll: Engaging the public

Spread the message about DESO by helping us conduct an informal opinion poll in Central London. We will go out in teams and ask ordinary people what they think about DESO. We will provide you with the necessary support and materials to be able to do this. Together we will be able to tell hundreds of people in a short space of time about DESO.

### 3–6pm – Lobbying MPs

Join others and visit your MP at the Houses of Parliament, encouraging them to take a stand about DESO. This lobby will form part of our 3-month mass lobby, during which we hope as many MPs as possible will be contacted face to face about DESO. Again, we will be on hand throughout the day to provide information on how to do this.

16th October is the most important date in the Shut DESO calendar this year. Please put this date in your diary now and ask people around you to come too. You don't need to take part in every section of the day – if you only have a couple of hours to spare, join us when you can!

11 Goodwin Street, London N4 3HQ  
Tel: 020 7281 0297  
Fax: 020 7281 4369  
Email: [enquiries@caat.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@caat.org.uk)  
Website: [www.caat.org.uk](http://www.caat.org.uk)



## Key dates to target DESO

DESO's events are usually in or around London as the list below illustrates. DESO does however sometimes organise seminars or other events around the UK so please do get in touch with the CAAT office if you hear of any in your area. These could provide good hooks for local campaigning.

### 4 May: BAE Systems Annual General Meeting, London

BAE Systems is the 4th biggest arms company in the world. Each year it sells around £11 billion of arms around the globe. DESO provides financial and political support to BAE Systems and the company enjoys a significant proportion of the estimated £900 million of public money used to subsidise private companies exporting weapons. Join other CAAT supporters at BAE Systems' Annual General Meeting in May and help us challenge DESO's main beneficiary about its deadly business.

### 17-23 July: Farnborough International Arms Fair, Farnborough, Surrey

Farnborough International sells itself to the public as an airshow and fun family day out. Many visitors don't

realise that the public days at the weekend follow a week-long trade event for the sale of military aircraft and associated weapons systems. It is organised by the UK's Society of British Aerospace Companies and is supported by DESO. CAAT will be campaigning and protesting at the arms fair.

### 1 September-30 November: 3 month mass lobby of MPs, UK-wide

Visit your MP in your local constituency or come to London on the 16th October and lobby them alongside other CAAT supporters at the Houses of Parliament. Either way we need as many MPs as possible to be contacted about the campaign and talking to them face to face will have the greatest impact.

### 16 October: Shut DESO action day, London

Come to London and help us shut DESO! See previous page for more details.

For more information and action ideas or to find out more about any of these events, contact Beccie ([beccie@caat.org.uk](mailto:beccie@caat.org.uk)) or Anna ([action@caat.org.uk](mailto:action@caat.org.uk)) at the CAAT office.

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

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## Get involved in the campaign

Please fill in this form return to **CAAT, 11 Goodwin Street, London N4 3HQ**

I will tell \_\_\_\_ people about DESO. (You may also wish to write below how you plan to tell these people about DESO, i.e. 'through giving out postcards in my local peace group' or 'through writing a letter to my local paper')

I will be at the DESO action day on 16th October. Please send me more information.

Please send me a Lobby Pack when it is available. My MP is \_\_\_\_\_

I would like some more Shut DESO campaign materials to use or distribute locally. Please send me \_\_\_\_ leaflets / \_\_\_\_ postcards / \_\_\_\_ briefings / \_\_\_\_ action guides / \_\_\_\_ campaign packs (please delete as appropriate).

I would like to make a donation of £\_\_\_\_\_ towards CAAT's work.

Please send me more information about CAAT's work.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_