Autocrats and arms
UK-Saudi deals uncovered
IN THIS ISSUE...

• ‘Shut DESO’ update
• Arms Trade Shorts
• Farnborough arms fair
• Local campaigns
• UK-Saudi arms deals uncovered
• BAE AGM
• Control arms?
• Parliamentary
• Rachel Vaughan
• Reed update
• Fundraising
• Steering Committee news
• Get active

Shut DESO’ update

Arms Trade Shorts 4–5

Farnborough arms fair 6

Local campaigns 7

UK-Saudi arms deals uncovered 8–9

BAE AGM 10

Control arms? 11

Parliamentary 12

Rachel Vaughan 13

Reed update

Fundraising

Steering Committee news

Get active 15

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Early Day Motion

An Early Day Motion (EDM) is a sort of parliamentary petition. EDM 178 is based on the Close DESO statement below.

• Get your MP to sign the EDM. If you have web access you can check the website http://edmi.parliament.uk/edmi/ to see if your MP has already signed. If not, ask your MP to do so either by email or by post at the House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA

Increase support for the Close DESO statement

As part of the campaign, we have asked various organisations to sign the following statement:

Close DESO:
The Defence Export Services Organisation is the unit of the UK Ministry of Defence which helps UK companies sell their military equipment and services overseas. Through DESO, the UK taxpayer subsidises the export of arms into areas of conflict and to governments that abuse human rights. The trade in military equipment also damages economic development at each of global, regional and local economic levels.
The undersigned call on the UK government to close the Defence Export Services Organisation and not to transfer its functions elsewhere in the public sector or to allocate public funds to enable them to be undertaken in the private sector.

Time’s up for

Launch of the Shut DESO campaign, see opposite page

‘Shut DESO’ campaign, see opposite page

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Content of most website references are also available in print – contact the CAAT office.

Contributors to CAATnews express their own opinions and do not necessarily reflect those of CAAT as an organisation. Contributors retain copyright of all work used.

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.

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If you use Charities Aid Foundation cheques and would like to help TREAT (Trust for Research and Education on Arms Trade), please send CAP cheques, payable to TREAT, to the office. Unlike CAAT, TREAT is a registered charity (No.328694) and will be able to use your donation for education and research.

CAATnews is part of INK, the Independent News Collective – www.inkuk.com

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TONY BLAIR AND SAUDI CROWN PRINCE ABDULLAH, RIYADH AIR BASE, JULY 2005. ZAINAL ABD HALIM/REUTERS
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The undersigned call on the UK government to close the Defence Export Services Organisation and not to transfer its functions elsewhere in the public sector or to allocate public funds to enable them to be undertaken in the private sector.

- The political parties and national organisations that have signed so far are listed in the box below. If you belong to a national organisation which hasn’t signed, please encourage it to do so. Also, please get local organisations and representatives of all sorts to sign. Get the organisations to contact Ann by writing to the CAAT office or by email to ann@caat.org.uk.

**DESO Action Day – Monday 16th October – London**

This Action Day is the most important date in the Shut DESO campaign calendar – please put the date in your diary now. A special leaflet about the Day is enclosed, but the programme outline is:

- 11am – rally
- 12noon – human chain around the headquarters of DESO
- 1.30pm onwards – polling the public
- 3pm onwards – an opportunity to lobby your MP

**Shut DESO Lobby**

From 1st September to 30th November there will be a lobby of MPs. The long timespan is to allow as many supporters as possible to talk to their MPs about closing DESO. You could lobby your MP on 16th October or in your constituency at a convenient time.

- Order the Lobby Pack from the CAAT office now.

**Materials**

As well as the Lobby Pack, you can still order the main Shut DESO Campaign Pack, which includes a briefing and action guide as well as leaflets and a postcard to send to your MP. You can also order multiple copies of the postcard. Send your order to the CAAT office or email Patrick on patrick@caat.org.uk.

**Statement signatories**

**Political parties**
- Green Party of England and Wales
- Liberal Democrats
- Plaid Cymru
- Social Democratic and Labour Party

**National Organisations**
- ACOED
- Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation
- Burma Campaign
- Campaign Against Depleted Uranium
- Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
- Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases
- Conscience – the Peace Tax Campaign
- Corporate Responsibility Coalition
- Fellowship of Reconciliation
- Jesuit Refugee Service
- Justice Not Vengeance
- Landmine Action
- Liberal Democrats for Peace & Security
- Movement for the Abolition of War Medact
- One World Action
- Oxford Research Group
- Palestinian Solidarity Campaign
- Pax Christi
- Peace Direct
- Peace Pledge Union
- Progressio (formerly Catholic Institute for International Relations)
- Quaker Peace & Social Witness
- Scientists for Global Responsibility
- Speak
- TAPOL – Indonesia human rights campaign
- UNA Wales
- Waging Peace
- War on Want
- War Resisters International

**Time’s up for the government’s gunrunners**

The campaign to shut the Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO) is gathering pace. Lots of supporters have sent postcards to their MPs and more organisations are signing the statement. Please do whatever you can to help make this a successful campaign.
Saudi alarm over BAE “slush fund” inquiry

An ongoing Serious Fraud Office inquiry into a BAE Systems “slush fund” faces a new obstacle. The attorney-general Lord Goldsmith has been asked by government officials – said to be from the Ministry of Defence – to examine whether the inquiry is “in the public interest”.

The inquiry is looking into allegations that BAE Systems funded the lavish lifestyle of members of the Saudi royal family to the tune of £6m. The Saudi government has told BAE Systems’ chief executive that it is unhappy with the investigation, leading to UK government concern that Saudi Arabia may be provoked into pulling out of the UK’s biggest export deal, the Al Yamamah contract.

UK aircraft in assaults in Nepal

The Royal Nepalese Army has been using two Islander aircraft, ironically given to Nepal as part of a package from the Conflict Prevention Fund, to support helicopter attacks on villages. While the UK claims not to have supplied lethal aid to Nepal, Amnesty International says there was no end-use monitoring to ensure that aircraft were not later fitted with arms.

Arms still entering Darfur

UN experts have said that arms are still pouring into Sudan’s Darfur region in violation of a UN ban. The arms come both from neighbouring countries and from overseas. Chad, Eritrea and Libya have been cited as sources.

The experts accused the Sudanese government of failing to ensure that weapons it buys from official sources do not end up in the hands of non-government forces in Darfur.

Call for greater action on corruption

A report that focuses on the UK’s dealings with Africa has accused the government of “a lack of political will at the highest levels to take a lead in fighting global corruption”. The Africa all-party parliamentary group urged the government to speed up introduction of a new anti-corruption bill and called for sanctions barring companies from public procurement contracts if they are convicted, or if there is overwhelming evidence of corruption.

Portillo quits BAE Systems

Former defence secretary Michael Portillo has ended his time as a director of BAE Systems to avoid potential conflict of interest with his work as a political journalist. A company spokesperson denied that Portillo had been persuaded to step down because his political connections were no longer of use.

Portillo stand down because his political connections were no longer of use. Portillo stood down as an MP in last year’s general election.

Italian inquiry over UK-Iraq pistol deal

A UK deal to equip the Iraqi security forces with Italian-made pistols without telling coalition partner Italy is being investigated by Italian prosecutors. The weapons were bought from Italy by the UK Ministry of Defence before being sent on to Iraq. Newspaper reports have suggested that some pistols were found in the hands of insurgents, a claim denied by the MoD.

VT deal with Oman – and with London schools

VT Group is expected to secure a £400m order to supply offshore patrol ships to Oman. The deal would increase the value of the company’s Portsmouth shipyard, which it is considering selling to BAE Systems.

VT is hoping to transform itself from shipbuilder to support services firm, a move underlined by the company’s announcement that it is in talks with London’s Greenwich council to build or refurbish schools. The work would be part of the government-backed Building Schools for the Future programme.

US lifts ban on arms to Indonesia

The US has lifted a seven-year ban on the sale of lethal arms to Indonesia. The announcement came just two weeks after Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visited the Indonesian capital and called for closer ties with the military as part of an expanded “strategic partnership”.

Last November the US State Department announced that it intended to waive human rights conditions on military aid and sales to Indonesia in appreciation of the country’s “unique strategic role in Southeast Asia”.

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Aegis contract renewed

The private security company Aegis Specialist Risk Management has had its Iraqi contract renewed by the US government, despite an ongoing investigation into a video clip with the name “Aegis” that shows machine gun fire against civilian vehicles in Iraq (see CAATnews 194).

JSF engine funding looking likely

Two congressional committees have restored funding for an alternative engine for the Joint Strike Fighter programme despite the Pentagon having recommended its cancellation. The engine is being developed by Rolls-Royce and its US partner General Electric and the move will be welcomed by Tony Blair who personally lobbied George Bush over the issue. While re-instatement of the programme is not completely guaranteed it now looks likely.

The Chair of one of the committees had suggested that the Pentagon decision be re-visited because of the contribution of the UK – “our most steadfast partner” – in Iraq.

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INTER PRESS SERVICE, 31/3/06

Students highlight UK arms loopholes

UK schoolchildren have highlighted loopholes in UK arms controls by importing torture equipment including wall cuff restraints from Poland and a “sting stick” from China. The students set up a basic arms control awareness campaign to highlight UK arms loopholes by the end of this year.

CAAT NEWS, 28/3/06

Italian inquiry over UK-Iraq pistol deal

UK deal to equip the Iraqi security forces with Italian-made pistols has been suspended following coalition partner Italy being investigated by Italian prosecutors. The weapons were bought from Italy by the UK Ministry of Defence before being sent on to Iraq. Newspaper reports have alleged that some pistols were used in the hands of insurgents, a crime denied by the MoD.

INTER PRESS SERVICE, 31/3/06

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DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GLOBAL ARMS TRADE

Ireland contract renewed

Portillo stood down as an MP in last year because of the contribution of the UK to ‘middlemen’ in a $3bn deal to buy Scorpene submarines from France. India’s opposition party has demanded that the deal be cancelled due to alleged irregularities.

CAAT NEWS, 28/3/06

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DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GLOBAL ARMS TRADE

Shorts in brief

Chinese planes to Bangladesh

In a package said to be worth $94m, China has delivered eight F-7BG fighter planes to Bangladesh, and is due to deliver another eight by the end of this year.

EADS gets in with Youth Parliament

EADS, the European aerospace and defence manufacturer, has announced that it will work with the European Youth Parliament – an opportunity for learning and discussion about other cultures – as part of the development of the Youth Parliament. The EADS group includes the aircraft manufacturer Airbus and the joint venture MBDA, an international leader in missile systems.

CAAT NEWS, 28/3/06
Farnborough call-out, 2006

Farnborough International is sold to the public as an airshow and family day out. However, its public events are preceded by a full trade exhibition for aerospace and military products. The event is organised by the UK’s Society of British Aerospace Companies, with international invitations managed by DESO (the Defence Export Services Organisation), which is funded by the taxpayer.

Make it a date
Farnborough takes place every other year and is a major date on the international arms fair calendar. In 2004, 47 of the world’s top 100 arms companies were at Farnborough, and the Government’s export support machine swung fully into action behind it. By marketing the event as a family-friendly airshow, the organisers attempt to normalise arms sales and portray these events as publicly acceptable.

CAAT will be protesting at Farnborough on the first day of the arms fair – Monday 17th July. If you can, we hope you’ll join us to help put across the reality of Farnborough.

CAAT will be highlighting Farnborough as yet another example of blatant corporate welfare provided by the UK Government through DESO. It’s shocking that public money is used to subsidise events that promote the sale of weapons internationally, especially when no other export industry gets the kind of support that arms companies do.

Youth
CAAT will also highlight the fact that 90 per cent of victims of war are civilians and 50 per cent of these are children, a terrifying statistic that makes Farnborough’s “International Youth Day” especially cynical. Farnborough’s website boasts that “over 1000 youths will be making their way” to Farnborough to take part in “an eye-catching, mind-opening programme of events that demonstrates vividly the employment, the environment and the careers opportunities of the aerospace sector”. The website also admits that “the parallel aim of International Youth Day is to provide the aerospace industry with the opportunity to inspire, educate and integrate with a wide range of young people/students and their gatekeepers, inspiring and encouraging their personal developments in the field of aerospace”.

Clean Inve

Launch of new Local Authority figures
The 2006 Clean Investment launch took place in late April and received wide coverage in local, regional and national media.

This year the campaign has focused on Local Authority shareholdings as use of the Freedom of Information Act means that we have significantly more information than in previous years. Prior to the Act we were only able to obtain information relating to UK public limited companies – and often incomplete information at that. Now we are able to ask Local Authorities about any arms company shares they may hold. As a result, we have obtained information on a wide range of investments, including those in dominant US and European weapons manufacturers.

As well as being a significant step forward in transparency, this new information has the potential to dramatically shift the debate around investment in arms companies. Despite being weak, the arguments that holding these shares supports UK jobs and assists UK “defence” have been widely used and accepted by the media and much of the public. However, in the face of massive shareholdings in foreign arms companies – such as US-base Lockheed Martin – these arguments clearly won’t wash.

Steps you can take
This is a campaign that anyone can contribute to, even those with limited resources.

Edinburgh CAAT

Edinburgh CAAT continues its year-long Clean Investment campaign. The campaign is carried out at various levels, using displays in churches and premises of partner organisations. A weekly street stall has also taken place outside the City Chambers. Edinburgh CAAT found
Clean Investment campaign news

Launch of new Local Authority figures

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Steps you can take

This is a campaign that anyone can contribute to, even those with limited spare time. If you are not already in touch with your Local Authority pension fund, the first step is to write to them to express your concern and gather information. The CAAT office can provide you with latest available shareholding figures. If your Local Authority holds arms company investments, ask them whether they are considering selling them; if they have not provided figures, ask them why not. The importance of these simple inquiries should not be underestimated.

If you are able to follow up your initial letter, there are a number of further steps you could take to persuade your Local Authority to sell its arms company shares. You could write to individual councillors; contact your local UNISON branch; organise protests or vigils outside council buildings; collect signatures for a petition in favour of ethical investment (leaflets are available from the CAAT office); and obtain local media coverage.

For more information on and support with any of these activities see www.caat.org.uk/campaigns/clean-investment/ or contact the CAAT office for the latest information relating to any Local Authority's holdings or campaign guidance.

Made in Britain

Fall Britain’s market place.
And if you ask discreetly
With credentials, that are sound,
You may be ushered somewhere
Safe from public jostle:
A small town in Surrey,
A short train journey from London (Waterloo station).
If you can come along, please get in touch with Anna at the CAAT office for further details.

Local Authorities known to have over £500,000 invested in Lockheed Martin, the world’s largest arms producer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pension Fund</th>
<th>Value of Lockheed Martin shares</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berkshire</td>
<td>£804,294</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cambridgeshire</td>
<td>£2,576,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Derbyshire</td>
<td>£825,846</td>
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<td>Greater Manchester</td>
<td>£3,651,450</td>
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<td>Rhondda Cynon Taff</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Sussex</td>
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</table>

(LB refers to ‘London Borough’)

Edinburgh CAAT Group

Edinburgh CAAT continues its year-long Clean Investment campaign. The campaign is carried out at various levels, using displays in churches and premises of partner organisations. A weekly street stall has also taken place outside the City Chambers. Edinburgh CAAT found that many members of the public were only too happy to sign a petition after hearing more about the campaign. The group plan to deliver the petition to the Pension Fund Subcommittee of the Finance Committee of the City Chambers at the end of June.
Nicholas Gilby and Mike Lewis uncover 70 years’ worth of evidence of an unholy trinity at the heart of UK arms deals with Saudi Arabia

Some things in UK foreign policy never change. For over 70 years the UK has given powerful backing to the prodigiously repressive House of Saud, rulers of Saudi Arabia. This has been part of a longstanding policy of supporting dictatorial Mid-East rulers to ensure the West’s access to the region’s oil. A prime beneficiary of this policy has been the UK weapons giant BAE Systems. Since 1966 BAE Systems has largely run the Royal Saudi Air Force through a series of massive government-to-government deals for arms and military services (substantially in exchange for oil). These have been crucial to BAE Systems’ growth into the world’s fourth largest weapons manufacturer. From the beginning the deals have been surrounded by allegations of substantial corruption, from the involvement of middleman Geoffrey Edwards in the late 1960s, to the recent “slush fund” allegations surrounding the massive and ongoing Al-Yamamah deal.

Buried files

These last allegations are now under investigation by the Serious Fraud Office (see page 4). But the origins – and the illicit nature – of the UK’s relationship with the House of Saud lies buried in previously unseen Government files. These reveal an astonishing story of corruption in UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia in the late 1960s and early 1970s, involving not just dirty businessmen, but collusion at the heart of the UK government. The files show that the Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence (MoD) not only encouraged corrupt practices by UK companies, but attempted to use nationalised companies to pass bribes.

Perhaps conscious that senior Saudi figures involved in these deals are still in government (and thus are still some of the UK’s best arms trade customers), the MoD remains supremely sensitive about this murky chapter in recent history. In 2003 the MoD wrote a thundering minute to Parliament to deny claims by the Guardian that the MoD’s arms sales unit, the Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO), had been “directly implicated in bribery abroad for 40 years”. Ministry brass assured the Guardian of “irresponsible” reporting, insisting that DESO had never condoned bribery in arms sales, and had procedures in place to ensure the propriety of government-to-government contracts. The previously unseen Government files show that this is simply untrue.

What does DESO know?

Founded in 1966, DESO was aware from the start about the murky world of arms trade corruption. In 1967 Harold Hubert, the Director of Army Sales in DESO, told the UK Embassy in Caracas that in DESO “day by day we carry out transactions knowing that at some point bribery is involved. Obviously I and my colleagues in this office do not engage in it, but we believe that various people who are somewhere along the lines of our transactions do. They do not tell us what they are doing and we do not inquire. We are interested in the end result”. Having told the Embassy that the main mechanism through which bribes were paid was “commissions” paid to agents, the Foreign Office wrote to Caracas agreeing with the MoD’s “prophecy that an agent acting in a government-to-government deal (or of course firm-to-government) should get his commission and the price [H Government] charge must reflect it”. Hubert was heavily involved in arm sales to the House of Saud and, in 1977, the MoD paid a 15 per cent commission to him on a £30m Saudi deal to support 100 British marines with the £300m contract was put through a Swiss bank account. In 1976 Fustuq was awarded a contract to run the Saudi Arabian National Guard for a 15 per cent commission.

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Founded in 1966, DESO was aware from the start about the murky world of arms trade corruption. In 1967 Harold Hubert, the Director of Army Sales in DESO, told the UK Embassy in Caracas that in DESO “day by day we carry out transactions knowing that at some point bribery is involved. Obviously I and my colleagues in this office do not engage in it, but we believe that various people who are somewhere along the lines of our transactions do. They do not tell us what they are doing and we do not inquire. We are interested in the end result”. Having told the Embassy that the main mechanism through which bribes were paid was “commissions” paid to agents, the Foreign Office wrote to Caracas agreeing with the MoD’s “prophecy that an agent acting in a government-to-government deal (or of course firm-to-government) should get his commission and the price [H Government] charge must reflect it”. Hubert was heavily involved in arm sales to the House of Saud and, in 1977, the MoD paid a 15 per cent commission to him on a £30m Saudi deal to support 100 British marines with the £300m contract was put through a Swiss bank account. In 1976 Fustuq was awarded a contract to run the Saudi Arabian National Guard for a 15 per cent commission.

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Duffy was aware from the start about dodgy transactions. In 1973 BAC (now BAE Systems) won a contract to run the Saudi air force until 1987. The £30m contract was put through the MoD accounts, including £30m in payment to "consultants". The forerunner to the National Audit Office queried the propriety of these payments, telling the MoD that since the MoD had not established the purpose for which the £30m payments had been made, the arrangement failed standards set by Treasury legal advice to avoid corruption. When the Treasury Solicitor suggested further enquiries be made of BAC, MoD Permanent Secretary Frank Cooper’s private secretary mishandled: “It didn’t really
like the way this is going and what may be unearthed”. Cooper’s solution was to obtain an unsupported assurance from BAC that it was not engaged in improper acts.

Keeping the customer satisfied
Throughout, keeping the Saudi customers happy remained the paramount political concern. Indeed, the 1973 contract was seen as so valuable that it was exempted from the general UK arms embargo to the Middle East during the Yom Kippur War. The British embassy in Jeddah explained that if Saudi Arabia were included "the political consequences could be very serious... undermining the biggest single strand in the fabric of the UK/Saudi relationship".

Corruption allegations around the massive Al-Yamamah deal to Saudi Arabia, another government-to-government deal involving BAE Systems’ forerunner British Aerospace, were also investigated by the National Audit Office. Its results were issued in a 1992 report for the Public Accounts Committee. The report has never been published (see page 12), despite Labour’s pledge while in opposition to do so. Indeed, Freedom of Information requests for it are currently being denied on grounds of Parliamentary Privilege: insisting that its publication remains the prerogative of MPs, even though in 1992 only two members of the Public Accounts Committee were allowed to see it, and none of the current members have seen it. It is the only National Audit Office report ever presented to Parliament which has never been published.

The Foreign Office too is continuing the fight to keep its own Saudi arms trade files secret, many of which are almost 40 years old. Several of the closed files concern the role of Mr Fustuq in Saudi Arabia, as well as that of Geoffrey Edwards in the deals of the 1960s. Crucially, the customers from forty years ago remain the customers today – Prince Sultan, the Minister of Defence, and King (then Prince) Abdullah. The cover-up by the Foreign Office and National Audit Office is vital to avoid scuppering BAE Systems’ chances of a massive new arms deal with Saudi Arabia, the initial stages of which were signed by Prince Sultan and then Defence Secretary John Reid in Riyadh in December. As with most of the UK-Saudi arms deals over the last forty years, the taxpayer will likely underwrite this new deal with billions in loan guarantees from the Export Credit Guarantee Department. BAE Systems is now rushing to conclude the deal before the Export Credit Guarantee Department’s procedures change next year to require disclosure of their agents’ identities. Arms sales are still “the biggest single strand in the fabric of the UK/Saudi relationship”. Some things in UK foreign policy never change.
BAE Systems AGM 2006

Anna Jones reports on events both inside and outside the meeting

News reports of BAE Systems' Annual General Meeting at the beginning of May concentrated on the disgruntlement of small shareholders about the sale of Airbus, which makes the company's output almost entirely military and increasingly reliant on the US market. This is certainly a very significant development, but it isn't the whole story of what was discussed: around 40 CAAT supporters attended the AGM as "token shareholders" and raised questions to the board on a number of other issues.

Making the world "a safer place"

Supporters challenged the company on its continued contribution to conflict and human rights abuses around the world – particularly by supplying arms and services to Saudi Arabia and Indonesia. One shareholder asked the Chair, Dick Olver, whether he empathised with victims who had been maimed or killed by BAE products. Olver replied that he believed: "BAE supplies products to make the world a safer place" and "the people in the company are proud of their contribution to stability in the world."

In response to questions about BAE Systems supplying arms to countries that perpetrated human rights abuses, or broke United Nations resolutions, the company Chair tried to escape responsibility by stating that all transfers were sanctioned by the UK Government. So, another win for the arms companies thanks to the ineffectiveness of the Export Control Act, which pays lip service to human rights, development and conflict issues, but has done nothing to limit arms exports. Other "factors" under the Act state that the UK's military-industrial base should be taken into account when granting licenses. This provides get-out clauses with which to justify arms exports. These "factors" were added in 2002 in response to BAE Systems' desire to sell components destined for incorporation in US-made jets, which were supplied to Israel and used against Palestinian civilians.

Cluster bombs

When an Iraqi CAAT supporter who had first-hand experience of the horror of cluster bombs got up to ask whether BAE Systems was supplying cluster bombs, Olver asserted that it was not. When the man tried to follow-up on his question, it seemed to many around him that his microphone had been turned off. Another supporter asked about cluster bombs again, citing a Parliamentary question in which a minister for the MoD had confirmed that cluster bombs parts had been purchased from Royal Ordnance, a subsidiary of BAE Systems. The Chair admitted that BAE subsidiaries might procure cluster bombs as part of a larger MoD order, something he didn't see as contradictory to his earlier assertion.

Influence

Olver was next forced to field questions regarding allegations of corruption and BAE System's apparent ability to by-pass democracy and influence Government policy. He was asked first about the way in which the company had lobbied the Government to water down the Export Credits Guarantee Department's anti-bribery procedures and secondly about investigations of the Serious Fraud Office into suspected false accounting and corruption. Olver denied the first, and, in regard to the second, stated that BAE had "done nothing wrong".

Meanwhile...

Outside the ADM other CAAT supporters made a very public peaceful protest. Several donned masks and costumes to highlight the way in which Tony Blair and other ministers have played�oodle to BAE Systems, providing taxpayers' money, helpful legislation and free marketing, not least in the form of DESO. It was a fitting picture to be spread across the pages of national newspapers the next day.

2006 marks the climax of the campaign for an international Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), launched three years ago by Oxfam, Amnesty International and the International Action Network on Small Arms. Somewhat surprisingly, this Control Arms coalition – which includes CAAT – has recently been joined by the UK government, despite its unstinting support for massive arms exports, and the Defence Manufacturers Association, the representative body of the UK arms industry.

What should we think of this apparent conversion by some of the arms trade’s biggest participants on champions? And will a treaty supported by such bodies actually work? In a speech in early 2005, then Foreign Secretary Jack Straw insisted that the treaty would tackle some of CAAT’s central concerns. He said it would enshrine "core principles" prohibiting arms sales when "exports may be used to abus
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Yet in January this year the Defence Manufacturers Association told its members that the Government had assured them that any eventual treaty “would not bring new obligations for UK industry”. This suggests that current UK arms exports provide a benchmark for the likely effectiveness of a treaty with government and industry backing. Unfortunately, the official record of UK arms exports in 2005 shows the UK arms trade in open and growing breach of the “principles” discussed above.

Human rights abuse
The Foreign Office’s 2005 Human Rights Report listed 20 “major countries of concern”. In the same year the UK licensed military exports to 11 of them. These included:

- The highest level of UK arms exports to Israel since 1999, despite ongoing occupation of and civilian killings in the Occupied Palestinian Territories
- Exports to Indonesia worth over £12.5m. Late last year CAAT exposed UK-made Tactica armoured vehicles being deployed against protestors in Papua
- A 25 per cent increase in arms exports to Saudi Arabia. In December 2005 Defence Minister John Reid signed an agreement paving the way for a new multi-billion pound arms deal with the regime, including a new fleet of Typhoon fighter jets

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12
ECGD and bribery

The Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD), part of the Department of Trade and Industry, insures exports, including many arms deals, which are too risky for the private market to touch otherwise. The ECGD is subsidised by the UK government. This means that while the companies involved pay premiums to the ECGD, in effect the UK taxpayer underwrites the deals, picking up the shortfall if the companies lose out.

In spring 2004 the ECGD announced that it was introducing tough new rules on bribery and corruption. Three companies – BAE Systems, which is being investigated by the Serious Fraud Office over allegations of a “slush fund” in its South African arms deal known as Al Yamamah, see page 4, and pages 8–9, Airbus and Rolls Royce – objected. The proposals were watered down by the then Trade and Industry Secretary Patricia Hewitt. In January 2005, after a legal challenge by an anti-corruption group, The Corner House, the Government agreed to hold a public consultation over the proposals. The results of this were announced in March 2006. The ECGD has reintroduced key anti-corruption measures. These include a requirement for exporters to name agents involved in the transaction, though the current proposal for the method of doing this (itself the subject of yet another consultation) imposes conditions of the most stringent secrecy.

In general, although some loopholes remain, the new procedures are a great improvement, and it is hoped that they will significantly reduce the potential for corruption. Further information can be found on www.ecgd.gov.uk.

Ann Pickering

Continued from page 11

Conflict

Of the 17 countries involved in major armed conflict in 2005, the UK licensed military exports to 14 of them. These included:

- Assault rifle parts to Nepal, where both sides of the civil war have been accused of human rights abuses
- A 60 per cent rise in arms exports to Sri Lanka, where government bombing of rebel-held areas has escalated
- Military aircraft parts to Uganda, despite an international coalition of aid agencies accusing the Ugandan government of failing to “prioritise the protection of civilians over the annihilation of the Lord’s Resistance Army”

Poverty

In 2005 the UK sold significant quantities of arms to ten countries in the bottom third of the UN’s Human Development Index. These included:

- At least £18.1m of arms sales to Pakistan, which spends more on its military than on health and education combined
- At least £31m to Nigeria, the world’s 20th least developed country

With the UK government already backing the initiative, CAAT has not made the ATT part of its core work this year. Unless a treaty goes further than government and industry currently allow, it may prove a dangerous whitewash – an ostensible solution to the repression, bloodshed and poverty fuelled by the arms trade which, in fact, provides cover for continued indiscriminate arms sales around the world. 

Only report not published

A Freedom of Information request made by CAAT has revealed that the 1992 National Audit Office (NAO) report on the Al Yamamah deal with Saudi Arabia is the only NAO report presented to Parliament that has not been published. The nearest equivalent is three reports from the early 1990s on security service buildings, but these were eventually published in 2000. It seems that arms sales to Saudi Arabia are afforded greater secrecy than matters pertaining to spies.

Contact your Councillor

Many CAAT supporters will have new local councillors following the elections in some parts of England on 4th May. If you haven’t done so already, do write to or talk to your councillor about disinvesting from arms companies.

• See page 7 for more information about this year’s Clean Investment figures. There’s a lot more information on www.caat.org.uk/campaigns/clean-investment.php including a briefing for councillors, which includes the legalities. If you don’t have web access, copies can be ordered from the CAAT office.
Reed Elsevier update

You may remember that in March this year, prominent writers including A.S. Byatt and Ian McEwan called on the publishing company Reed Elsevier to stop organising arms fairs. They did so in a high-profile letter co-ordinated by CAAT, which was published in the Times Literary Supplement in the week of the London Book Fair, another of Reed Elsevier’s events.

A couple of weeks later, CAAT learned that because of events around the London Book Fair, Reed Elsevier had decided to employ PR company Luther Pendragon to handle the “crisis management” arising from its involvement in arms fairs.

Well it certainly seems like they could do with a bit of help getting their stories straight, particularly around the issue of cluster bomb incidents.

CAAT bookmark at the London Book Fair

Nevertheless, the official DSEi catalogue listed a Canadian firm called International Custom Products that advertised “aircraft deployed cluster bombs”. When asked by the Independent newspaper to explain this discrepancy, Reed Exhibitions said: “Our original statement was meant to refer that cluster bombs would be banned after 2005.” Ah, so that’s what they really meant...

Strange then to find that around this time a few pages of the DSEi catalogue, including the page listing cluster bombs, had mysteriously gone missing from the official website. And stranger still that when a handful of CAAT supporters attended Reed Elsevier’s Annual General Meeting in April, the company’s board members went back to denying that cluster bombs had been promoted at DSEi, saying that they didn’t know where we’d got our information from!

We continue to urge Reed Elsevier to stop organising arms fairs. The horrifying nature of the trade in which the company takes part can’t simply be hidden by smooth talking and glossy PR. It’s time Reed Elsevier stopped trying to duck the truth and faced up to the glaring reality that its role in the arms trade is inconsistent with the good work that it does in other fields.

Obituary: Rachel Vaughan

Rachel was an amazing person to spend time with and we were able to enjoy a fair amount of that time thanks to her volunteer work at CAAT. She was entertaining, friendly and compassionate, and you certainly knew where you stood with her. She wrote, edited, and was a valuable proofreader, not least of all CAATnews. You could guarantee she wouldn’t just check the grammar and spelling, but would excise the jargon and ensure we weren’t caught up too much in our own little bubble.

Rachel had periods when she couldn’t come into the office following illness. She had Marfan’s Syndrome, which meant she required heart operations from an early age. In 2001, a year or so after arriving at CAAT, she had a serious, related heart problem that put her in hospital for nine months, after which she was expected to be left needing a wheelchair. But it wasn’t! Rachel’s nature to passively accept this and she steadily increased her mobility to the point where she needed just one walking stick. As soon as she was able, she came back to the office, as lively as ever.

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Several years on and, from what we could see, having significantly increased her strength, Rachel died peacefully in her bed on 18th March this year. It was a great shock to everyone in the office, but she deemed another lengthy stint in hospital and it was some consolation that this was avoided. Her funeral was impressive. Rachel’s mother oversaw it, giving us a background to her life, then a stream of relatives and close friends shared their memories and thoughts of her. There were many who were very close to her: she obviously achieved great quality as well as quantity in her friendships. From what these friends and her family said, it was apparent how important CAAT was to her, both for the friendships she forged here and the work itself. She was important to many people here, and is greatly missed.

IN PRECIOUS REUNION
Fundraising

By Kathryn Busby

Sponsor an advert
One of the ways in which we help CAAT to grow is through advert and insert swaps with like-minded organisations whose supporters are likely to be sympathetic to CAAT’s cause.

You will have noticed the leaflets and advertisements in each issue of CAATnews, from organisations such as World Development Movement, Corporate Watch and Peace News. In return for these, the organisations put our adverts or inserts in their magazines or newsletters, attracting many new CAAT supporters.

In addition to swapping adverts and inserts, CAAT sometimes has the option of paying to place promotional materials in other targeted publications. To take one example, the Friend is an independent weekly magazine providing news and views from a Quaker perspective on issues such as peace. It’s read by more than 15,000 people connected with the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in the UK. Quakers helped to found CAAT thirty years ago and the support we receive from Quaker meetings and individuals across the country today remains invaluable to the campaign.

Placing a leaflet and advert in the Friend would help us reach thousands of people who are very likely to support CAAT’s campaigns, both financially and by taking action. The problem, as ever, is cost. We have to stretch our resources a long way and we don’t currently have the money to pay for this type of advertising – unless someone can help us. If you’re interested in sponsoring an advert and insert such as this (or part of one!) to help us get our campaign message across to even more people within an important and supportive audience, please give me a call at the office or email me on kathryn@caat.org.uk for more information.

New publications and materials list
As promised in the last issue, your June/July copy of CAATnews will have arrived with our newly re-designed publications and materials list. We hope that you’ll be able to order everything you need to learn about the issues, campaign locally and raise awareness of CAAT. As the form explains, we try to provide resources for free or for as low a price as possible; but if you can make a donation to help us cover costs we would be very grateful. Also, if you have an idea for a new resource to help you campaign, fundraise or sign up new supporters, then please do let us know.

Steering Committee

Following an election in March to fill a vacancy, David Babbs was elected to the CAAT Steering Committee as a Supporter representative. He will serve until the end of 2006, but will be eligible to stand for a full term of two years when the next regular election is held in the autumn.

The Steering Committee is now:

Elected Supporter representatives – Richie Andrew, David Babbs, Richard Bass (also the Treasurer), Dorothy Forbes, Nick Gilby, Gillian Paterson, Sam Parlo-Freeman, Anna Stavrianakis

Sponsors’ representatives – Pat Allen (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament), Albert Beale (Peace Pledge Union), Angela Breame (Fellowship of Reconciliation), Rebecca Gumbrell-McCormick (Quaker Peace & Social Witness), Kev Mullen (TAPOL – Indonesian Human Rights Campaign), William Parker (Liberal Democrats for Peace & Security), Nicholas Russell (Labour Action for Peace)

Network representatives – Simon Matthews (Christian); Jo Wittams (Volunteer)

The CAAT staff are also members of the Steering Committee.

WHOSE RULES RULE? 06

Campaign locally

CAAT has a network of local contact across the UK who take responsibility for programme activity and the work of CAAT contact if you would like to know whether the work of CAAT in your area or if you are interested in getting in touch or setting up a group. All that is needed is a willingness to raise awareness of arms trade activity and the work of CAAT locally.

Contact Kathryn at kathryn@caat.org.uk

Contact your MP

It is estimated that every letter written represents about 80 people who are around to writing. If you would like your MP to contact the CAAT office to find out more on your behalf and about an interest in arms trade issues.

On some issues it is also worth contacting your MP to ask them to write in support. If you would like to know who your MP is or if you would like to write, contact the CAAT office on 020 7287 7287 or email enquiries@caat.org.uk for more information.

Contact Beccie at beccie@caat.org.uk including the Local Campaigns Pack

Raise awareness

Organising a public meeting, using running a street stall have proved effective ways to raise awareness of arms trade issues and can also help with publicity. For more information on all the above, please contact enquiries@caat.org.uk or call 020 7287 7287.
Campaign Against Arms Trade
thrive on your participation

For more information on all of these contact the CAAT office on 020 7281 0297 or if you have any enquiries not covered below contact enquiries@caat.org.uk

Subscribe to a CAAT email list
Sign up to receive the monthly CAAT bulletin with the latest news and events; to receive press releases; to join the list for the CAAT Action Network and find out about nonviolent direct action to stop the arms trade; or to find out when the latest CAATNews is on the website.
Contact enquiries@caat.org.uk or visit www.caat.org.uk/lists

Make a donation
The donations of our supporters enable CAAT to struggle for a world without arms trading; without your help there would be no campaign. Support CAAT by sending us a cheque, setting up a regular standing order donation, or by taking part in a fundraising event.
Contact Kathryn at kathryn@caat.org.uk

Contact your MP
It is estimated that every letter written to a politician represents about 80 people who care but haven’t got around to writing. If you would like to visit or write to your MP contact the CAAT office to find out if your MP has shown an interest in arms trade issues.
On some issues it is also worth contacting your MEP. If you live in Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales, you can also raise issues that have an impact on employment or the economy with your national representatives.
Contact Ann at ann@caat.org.uk

Campaign locally
CAAT has a network of local contacts and groups around the UK who take responsibility for promoting anti-arms trade activity and the work of CAAT in their area. Get in contact if you would like to know what is happening in your area or if you are interested in becoming a local contact or setting up a group. All that’s needed is a willingness to raise awareness of arms trade issues in any way that you feel is appropriate.
Contact Beccie at beccie@caat.org.uk for info, including the Local Campaigns Pack.

Raise awareness
Organising a public meeting, using the local media and running a street stall have proved effective ways for CAAT groups to raise awareness of arms trade issues. CAAT can provide speakers for public meetings, materials for stalls and can also help with publicity.

Contact Anna at action@caat.org.uk or Beccie beccie@caat.org.uk

Research the arms companies
CAAT has produced a range of research on the UK’s main arms companies. However, staff at the CAAT office are not able to track all arms company developments and would appreciate receiving any information you find. This can include anything from watching out for information in your local press, to undertaking basic research in your local library, to approaching a company directly for information.
Contact Ian at ian@caat.org.uk

Protest against the arms trade
A protest can confront the arms trade and illustrate that many people do not think that the arms trade is an ordinary, acceptable business. In addition, a protest can generate a lot of publicity, which will raise awareness about the company and the arms trade in general. CAAT is a non-violent organisation and any protest organised under the name of CAAT needs to be non-violent (contact the office for the CAAT guidelines).
Contact Anna at action@caat.org.uk

Join the CAAT Christian Network
The Network raises arms trade issues within national church structures and local churches.
Contact Alun Morinan at christian@caat.org.uk

Order a CAAT publication
CAAT produces briefings, reports and leaflets on a range of issues.
Contact Patrick at patrick@caat.org.uk

Media Co-ordinator
(part-time)
CAAT is seeking to appoint a part-time Media Co-ordinator (3 days per week) to work in our London office.
The Media Co-ordinator’s role is to sustain and develop CAAT’s media profile and the media components of our campaigns.
For further information please visit www.caat.org.uk or send an A4 84p SAE to: CAAT, 11 Goodwin Street, London N4 3HQ
Salary £24,600 pa (pro rata)
Closing date 14th June
3–11 June
Stop the Arms Trade Week, focussing on the Shut DESO campaign. Contact beccie@caat.org.uk

11 June
Arms Trade Day of Prayer. To order leaflets or a free day of prayer pack email patrick@caat.org.uk

24 June
CAAT Speaker’s training, Leeds. A one-day public speaking workshop for existing or future CAAT speakers. Contact beccie@caat.org.uk or anna@caat.org.uk

17–23 July
Farnborough International arms fair. See page 6.

29 July
Demonstration in DSEi host borough Newham, calling for the cancellation of the 2007 arms fair. Starts 12 noon from the Park in Balaam Street, Plaistow, E13.

1 September–30 November
3-month mass lobby of MPs as part of Shut DESO campaign. Visit your MP in your local constituency or come along to Parliament on the 16th October. See page 3.

16 October
Shut DESO Action Day, including a mass peaceful action in central London and the chance to lobby your MP in the afternoon. See page 3.

25 November
CAAT National Gathering. 10am–6pm, London. A day of talks, discussions and workshops to find out more about the issues, improve your campaigning skills and meet other CAAT supporters. More details nearer the time.