Where next after the National Gallery campaign  P7

Taking on the arms trade in 2013  P8-9

We gate-crashed the arms dealers’ dinner  P14

CAMERON: ARMS PUSHER TO THE MIDDLE EAST

The PM’s recent activity  P3
The most obvious thing to mention in the editorial this issue is the new design! This comes along with a new designer, Chris Woodward. So this issue also calls for a goodbye and huge thanks to Richie Andrew, who worked on CAAT NEWS for many years. We’re grateful for all his fantastic work – not just as the magazine designer but as a member of the CAAT steering committee. Please do let us know your feedback on the new look. We’d also love to hear your response to arguments raised on pages 12 and 13 – difficult issues but ones that come up time and again.

On 7 December 2012, CAAT was presented with a 2012 Right Livelihood Award in the Swedish Parliament. CAAT was one of four recipients of the Award, known as the “Alternative Nobel Prize”.

Speaking on behalf of CAAT, Anne-Marie O’Reilly said:

“Arms control will never work when governments also promote arms sales. David Cameron talks about democracy and human rights in the Middle East but continues to push arms to Saudi Arabia, a regime with a terrible human rights record.

“This award is a testament to the work of thousands of people around the UK whose collective action has managed to expose, challenge and impede the arms trade since we began our work nearly 40 years ago.”

More on the award and the full version of Anne-Marie’s speech to the Swedish Parliament can be found online at blog.caat.org.uk

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Campaign Against Arms Trade works to end the international arms trade. The arms business has a devastating impact on human rights and security, and damages economic development. Large scale military procurement and arms exports only reinforce a militaristic approach to international problems.

To receive this issue of CAAT NEWS in large print please call 020 7281 0297
David Cameron is desperate. He is determined to help the arms companies, in particular BAE Systems, sell their wares. His problem is that many of the customers are autocratic rulers in the Middle East, highlighted in the last two years. Their disregard for human rights has led many parliamentarians, the press and the public to express disquiet at arms sales to them.

The sales trip
The Prime Minister’s reaction has been to jet off to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia as BAE’s arms-seller-in-chief to promote the Eurofighter Typhoon. In response, the Guardian said that Cameron should admit that the interests of the military-industrial complex take precedence over human rights.

While the Guardian’s stance might not be entirely unexpected, much of the media shared this unease about the sales trip. The Daily Telegraph, for instance, ran the headline “David Cameron defends arms deals with Gulf states”. The media consensus that arms sales are to be applauded seems to be breaking down.

The speech
A week later David Cameron used a speech to talk about arms sales. Saying he understood “why some people are a bit squeamish about me flying off round the world to help our defence industry” he told his audience: “with 300,000 jobs [dependent on the defence industry], it’s right that we should be at forefront of this market, supporting British jobs and British allies and that’s why last week, in the Gulf, I was pushing for new contracts for Typhoon jets worth billions of pounds and thousands of jobs. That’s vital new business for Britain. And I make no apology for going out there and trying to help win it.”

Beaming in Oman
Just before Christmas it was all smiles as Cameron dropped in on Oman to mark a £2.5 billion Eurofighter and Hawk deal. Once again, he cited the 300,000 jobs, 6,000 of which, he claimed, would be safeguarded by this deal.

Jobs
The Government’s reference to 300,000 jobs requires scrutiny. It is based on five-year-old data from a declining industry, includes around 100,000 jobs from non-equipment expenditure by the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the majority of the remaining jobs are supported by MoD equipment purchases, not exports.

Just 0.2 per cent of the UK workforce is employed on arms exports. All arms industry jobs are heavily subsidised by the taxpayer, and military exports get Government support not given to other industries.

In 2013 CAAT will be increasing its efforts to get the argument across on jobs, as well as redoubling its efforts to influence the Labour Party and the trade unions. Their support for human rights and green jobs, instead of, as at present, for military sales and the arms industry, is sorely needed.

0.2% of the British workforce is employed on arms exports
Former BAE Systems lobbyist Alfons Mensdorff-Pouilly has been cleared of laundering millions of euros on behalf of the company in order to win arms contracts in central and eastern Europe. However, he was given a two-month suspended jail sentence for tampering with evidence.

India is investigating alleged corruption in helicopter deals that involved the Finmeccanica company AgustaWestland. The Italian government has been asked for a response and for any relevant documents. Jane’s Defence Weekly, 7/11/12

The CEO of Finmeccanica has been arrested in Italy on suspicion of seeking to rig Naples police department public contracts. At the time of the alleged wrongdoing Carlo Gualdaroni was head of Finmeccanica unit Elsag Datamat, which had won contracts to provide Naples police with surveillance systems. Defense News, 10/1/13

Six employees of Finnish military company Patria have been charged with bribery and corporate espionage in connection with a Slovenian contract for armoured vehicles. Agence France-Presse, 18/12/12

The presiding judge said: “The whole affair stinks, but it doesn’t stink enough”.

In 2010 the UK’s Serious Fraud Office (SFO) dropped its investigation into bribery allegations concerning Mensdorff-Pouilly after BAE made a deal with British prosecutors.

In a separate case, EADS offices in Germany were raided in connection with investigations into alleged bribes to Austrian officials to smooth the sale of Eurofighter jets to Austria five years ago.

Austrian prosecutors gained insights into the Eurofighter deal when they helped the SFO during its investigation referred to above. EADS already faces a criminal probe by the SFO into whether a UK subsidiary bribed Saudi officials.

Defence News, 17/1/13;
Financial Times, 7/11/12

India has despatched a request to the US to buy 145 BAE M777 howitzers. The deal would be conducted through the Foreign Military Sales programme. Jane’s Defence Weekly, 14/11/12

A subsidiary of Germany’s Rheinmetall intends to produce up to 1,200 armoured vehicles for Algeria over the next 10 years. Agence France-Presse, 21/11/12

An analysis of UK government figures by the Jubilee Debt Campaign (JDC) shows that the UK is owed hundreds of millions of pounds of unpaid debt on loans to autocratic governments in Argentina, Indonesia, Iraq and Zimbabwe for UK weapons, many of which were used against civilians. Up to £50m was lent to the Argentinian junta to buy British arms before the 1982 invasion of the Falklands.

JDC is calling for an end to these “unjust poor country debts”. Guardian, 6/11/12

The German government is said to be considering a request from Saudi Arabia for the supply of armoured vehicles. The vehicles have been described as suitable for combating uprisings.

Independent, 21/12/12

Iraq has agreed to buy 28 Czech combat jets in a deal estimated to be worth around $1bn.

Ria Novosti, 21/10/12

Iraq has agreed to buy 28 Czech combat jets in a deal estimated to be worth around $1bn.

Ria Novosti, 21/10/12

Image © Ndecam/Flickr
UK SPENDING

The National Audit Office has warned that major military projects are being hit by delays and overspend. It found that costs of the 16 largest projects had risen by £468m and slipped in timescale by 11 years, seven months in the past year.

The annual report on the Ministry of Defence’s major equipment projects said the overall costs of the department’s projects have risen by a total of £6.6bn and commissions have been delayed overall by 39 years since being ordered.

BBC News, 10/1/13

**Costs of the 16 largest projects have risen by £468m**

INFLUENCE

An undercover investigation by the Times has found former military chiefs willing to cash in on their contacts.

Undercover reporters visited former army chief and former adviser to David Cameron Lord Dannatt claiming that they hoped to hire him for a South Korean company that wanted to sell a drone to UK armed forces. The Times alleged that Dannatt boasted about using his contacts to gain an advantage during the bidding process.

Five other top-ranking armed forces officers were interviewed by the reporters, who claimed to have uncovered a world in which former military leaders can be hired by private firms.

Sunday Times, 14/10/12

EU ARMS EXPORTS

The EU’s arms export Annual Report for 2011 has been published, providing data on arms export licences approved by EU member states.

- For the full report see bit.ly/XVj9Vl
- For CAAT’s press release go to bit.ly/SofKN0

Top recipients, 2011 (€, million)

- USA: 3,191
- Saudi Arabia: 4,205
- India: 1,565
- Singapore: 961
- UAE: 1,904
- Australia: 604
- Mexico: 576
- Algeria: 815
- Kuwait: 622

Sales by region, 2011 (€, million)

- Europe (other): 1,837
- Central Asia: 517
- North East Asia: 854
- South East Asia: 1,779
- Middle East: 7,975
- South Africa: 1,201
- Sub-Saharan Africa: 493
- Central America & the Caribbean: 660
- South America: 741
- North America: 3,588
- Africa: 622
- Asia: 4,205
- Oceania: 946

Top suppliers, 2011 (€, million)

- UK: 7,003
- France: 5,415
- Germany: 1,890
- Belgium: 1,632
- Netherlands: 1,439
- Sweden: 1,189
- Poland: 946
- Italy: 5,262
- Spain: 2,871
- Austria: 530
- South Africa: 493
- Australia: 1,904
- Singapore: 961
- North East Asia: 854
- South East Asia: 1,779
- Middle East: 7,975
- Africa: 622
- Asia: 4,205
- Oceania: 946

UKTI IN IRAQ

UKTI Defence & Security Organisation (UKTI DSO) may attend a new arms fair in Iraq this March. The UKTI website states: “As Iraq both becomes increasingly prosperous and looks to increase its military capabilities, there will be potential for it to become a significant market for UK defence and security exports.”

UKTI website, 10/1/13

CHEMRING

Talks between Carlyle and Chemring Group on a possible takeover of the latter have collapsed. The deadline for takeover talks had already been extended a number of times.

Jane’s Defence Weekly, 14/11/12

IRAQ-RUSSIA

A $4.2bn arms deal between Iraq and Russia has been delayed by the Iraqi Prime Minister after allegations of corruption. Iraq now plans to renegotiate the deal and acquire more sophisticated equipment.

Jane’s Defence Weekly, 21/11/12

BURMA

Weapons made in Sweden by Saab Bofors Dynamics used by Burmese troops against rebels have been traced back to a shipment of arms sold to India in 2003. Selling or passing on such weapons would have been in breach of regulations on arms trading.

A Saab spokesperson said deals included end-user agreements that prohibited the weapons being sold on.

Independent, 14/12/12
The autumn term saw a wave of protest against arms company recruitment on campus with even more universities taking part than last year. Demonstrations took place at Edinburgh, Warwick, UCL, Islington, Bristol, Queen Mary, Royal Holloway, Southampton, Sheffield, Lancaster and Kent. Arms companies need new student recruits, so promotion opportunities such as careers fairs are very important to them.

October saw a fantastic victory in the campaign to kick arms companies off campus. Students at the University of Essex discovered that BAE Systems was planning to attend their Careers Fair and quickly sprung into action to stop it! The activists emailed every university department and all the other stallholders and planned a protest. The Essex Careers Centre then announced that BAE Systems would not be attending the fair due to health and safety concerns. Congratulations to everyone at Essex for this victory!

We were pleased to find that students were as shocked as we were about the Huffington Post report on arms company funding of Russell Group universities. Lots of student newspapers have expressed interest in following up the story, and articles have been published at King’s College London, University College London, Leeds, Cambridge and Cardiff. This will inform even more students about the ways in which arms companies impact upon universities.

Get involved:
- Find out what’s happening at your university and across the network at universities.caat.org.uk
- If you’re interested in finding out more or getting involved, email Beth at universities@caat.org.uk

In November, a student society at the University of Sheffield called “Fund Education Not War” (see page 15 for more on the group) kindly hosted the CAAT Universities Gathering. Activists from around the UK gathered to share ideas and learn more about campaigning. It was also a great opportunity for students from different places to meet each other and to make links between their universities. All in all the day was a great success, full of energy and exciting ideas for the future.

In the News

Lancaster students protest against BAE Systems
SPONSORSHIP OF OUR CULTURE: THE CAMPAIGN DEVELOPS

Following on from success in CAAT’s National Gallery campaign, Sarah Waldron gives an update on arms trade sponsorship of cultural institutions.

As the previous edition of CAAT NEWS went to print last September we received exciting news. The National Gallery called to say that its sponsorship deal with arms company Finmeccanica had ended!

The Gallery says its paintings “inspire and enrich life” but from 2006–2012 it allowed arms dealers to use its rooms, hosting receptions for the UK’s two main weapons fairs, Farnborough International and DSEi.

Finmeccanica wasn’t just buying the use of the Gallery’s rooms; it was buying the Gallery’s good name to give the appearance of legitimacy to its business. But no more! After an amazing effort from CAAT supporters, the National Gallery told us we’d won (and could we please call off the protests).

Campaign results

The contract had been due to run until October 2013, and Finmeccanica had already made advance bookings for the Gallery’s rooms – so this was undoubtedly a response to the campaign.

Thousands of emails and letters to the Gallery, support from the arts world, and a series of creative interventions put on the pressure. Together we’ve shown that arms companies and their deadly deals have no place in our arts institutions. Thank you!

Now we need to keep up the good work. The Gallery isn’t the only cultural institution to have made deals with arms companies.

Royal Opera House

Chemring is a Gold Patron of the Royal Opera House. Its weapons were used in Kuwait in October 2012. Baton rounds were fired at Bedoon protesters, stateless people denied official documents and access to education, healthcare and employment. Teargas made by the company was used against protesters in Egypt in 2011.

Write to Sir Tony Hall, Chief Executive, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London, WC2E 9DD to express your concerns about the Royal Opera House’s association with Chemring, a company that profits from conflict and repression.

London Transport Museum

The London Transport Museum (LTM) takes sponsorship from weapons giant Thales, whose products include missiles, drones and aircraft carriers. The UK government recently helped it sell Starstreak missiles to Thailand, after they were used as part of the 2012 Olympic “defence” systems.

The LTM’s rooms have been used for meetings between Thales and UK Trade and Investment Defence & Security Organisation (UKTI DSO), the Government body responsible for promoting arms sales, and for a meeting between UKTI DSO and an Indian military group.

Write to Sam Mullins, Director, London Transport Museum, Covent Garden Piazza, London, WC2E 7BB to express concern about the London Transport Museum’s association with Thales, a global weapons manufacturer, and the use of the Museum’s room for the promotion of arms sales.
Challenge the arms fair

DSEi, one of the world’s largest arms fairs, is a surreal and disturbing place. Every two years the ExCeL centre in East London becomes home to acres of weaponry.

Those organising and attending like to think of it as just another gadget show and marketing opportunity. But conflict and repression are fuelled from here.

DSEi stands for “Defence & Security Equipment International”, but the “defence” equipment is designed to intimidate, repress, injure and destroy. “Security” is offered to tyrants, browsing equipment to be turned on their own citizens.

Around one in three of the world’s militaries attended DSEi in 2011. Adversaries shopped alongside each other for weapons to use against each other. Bahrain, Egypt and Saudi Arabia were there at the invitation of the UK government, despite continuing human rights abuses and violent repression of protest.

The next event is booked for 10–13 September 2013. We cannot let this go unchallenged.

Attend a workshop to Stop the Arms Fair

Are you planning to take action against the arms fair? Or maybe you’d like to do something but are not sure how to get started? Stop the Arms Fair is a coalition of groups, including CAAT, which have pledged to resist the arms fair. It will be running a series of workshops in the first half of 2013, where you can find out more about DSEi, build essential campaigning and action skills and share ideas for local and national action.

If you’d like to attend a workshop, or can help organise one, contact Anne-Marie.

Take action to burst the arms dealers’ bubble

In the bubble of the arms fair - supported by the Government, protected by a huge security and police operation and insulated by euphemism – arms dealers are desperate to ignore the human consequences of promoting weapons to whoever will pay. But that’s been getting harder.

Over the last year, protesters have intervened at arms trade conferences, receptions and expensive dinners to challenge the arms trade and offer a reminder of the lives at the other end of UK arms sales (see page 14 for the latest).

Join a Non-Violent Direct Action training day to explore non-violence and direct action, and to develop your skills for impeding the arms trade. The next training is in Leeds on 23 March.

Keep up the pressure on BAE: see page 14.

An arms fair is like a double glazing sales convention – but where every last bit of UPVC is designed to kill you.

Liz Stephens, politics.co.uk

Bahraini weapons buyers were special guests at DSEi both before and after the uprising began in 2011 – invited and courted personally by the UK government. Even though the crackdown on democracy protests continues to this day, the UK still bolsters the regime with weapons sales.
DSEi is on your doorstep!
Hundreds of companies have already booked a place at DSEi 2013.
Find out which are near you on CAAT’s arms trade map: www.caat.org.uk/resources/mapping/

No cultural credibility
Arms companies have quietly been making their way into our cultural institutions through sponsorship deals. Museums and theatres provide beautiful and useful venues for corporate events, but it’s the appearance of legitimacy that such an association brings that the companies are really keen to buy. Last year, our campaigning ended the National Gallery’s support for the arms trade.

Imagine if human lives and the environment were valued more than arms company profits.

Time to shift priorities
The UK’s military spending is the fourth largest in the world, but despite public spending cuts and austerity, UK military expenditure has seen one of the smallest reductions in Europe.

It is predicted that 56,000 jobs in the NHS will be lost, but the Government subsidises the arms export industry to the tune of £700 million a year.

The Government has halved the budget for social housing yet it plans to spend £25 billion designing and constructing a new Trident nuclear weapons system. Our Government could choose to tackle climate change. Instead it spends 30 times more researching weapons than green energy.

We urgently need to imagine and pursue alternatives. Cutting arms trade subsidies and military spending could save our youth services, mental health services, support for disabled people and social housing. Shifting priorities to tackle climate change could also have a dramatic impact. It could secure jobs in renewables for the future and improve human security rather than threaten it.

Take action on 15 April, the Global Day of Action on Military Spending. Contact Anne-Marie to order materials and find out more.

Watch out for the launch of our new campaign later this year to push for positive choices on public spending.

Contact Anne-Marie on outreach@caat.org.uk or 020 7281 0297 for more information.
UK-supplied military equipment was used by Israel in Gaza in 2008-9; it is likely that the same happened in November 2012. This prompted a multi-party group of MPs to table an Early Day Motion (EDM), which is a kind of parliamentary petition.

**EDM Text**

EDM 788 includes: “[This House] notes that the then Foreign Secretary confirmed that Israeli equipment used in the 2008-09 conflict in Gaza almost certainly contained UK-supplied components... is concerned that this is likely to be the case with Israeli equipment used in November 2012; believes the Government should conduct a thorough assessment of the possible use of UK-supplied equipment by the Israeli Defence Force during the recent conflict in Gaza; and calls on the Government to fundamentally re-examine all military relations between the UK and Israel, including imports from Israeli defence contractors and co-operation through the EU Security Research Programme, until such time that the long-term safety of Palestinian civilians is secured.”

**Scrutiny continues**

The Commons’ Committees on Arms Export Controls initiated a debate on the issue on 13 December. The CAEC Chair Sir John Stanley MP, a former Conservative Defence Minister, continued to try to convince the Government that there is a conflict between arms sales and human rights, calling this “blindingly obvious”. A welcome export is CAEC’s expertise. Sir John visited Berlin and Paris recently to tell parliamentarians there about CAEC’s work.

Write to your MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA and ask her or him to sign the EDM. You can also do this via the CAAT website www.caat.org.uk/resources/countries/israel/

-The All-Party Parliamentary Group on International Corporate Responsibility published a report in November 2012 into UK Export Finance (UKEF), formerly the Export Credits Guarantee Department. This Government department insures companies selling overseas.

**Recommendations**

Among the report’s recommendations was that there should be a consultation on a prohibitions list for arms.

**Amounts**

Although currently at a low level, export credit support for arms exports has usually been high. Papers on export credit debt, released by UKEF in October, give details of the amounts outstanding from military deals to Indonesia’s Suharto, Egypt’s Mubarak and Argentina’s Galtieri (also see “Unjust debts” on page 4).

-Ann Feltham

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**THEY SAID IT!**

I do not think that people in this country really appreciate the extraordinary lead that the Prime Minister has given in the promotion of defence exports. Having been the Minister responsible for defence exports, I can testify to his determination, vigour, enthusiasm and commitment.

Sir Gerald Howarth, former defence minister, speaking in Parliament, 22 November 2012

A significant section of the NGOs (non-governmental organisations)… are deliberately provoking parliamentarians into taking positions which are unnecessarily unsympathetic to the conditions on the ground in the Middle East, which does real damage to our arms exports… I’m not condoning human rights abuses, of course not, but… sometimes you have to be pragmatic.

Peter Luff, former defence minister, quoted in Reuters, 2 November 2012

[Cameron’s support] makes a huge, huge difference. First of all, it sends a very strong message to our customers... It also sends a message internally within government, that this is something the Government wants to do. It is an active leadership and it is one that has had a big ripple effect through government and through industry.

Nigel Whitehead, Head UK BAEBusiness, Telegraph, 25 November 2012
MINISTER VINCE CABLE QUESTIONED ON ARMS TRADE

More than 200 residents of south-west London turned out to question local MP Vince Cable on Government support for the arms trade at a public meeting on 29 November.

Supporter of TRAKNA T (Twickenham, Richmond and Kingston Network against the Arms Trade) and local resident Paul Tippell described how local people had been motivated to act after seeing pictures of UK-made weapons helping to suppress democracy protests in the Middle East. With Vince Cable in charge of the department that both licences and promotes UK arms sales, his constituents felt they were in a unique position of influence.

Cable’s thoughts
Cable told the meeting he does think about the arms trade as a moral issue, but proceeded to give reasons for reconciling himself to his job of promoting it. Local resident Harald Molgaard said: “I was disappointed in the way Vince batted away the detailed serious questions with comments that really didn’t answer the points raised. We were told that countries had the right to defend themselves; that democratic countries had the right to decide for themselves how they spend their money; and that all would be well, once we had the international arms trade treaty, which the UK is working for.”

His constituents felt they were in a unique position of influence

Public opinion
Cable also claimed that 95 per cent of those lobbying him were calling for more arms promotion, not less. However, at the meeting he was handed a 1,000-strong petition against Government support for the arms trade, with all the signatures collected in the local community. Hilary Evans of Kingston Peace Council also added 9,000 signatures collected nationally by CAAT. She welcomed Cable’s personal vision of “a better and fairer world” but called for more action: “It is not OK for the Government to facilitate the arming of repressive regimes. It’s not OK for the Government to help organise the massive DSEI arms fair every two years at the ExCel Centre in London; and it isn’t OK to welcome customers to this fair from repressive regimes... And it’s not OK for the Government to waste... public money every year on subsidising arms exports. All these things are wrong, wrong, wrong.”

Ongoing issues
The meeting felt like a very powerful expression of grassroots opinion. As Harald put it: “Vince Cable was left in no doubt that his constituents are well-informed and very concerned about his department’s role in promoting arms sales; he must also have noticed the spontaneous applause as key points were raised. This concern has continued to be aired in the letters page of the local paper.”

TRAKNA T has pledged to continue lobbying Vince Cable. For details see www.traknat.org.uk.
CAAT supporters are opposed to the arms trade because it is destructive, abusive and wasteful. For years CAAT supporters have protested against the sale of weapons to repressive and aggressive regimes, against UK government support and promotion of the arms industry and against the dangerous and corrupt activities of arms companies.

It is easy to protest against well-publicised cases like arms giant BAE Systems selling military aircraft to an authoritarian regime like Saudi Arabia, with successive British prime ministers acting as deal makers. But other issues are not so clear cut, and these are the issues that are most likely to impinge upon our lives.

**Difficult questions**

For example, how do we deal with industries developed from military technologies, like electronics or the space industry, with many beneficial aspects? What should be our attitude to companies, like Rolls-Royce, that make both civil and military goods?

What about the workers, or potential workers, in these industries? Is it right to work for such companies or is it acceptable if the work is in the civilian sector? How can workers influence company policies to move away from the military sector to other areas, including renewables?

But questions go beyond those of employment. You may not hold shares in arms companies directly but your employer or pension fund may do so. Your bank may have investments in arms companies or act as their banker. Your university may have investments or receive endowments or research grants from individuals or organisations connected with the arms trade. You may even find that the church you attend or the charity you support owns arms company shares, although thankfully this is much less likely than in the past.

There are no definitive answers to many of these questions. While CAAT campaigns for an end to the international arms trade, we know that this is unlikely to happen quickly and that we need to be strategic in our aims. That’s why we focus on stopping arms sales to repressive regimes and countries in conflict, and for an end to government promotion of arms exports. As individuals, living our lives, it can be even more difficult to find a definitive answer.

CAAT wants to encourage debate on these issues, which is why we are printing a recent letter to CAAT together with our response. We would love to hear reader feedback. Send your thoughts on a reply to enquiries@caat.org.uk or by post to CAAT NEWS at the address printed on page 2.

**I love my job... but the space industry is deeply intertwined with military technology**

Richard Essex
What do you think?
How can we support workers in the space industry to resist military contracts and develop civilian applications?

Going forward
In 2013 CAAT will be publishing a research paper looking at alternatives to arms industry jobs, especially in the renewables sector. All too often we hear politicians declare that the arms industry provides massive numbers of jobs, and if these were to disappear the economy would suffer hugely. Some public figures even have the gall to suggest that arms exports are vital to economic growth.

However, to reiterate a point made on page 3, nothing can be further from the truth. Arms industry jobs have been in decline for many years and the arms industry faces competition for skilled workers from other industries. The renewables sector (which is much more than wind farms) has potential to employ many more people, to support green energy and to enhance our environment – if there is the political will to make it happen.

CAA T does not have the vast resources of the arms companies but we do believe that our research and action can make a difference. We welcome your ideas on how we deal with difficult ethical issues and how we move forward our agenda for change.

The military is a driver of technological development because it has Government support and vast resources.
In November, around 200 arms dealers and their guests (including military “top brass” and high-ranking officials from the Ministry of Defence and foreign embassies) gathered for a dinner. At these events companies that manufacture and sell weapons entertain their clients, network and promote their deadly wares.

Seven of us went along to remind those present of their victims. Dressed in our smartest clothes (it is amazing what a suit will do!) we entered the plush surroundings of the Institute of Directors in Pall Mall. Once inside the double doors, four of us sat down with arms linked to block the entrance. The arms dealers and all those entering had to climb over us, while we said we were there to protest against the export of arms to regimes that abuse human rights.

Meanwhile two of us had walked confidently into the dining room and left “calling cards” – in the form of photos of victims of conflict – on the tables. It should have been a good dinner (at £170 a head), but let us hope that some of the guests lost their appetite having been reminded of the victims of their shameful trade. The Institute of Directors should think twice before hosting another such event.

Rhiannon Rees, London CAAT

Let us hope that some of the guests lost their appetite!

Photos of victims of conflict were left on each of the arms dealers’ dining tables.

Put BAE on the spot
Wednesday 8 May, 10am–1pm
BAE AGM in Central London
BAE, the world’s second largest arms company, sells arms indiscriminately to over 100 countries. Its armoured vehicles were used by Saudi troops to help suppress pro-democracy protests in Bahrain in March 2011. Marred with corruption allegations, BAE wants to use its Annual General Meeting to help whitewash its image. But we can be there to make sure this doesn’t happen! Contact Anne-Marie on outreach@caat.org.uk or 020 7281 0297 to arrange for a proxy share in your name so you can enter the meeting and help hold BAE to account.

Be there on 9 March
CAAT’s National Gathering.
Saturday 9 March, 10.30am–4.30pm (Arrive from 10am).
Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London, WC1R 4RL. £7 waged / £3 unwaged (includes tea, coffee and a light veggie lunch).

Vital public services are being cut, yet UK military spending is among the highest in the world. Elsewhere, repression and death are a direct result of our government’s zealous promotion of weapons.

Gain ideas and inspiration to make an impact on the arms trade at our National Gathering. Hear from author Owen Jones, attend workshops on drones, the security industry, disarming our cultural institutions, direct action, and others!

Book online or with the enclosed flyer.
Our CAAT group was initially inspired when one of our members met someone from CAAT on an arms trade protest at the DSEi fair in 2011. We all feel very strongly about the arms industry; and for each of us it represents a violation of our principles. Because we’re quite relaxed, meetings are social events too, and I think this friendly atmosphere helps to keep us motivated and moving. However much time people are able to commit, we are all important and needed, as this helps with energy levels and creativity.

Our tips for starting up a group are: infuse some fun and do things other than campaigning together. Really include new people who turn up and be prepared to change what you do to include them, but stay on track. We do not have a leader but allow each other to lead at times – it’s important to know at the end of a meeting who is doing what, who is writing up minutes and when you will next aim to meet.

So far our group has hosted a speaker from Drones Campaign; we experimented with a “theatre of the oppressed”-style drama in a presentation with students; we took action at the recent careers fair with a large banner saying “arms industry hands off”.

Coming up, the company LUSH has agreed to donate soap bombs for a new campaign on campus highlighting the issues around drones. The plan is to hide the bombs around campus, attached to messages about the questionable role of drones in warfare.

**Southampton CAAT**

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Sheffield Uni: Fund Education Not War

When Sheffield Students’ Union Council put a policy to referendum which watered down the existing anti arms-trade position, activists mobilised to ensure that their own, stronger, policy would also be put to a student vote, giving students the option to choose between the two policies. Students from a range of groups worked together to collect the 1,000 signatures needed to bring the issue to referendum in just one day! Out of this collective action, Fund Education Not War was born and has gone from strength to strength. When the referendum happened, the stronger Fund Education Not War policy passed with a majority of over 1,000 votes.

The group is raising the profile of the issue on campus through events and discussions, and in November they hosted CAAT’s Universities Gathering. A recent panel event helped to put the University of Sheffield’s links with arms companies in the broader context of the arms trade, war and high military spending in a time of cuts. Next, Fund Education Not War will be focussing on arms company recruitment.

To get involved look for them on Facebook or email universities@caat.org.uk to be put in touch.
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Donations direct to CAAT are the most useful for the campaign, but if you send a Charities Aid Foundation cheque please make it payable to TREAT (Trust for Research and Education on Arms Trade) making clear that you wish for your donation to support CAAT’s research programme. Unlike CAAT, TREAT is a registered charity (No. 328694).