

# Report from the Campaign Against Arms Trade (UK) to the meeting of the European Network Against Arms Trade - May 2001

## Paying the Price - how the arms trade affects children

A big priority for CAAT has been to increase the number of supporters and to encourage people to raise the arms export issues in towns and villages around the UK. To do this, Chris Cole, who looks after CAAT's local work, has been running a campaign linking the arms trade and children. It has been very popular and there has been a big demand for information as a result.

## New export control legislation

Many organisations in the UK have been pressing for new arms export licensing legislation to replace the current controls which were introduced as a wartime emergency measure in 1939. A draft Bill was published in March and includes controls on brokerage, production under licence and technical assistance. It is much better than the White Paper (Government proposals) which was published in 1998.

The Quadripartite Committee (see below) has held a one-day hearing on the Bill. CAAT is responding to the Government's invitation to comment on the Bill by 24th May.

The big question is whether the Government will find parliamentary time for the Bill in its first session after the General Election which will probably be in June. Another question is who will be Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the lead department on the Bill after the Election.

However, it felt that slow progress is being made.

## Defence Diversification Agency

The Ministry of Defence has asked for comments on the future of the Defence Diversification Agency (DDA). The Labour Party's 1997 Election Manifesto included a commitment to extend military industry's expertise "to civilian use through a defence diversification agency". However, the Defence Diversification Agency, which was set up in 1999 as part of the Ministry of Defence's Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (DERA), has been at least as concerned with the exploitation of civil technology for military use as the opposite.

Now DERA is being partially privatised and the Government is considering the DDA's future. However, all three of the Ministry of Defence's stated options

envisage the DDA staying within the military sector. CAAT believes this is unsatisfactory and that the Government should take the opportunity to place the DDA within the Department of Trade and Industry, where it could be fully involved in the development of manufacturing strategy.

CAAT is also concerned that the Government has downgraded its commitment to a Defence Diversification Council to only a future possibility. The Council was to have been drawn primarily from industry, but would also have included representatives of central and local government and the trade unions.

## Quadripartite Committee

Members of the House of Commons Defence, Foreign Affairs, International Development and Trade & Industry Select Committees meet as a combined Quadripartite Committee to look at arms export issues.

The Quadripartite Committee is pressing the Government to allow it to look at and comment on a restricted number of export licence applications before the decisions on the applications are made by Ministers. The Government is considering this and it looks as if it may agree to it. Whilst CAAT is asking for a lot more, this would be a good first step towards greater transparency.

## Framework Agreement

The Defence Committee looked at the Six-Nation Framework Agreement and published a not very good report. The UK ratified on 28th February. CAAT is continuing to raise the issue of the Framework Agreement wherever it can.

## Small arms

Following changes to the wording of its statement (it was previously definitely "non-pacifist"), CAAT has joined the International Action Network on Small Arms. Small arms is the theme of this year's CAAT Stop the Arms Trade Week of Action (9th to 17th June).

## Mercenaries

The Green (consultative) paper on mercenaries that was expected in November 2000 has been delayed as the issue is said by the Government to be very complicated.

## Clean Investment

CAAT continues to monitor the shares held in arms companies by local authorities, education authorities, health services and charities. Students are increasingly questioning their universities' investments in the arms industry. Clean investment is also often mentioned in personal finance articles about savings and pension schemes.

As usual, CAAT is protesting during the BAE Systems Annual General Meeting on 3rd May.

## Economics lecture

Over three hundred people attended the CAAT Lecture on 9th April when leading economic journalist Sir Samuel Brittan, who frequently writes for the "Financial Times" talked about the bad effects the arms trade has on the UK economy.

## Defence Systems Equipment International

This Government-sponsored arms exhibition is taking place from 11th to 14th September in London Docklands. CAAT is organising protests and ENAAT people should contact Martin in the office ([martin@caat.demon.co.uk](mailto:martin@caat.demon.co.uk)) if they would like to attend.

## Newsletter redesign

CAAT's newsletter, which is published every second month, has been redesigned. Most people think it is much better.

## Website

All CAAT's campaigns, events, and briefings and other materials are on the website ([www.caat.org.uk](http://www.caat.org.uk)) which is kept up-to-date by a volunteer. A new briefing on Globalisation will be available very shortly.

## CAAT internal

Since September 2000, CAAT has been creating on a plan for its future work. This has taken a lot of time, but there are now six agreed priorities. Three of these are "external" and three concern the "internal" organisation. They are:

- pressing for better government controls including the new export control legislation, improved working at a European level, and controls on small arms, mercenaries and alternatives to landmines;
- exposing the economics of the arms trade and the myth that arms exports are good for the economy;
- highlighting the role of companies in promoting the arms trade;
- recruiting more supporters;

- re-activating Local Contacts and local work around the UK;
- increasing the media profile of CAAT and the arms trade.

Since September, CAAT has had two staff changes. The current staff are:  
Richard Bingley - press work and newsletter (full-time); Chris Cole - looks after local campaigners around the country and the Christian Network (3 days a week); Patrick Delaney - sales worker (3 days a week); Ann Feltham - parliamentary and lobbying work, liaison with other organisations in the UK and internationally, administration (full-time); Martin Hogbin - national events and campaigns co-ordinator and the Student Network (3 days a week); Robin Oakley - fundraiser (3 days a week); Ian Prichard - research co-ordinator (full-time).