



WAKE UP! IT'S YER WEAPON OF MASS DISTRACTION

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Mr President, this is a nuclear reactor and four missile launchers and they're all over Iraq Sir.



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IT'S A NUKE OUT

OIL SLIP

Tuesday was the anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima. Fifty-seven years since the USA dropped a nuclear bomb on the Japanese city which eventually killed an estimated 200,000 people.

Tuesday was also the 12th anniversary of the imposition of sanctions on Iraq - where another Hiroshima is taking place. In a report published three years ago, the United Nations Children's Fund said that between 1991 and 1998 economic sanctions contributed to the deaths of half a million Iraqi children under the age of five. These deaths weren't caused by sanctions alone, however. Other factors have also contributed to the high child mortality rate, including the after-effects of the Gulf War, where the country's infrastructure, namely water and sewage treatment facilities, was deliberately destroyed. In addition, depleted uranium from tank shells and bombs used in the Gulf War has caused cancer in many children. This situation was worsened by the Iraqi government not taking all available measures to prevent the massive increase in child mortality. Dr. Ginan Ghalib Hassen, an Iraq paediatrician said, "I have studied what happened in Hiroshima. It is almost exactly the same here; we have an increased percentage of congenital malformation, an increase of malignancy, leukaemia, and brain tumours."

During the Gulf War, more than 300 tons of depleted uranium was used in weapons against the country. On impact, they left a residue of radioactive dust. This dust, travelling where the wind blows, remains radioactive for 4,500 million years and as a result, there is now an epidemic of cancer throughout Iraq causing babies to be born without eyes, limbs, genitalia, and sometimes with their organs on the outside of their bodies.

Professor Doug Rokke was the army physicist responsible for cleaning up Kuwait. He now has 5,000 times the recommended level of radiation in his body. He wonders why the United States and Britain decided to use a 'weapon of mass destruction', "What happened in the Gulf was a form of nuclear warfare," he maintains.

As if the death of innocent civilians from cancer wasn't enough, Britain and the US have also been bombing the country on and off since 1991 to protect the so called 'no fly zones'. During 1999 alone the two countries dropped more than 1,800 bombs and hit 450 targets. Bombing happens almost every day, yet to read the mainstream media you wouldn't know it was happening.

For 50-odd years, Iraq relied on its oil exports for national earnings. In 1990, its ability to export was cut off overnight and its oil facilities decimated by bombing. Although the country can now export oil, it can only spend the bulk of the revenues on humanitarian imports. "What this means" Dr Glen Rangwala from the Campaign Against Sanctions on Iraq told SchNEWS "is three things: Iraq can't rebuild its country's public services; it can't rebuild its oil sector, so it earns less than a fifth of what it was earning in 1980 with double the population to provide for. The Iraqi people don't have jobs that pay anything like adequate salaries, because the Government can't use its oil revenues to pay its people - which means that people aren't able to afford any of the necessities of life. They receive the bulk of their food in a government ration - the whole country has been run like a refugee camp for the past 12 years. Lastly, it also means that if we invade, the ration distribution system will probably collapse and we'll see mass starvation."

Bush and Blair say Saddam Hussein is still a threat to the world but Scott Ritter, for five years a senior weapons inspector in Iraq who meticulously checked out the country's chemical, biological and weapons infrastructure, said "If I had to quantify Iraq's threat, I would say (it is) zero."

It was the CIA who helped put Saddam in power and it was the West who helped keep him there. It was the US who sold materials that it knew could easily be used to make nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, even after the Iraqi government had slaughtered 6,000 Kurds in its chemical bombardment of Halabja in 1988. A year later John Kelly, US Assistant Secretary of State, visited Baghdad and told Hussein "You are a force for moderation in the region, and the United States wants to broaden her relationship with Iraq."

Saddam's problem was not that he tortured and murdered thousands of his people, gassed and bombed the Kurds and made war with Iran, but that he invaded Kuwait and now refuses to toe the American line. As Rahul Mahajan, author and Green Party candidate for Governor of Texas points out, "The Bush administration wants a war...replacing Saddam with a U.S.-friendly dictator who will make deals

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For travelling in the same car!

In Iran the Basiji (the Islamic police force) routinely stop cars playing forbidden Western music, and if unmarried women are found in the company of men, they are arrested and charged with moral corruption! Single women can be subjected to humiliating virginity tests, and if they fail they are given the option of marrying their companion or being flogged for having extramarital sex. www.hambastegi.org

with American companies and follow American dictates."

On any given day, U.S. troops are in 140 countries around the world with permanent bases in more than half of those. This is the reality of the so called war on terror, a war that will never end, until every country bows to the might of the United States.

* A lot of this material was lifted shamelessly from John Pilger's excellent new book 'The New Rulers of the World' published by Verso. Essential reading.

* Campaign Against Sanctions on Iraq have produced a booklet giving twelve suggested actions for twelve years of sanctions 0845 330 4520 www.casi.org.uk

* A doctor from Oxford has begun withholding 7% of her tax bill in protest against sanctions on Iraq and instead donating the amount which would usually go to the military to the UK charity Medical Aid for Iraqi Children.

* 24 August: Citizen's Inspection at Welford US munitions store to highlight the hypocrisy of US demands for arms inspections. Meet 10 am Reading station. 0118 966 8328 readingpeacegroup@hotmail.com

* Sellafield Peace Camp 29-31 August The Sellafield site is implicitly involved in the nuclear weapons industry. 0773 2928780

* Don't Attack Iraq demonstration Saturday 28 September. 12noon Speaker's Corner, Hyde Park, Central London CND 020 7700 2393 www.cnd.org.uk

* Two ships carrying rejected MOX fuel from Japan are due to arrive in the UK at the end of the month. A nuclear-free flotilla is going to sail out to greet it, and a protest is being organised in Barrow-on-Furness. Info: fgod@hotpop.com www.nuclearfreeflotilla.org

AIRBORTED

In an astonishing victory for the residents of San Salvador Atenco, the Mexican government last week confirmed that they were abandoning plans to build a new international airport smack on top of the small farming community just outside of Mexico City. The whole saga began last autumn when Mexican President Vicente Fox's government approved plans to build a six-runway, \$2.3 billion airport that would gobble up much of San Salvador Atenco's farming land. In October, a federal ruling offered villagers a mere 40 pence a square yard for the land - the land that served as the farmers' main source of food, income, and security. The residents of Atenco and the surrounding villages quickly dismissed this slap-in-the-face offer, and immediate protests and marches were organised. Over the next 9 months, farmers mobilised themselves with few results - but things began to change on Thursday, July 11th, when a demo was organised to protest an official government announcement affirming the airport plans. Farmers travelling in a peaceful caravan to the demo were attacked by police with clubs, tear gas, and live ammunition. Thirty protesters were injured, fifteen arrested, and five hospitalised—one of whom, Jose Enrique Espinoza Juarez, died in hospital two weeks later.

This brutal show of force inspired supporters in nearby Atenco to take immediate and radical direct action. Over the next few days, five police squad cars were burnt and used along with other seized vehicles (including some Coca-Cola trucks!) to block the nearby national highway. Thirteen government and police officials were taken hostage, and the Atenco farmers used these hostages as bargaining tools in their struggle with the authorities. On July 14, the last hostages were released in return for the release of all arrested farm workers. It has taken the government another three weeks to cancel plans for the airport altogether, but with last week's announcement; the Atenco workers' victory became certain.

Many people feel that the Atenco struggle has been a vital test of the ability of a community-based movement to stop projects that only serve the interests of a few, powerful and wealthy businesses. The administration of President Fox has a plethora of such projects, including the lofty Plan Puebla Panama (PPP), a plan to privatise the energy industry and support the Free Trade Area of the Americas. The PPP is President Fox's crown jewel economic project, which seeks to transform south eastern Mexico into an industrialised factory centre where maquiladoras (sweatshops) can thrive, producing yet more raw materials for the developed countries in the Northern Hemisphere. The plan involves massive construction projects and generous factory building incentives in an attempt to attract more foreign investment from multi-national corporations. But the PPP cuts right through the heart of a lot of indigenous land and territory in the poverty stricken southern Mexico State of Chiapas and beyond. Roberto Rivera, a student involved in a recent Atenco solidarity march, sees the protests in Atenco as "an important turning point, because the proposed airport is the first integral step in the process of implementing the Plan Puebla Panama . . . if the plans to build this new airport in Atenco are stopped, it will be a major blow to the PPP."

The events of Atenco have indeed sent a clear message to multi-national companies and the governments that seek only to protect their interests. "Even if they gave us all the gold in the world," said one Atenco woman, "We wouldn't leave our land because that is all we have."

<http://mexico.indymedia.org/>

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SchNEWS in brief

Brighton's **Radio 4A** is back on the airwaves this weekend, followed by a Reclaim the Beach party on Saturday night. 'Bring your ghetto blaster - you are the sound system.' 107.8 FM www.piratetv.net ** **Random Artists** have opened a building as a café, gallery space and record shop at 282 Richmond Rd. London E8. Open Thurs-Sat midday-late. 07092 012299 ** Sunday 11th is the 9th **Portsmouth Smokey Bears Picnic** for those who like a joint or twenty. 2pm on Southsea Common. 07753 219135 ** 87 activists who were arrested during a march to the Mayor of Johannesburg's house in protest against water privatisation, are being taken to court on 15th August. An international day of action is being called. **Picket of South Africa House**, Trafalgar Square, London, 4.30pm onwards. www.resist.org.uk ** Glasgow once again has it's own new radical bookshop and meeting space. **The John MacLean Centre** is a workers co-op run by volunteers, 34 Clarendon Place. 0141 332 6849. www.johnmacleancentre.org ** **A compilation video of various GM actions** from Stop the Crop in 1998 to last months DEFRA action is now available for £5 from ToGG 01803 840098. ** At **Hayle Beach in Cornwall** there is a series of protests against the destruction of the beach by the harbour company that manages the area. www.SOSHayle.fsnet.co.uk ** **Road Alert!** have a new website www.roadalert.org.uk created to provide a forum for those interested in a direct action response to the resurrection of the Government's road building program ** Demonstration against the resumption of **live exports** from Dover next Saturday (17th) midday, Pencester Gardens, Dover. Coaches from London and the Midlands 01730 264208 ** Last Saturday shoppers at **Selfridges** in Oxford Street faced a couple of hundred demonstrators protesting about the store continuing to stock goods made in illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. The protest was organised by Direct Action Against War Now! www.daawn.cjb.net

SODS

Last week, 300 hospital workers at Glasgow's Royal Infirmary went on strike to demand a minimum of five pounds an hour and a return to NHS conditions of employment with holidays and sick pay. Ever since the French multinational Sodexo has officially employed the workers (when they won the contract from the NHS) the workers have been in a much weaker position to make any demands. Not content with treating workers like second class citizens, Sodexo has really taken the piss recently by offering to restore workers rights by 2005! No rush hey. This crap offer was unanimously voted out and there has been a three day strike this week and one planned for next week. The fact that public services are now run by profit is due to the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), which is basically privatisation by the back door, allowing corporations like Sodexo to get their hands on public services (see Schnews 240). Sodexo has its fingers in many pies--it has contracts with 120 public sector institutions, at least 4 of which are PFI profit-run NHS hospitals; it's subsidiary, UK Detention Centres Ltd., is a leader of the privatised prison service. This lovely company was also planning to pay asylum-seekers 34p an hour for cooking, cleaning and doing odd jobs at a detention centre near Heathrow, an offer which they eventually dropped under pressure from various groups.

More info: Sod Action, Box 95, 82 Colston Street, Bristol, BS1 5BB. sod-action@fsmail.net

Corporatewealth Games

"While big business is profiteering, local resources are cut. While poor areas of the city are given a paint job and abandoned shops covered over with corporate adverts, the real problems go unsolved and the real needs of the communities in these areas are ignored." - Manchester Biotic Baking Brigade.

The Blitz festival blew up in the streets of Manchester with a mind-expanding explosion of art and direct action. Running parallel to the Commonwealth Games, this well-organised, independent festival showed how cunningly the people of Manchester could attack the corporate games spectacle.

The simply splendid march FOR capitalism kicked off with cucumber sandwiches and G & T's in a park, where an impeccably dressed rabble held banners such as "Bomb Other Countries" and "the environment can kiss my ass." AgiTATE put on an art exhibition in a shopping mall, and cyclists and skaters teamed up for a skate-athon around Manchester City centre. Councillors were none too pleased with all this unpredictable activity, particularly when they eventually realised that tourists were wandering around with spoof alternative guides to the city.

The Commonwealth Games, like all major sporting events, was used to boost sales of advertising and sponsorship. Reebok sponsored UK Athletes. Chinese Labour Watch say the company encourages "illegal long hours, failure to pay the minimum wage, lack of social benefits, crowded living, short term contracts, and constant violation of both Chinese law and Reebok's own cosmetic Human Rights standards." Asda Walmart and Manchester Airport were two other sponsors who both have lousy labour rights records. In 2000, Walmart in the US was forced to pay \$50 million to settle claims after 69,000 workers were forced to work unpaid overtime.

No Sweat organiser Mick Duncan said "Our campaign isn't about attacking the Games, or sport - it's about exposing the practices of firms who use sport and sporting events to make millions while paying next to nothing to the workers who make the products." www.nosweat.org.uk

For a copy of the splendid spoof booklet send 2 first class stamps on an SAE to NATO, c/o EF! Box 29, MERCi, Bridge 5 Mill, 22a Beswick Street, Manchester, M4 7HR

Positive SchNEWS

'Land and Future' is the world's first guide for tribal people, with information on how tribes around the world can secure their lands and way of life. It advises tribes on how to conduct a campaign when faced with the invasion of their lands by nasty oil companies, loggers and colonists, and offers tips on their rights under international law, and how to secure them. The book is going to be printed in many languages and there are plans for it to be sent out to the remotest parts of the world. www.survival-international.org

...and finally...

Cardiff Bay, once an expanse of tidal mud flats, was recently redeveloped at a cost of billions cos' nature wasn't considered good for business. Instead of being home to wading birds, the Bay's new residents are thousands of rich people who flocked to the area hoping to spend their time sipping cocktails on their balconies whilst the sun set over the tidal barrage. It now seems however that nature is getting its revenge in the form of thousands of midges that are plaguing the area. Residents, who now have to lock themselves in their luxurious flats at dusk to avoid the swarms of midges, are now threatening to take legal action against the harbour authorities for their failure to understand mother nature. Gnats that then.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers living in the atomonous zone - don't fall-out over the mushrooms. Honest.