



# AFGHANI-SHAM

**In the week that George W. presents his 'vision' for a post-war Iraq, a vision that he has already refused to contribute to financially, SchNEWS reckons it's appropriate to look at Afghanistan one year on. Just how has bombing and killing civilians improved the situation for the Afghan people?**

The Wanted posters that litter the country, dropped by US planes, give us a clue. America's most wanted are Osama bin Laden, former Taliban leader Mullah Omar, and former Prime Minister and hardline Pashtun warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Little change there then. Hekmatyar continues to rally support among the Pashtun communities, probably due to the oversight that neglected to allow them proper representation in the Transitional Government headed up by US puppet Hamid Karzai. Karzai's credibility plummets as he turns to the US for his own security, and his power has yet to extend beyond Kabul. Someone obviously forgot to read the bit in Security Council Resolution 1378 stating that both the transitional and the pursuant democratic governments should be 'broad-based, multi-ethnic, and fully representative of all Afghan people.'

With their usual 'go for the symptom if you can't get the cause' way of looking at things, the US have been bombing the Pashtun communities in the South and East of the country. If the man's too slippery, go for the people who may, just possibly, one day in the future, support him. In January, US, Norwegian and Danish fighter planes conducted a massive bombing raid close to Spin Boldak, a refugee village near the Pakistan border that houses 65,000 men, women and children, reportedly killing hundreds of civilians. Accurate numbers were not available as the area was sealed off by troops and access denied even to the Red Cross. This is in direct contravention of UN Resolution 1379 - which underlines the importance of 'full, safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel and goods, and the delivery of humanitarian assistance to all children affected by armed conflict.' Earlier this month, 17 civilians, mostly women and children were killed in bombing raids designed to wipe out a handful of rebel fighters in the Baghran district to the South.

## ORE OF BABYLON

US forces continue to use outlawed weapons in these attacks, such as uranium bombs and the innocuously named Daisy Cutter, a bomb the size of a VW beetle which incinerates everything within a 600 metre radius and whose shock waves can be felt miles

away. Findings by the Uranium Medical Research Centre (UMRC) point out that uranium poisoning is already causing severe health problems throughout Afghanistan "The UMRC field team was shocked by the breadth of public health impacts coincident with the bombing. Without exception, at every bombsite investigated, people are ill." Yet again the US shows its middle finger to resolution number 1379 that calls upon all parties to respect conditions of 'Prohibition or Restriction' on the use of weapons which have 'Indiscriminate Effects.'

And to add insult to mass destruction, George W. 'forgot' to include any humanitarian and reconstruction funds in his 2003 budget. Yet another unfortunate oversight hurriedly rescued by Congress who managed to rustle up \$300 million for the cause. How many times did Bush pledge not to walk away from the Afghan people? \$300million might seem like a lot, but it constitutes a small proportion of the \$4billion total pledged at the Tokyo donor's conference to help rebuild Afghanistan. Compared to the \$3 billion that Israel receives in US foreign aid every year, \$300m figure suddenly loses its impact. Israel has been given \$240 billion since 1973, much of it used for the purchase and manufacture of weapons, plus additional funds, not counted as foreign aid, for special projects such as \$180 million for the development and manufacture of the Arrow missile project. Weapons now make up 50% of Israel's manufactured exports. Contrary to the norm, Israel is not required to use this injection of funds to buy American goods, in fact American defence contractors are often forced to buy Israeli goods, and it has the power to block the sale of US military equipment to Middle Eastern countries. In common with other states that have earned the "rogue nation" label, Israel has the capacity to manufacture nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and maintains a stockpile of nuclear weapons, yet has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty and refuses to allow any independent inspection of its facilities.

Israel are now demanding an additional \$3-4 billion for the next 3 to 5 years to help them cope with the continuing Palestinian

## CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

### For handing out leaflets

In Minneapolis, eight antiwar protestors handing out leaflets on the pavement were suddenly outnumbered by police demanding they leave, Kathryn Gilje and Lisa Zaragoza pointed out the charge of soliciting wasn't valid as they weren't selling, just distributing political literature, so the pair were arrested for trespass!

uprising and the consequences of a US war in Iraq. Perhaps George W. should see someone about his blurred 'vision' before he makes more of a spectacle of himself.

More info: Uranium contamination - [www.URMC.net](http://www.URMC.net); Daisy cutters - [www.robearly.com/911/DaisyCutter.html](http://www.robearly.com/911/DaisyCutter.html); Israeli foreign aid - [www.csmonitor.com](http://www.csmonitor.com)

## It's a Fairford Cop, Guv

Last Sunday around 500 people met for a day of direct action at Fairford, a US military base in Gloucestershire. Fairford is the biggest bomber base in Europe and houses US stealth bombers that will drop depleted uranium bombs on Iraq. After gathering at the main entrance of the base, someone announced that they were weapons inspectors and wanted to inspect the base. A peace activist told SchNEWS, "We tied ropes to the top of the front gate and started pulling on them and shaking the gate. To everyone's surprise, including the cops, it collapsed on one side and swung open after a few minutes. There was a pause while everyone on the outside watched the horrified expressions on the faces of the police on the other side and then everyone rushed in." While being part of a huge crowd on the streets is an important show of dissent, "direct action allows us to slow down or stop the war machine" as one protestor told SchNEWS, "The best thing was that it was cool to see different types of people working together and not letting each other get beaten up by the police and fighting back." [www.gwi.org.uk](http://www.gwi.org.uk)

\* Since last Friday Italian protesters have been stopping and delaying US army "trains of death" (weapons, vehicles and personnel) <http://italy.indymedia.org/>

\* Last Saturday around 10,000 people marched on the US air base in Rhein-Main, Germany with 2,000 of them blockading entrances to the base. Meanwhile on the Sunday 10,000 who marched to a military base in Cologne were met by armed soldiers. Security at all military bases in Germany is now being stepped up.

\* Belgian cops took several hours freeing/arresting 11 Activists who chained themselves to transport trains heading to the port in Antwerp where military equipment is on its way to Turkey and the Gulf.

\* Rolls Royce, Derby producers of nuclear fuel components for Trident missiles was closed for a day last week after activists chained themselves to the gates 0796 003003

\* 5 scientists in Antarctica made a banner and held a demo against the war on Iraq, which goes to show how global the anti-war movement has become!

## BRIGHTON STOP THE WAR PROTEST

Saturday 1st March, meet 1pm War Memorial for moving protest with street theatre and samba bands 07815 983022 [www.safp.org.uk](http://www.safp.org.uk)

## KISS MY ESSO

The looming war in Iraq has nothing to do with oil. Or so Bush Jnr sponsored by the oil industry would try to have us believe. But, according to City analysts Deutsche Bank, the oil corporation Esso exert a "huge political weight" over Bush and "may find itself in pole position in a changed-regime Iraq."

Making this link Greenpeace shut down 119 Esso petrol stations on Monday by locking petrol pumps together and removing handles from electricity switches. Esso's head office was also shut down when a container blocked the entrance. Greenpeace have published a report showing how oil is fuelling the drive to war and the role Esso has played.

More info: Greenpeace UK: 020 7865 8255 [www.greenpeace.org.uk](http://www.greenpeace.org.uk)

There'll be more action against the War-Oil-Climate Change cabal with a Kyoto March - 2 Years after Bush dumped the Kyoto agreement. It leaves on 20<sup>th</sup> March 7am from the Esso HQ in Leatherhead for a 20 mile walk to the US Embassy. But you can meet it at a Rally at the Imperial War Museum, 3.30pm and an End of the World Party, 5.30pm at the US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, London. 020 88553327 [www.campaignagainstclimatechange.net](http://www.campaignagainstclimatechange.net)

Tony Blair's Best Pals, BP will be welcomed to their Annual General Meeting by a Carnival Against Oil Wars and Climate Chaos on the 24<sup>th</sup> April at the Royal Festival Hall, South Bank, London. [London@risingtide.org.uk](mailto:London@risingtide.org.uk) [www.burningplanet.net](http://www.burningplanet.net)

\* Air pollution in the UK kills 10 times more people than road accidents every year. 24,000 deaths are caused by "peak" air pollution episodes. Another 4,000 lung cancer deaths a year are caused by air pollution, and an increase in heart diseases. National Society for Clean Air 01273-878770 [www.nasca.org.uk](http://www.nasca.org.uk)

\* March 17<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup>: Towards Car-Free Cities III, Prague, Czech Republic. A conference "promoting alternatives to car dependence and car culture." If you want to go see [www.carbusters.org/conference](http://www.carbusters.org/conference)

\* This week the Government unveiled its Energy White Paper, which has produced a lot of hot air even before it's chucked on the fire. The Government announced it wants to cut emissions of carbon dioxide by 60% by 2050. But they haven't said how this would be achieved and the target of producing 20% of energy from renewable sources energy by 2020 is now an "aspiration"! And while claiming no more nuclear power stations will be built in the near future they haven't ruled it out as a long term option.

## Positive SchNEWS

The award winning community organisation the Arts Factory have submitted a planning application to develop a wind farm close to their Rhondda base. The eight turbine wind farm will generate enough electricity to meet the needs of over 6000 households (20% in the Rhondda) and over 3300 local people have signed a petition in support of the project.

The Power Factory will provide a long term income to the Arts Factory, providing jobs for at least 20 people, not just greasing the turbines, but jobs providing desperately needed services in the community, such as nursery, community and youth workers.

There will be a series of road shows at community events in Rhondda to promote the project.

More info: The Arts Factory - 01443 757954 [www.artsfactory.co.uk](http://www.artsfactory.co.uk)

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## SchNEWS in brief

Nestlé, the company who tell mums in the third world that powered milk formula is better for kids than breast milk, have scrapped plans to sponsor a new teenage book prize after seven leading writers said that they "do not wish to be associated" with Nestlé's prize "in any way". Info on the worlds longest consumer boycott - Baby Milk Action 01223 464420 [www.babymilkaction.org](http://www.babymilkaction.org) \*\* The trial of the 13 asylum seekers facing charges relating to the fire at **Yarlswood Detention Centre** in February last year, starts 23<sup>rd</sup> April. Most of the defendants have been released on bail but are denied the right to work and benefits. The Justice for Yarlswood Campaign are trying to raise funds to get them to the trial in Bedford and provide them with accommodation (otherwise they will be put up in Wormwood Scrubs!). Cheques payable to 'Stop Arbitrary Detentions At Yarl's Wood', marked 'Defendants' Trial Support' on the back. Campaign For Justice In The Yarl's Wood Trial, PO Box 304, Bedford, MK42 9WX 07786-517379, [ginn\\_emma@hotmail.com](mailto:ginn_emma@hotmail.com) \*\* Home secretary **David Blunkett** whose asylum policies are leaving people in the UK destitute, while his government threatens to bomb countries and create more refugees is visiting the Marriot Hotel, College Green, Bristol, next Thurs (6<sup>th</sup>). A demo has been organised meet 6.30pm \*\* Last week Spanish cops raided the offices of **Egunkaria**, the only exclusively Basque newspaper, and arrested its editor and nine senior staff under anti-terror laws. The Judge claimed the paper had links to the Basque separatist organisation ETA and imprisoned five and fined the others at least £8,000 [www.euskalinfo.org.uk](http://www.euskalinfo.org.uk) \*\* If you're interested in organising another **MayDay** event this year there's a meeting this Sunday (2<sup>nd</sup>) 11am onwards (lunch provided) @LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 (Whitechapel tube) [londonmayday@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:londonmayday@yahoo.co.uk) [www.ourmayday.org.uk](http://www.ourmayday.org.uk)

## WAR BRIEFS

**A Piece of Peace**, benefit night for a peace compilation CD this Saturday, 7pm, Ray Tindle Centre, Upper Gardener Street, Brighton £4.

\*\* **Anti-war picket of Labour party conference** this Saturday outside Floral Hall, Southport, Merseyside. 9-11am 0151 708 7764 [merseyside@stopwar.org.uk](mailto:merseyside@stopwar.org.uk) \*\* **Cycle for Peace** this Saturday 11:30am at the gates of Abney Park cemetery, Stamford Hill, London N16 07787 523907 [hstwc@hotmail.com](mailto:hstwc@hotmail.com) \*\* Performance of the play "**Lysistrata**", an Ancient Greek comedy of a women's "sex strike" in order to stop their menfolk from going to war. 10.30am, Parliament Square, London and 800 other readings in 42 countries. More readings are planned during the day, with a rehearsed reading at Pleasance Theatre, Caledonian Road, 7.30pm. £5 entry - proceeds to the War Child charity. [www.lysistrataproject.com](http://www.lysistrataproject.com) \*\* **The small peace camp outside Fylindales** in Yorkshire are looking for more people. 01274 730795 or [neil@yorkshirecnd.org.uk](mailto:neil@yorkshirecnd.org.uk) \*\* **Peace camp** on the grass of the Peace Gardens near the Town Hall, **Manchester**, March 8th after the anti war demo in the City. 0161 881 0450 [ros\\_arnold@hotmail.com](mailto:ros_arnold@hotmail.com) \*\* **Stop the warmongers**. Demonstration at the Jane's Defence Weekly conference 10<sup>th</sup> March, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, 10 St James Street, London SW1 8am, bring whistles, banners, flags, drums etc. [www.disobedience.org.uk](http://www.disobedience.org.uk) \*\*

**Human shields** in Iraq have now taken up their positions to defend important civilian infrastructures. Donations are urgently needed send cheque/money order made out to Human Shield Action c/o Christine Strickland, 97, Retford Road, Romford, UK, RM3 9ND Info 0207 572 1125 \*\* **Tell Cherie Blair: No War!** email her at [cheriebooth@matrixlaw.co.uk](mailto:cheriebooth@matrixlaw.co.uk)

## Inside SchNEWS

Paul Kelleher, the man who knocked the head off a statue of former PM Margaret Thatcher as a protest against the ills of the world's political system, has been jailed for three months. On the day of the attack Mr Kelleher arranged a babysitter for his son and bought a cricket bat. He smuggled the bat into the Guildhall under his coat, but when he hit the statue the bat "pinged off". So he picked up a metal crowd barrier and finished the job. He then waited for the cops to turn up and when he was being arrested told them he thought the statue "looked better this way". The statue (a snip at £150,000) can be repaired for £10,000, but sadly, according to the judge, "will never look the same".

There's an online petition for clemency at: [www.petitiononline.com/pkvsmt/petition.html](http://www.petitiononline.com/pkvsmt/petition.html) If anyone has his prison address can they tell us, so we can send him SchNEWS each week.

\* Barbara Smedema is in prison for disabling an American communications dish at the military airport of Volkel in the Netherlands. The damage has been estimated at 500,000 Euros. Barbara said "We do not have the illusion that we can stop the warmachine in this way but we need to show hope and confidence that the world can be different." Write to: Barbara Smedema, P.I. Ter Peel, Patersweg 4, 5977 NM Evertsoord.

## You Asda Be Kidding

Old Kent Road already has three supermarkets, but no decent community facilities. So guess what is gonna be built? Yep, a Wal-Mart/ASDA superstore! Traffic, pollution and respiratory disease are at an all time high along this stretch of road, which also, ironically, has the lowest car ownership in London. The Ossory Road Yard has been squatted since September as a community space with children's weekends, discussion groups, workshops and an anti-war forum. They want to build a kid's adventure playground, cultivate the land and create a genuinely community-run space. They have been served an eviction notice and expect bailiffs to arrive some time in March.

Ossory Road Social Centre: 07769 791387 [ossoryrd@breathe.com](mailto:ossoryrd@breathe.com)

To read 'Nine reasons why not to shop at Asda' see [www.corporatewatch.org.uk/news/resist\\_asda.htm](http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/news/resist_asda.htm)

## ...and finally...

You know the scenario - soldiers leaving to go off to war being interviewed by the media and saying things like "It's a job we have to do" or "We're professional people and we're going to fight for our country". Well when 26 reservists - from all walks of civilian life - were leaving for the Gulf from the Territorial Army base in Dundee the media were invited along, but this time instead of smiling for the cameras and saying it was their patriotic duty to go and fight they angrily condemned the stance taken by the Bush/Blair axis.

Gary McIntosh, a medic who had been called up, became tearful when saying goodbye to his three-year-old daughter. "How do I say 'Daddy's got to go away, I don't know when I'll be back'", he said. "I don't understand why we have to go. This is about Bush wanting to finish off what his father started and us Brits are getting dragged into it because of Blair. I don't really see why I have to be parted from my family for that." All highly embarrassing for their commanding officers.

## Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers having visions to stop masturbating for peace. (see SchNEWS 392) Honest.