

BCAAT's letter to the press got printed in the Bristol Evening Post. Interestingly, they edited the letter to refer to "defence" companies rather than "arms" companies and cut out the part about jobs...

PUBLISHED LETTER
BAE AND ROLLS BENEFIT FROM ARMS

11:00 - 25 July 2005

Bristol Campaign Against Arms Trade welcomes a recent edition of West Eye View on ITV 1, entitled Ban The Bung, on corruption in the arms trade. The programme exposed the power of defence companies such as BAE Systems and Rolls Royce in shaping the rules that are supposed to govern their activities, and explained how taxpayers are footing the bill for the subsidies and cheap insurance enjoyed by arms-exporting companies.

Thus, while companies may not be acting illegally, they are shaping the rules to their advantage.

There is a general lack of transparency surrounding these companies' activities.

Anna Stavrianakis, Bristol Campaign Against Arms Trade.

ORIGINAL LETTER

Dear Editor

Bristol Campaign Against Arms Trade welcomes last night's edition of West Eye View (ITV 1), "Ban the Bung", on corruption in the arms trade. The programme exposed the power of arms companies such as BAe Systems and Rolls Royce in shaping the rules that are supposed to govern their activities, and explained how taxpayers are footing the bill for the subsidies and cheap insurance enjoyed by arms-exporting companies. Thus, whilst companies may not be acting illegally, they are shaping the rules to their advantage.

There is a general lack of transparency surrounding these companies' activities; for example, the National Audit Office report into the massive Al-Yamamah deal with Saudi Arabia has never been published, preventing the public from finding out exactly how much was spent on securing the deal.

Whilst it is true that government insurance covers companies against the buyer country failing to pay for purchases, it is not correct that this is vital for protecting jobs, as was suggested in the programme. Arms companies employ large numbers of people in Bristol and the South West, but the economic arguments in favour of the arms trade do not stand up. Every job in the UK defence industry is subsidised to the tune of £12,300 a year. This means that UK taxpayers are guaranteeing corporate profits and the continued role of UK-produced

equipment in human rights abuses across the globe, from Indonesia to the Occupied Territories.

Yours sincerely
Bristol Campaign Against Arms Trade
<http://www.bristolcaat.org.uk>