

Your **informed** invitation to be
partake in *Parihaka & Peace Week!*



The government plans the expenditure of **\$20 billion** on new weaponry for the NZ Defence Force including the purchase of new Navy frigates and offensive cyber-weapons. This level of expenditure dwarfs the budgetary cuts that have slashed domestic access to justice and other critical services. Regardless of one's personal persuasions as regards the modern military, the sheer extent of expenditure itself draws attention to itself, given the chequered history, especially recently of modern military agendas.

In the 2016 Defence White Paper, the Ministry of Defence states that "New Zealanders can remain confident that the country does not face a direct military threat in the foreseeable future" — an admission that the expenditure on weaponry is not based on domestic need, but rather is to appease politicised war-alliances — including NZ's defence partners US & Australia.

The stark reality is that such countries have in recent times, initiated in the face of global protest and during the 13 subsequent years of outrage, a series of actions that have led to their embroiling themselves in unjust wars such as Iraq. These have in turn generated ongoing humanitarian crises of immeasurable proportions as a direct result of ignoring facts and factors such as lack of transparency around war incentives and vested interests.

A celebration of military might with an alliance of aggression that has wreaked humanitarian havoc all over the world could not be a worse insult to the honourable defence forces — past and present — of any responsible, law-abiding nation, let alone a proud nation like New Zealand.

The fact that our defence forces have today utterly succumbed to the politics of international warfare and mass destruction for the sake of powerful private interests, confirms the utter compromise of all principles of honour, dignity, courage and camaraderie against evil.

This reference to **powerful private interests** is not flippant and is **not** used casually. Any reckoning of the question *cui bono* — who benefits? — cannot avoid the obscene financial benefits that have accrued to corporations devoted to warfare. There has been no benefit at all to the inhabitants of Iraq, Syria, Libya and other places; only misery, death and the loss of homes, stability and any semblance or hope of the kind of decent life we take for granted in New Zealand and that most of humanity aspires to.

Lockheed Martin, the world's *largest* arms dealer, is the primary sponsor of the November Weapons Expo — the annual conference of the NZ Defence Industry Association, an industry trade body charged with growing NZ's weapons industry and international arms contracts. At this Expo, the Minister of Defence presents awards to Industry members for service to Defence.

That is in itself a cause of grave concern, but even moreso, the war (read: mass-murder) party that the celebrations are for war-profiteers — the obvious ethical ramifications of which seem to continue to elude the government-corporation intimacy.

The NZ government is currently contracting with nuclear weapons producers Lockheed Martin (on the upgrade of the frigates) and Babcock (for the management of the Devonport Naval Base), and may be doing so in apparent contravention of the 1987 Nuclear Free Act.

The NZ government is also currently engaged in a Public Private Partnership (PPP) with Serco to run the Wiri Men's prison in South Auckland, another company involved in the production of nuclear weapons. Investment in Serco is banned by the NZ Superfund for its involvement in nuclear weapons. But that is not all. Serco has been the subject of controversies and real concerns in a number of countries. The public and media scrutiny since the Mount Eden Prison fighting saga is just one symptom of an organization that has never displayed the kinds of values that have long been held as representative of what is good in New Zealand. By its performance across a number of fields Serco has not shown itself to be a fit partner for the government of this country.

Kiwis have recently witnessed first hand the flagrant disregard for humanity of such major corporations, as well as the indifference of governments such as NZ (NZ Super Fund investment in cluster bomb companies) and Australia (Wilson corporation in Asylum Seeker abuse cover-up cases) towards the actions of such corporations, driven as they are by short-term interests of the maximization of profit. They do not contribute to the health of this nation. They do not make New Zealand, nor the world, a better place.

The **NZ weapons company** MAS Zengrange, another guest of the NZ Navy for its celebrations, is one of the 80+ members of the weapons industry lobby group, and has shipped its mortar firing systems to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Countries.

The UK based Campaign Against the Arms Trade is currently taking the UK government to the UK High Court for a Judicial Review of the UK's continued sales of weapons to Saudi Arabia, based on the war crimes perpetrated against the people of Yemen — which is tragically ongoing and continues to be reported daily for unspeakable atrocities. The attacks on hospitals, the recent attack on a funeral, and the reports of malnutrition as a consequence of the Saudi-led actions — all these stand to be condemned not indulged nor condoned by silence or inaction.

A key weapons supplier to Saudi Arabia in its ongoing aggression against helpless Yemenis is the weapons maker **General Dynamics** — another special guest of what can only be seen as New Zealand's weapons of mass-murder expo.

The NZ Navy has invited 33 Navies, including the US, China and Indonesia, to “celebrate” its birthday. This large-scale public event is being held to bolster the Navy's “recruiting, retention, relationships and reputation.”

The endless ramifications of this unrestrained celebration of war are naturally being overlooked: the arms industry could not ever be better known than it is today for its callousness for human welfare across the ailing world.

The industry is antithetical to any sort of “defence” that those who honourably served their nations may have perished in and in whose name such military posturing and profiteering through war is being celebrated in NZ — a nation to whom many look up to for standing up for international law, peace, stability and humanitarian welfare.

The industry is offensive – in more than one sense. The defence of a nation or a community is a necessary and vital subject of concern and action. Lasting, effective defence might well be achieved in other, cheaper, non-militaristic ways.

Where defence fails to apply itself to a thorough, probing, disinterested analysis of the genesis of any conflict; where it fails to learn from past experience and insists on the continuing and mounting application of military might to “solve problems” then there is no end. In the case of the USA this has been described by one American patriot as “Imperial Hubris.”

The separation of such interests from real people could not be made any more shamelessly patent. ACC Lawyer John Miller noted in the media today that the Defence Force attempted to block compensation for trauma in Afghanistan suffered by a Kiwi soldier by trying to argue the legislation only provides for trauma stemming from a single event. The soldier suffered trauma in a series of traumatic events. Miller called the Defence Force tactics “ridiculous.”

. . . and certainly inhumane. The Defence force’s abandonment of a traumatised soldier — whose case is yet another testament to atrocities in Afghanistan — is a timely reminder, with celebrations with the alliance of aggression in less than a fortnight, where the loyalty and interests of the present politicised militaries stand. Very sadly it reflects another direction observable in the USA and the UK — that not only are a nation’s armed forces often sent off to unjust, illegal wars, they can all too easily be abandoned and left unsupported once they return home.

Ongoing compromises by the government of NZ’s interests and of international principles now dictate that loyalty is not to those who serve our country, but with those political alliances and powerful interests that NZ now serves — private interests and corporations whose profit levels are now staggering and who have the power to force the military might of the world’s biggest war budgets into massive atrocities that annihilate entire civilisations such as in Iraq and Syria, for private interest, over the protests of international law and sentiment.

The Navy wargames, called “Operation Mahi Tangaroa”, are happening in the Hauraki Gulf from 13-16 November with 17 navies. These may include live firing, and are being incidentally conducted in the migratory pathway of Bryde’s whales — a threatened species that are a year-round presence in the Hauraki Gulf, the least of any concerns for an industry so indifferent and apathetic to wholesale loss of human life.

This recklessness is merely indicative of the lack of concern for the welfare of all living beings that is inherent in inebriated military ego — when the compulsive interests of the powerful arms industry coincides with that of conflicted governments and corporations.

The mode and extent of both celebrations and expenditure is a flagrant disregard of the grave international concerns at the conflicts of interest between arms makers, governments, and corporations — especially given the extent of personal benefit being derived from the war industry that is only gradually being uncovered through the otherwise lack of sound bases for countless wars other than for resource grabbing and powerful personal interests — of course through the medium of corporate entities well protective of their owners, friends, and clients.

The supply of arms in Middle Eastern conflicts has for decades been well known; in recent times as the ethics of war have increasingly diminished and the cases for war made by governments become increasingly tenuous, the abundant perpetuation of wars and cross-wars between an endless number of parties armed by various conflicting government and political interests has increasingly come to light. Yet fundamental ethical principles continue to be disregarded.

Ongoing academic, government and NGO reports continue to undermine the bases – ethical or otherwise for recent wars in Iraq – from which the Middle East shows no sign of recovery and that have led to one humanitarian catastrophe, political consequence and aggression, after another.

The upcoming celebrations fly in the face of all such international concern, particularly ignoring the recent, and ongoing, human calamities caused directly by the offensive, baseless, military action of governments such as the US and Australia – which directly and indirectly benefit only secured corporate interests.

The fact that these unconscionable events are being hosted in **NZ of all places** is an invitation to all people of conscience – however connected or disconnected to the military or related government arms – to draw to public attention the dismay of all common people in New Zealand and internationally who may until today may have retained hope in nations such as NZ to continue to stand for a peaceful, stable, and principled world.

This extravagant display of celebration with the superpowers and alliances of aggression emphatically destroy any notion of NZ being an impartial objective contributor to the international community.

Join, gather, share, and be heard, to preserve peace in our world!

Peace!

This information was compiled by informed community groups from multiple sources including media. Should you have know of information that updates any of this content, please let us know by reply e-mail.