

“Warfighters around the world rely on Brimar products every day.”

<http://www.brimar-ltd.com/profile.html>

The case against Brimar: why Manchester citizens don't want human rights abuses facilitated from their doorstep

A report by Target Brimar, October 2009

www.targetbrimar.org.uk

press@targetbrimar.org.uk

Executive summary

This dossier is part of a work in progress. It forms the basis of the Target Brimar campaign's arguments as to why the Brimar factory in Chadderton should cease manufacturing military components and return to making peaceful equipment.

Brimar's products, by its own admission and those of public documents from some of its governmental R&D partners, have been sold to the Israeli military – for parts for Apache attack helicopters as used in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon, including in extra-judicial targeted assassinations – and developed with and for the US Marines Corps in Iraq, including battalions on record as having been involved in some of the most large-scale human rights abuses of that conflict. The extent of Brimar components' use in Afghanistan is something we're continuing to explore; the current state of our knowledge is set out below. We also know that Brimar has sales representatives in Turkey and Pakistan, countries which also have their own records of instability and human rights infringements, and which are also often used as 'cover' countries for materiel which ends up elsewhere.

A British government investigation into the uses of military materiel exported to Israel has already resulted in the revoking of several export licenses. Al Haq, a major Palestinian human rights NGO, is carrying out a large-scale legal challenge in the British courts regarding the continued granting of other export licenses. The Goldstone Report to the UN has detailed widespread human rights violations by the Israeli military in the 'Operation Cast Lead' attack on Gaza in December 2008 and January 2009 – some of them involving the Apache helicopters for which Brimar supplied parts in 2006. Specific incidents involving Apaches, listed by Judge Goldstone, included the destruction of a flour mill and grain stores in a territory with disastrously high rates of hunger and malnutrition, and possibly the attack on the Samouni house which became one of the most notorious incidents of the entire conflict.

Brimar's position when challenged in 2006 was that If We Don't, Others Will. This doesn't make such actions justifiable.

The Target Brimar campaign is calling on the citizens of Manchester to think deeply about whether this is the kind of manufacturing they want to be happening on their doorsteps. It is also calling on Brimar to be open about where its products go, what they are used for and whether it should continue to operate the way it does.

The Target Brimar campaign is sensitive to concerns, in the current economic climate, over job security. But we also call the reader's attention to wide-ranging evidence that suggests that subsidising the arms industry is massively expensive the the British taxpayer, and that to divert such funding to peaceful industries – including 'green' industries which could not only help to adapt the

UK to coming climate change, but could also help to encourage wider geopolitical stability and reduce conflicts over fossil fuels – would yield greater numbers of skilled, secure jobs.

Target Brimar and its aims

The Target Brimar is a group of citizens from around Greater Manchester who are concerned about the presence of the Brimar factory in our city. We believe that Brimar's products have been, and may still be being, used to commit war crimes in various conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere.

We call upon:

- the owners of Brimar to cease producing parts for military use and to revert to the peaceful purposes for which many of the company's products have been made;
- the workers to refuse to manufacture military products;
- the people of Manchester to engage in a concerted non-violent campaign against Brimar's presence in their city, as well as that of other arms and military-related manufacturers in the region, such as BAe Systems, Francis Searchlights and Hampson;
- the British government to cease its subsidising of the arms industry and its licensing of arms exports from Britain, especially to states such as Israel which have been accused of grave war crimes.

Who is Brimar?

Brimar is a company with a long history in a fairly specialised field of manufacturing. In 1883 the US firm Western Electric established operations in London, and in 1925 sold this international division – the International Western Electric Company – to International Telephone & Telegraph (ITT). It manufactured valves for radios and cathode ray tubes (TVs) under the brand names Standard, Micromesh and – from 1934 onwards – Brimar.¹

In 1960 the Brimar division of the company, then operating from a factory in Footscray, Kent, was sold to Thorn Electrical Industries Ltd.² Various specialist radio valve sellers on the internet, including <http://www.brimartubes.com/>, list a range of valve products from the company. Many of these are for civilian use and are enthusiastically recommended for use with various audiophile equipment such as Fender amps. However, a number of the vintage valves offered for sale online are labelled 'RAF,' suggesting that the company was making components for military equipment from the 1930s or 1940s.³ Although Thorn and its later manifestation Thorn EMI are most widely associated in the public mind with entertainment industries and technologies – film, video and music – Thorn had major defence interests until they were sold off in the early 1990s.⁴

In 1986 Thorn sold Brimar along with the various related technology operations which had become part of it via Thorn's other acquisitions such as valve and cathode ray tube (CRT) operations from Ferranti.⁵ Brimar became part of the Rank Organisation to sit alongside Cintel, another visual technologies company which was founded in around the 1920s and had been owned by Rank since at least the mid-late 1970s.⁶

1 www.radiomuseum.org Standard Telephones & Cables Ltd company profile, accessed 28th May 2009

2 Ibid

3 <http://www.brimartubes.com/> and others, accessed 28th May 2009

4 The Independent newspaper 'Thorn-GEC talks fail,' August 1993

5 www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/Thorn-plc-Company-History.html accessed June 2009, Brimar company history chart, Brimar NEW website accessed June 2009

6 International Guild of Cinematographers website accessed June 2009

Rank Brimar and its sister company Rank Cintel, along with another technical division called Digital Projection, continued in the late 1980s and early 1990s to work on various types of visual display technology, including large screen cinematic displays developed from ideas originating with Texas Instruments. Rank Brimar developed the Digital Micromirror Device from Texas' project, and is recorded as having demonstrated prototypes at its 'Manchester, England' plant in 1992.⁷ Although Rank Group was listed as not intending to sell its digital projection businesses when it divested Brimar and Cintel in 1996,⁸ and according to its own website it passed through the hands of IMAX Corporation between 1999 and 2001,⁹ Digital Projection, Inc lists the same Greenside Way, Middleton address as Brimar as its UK contact.¹⁰

In 1996 Rank Group divested its precision engineering division, composed of Taylor Hobson, Cintel and Brimar's electronic display division – but not its digital projection operations.¹¹ Initially acquired by Schroder Ventures, in 1997 a £48 million management buyout of Cintel and Brimar was completed with backing from 3i Group.¹²

Brimar is currently owned by an investment company, Giles Briggs Holdings, which is registered at Arden House, Lamb Lane, Ashley, Cheshire and which also owns Cintel. Of the 3501000 Ordinary shares in Brimar, all are held by Giles Briggs Holdings Ltd.¹³ Giles Briggs Holdings is in turn owned by a combination of the Bank of Scotland, which holds a single 1A Ordinary Share, and PH Giles & Co Ltd, registered at the same address as Giles Briggs Holdings Ltd.¹⁴ In turn, PH Giles & Co Ltd is listed as having 100 Ordinary Shares, of which 1 is listed as belonging to Mr KH Giles of Hale, Cheshire and 99 as belonging to Mr PH Giles of Ashley, Altrincham, Cheshire.¹⁵

The two Mr Giles are both listed as officers of the company of PH Giles & Co Ltd, along with a Mr PA Briggs.¹⁶ The officers of the company for Giles Briggs Holdings Ltd are listed as Mr KH and Mr PH Giles only.¹⁷ The officers of the company listed for Brimar are Mr PH Giles along with Mr G Payne of Haslingden, Lancashire; Mr Iwan Dodd of Roanoke, Virginia, USA; Mr David P Eldridge of Preston, Lancashire and Mr WG O'Brien of Altrincham, Cheshire.¹⁸ The Bank of Scotland is also listed as having a mortgage claim over Brimar Ltd.¹⁹

What is clear from Brimar's ownership is that the company is making a lot of money from the suffering of ordinary people around the world, including repeated and substantial military attacks on civilian targets, which have raised the issue of the possible perpetration of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Being ancillary to such crimes is in itself to commit a crime under international law. The result of this supply of weaponry has been to raise substantial funds for a small number of investors, primarily Mr Peter Hardwick Giles.

It is also clear that Brimar's owners currently have a substantial financial agreement with the Bank of Scotland, now part of Lloyds Banking Group after Lloyds bought out the Bank of Scotland's

www.cameraguuild.com/technology/telecine.htm

7 "From Rank Group to Digital Projection" Presenting Communications magazine August 1998

8 The Independent newspaper "Rank Sells Precision Engineering" 1st October 1996

9 www.digitalprojection.com/companyhistory accessed June 2009

10 www.digitalprojection.com accessed June 2009

11 The Independent newspaper "Rank Sells Precision Engineering" 1st October 1996

12 Private Equity's Broken Pension Promises, GMB 2007

13 Annual Return for Brimar Ltd, filed at Companies House 26th July 2008

14 Annual Return for Giles Briggs Holdings Ltd, filed at Companies House 20th September 2008

15 Annual Return for PH Giles & Co Ltd, filed at Companies House 9th January 2009

16 Ibid

17 Annual Return for Giles Briggs Holdings Ltd, filed at Companies House 20th September 2008

18 Annual Return for Brimar Ltd, filed at Companies House 26th July 2008

19 Annual Return for Brimar Ltd, filed at Companies House 26th July 2008

owners, HBOS (Halifax Bank of Scotland) in January 2009. However, government bailouts of threatened British banks during the height of the credit crisis in 2008 and early 2009 mean that over 43% of Lloyds Banking Group actually belong to the British Treasury²⁰ – that is, in effect, the British taxpayer and voter. So shouldn't we also have a say in the companies which are being financially supported by banks which substantially belong to us?

Brimar's military activities

Brimar manufactures a range of screens and viewing equipment. These can, of course, be used for a whole range of purposes, but Brimar has over the years come to specialise in producing them for military uses. In tanks and other armoured vehicles, these devices allow the occupants to see what's going on outside and to aim weaponry at targets, whether using conventional vision or technologies such as thermal imaging. The Brimar website lists its products as having been used in the following land capacities:²¹

- Challenger II (UK/Oman main battle tank)
- Bradley M2A3 (fighting vehicle)
- Mastiff/Cougar (MRAP) (armoured fighting vehicle)
- Warrior (light tank)
- Bushmaster (infantry vehicle)
- Scimitar (light tank)
- M1A2 Abrams (US main battle tank)
- HMMWV Humvee (military 4x4)
- Javelin Missile (anti-tank person-held missile)
- Stryker (8-wheeled armoured combat vehicles)

Brimar also manufactures components for aircraft, where again they are often used to aim and fire weapons as part of head-up, head-down and helmet-mounted displays. The Brimar website lists its products as being used in the following military aircraft:

- F 15 Eagle (tactical fighter)
- AH-64 Apache Helicopter
- F 16 Fighting Falcon (multi-role fighter)
- Cobra Helicopter
- Tiger Helicopter
- F 18 Hornet (multi-role fighter)
- Blackhawk Helicopter
- F 22 Raptor (stealth fighter aircraft)
- A 10 Thunderbolt (close air support aircraft for ground operations)
- F4 Phantom (interceptor fighter/fighter-bomber)
- Eurofighter Typhoon (fighter aircraft, used by the British, German, Italian, Spanish and Austrian air forces and sold to the Saudi Arabian air force)
- F 5 Tiger (fighter aircraft)
- AV-8B Harrier (ground attack aircraft)
- SAAB JAS 39 Gripen (fighter aircraft)
- C-17 Globemaster (large military transport aircraft)

as well as civilian aircraft such as the Boeing 737 and Gulfstream jets.²²

²⁰ Financial Times 8th June 2009

²¹ http://www.brimar-ltd.com/land_systems.html accessed June 2009

²² <http://www.brimar-ltd.com/avionics.html> accessed June 2009

Brimar also promotes and sells its products via a range of military trade fairs and exhibitions, including the Association of the United States Army annual exposition,²³ Defence Systems & Equipment International 2007²⁴ and Military Vehicles Expo 2009.²⁵ It also appears in British government export publicity, such as a brochure published by the Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform in 2008 detailing “Flat panel displays in the UK: a guide to UK capability 2008/9” and describing Brimar thus:

“Brimar has developed a range of display solutions for some of the world’s most successful and respected names in avionics, surface combat, command intelligence and the film and television industry.”²⁶

Brimar's state customers include the British Army, the US Army and Navy and the Israeli airforce, and products which may contain its components include Challenger II tanks sold to the government of Oman and Eurofighters sold to Saudi Arabia. Its other customers and partners include other arms companies such as Lockheed Martin.

US military supply

According to US Department of Defense documents, Brimar has been a significant contractor to the US military for some time. Most of these contracts are via the US Defense Logistics Agency, the main Department of Defense agency for procuring and delivering goods to various units of the US military. Figures released by the US government indicate that Brimar (under the names Rank Brimar, Brimar Inc and Brimar Ltd) has been a major supplier since at least 2000, with contracts between 2000 and 2008 worth US\$8,295,596. The vast majority of these contracts - \$8,268,431 worth – have been for Brimar's core products, viewing equipment, categorised as “Electron Tubes and Associated Hardware.” The remaining \$27,165 has been for 'communications studies.’ The Defense Logistics Agency was responsible for \$8,173,271 of these contracts, with \$95,160 going to the Navy and \$27,165 to the US Agency for International Development.²⁷

Using the US Department of Defense's own information, Brimar Ltd, Brimar Inc and Giles Briggs Holdings appear in the full contractor listings for at least 2002 and Brimar Inc in those for 2006 and 2007.²⁸

More detailed US Department of Defense documentation gives more information on the nature of Brimar's work for the US military. The Department's 2005 “RDT&E Budget Item Justification” (Research, Development, Test & Evaluation) for February 2005 details the evaluation of

“the Biocular Image Control Unit (BICU). The BICU, developed by Brimar, will be part of the Marine Corps’ M1A1 Firepower Enhancement Program. The BICU directly supports the tank crew’s situational awareness by enabling the 2nd generation Forward Look Infrared (FLIR) imagery to be displayed in the Gunner’s Primary Sight monocular display and also the biocular display. The BICU will provide eye relief to the gunner that will significantly reduce gunner’s fatigue. A successful FCT [Foreign Comparative Test] will enable the crewman to utilize the best features of

23 2008 AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition catalogue

24 Defence Systems & Equipment International 2007 exhibition catalogue

25 <http://www.militaryvehiclesexpo.com/exhibitors.php>

26 'Flat panel displays in the UK: a guide to UK capability 2008/9,' BERR 2008

27 Fedspending.org records for contracts relating to Brimar, accessed May 2009

http://www.fedspending.org/fpds/fpds.php?parent_id=261338&detail=-1

28 Full contractor lists for 2002, 2006 and 2007 downloaded from www.dod.mil May 2009

direct view optics and 2nd generation FLIR imagery at the same time to acquire and engage targets.”²⁹

Later information on the same programme states that:

“Leveraging the defense investments of our allies and coalition partners reduces our total ownership costs. For example, in 2004 the Marine Corps Systems Command qualified and procured Biocular Image Control Units, developed by Brimar of the United Kingdom, for the M1A1 Main Battle Tank Fire Enhancement Program, avoiding an estimated \$2 million in development costs and anticipated production cost savings of about \$4 million”

and goes on to offer details including the fact that the equipment discussed had been deployed with the Marine Corps in Iraq:

“The project was managed by the Project Office M1A1 Tank, Marine Corps Systems Command Armor & Fire Support Systems at Quantico, Virginia. An accelerated integration and test program was conducted at the Army Night Vision and Electronic Sensors Directorate at Fort Belvoir, Virginia; Aberdeen Test Center, Maryland; Eglin AFB, Florida; Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona; Twentynine Palms, California; and at Raytheon Corporation facilities in McKinney, Texas. In December 2004, Milestone C was achieved and the Marine Corps awarded contracts valued at approximately \$2.9 million to Brimar for full rate production of 192 FEP/BICUs and 12 initial spares FEP/BICUs. The first production units are deployed with the Marine Corps 2nd Tank Battalion in Iraq.”³⁰

A later report on the project included the following quote from a serving US tank officer:

““The gunman can kick back and look at the picture,” said Lt. Col. Gaskill of the Marine Corps’ Program Office for Tank Systems. “From now on, we are going to be able to lase through a target and we immediately get back the report on the target. Utilizing our communications we will be able to issue the first call for fire.”³¹

By this time the value of the contract had increased to \$6.7million for production of 450 units.³²

Israeli military supply

Brimar has contributed components to the Apache attack helicopter. These helicopters have been used by the US military since 1984 and have also been sold by the USA or UK to Egypt, Greece, Israel, Japan, Kuwait the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom. Models of the newest version, AH-64D, were still being delivered to the US army after 2007. Saudi Arabia and Taiwan both ordered batches of Apache helicopters in the last quarter of 2008.³³

Not all of these models will necessarily contain Brimar components, as this depends on the weapons systems and other features incorporated into the specific helicopter sold. However, in July 2006 an

29 US Department of Defense RDT&E BUDGET ITEM JUSTIFICATION February 2005

30 US Department of Defense Foreign Comparative Testing Program, review of fiscal years 2003-4. Published August 2005 by the Comparative Testing Office, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Advanced Systems & Concepts)

31 US Department of Defense Foreign Comparative Testing Program, review of fiscal years 2005-6. Published 2007 by the Comparative Testing Office, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Advanced Systems & Concepts)

32 Ibid

33 Army-technology.com industry project page AH-64A/D Apache Attack Helicopter <http://www.army-technology.com/projects/apache/>, accessed May 2009

investigation by an arms research organisation and the Guardian newspaper extracted an admission that Brimar components were indeed being incorporated into Apaches which were then sold to Israel. As the article noted:

“British arms companies are supplying key parts for Israel's Apache combat helicopters, F-15 and F-16 fighter jets deployed in southern Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank despite government guidelines banning the sale of weapons likely to be used "aggressively against another country" or fuel regional tensions.”³⁴ [the components for F15s and F16s were said to be manufactured by a Liverpool-based company, despite F15s appearing on Brimar's client list]

When asked to comment by the Guardian, Brimar responded as follows:

“The Guardian contacted all of the British companies with parts in the Israeli Apaches. 'We ensure that we follow the absolute letter of the law ...' said Dave Eldridge of Brimar, which manufactures helmet-mounted display systems for the Apaches. 'But these components are commercially available worldwide. If British companies are prevented from supplying the Boeing Apaches because they'll get sent onwards to Israel is that going to stop them from being sent? Of course not, they'll just move on to other suppliers and it would make no difference beyond hurting British business.’”³⁵

The Guardian also listed other British arms manufacturers making components for Israeli Apache helicopters, including Smiths Industries and AgustaWestland.

In February 2009 Public Interest Lawyers, a Birmingham-based law firm, submitted a request for judicial review to the High Court, alleging that the UK government's awareness of infringements of human rights and international law by Israel made it complicit in subsequent abuses during Israel's invasion of Gaza in December 2008 and January 2009.³⁶ Al-Haq is “the West Bank affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists - Geneva, and is a member of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Habitat International Coalition (HIC), and the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO)” and has special status with the UN's Economic & Social Council.³⁷

The UK government has argued that the courts should not rule on matters of foreign policy, a position which Phil Shiner of Public Interest Lawyers has claimed is 'outdated' and that the case relates to the legal obligations of the British government under international law, not to its policy positions. The initial hearing took place in June 2009, but a decision is still pending.³⁸ Brimar is one of the exporting companies specifically named in documentation produced by Palestinian human rights group Al Haq (in Arabic).³⁹

In addition to its case against the FCO, Al Haq is also in the process of taking legal action against the Department for Trade & Industry, again alleging that the UK government is neglecting its obligations under international law by licensing the export of items used to commit human rights abuses. This case is currently pending appeal before the House of Lords.⁴⁰

34 Guardian newspaper 29th July 2006, “Made in the UK, bringing devastation to Lebanon - the British parts in Israel's deadly attack helicopters”

35 Ibid

36 Public Interest Lawyers February 2009, pre-action protocol letter to the Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Office

37 Ibid

38 Al Haq press release 20th June 2009

39 www.alhaq.org/pdfs/lettertoUKprime.pdf viewed July 2009

40 <http://www.alhaq.org/etemplate.php?id=432> viewed July 2009

In June and July 2009, reports from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International reported major human rights abuses by the Israeli military during the Operation Cast Lead reinvasion of Gaza in December 2008 and January 2009, although they also accused Hamas of human rights infringements during the same conflict. Amnesty International⁴¹ accused Israel of 'wantonly' destroying Gazan infrastructure and lives,⁴² while Human Rights Watch concentrated on the use of drone-launched missiles by Israel in Operation Cast Lead and civilian deaths caused by them.

In April 2009 the British government also announced that it was reviewing all its arms exports to Israel. The JTA Jewish news service stated that "During Israel's military operation in Gaza earlier this year, British lawmakers had demanded that the government ensure its weapons parts were not used against Palestinians. At the time, Foreign Secretary David Miliband promised to look into the issue, and on Tuesday he issued a written statement detailing all direct and indirect arms exports from the United Kingdom to Israel. In his statement Miliband promised that all export licenses would be reviewed "in light of recent events in Gaza," adding that all future applications to export arms to Israel also will be assessed with the Gaza conflict in mind."⁴³ Several arms exports licenses to Israel were revoked as a result of the enquiry, although Brimar's was not one of them. Allegations of human rights abuses and infringements of the laws of war, including Apache attacks on medics and civilians, are also the subject of an ongoing United Nations enquiry under Judge Goldstone.⁴⁴

British military supply

Unsurprisingly, Brimar's products also find their way into the British military's equipment. It was one of the development partners in Lockheed Martin's "Warrior Fightability & Lethality Improvement Programme," designed to bring "accelerated development and integration of a new turret and weapon system onto the British Army's Warrior infantry fighting vehicle."⁴⁵

Brimar is also described as a "main team member" in the joint venture development of the Javelin light forces anti tank guided weapon system. This system has been sold to the British military, with a 2003 press release announcing that it "will enter service in 2005 with the Rapid Reaction Forces including 16 Air Assault Brigade and 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines." The same document stated that the weapon system was "already in service with the US Special Operations, Army and Marine Corps forces and has been sold to five other nations including Ireland. Approximately twenty countries will have anti armour requirements in the next 3 years that Javelin could fulfil and the UK team will be part of the Javelin Team competing for these programmes."⁴⁶ A Lockheed Martin publicity leaflet for the project stated that "Brimar will be responsible for the manufacture of the cathode ray tube in the CLU [Command Launch Unit]"⁴⁷

Other markets

According to Brimar, it has sales representatives in countries other than the UK and USA, namely Pakistan and Turkey. These are listed as:

Pakistan - Adnan Sherwani, Galaxy Enterprises

41 Human Rights Watch June 30th 2009, "Precisely wrong: Gaza Civilians Killed by Israeli Drone-Launched Missiles"

42 Amnesty International July 2009: "Operation 'Cast Lead': 22 days of death and destruction"

43 <http://jta.org/news/article/2009/04/22/1004551/britain-reviews-arms-exports-to-israel> 22nd April 2009

44 LA Times 8th April 2009, "Judge named to lead Gaza inquiry is known for fairness"

45 Battle Technologies magazine, January 2008

46 Northern Defence Industries press release, 23rd January 2003

47 Lockheed Martin Javelin team leaflet, www.lockheedmartin.co.uk/products/team_leaflet.pdf, downloaded May 2009

http://www.brimar-ltd.com/contact_ROW.html

Turkey - Levent Keskin, Delta Trade & Consultancy
http://www.brimar-ltd.com/contact_europe.html

In 2007, global security research organisation Saferworld expressed concern over “the Government's continued authorisation of the export of military equipment to countries renowned for their violation of human rights... such as Turkey and Pakistan.”⁴⁸

Non-military supply

Despite its apparent focus on military production at the current time, Brimar does appear to have maintained links with its civilian activities, manufacturing hi-tech audiovisual equipment for the film industry. Its products are listed amongst those sold by Cintel Television Equipment srl in Italy,⁴⁹ and Brimar's own revamped website, launched in May/June 2009 now has a full section on its film and TV capabilities, which were given less of a profile in the previous version of the site.⁵⁰ This suggests that Brimar's existence is not wholly dependent on its military manufacturing capabilities, and that a reversion to peaceful activities is an option for the firm.

How are Brimar's military products used?

Thanks to the Guardian's 2006 article and David Eldridge's own admissions within it we can establish that Apache helicopters with Brimar components have been used by the Israeli military in its wars in Lebanon and in human rights violations such as targeted assassinations in the West Bank and Gaza. As a result of US Department of Defense documentation, we can also assert categorically that Brimar equipment has been used by the US Marines in Iraq. Further details of the kind of operations involved are given below.

Because of the nature of Brimar's contribution to the Apache helicopter – ie a fairly small but vital part of the viewing mechanisms for the crew – it is often difficult to tie Brimar's operations with specific military activity or human rights abuses, although the connections to specific incidents in Gaza and the West Bank and to the general carnage of Fallujah are clear. A small number of the most likely cases, which would benefit from further research by those with more resources than this campaign, are flagged up in the following section.

Israel in Palestine

The Israeli airforce has used Apache helicopters in both the Occupied Palestinian West Bank and Gaza, and in South Lebanon.

An Apache was used in 2000 in the first instance of the now well-established Israeli tactic of 'targeted assassinations' – or as they are called by Israel, 'focused foiling' of planned attacks against Israeli targets. In this attack, near Bethlehem, Tanzim leader Hussain Abayat was killed and his deputy wounded by a laser-guided missile fired from an Apache.⁵¹ The tactic soon became a popular

48 Saferworld press release, 24th July 2007

49 Cintel Television Equipment srl Ecinema brochure, downloaded from cintelitaly.it and apparently created in June 2005

50 <http://www.brimar-ltd.com/film.html> accessed June 2009

51 Middle East Quarterly Winter 2003, “The logic of Israel's targeted killing.”

one with the Israeli armed forces, with 82 Palestinian activists and militants killed using Apache and Cobra attack helicopters, tanks or booby-traps between December 2000 and August 2002, and 31 bystanders also killed in the process.⁵²

Other examples of the use of Apache helicopters in targeted assassinations include the killing of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the wheelchair-bound spiritual leader of Hamas, in March 2004. Seven civilians were killed and at least 15 other people wounded in the guided missile attack in Gaza City.⁵³ And in February 2008, a total of five members of the Al-Qassem Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, were killed in two Apache attacks in the Khan Younis area.⁵⁴

In the Goldstone Report of the official UN fact-finding mission into human rights in the Operation Cast Lead attack on Gaza in December 2008/January 2009, a number of incidents were specifically described as involving the use of Apache helicopters.

These included:⁵⁵

- attacks on the house of Mahmoud Abd Rabbo al-Ajrami, a former civil servant who resigned his job when Hamas was elected to power in Gaza in 2006;
- the partial destruction of a flour mill, including the destruction of its machinery and the contamination of its remaining grain stocks, in a territory where rates of hunger and malnutrition are high, many people are directly dependent on UN food aid and where the State of Israel has routinely blocked aid from entering for long periods of time;
- according to eyewitnesses, although not verified by the report, the attack on the Samouni house, when at least two dozen and possibly more members of the same extended family were killed and the survivors, including small children, prevented from seeking rescue and treatment for several days.

Despite significant evidence of the use of Apache helicopters with British-made components, as well as other weaponry with British links, including armoured vehicles, in the West Bank and Gaza from the beginning of the Second Intifada, the British government only acknowledge this fact in 2002 and continues to claim that it exercises its 'ethical foreign policy' when assessing export applications for arms sales to Israel.⁵⁶ Calls have also come from American thinktanks and campaign groups for the US government to exercise the power conferred by its massive support for Israel to curb human rights abuses.⁵⁷

In addition to the policy of targeted assassinations, human rights groups have also accused Israel of using Apache helicopters in missile strikes in heavily populated residential areas and against buildings such as medical facilities, schools and refugee camp buildings. The Guardian newspaper carried the following quote on their use:

"The Apache is not just equipment. For Palestinians it's a symbol of indiscriminate military violence," said Shawan Jabarin, general director of the Palestinian human rights group al-Haq. "From a young age every Palestinian child learns to distinguish the Apache's sound and associate it with assassinations, destruction and blood in the street."⁵⁸

52 "Arming the Occupation: Israel and the Arms Trade," CAAT 2002

53 BBC News 24th March 2004 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3556099.stm

54 Independent Middle East Media Centre, 27th February 2008 <http://www.imemc.org/article/53087>

55 Human Rights in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories: Report of the UN Fact Finding mission on the Gaza Conflict (the 'Goldstone Report'), Advanced Edited Version, UN September 2009

56 "Arming the Occupation: Israel and the Arms Trade," CAAT 2002

57 Foreign Policy In Focus briefing paper, 'Who's Arming Israel', July 2006

58 Guardian newspaper 29th July 2006, "Made in the UK, bringing devastation to Lebanon - the British parts in Israel's deadly attack helicopters"

In July 2009, Amnesty International published a report of its research into various allegations of human rights abuses committed in Gaza during Operation Cast Lead. One of these, the killings of three paramedics and the 12-year-old boy who was showing them where to find two wounded men, was committed using a missile marked AGM-114 – the designation for a Hellfire missile. The bodies of those killed could not be recovered for a further two days, as those trying to collect them came under further fire from Israeli troops.⁵⁹ Of the various vehicles from which Hellfires can be launched, only two, the Apache and Blackhawk helicopters, are in use by the Israeli military. The Blackhawk seems to be in operation by Israel in smaller numbers than the Apache,⁶⁰ so there is a significant possibility that the missile used in this particularly horrifying incident was fired by a Brimar-equipped Apache. It must be emphasised that Brimar makes the viewing equipment which actually allows such weapons to be targeted on medical personnel and children.

Israel in Lebanon

In addition to its use of Apaches in Gaza and the West Bank, there are also copious examples of their use during Israeli incursions into South Lebanon and even as far as Beirut. They were used to attack Hizbollah positions in South Lebanon in conflicts during the 1990s and in 2006, causing Amnesty International and Saferworld to call on the British government to halt all arms sales to Israel.⁶¹ And on several occasions, such as in April 2006, Apaches were sent into Beirut to attack Hizbollah offices.⁶² These attacks were part of a wider aerial assault which destroyed much of the infrastructure of South Lebanon and brought many accusations of direct killings of civilians and destruction (by helicopter-fired missiles) of civilian facilities such as the lighthouse in Beirut port and a hospital at Baalbek.⁶⁴

Britain in Afghanistan

The British Ministry of Defence admitted in May 2008 that Apache helicopters in Afghanistan were being used to fire “enhanced blast” or thermobaric weapons, which are designed to create pressure waves which “sucks the air out of victims, shreds their internal organs and crushes their bodies.” Human rights groups had called for the weapons to be banned worldwide after their use by the Russian armed forces in Chechnya in the 1990s.⁶⁵ Further coverage in 2009 resulted from Ministry of Defence admissions that British Apaches had been firing larger numbers of the US-made missiles.⁶⁶ There is no specific evidence tying these Apaches to Brimar components, but their UK associations make this a distinct possibility.

In 2006, the Telegraph newspaper reported on the use of Apache helicopters by the UK Army Air Corps in Helmand province, Afghanistan. Again, the use of Brimar equipment in these specific Apaches has not yet been established and needs more work by better-resourced researchers, but the descriptions given by soldiers using these helicopters are telling, given that on one hand they claim extremely accurate sighting capabilities (potentially using Brimar equipment), but that on the other hand large-scale killings of wedding parties and other civilian groups has been a prominent feature

59 Amnesty International July 2009: 'Operation Cast Lead: 22 Days of Death and Destruction'

60 Flight International Directory of World Air Forces, 11th November 2008

61 AviationSpectator.com Apache profile, accessed June 2009 <http://www.aviationspectator.com/resources/aircraft-profiles/ah-64-apache-helicopter-aircraft-profile>

62 Guardian newspaper 29th July 2006, “Made in the UK, bringing devastation to Lebanon - the British parts in Israel's deadly attack helicopters”

63 New York Times, 12th April 1996, “Israeli aircraft strike guerrillas in Beirut suburbs.”

64 Amnesty International August 2006: “Israel/Lebanon: Deliberate destruction or “collateral damage”? Israeli attacks on civilian infrastructure”

65 The Australian, 23rd June 2008, 'Britain admits to using 'brutal' vacuum bomb against Taliban'

66 Guardian newspaper 28th May 2009, 'MoD admits use of controversial 'enhanced blast' weapons in Afghanistan'

of UK and US engagement in Afghanistan:

'With an ability to pick out and shoot an insurgent up to two miles away, eight of the £38 million helicopters have been sent to Helmand in southern Afghanistan... "We will only engage enemy if it is entirely necessary but the message is we are not here to dish out sweets and if you take us on expect the consequences," said Lt Col Richard Felton, the commander of the joint helicopter force in Afghanistan...

...The pilots involved, who did not give surnames in case they are captured, yesterday spoke for the first time about their combat operations. Capt Nick, 29, from Sussex, was down to his last few minutes of fuel when he saw two Taliban shooting at the Paras from behind a wall.

Locking on to the targets by turning his head towards them with the 30mm cannon automatically following his gaze, the insurgents became the latest Apache victims.⁶⁷

USA in Iraq

US Department of Defense documents cited above state that viewing equipment for the M1A1 tank developed and manufactured by Brimar was purchased by the US military and deployed with the Marine Corps Second Tank Battalion in Iraq. The dates given for this process are commissioning in 2003/4 and the date of the document is 2005, so it is unclear at exactly what point Brimar delivered its products to the Marine Corps.

However, it is a matter of public record that the Marine Corps 2nd Tank Battalion and its M1A1 tanks have played a significant role in Iraq and were present at the 'second battle of Fallujah' in November 2004, when the US military launched an all-out assault on the town after clashes between Iraqi militants and US occupying forces and staff of their commercial contractors, Blackwater.⁶⁸ First-person accounts from Marine Corps personnel describe with considerable enthusiasm the Second Tank Battalion practicing firing their tank guns at Camp Fallujah, including the following passage:

"I pulled the trigger and a fireball came out," Valasek explained. "We shot through thermal sights, so the sight went white and the dust cleared in time for me to see the round impact on target. It's split-second total concentration. Even though I'm sitting right next to it, I don't experience it moving." That split-second zone, the flash of the gun and devastating impacts on target are what makes being a tanker worth it. All the un-sexy parts of the job, the maintenance, greasy fingernails, lifting heavy track, the sweat, the cold, the early mornings and late nights all seem to melt away.⁶⁹

Widespread criticism has been levelled at the US attack on Fallujah. Over 200,000 Iraqis, most of them civilians and including women and children, fled Fallujah in November 2004, and a large proportion took months or years to return, if indeed they have done so at all. After their return, many Iraqi residents complained that the infrastructure of the town, including sewage systems and power supplies, had been devastated, and they were forced to submit to biometric recording and the implementation of checkpoint measures on the town for a long period afterwards. Over 1450 people were also detained by US forces in Fallujah in November 2004. 400 of these were released within weeks, but a number were retained by US forces. US military personnel (not from the Marine tank battalion) also stated that they:

"routinely used physical abuse and mental torture [of detainees] as a means of intelligence

67 Telegraph newspaper 23rd June 2006: "Apache earns its stripes above the Afghan battlefield"

68 www.marines.mil accessed June 2009

69 Marine Corps News, November 2006 "Tanks bring the thunder to Camp Fallujah" http://www.marine-corps-news.com/2006/11/tanks_brings_the_thunder_to_camp.htm

gathering and for stress relief' (Human Rights Watch, 17 September 2005).⁷⁰

The human rights abuses and war crimes that the USA stands accused of for its actions in Fallujah have been documented elsewhere, see Milan Rai et al.

Depleted Uranium in Iraq

There is also clear evidence that Brimar components are used in systems which are involved in the delivery of depleted uranium (DU) munitions. These include Brimar's supply of sighting equipment in M1A2 Abrams Tank, The Bradley IFV, the Challenger II tank and the A-10 Thunderbolts, all of which have been listed by defence industry experts as firing DU munitions.⁷¹

According to the Federation of American Scientists, the PGU-14/B API Armor Piercing Incendiary round was also used widely by US troops during Operation Desert Storm, and that the round "has a lightweight body which contains a sub-calibre high density penetrator of Depleted Uranium (DU). In addition to its penetrating capability DU is a natural pyrophoric material which enhances the incendiary effects."⁷²

The International Campaign to Ban Uranium Weapons states that the issues involved in the use of DU weaponry include: "It is thought that DU is the cause of a sharp increase in the incidence rates of some cancers, such as breast cancer and lymphoma, in areas of Iraq following 1991 and 2003. It has also been implicated in a rise in birth defects from areas adjacent to the main Gulf War battlefields... the Bystander Effect - whereby cells adjacent to those struck by alpha particles also exhibit signs of radiation damage, and Genomic Instability, where the descendants of radiation damaged cells show increased rates of mutations: the precursor to cancer growth. Ionizing radiation is a human carcinogen at every dose-level, not just at high doses; there is no threshold dose and any alpha particle can cause irreparable genetic damage... Detailed research into uranium's chemical toxicity began in the 1940s, since then it has become clear that, like many other heavy metals, such as lead, chromium, nickel and mercury, uranium exposure can be damaging to health. While many studies have only investigated the possibility of kidney damage, since 1991, and triggered by concerns over DU, dozens of papers have highlighted other, more worrying effects of uranium toxicity. Repeated cellular and animal studies have shown that uranium is a kidney toxin, neurotoxin, immunotoxin, mutagen, carcinogen and teratogen. Compared to the uranium naturally present in the environment and the ore in mine workings, DU dust is a concentrated form of uranium."⁷³

Brimar's workforce and trade union

Brimar has a workforce at its Chadderton site of around 140-150 people. The main trade union on the site is Amicus, now part of the Unite super-union. Andrew Murray, Communications Officer for Unite, is chair of the national Stop the War coalition, and on September 20th 2008 Unite's General Secretary, Tony Woodley, said at a Stop the War demo at the Labour Party conference in Manchester that "There is nothing more important than world peace. A world of peace and justice. Justice for the Iraqis, justice for our comrades in Palestine and the Palestinians."

70 Milan Rai et al, 'Remember Fallujah' briefing, www.rememberfallujah.org, accessed June 2009

71 http://www.janes.com/defence/news/jdw/jdw010111_2_n.shtml viewed July 2009

72 <http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/sys/land/pgu-14.htm> viewed August 2009

73 www.bandepleteduranium.org <http://wbx.me/1/?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.bandepleteduranium.org%2Fen%2Fa%2F278.html> viewed August 2009

In 2005 over 40 workers at Brimar picketed the factory over the closure of their final salary pension scheme.⁷⁴

What are the alternatives?

The Target Brimar campaign recognises that in the current economic climate, a campaign which seeks to disrupt a company's economic activity can be seen as a threat to jobs and financial stability.

We have two main responses to this.

Firstly, the scale of the subsidies granted to the arms industry by the British Government is huge. 2004 estimates by Campaign Against the Arms Trade (based on Hansard records of parliamentary statements and Ministry of Defence statistics) suggest that arms export subsidies by the British government, ie from taxpayers' money, amounted to £890 million. Split between the estimated 65,000 jobs created by those exports, that's a government payout of £13,000 per job, per year.⁷⁵

As well as the claim that jobs are stimulated by the 'special' support given to the arms export industry, it's also suggested by supporters of the sector that bankrolling export development leads to cheaper domestic arms procurement. This claim is also challenged by evidence that in fact subsidising the arms export sector distorts procurement decisions made for domestic defence, leading to higher costs for the British government and armed forces, and wasted public money.⁷⁶

Although these subsidies may have directly or indirectly generated British jobs – including those at the Brimar factory in Middleton – the same sums invested in other sectors may have created as good or better returns, in terms not only of jobs but also of technological developments which could have been of more benefit to society or the environment.

As Campaign Against the Arms Trade summarised the situation in 2008:

“Supporters of the military economy and the arms trade argue that, despite the massive job losses in the sector, they provide the UK with internationally successful, high technology niches in aerospace, engineering and electronics, as well as skilled work and spin-offs beneficial to the civil sector. But the real cost has been the diversion of resources from other forms of manufacturing activity that, if provided with similar long-term government investment, could actually have generated greater employment and direct benefits to the civil economy through improved technologies and industrial processes.”⁷⁷

As CAAT points out in its 2008 report, concentrated arms manufacture in the UK now only takes place in a few specific places in the UK, such as Barrow-in-Furness and Yeovil. Diversification work by properly-funded local and regional development agencies can help to ensure that the skills and jobs in far less defence-dependent economies such as Middleton are more easily reallocated.⁷⁸ A far greater challenge to the Middleton jobs market has been posed by the winding down of BAE Systems' Chadderton facility, just a few hundred yards from Brimar, due to global inequalities in the arms sector which have led to the redeployment of research, development and manufacturing operations to the USA.

Secondly, the likes of Brimar use labour which is highly technically skilled and potentially

⁷⁴ Manchester Evening News, 21st June 2005, “Strike Over Pension Plan”

⁷⁵ Campaign Against the Arms Trade subsidies factsheet 2004, www.caat.org.uk

⁷⁶ 'Escaping the Subsidy Trap.' September 2004, British-American Security Information Council; Saferworld; Oxfam

⁷⁷ 'Making Arms, Wasting Skills' Campaign Against the Arms Trade 2008

⁷⁸ Ibid

transferable to other hi-tech industries, to say nothing of Brimar's existing involvement in non-military hi-tech visual manufacture, discussed above. With major crises such as climate change and disease pandemics threatening the future well-being of the human race, as well as of other life forms on the planet, it is the position of Target Brimar that a better use of the skills and training of its staff would be in sectors such as renewable and low-energy technologies or medical uses for screen technologies in the treatment and prevention of disease. And if the kinds of subsidies poured into the arms sector were devoted to these industries, how much faster might we be finding solutions to some of the world's most pressing problems, instead of fuelling conflict, death and destruction?

And, as Campaign Against the Arms Trade point out, a shift away from the manufacture of weapons and their export to unstable regions such as the Middle East and Africa could actually help to contribute to a reduction in global tensions which would see our own domestic need for defence materiel reduced, while the diversion of talent and expertise from the military sector into areas such as fuel efficiency and renewable energy technologies could reduce the UK's dependence on overseas oil and gas, much of which again comes from unstable regions of the world.⁷⁹ And looking further into the future, measures which mitigate and aid adaption to climate change can only help to reduce the global instability and likely mass migration which will result from it, and reduce the impacts of the conflicts which experts predict we will see over land and water in coming decades.⁸⁰ And lastly, increasing concerns have been raised in recent years over the climate change impacts of the military and its massive logistical operations and aviation dependency; given that high-emissions sectors are likely to be facing greater government regulation and higher fuel costs in coming years, the profitability of defence-related sectors may also face challenges.

79 'Making Arms, Wasting Skills' Campaign Against the Arms Trade 2008

80 See eg International Institute for Sustainable Development 2009, 'Rising Temperatures, Rising Tensions: Climate change and the risk of violent conflict in the Middle East'