

DEALING & WHEELING IN SMALL ARMS

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Flame of Peace, Cambodia

A happy crowd is attending a Flame of Peace somewhere in rural Cambodia. Hundreds of rifles that have been collected from the local population have been piled up into a huge pyramid. Many of the guns appear to be military-style semi-automatic and automatic guns, with of high lethality. A number of EU ASAC¹ members, including the tough-looking Adrian Sprangemeijer, are sprinkling the pile with fuel.

V.O.

A voice-over explains that, thanks to this program, more than 154,000 small arms and light weapons have been collected and destroyed in Cambodia since 1998. The Cambodian government's efforts to rid the country of the vast quantities of weaponry — left over from 35 years of civil war — has been heavily supported first by the European Union and now also by the Japanese government. The collection and destruction campaign is accompanied by a complimentary public education effort against guns and gun violence, encouraging people to hand in their guns or disable their guns themselves.

Cambodia, art atelier

Craftsmen are welding parts of handguns and rifles into pieces of art and furniture, producing exotic, beautiful, and peaceful creations.

V.O.

Over the last few decades, initiatives of this kind have led to the collection and destruction of approximately four million small arms worldwide. These projects were enhanced by financial and human assistance of a number of developed countries and international organisations such as the EU, the UN Development Programme, and individual donor nations.

Cambodia, Flame of Peace

The crowd cheers when the pyramid of arms is lit and sparks into a great flame. Among the Cambodian audience we see an American and his wife: Jim and Kate Sullivan. They are clearly impressed by the message of this ceremony, which is peaceful and non-violent: in a matter of a few hours, the long guns will be reduced to worthless scrap metal and wood.

Conference sequence: New York UN meeting

¹ The European Union's Assistance on Curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia.

At a UN conference on small arms in New York, the results of a number of disarmament projects are presented to an optimistic audience of governmental representatives, NGO members, and journalists from around the world.

Phoenix, Arizona

Jim Sullivan, a renowned small arms designer living in Prescott, Arizona (USA), is proudly showing the different components of one of his latest improvements on the M16, the famous American assault rifle, which he co-designed. While he puts the parts together again and then shoots at a target with an unexpected precision for a man of his age, he explains that the ancestor of this weapon — the AR10 — designed by his colleague and friend Eugene Stoner, was produced in the Netherlands. His wife Kate looks at him with admiration.

A montage sequence about the passion for guns

Shots of shooting clubs, a proud arms collector, examples of gun violence in the entertainment industry, such as video games, a movie sequence, children running after each other with fake guns...

Amsterdam, a film studio

Arthur van Oest and Kees Witte, two Dutch weapons special effects experts, are on a film set. A Russian video is being shot in which child soldiers appear. As soon as the film shooting has been finished Arthur collects his Kalashnikovs, M16's, Heckler & Kochs, Herstalls, etc. among the children. He counts them to make sure none is missing.

Amsterdam, warehouse

Van Oest and Witte are at home in their huge warehouse filled with guns, rockets and all kinds of military equipment. They have a meeting with a film director who is working on a cinematic reconstruction of the assassination of Theo van Gogh by Mohammed Bouyeri. The director of the film project explains that Bouyeri used a specific handgun in the killing, a HS2000. According to Arthur, the HS2000 is a high quality pistol available in calibre 9mm luger, .40 S&W and .357 Sig. Witte quickly retrieves a pistol made in Austria, a Glock 17, that 'almost looks exactly like the gun used'. But the director is not satisfied and explains that the gun of the killer came from Croatia. He says he wants the absolutely same type of gun, from Croatia. Van Oest tells him not to worry, if he comes back next week it will be taken care of...

Production sequence

Employees enter an arms manufacturing plant located in the Croatian city of Karlovac. It's the start of a new day. The factory looks like any other industrial complex, with a car park and a modern main entrance. Somewhere at the factory gate, the company's name and logo are visible: IM Metall.

Conference sequence: Former Yugoslav Republic, introduction of SEESAC

(At a conference) the mission statement and results of SEESAC² are presented to an enthusiastic audience: In cooperation with the new Yugoslavian governments, UNDP and the European Union are engaged in a widespread operation to assist the new governments in the region with the collection and destruction of illegal civilian weapons. The slogan of the project is: "Serbia free of weapons — Croatia free of crime."

Belgrade, van Oest meets Wilkinson

Van Oest and Witte meet with Adrian Wilkinson, manager of the SEESAC project. Van Oest explains that he has heard about the collecting of civilian weapons and asks casually whether he could buy some of the turned in weapons for his work. According to Wilkinson this is unfortunately not possible. When Van Oest asks about the numbers and kind of weapons that have been collected, the results from SEESAC's work in the region, Mr. Wilkinson becomes very vague and uncooperative. Disappointed, Van Oest and Witte leave.

Former Yugoslav Republic, Croatia, IM-Metall factory

Because they don't want to return to Amsterdam empty-handed — which will cost them a job — Van Oest and his partner visit IM-METAL. Here the HS2000 that has been used in the Van Gogh assassination is being produced. Van Oest and Witte admire the HS2000 pistol and its ancestor, the HS95.

While van Oest and Witte watch the production process, going from design department to production department to testing department to export department, a voice over explains:

V.O.

Since 2002 IM Metall exports light weapons, military weapons, rifles and shotguns, pistols and revolvers and small arms ammunition valuing US\$ 6,495,177. The current international weapons export embargo, in combination with the fact that small arms production became one of the main industries in former Yugoslavia since the war has ended, has led to a huge raise of illegal arms exports... etc.

At the end of their visit, van Oest asks the management of the factory whether it is possible to buy a few specimens. The answer is that this is no problem — if they buy in a quantity of at least 1000 pieces.

² South Eastern Europe Small Arms Clearinghouse, a joint project of the UN Development Programme and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

Former Yugoslav republic, Croatia, streets of Zagreb

Van Oest and Witte are seen browsing in a local gun shop. Here they are finally able to buy two used HS2000 pistols for the movie about the assassination of Van Gogh. To their surprise, they find out that some of the guns sold in the shop do not have registration numbers, as required by law.

Thus a new problem arises: how are they going to take these weapons back to Holland?

Former Yugoslav Republic, Croatia, hotel bar

As Van Oest and Witte discuss the problem at the hotel bar, they are approached by an Englishman. A confusing dialogue follows until it becomes clear that the Englishman believed that Van Oest and Witte were arms brokers based on their overheard conversation. The man turns out to be a journalist, Brian Thomas, working for the London *Observer*, and an expert in suspicious arms deals. He explains how arms traffickers in the region export their illegal trade. In some cases, for example, factories produce two weapon lines, one with a registration number, the other without. The guns without registration numbers are meant to 'enhance exports'... Brian Thomas is currently researching arms trade 'links between this country and Congo'. The two countries have one feature in common, namely that the embargo's imposed on them are being systematically violated. In Serbia, the leaks concern exports, in Congo they concern imports. With his investigations, Brian says he is —unofficially— assisting a UN war crimes commission, which has pledged to "bring before the courts" perpetrators of serious crimes committed in the Congo war. In this respect, Thomas is after a former commercial airline pilot of suspicious flights...

Former Yugoslav Republic, Serbia, bar

Brian Tomas meets a man, called Sam—who downs one drink after the other. Sam has something on his conscience that he wants to get rid of. Sam talks about the flights that Ukrainian business people commissioned him for. He talks about flights to various countries in Africa and the 'green boxes' he was transporting. One day he found out that he was supplying guns to both parties in an ongoing tribal war — and that he was therefore implicated in thousands of deaths. That day he decided to leave the job.

Congo, UN inspectors at Ituri

UN inspectors, including one General Patrick Cammaert, acting MONUC³ commander in the region, fly in a private plane over the serene landscape of Ituri.

V.O.

The eight year war in Congo has caused 2.5 millions of deaths directly from violence and indirectly from conflict-related malnutrition, hunger and disease.

³ United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Hundreds of thousands of refugees have been created, forced from their homes at gunpoint. This war is continuously fuelled by large numbers of small arms and light weapons that are not supposed to be in this country.

In some parts of Congo peace seems to now have settled and a UN embargo has been imposed to stop the illegal import of weapons. However, in others areas of the country there are still enormous numbers of weapons flowing into the country. Shipments of weapons are imported, often in exchange for diamonds that are illegally harvested and smuggled out of the country.

Looking down at the landscape, General Cammaert discusses the horror that took place here, hardly imaginable now in this peaceful setting. Yet in this location a massacre took the lives of thousands of people in just a couple of hours. And conflict continues in the context of the ongoing ethnic conflict between the Hema and the Lendu clan.

Congo, Kathi Austin

Ms Kathi Austin, a UN consultant on illegal small arms trafficking, and a colleague of General Cammaert, describes how she is desperately trying to map the way rebels — who for years control the civilian population through terror and fear — attacked a community in Ituri that led to hundreds of deaths. The guns they used, she says, were produced in the former Yugoslavia.

Serbia, Government building

Brian Thomas interviews the Serbian director of Arms Exports Control. The man repeatedly claims to know nothing about the illegal weapons trade or the role of Serbian mafia.

Congo, Witnesses

Some of the survivors of the Ituri massacre are interviewed. One man testifies who fled with his family but was intercepted by a group of rebels. He witnessed the rebels kill his entire family, including his wife and smallest child, using M85 submachine guns (a Zastava 'copy' of the AK-47). He shows pictures of his deceased children and grandchildren. How could this happen despite the UN arms embargos?

Serbia, Thomas visits Zastava factory

Brian Thomas visits the Zastava factory. He tells a representative of the management how a Serbian criminal — using the name Bistrov — was recently arrested in Amsterdam. In his hotel room authorities found money, drugs, jewels and documents on small arms from the Zastava factories. Bistrov appeared to have a dozen of aliases and a large number of passports. He was member of the Serbian Mafia involved in drugs, money laundering and illegal arms trading. Among his belongings were a number of used flight-tickets as well as certificates with the registration number VP TLK, apparently of an airplane that

belonged to Bistrov himself. According to a manifest list of non-scheduled flights, the plane had landed in Uganda several times. Brian asks the Zastava management if they have any comment on this...

The Zastava representative stresses that 'they are innocent and have nothing to do with it' of course. As a proof — and after a lot of waiting — they show Brian documents, including user certificates that appear to show that, around the date mentioned in Bistrov's documents, Zastavas cargo was explicitly transported to Chad — not to Uganda. The end user certificate is a guarantee that a cargo went where it was supposed to go. According to Brian they are routinely falsified, and likely with the knowledge of government officials.

Production sequence

As we see a sophisticated montage sequence of the arms production process of Zastava — with shots of the design at the design department, the fabrication, the testing department and the marketing department.

The voice-over explains that since 2002, Serbia exported rifles, shotguns and parts and accessories of light weapons as well as small arms ammunition valued at US \$3,521,520. However, this amount counts only for the legal export of small arms and ammunition...

Conference sequence: Geneva meeting

People from around parts of the world attend a conference in the framework of the 'Geneva Process on small arms'. They are representatives of governments, international organisations, universities and NGOs. In an informal atmosphere of lectures, lunch breaks, press conferences and cocktails they discuss, promote and monitor the implementation of the 2001 United Nations "Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects".

Checking radio communications

Brian checks a long list of recorded communications and numbers of flights that took place around the dates mentioned in the end user certificate of the Zastava factory. He finds a number of suspicious flights from Chad to Uganda. We learn from him that in Africa there is hardly any air transport surveillance — airport records are not listed in official logbooks. After Chad the cargo disappeared and could have gone anywhere. He shows one of the flight registration numbers; the number match a plane that a certain pilot named Sam used to fly...

CUT BACK

TO:

Hotel bar

Brian studies photographs, taken at the Chad airport, of the cargo being unloaded from Sam's plane — the green boxes. Sam explains that the boxes he transported were immediately loaded into another plane, which is appears in another photograph. This second plane bears the registration number VP TLK. Brian tells Sam that this plane was owned by the Serbian criminal Bistrov. Sam recalls that the destination of its flight was Uganda. Therefore, it is surprising that one of the people in Sam's pictures is recognized as a personal assistant of Congolese president Laurent Kabila...

Brian in an airplane on its way to Congo

As we fly over Africa:

V.O.

Since the end of the Cold War, wars have changed. Today they are primarily due to economic reasons, like control over valuable oil resources, diamond mines, and timber manufacture. Western arms traffickers often belong to the inner circle of presidents of African countries like Congo and Uganda. It is generally Westerners who are involved in all kinds of trade. Weapon deals are more like a business card for them. In exchange for a license to export diamonds, they provide these presidents with a quantity of green boxes, packed with small arms and light weapons and ammunition.

Congo, Kinshasa airport

The plane with Brian Thomas on board lands at Kinshasa airport. We see the evidence of war all around us: bombed out buildings, men carrying arms, barbed-wire... Thomas talks to an official and says that he has asked president Kabila for an interview on the Ituri massacre. His request is rejected.

Congo, Thomas travels to the 'locus delicti' in Ituri

Brian sees the results of the massacre with his own eyes. Mass graves with blood stains still visible, orphans, people physically and psychologically wounded for the rest of their lives. He interviews a few survivors. He also talks to some of the thousands of recently demobilized child soldiers, who were forcibly recruited by armed groups. They tell stories of extreme violence and sexual abuse...

Congo, centre for former child soldiers

Brian visits a trauma centre for former child soldiers in order to get more information on the type and origin of weapons that were used in the Ituri massacre. Child soldiers are among the best experts on weapons in Africa. Without hesitation, children proudly list the different brands and types of weapons they have had in their possession: Kalashnikovs, Heckler & Koch G36 assault rifles, Zastava Skorpion machine pistols, IM-Metal HS95 9mm pistols, FN Herstal P90 sub-machine guns ...

Production sequence: FN Herstall, Belgium

Alongside balance sheets and in-trays on desks we see computer-aided design print-outs of sophisticated weaponry, models of weapons, and brochures on the latest ordnance. Employees are at work at various partially automated machines, manufacturing receivers, inserting barrels into vast hammer forging machines. It is not a production line, but a more modern configuration in which employees sit at individual workstations, producing small, highly-crafted parts. In great quantities.

V.O.

A voice over explains that the Belgian Herstal Group is by far the largest military and commercial small arms producing company in Western Europe. The company had total sales of roughly EUR 400 million in 2003 and employs more than 2,500 people. They produce assault rifles (F2000, FNC, FAL), machine guns (Minimi, MAG and M2HB-QCB), sub-machine guns (P90), pistols (Five-seven) and small arms ammunition. FAL assault rifles are in service with the armed forces of a very large number of countries worldwide and are—and have been—produced overseas under license.

UN Conference sequence

A proposal for an international treaty against the proliferation of small arms is presented and discussed.

Congo, Brian visits a disarmament project in Ituri

The United Nations Mission in Congo (MONUC) has organized a disarmament project in Ituri. This effort was not very successful until the UN forces began actively destroying militia compounds; in the course of which a number of rebels were killed. Since then, many militias seem willing to offer up their guns. By January 2005, more than 12,000 weapons were collected. Although a positive result, tens of thousands of guns are assumed to be still in the possession of various armed groups, and fighting is ongoing, including with UN troops.

Congo, Brian meets general General Cammaert

Brian interviews General Cammaert, who admits that the flow of weapons and ammunition crossing the border from Uganda through Lake Albert into Congo continues as before. However, one important difference is that today, none of the arms and ammunition have registration numbers anymore. Therefore it is even harder to track their sources and transports down than before...

Congo, Witness

The man who witnessed the killing of his family observes with a cold note in his voice that small arms are not produced in Congo. And besides, a weapon embargo is

supposedly in place. Nevertheless, his family has been murdered with small arms. How is that possible? Is it greediness of the rich?

Production sequence: Heckler & Koch, Germany

Quiet, light-filled offices which could well be mistaken for those of any modern technology firm. Large workspaces are flanked by drab green machines, worn benches of pressed steel construction, and tubular trolleys fitted with racks, and painted in the same functional green. On the racks rest rifles in various stages of completion. There are glossy black rifles, conspicuous against the plain surroundings, and rifles of vivid blue composite awaiting their final coat of black or green. Deeper inside the factory are the testing workshops. Rifles and pistols are test-fired, monitored, and then test-fired again, sometimes with the aid of extremely accurate machines, and sometimes simply by line of sight.

V.O.

A voice over explains that Heckler & Koch is one of the two largest producers of small arms for military and law enforcement authorities in Western Europe. It dates from just after the Second World War, when it was established in the location of a former weapons factory had been dismantled by Allied forces. The company had total sales of EUR 134 million (US \$151 million) in 2003. Two-thirds of its sales are derived from military and police sales in and about 75 per cent of total sales are derived from exports. Heckler & Koch produces pistols, sub-machine guns (MP5, UMP and the Personal Defence Weapon MP7), assault rifles (G36, HK53, HK33), sniper rifles (HK23, HK21), grenade launchers and machine guns. The G3 assault rifle, in production since the 1950s, is one of the most widely distributed assault rifles around the world. Production as well as marketing rights have been sold to an extraordinary large number of countries, including a number of repressive regimes and governments involved in armed conflicts.

Conference sequence: New York UN Conference on Small Arms, July 2005

The proposal for an international treaty against the proliferation of small arms is rejected. A new proposal will be presented and discussed at the next meeting in 2006...

Third world sequence: proliferation and victims

In Yemen, young children guard a field where *quat* — the national drug — is grown. They all carry large rifles. Not to use them, they say — although you never know...

A Cambodian man, who doesn't want to show his face, says that in his country many generals of the national army are raising their income by selling the best weapons collected by the European Union from the population to foreign arms traffickers.

In Rio, Brazil, the public lays shoes along a busy street in a remembrance ceremony. Each shoe represents a person who has been killed by a gun. Most of the shoes contain photographs — pictures of its owner — a young man, a middle-aged woman, a small child...

London, office of Brian Thomas

Brian is making a report from the information he has collected. He admits there is nothing more he can do with it than send it to the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the UN, and a few NGOs. He will also publish an article in the London *Observer* — his fifth — on the impunity of international arms trafficking, because it's only a *public discussion* about the uncontrolled widespread of small arms that will finally make a difference, he says...

New York UN Conference on Small Arms, July 2005

Representatives of Germany, Belgium and a few other small arms-producing European countries express their disappointment in the slow progress being made on an international treaty. One of the speakers concludes that the 2001 Programme of Action is apparently too weak to actually prevent more than four hundred thousands people from being killed each year. An international treaty is desperately needed...

Production sequence

Montage sequence of new guns being manufactured by Heckler & Koch, Zastava, IM Metall and FN Herstal. They are packed in boxes, loaded into trucks and displayed at an international arms fair...

V.O.

The world produces an average of seven million new small arms every year, which adds up to 140 million new small arms made over the last two decades, estimated at a value of EUR 114 billion. The most important exporter of small arms and light weapons today is the European Union, which exported EUR 669 million in small arms and ammunition in 2000 — more than the United States, which exported arms valued at EUR 533 million in the same year. Compared to the flood of new guns dumped on the international market each year, the 154,000 small arms and light weapons collected and destroyed in Cambodia, or the 7,000 weapons taken out of circulation in Congo, for example, seem almost insignificant.

Congo. The witness

The man who witnessed the killing of his family visits a grave and cries softly. As the camera pulls back we gradually see a large graveyard with mourning people everywhere...

Design studio in Prescott, Arizona

Jim Sullivan talks about his newest project: a new family of small arms. He explains and demonstrates why this new generation of small arms is better, lighter, stronger and more precise than every other weapon he has worked on.

UN Conference on Small Arms, July 2005

A number of short interviews in front of the UN building in New York. As the conference has almost ended, the representatives of different governments respond to the question why the international community cannot succeed in creating an international treaty to stop the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms...

The responses, delivered in the most cautious terms, fail to provide any direct answers. This in itself reveals much, and the viewer is left with the impression that we are not being told the whole story. The impression built up from these statements seems to be that some -- perhaps many -- governments don't want a treaty after all.