

Statements by Gerald James made at a UK Conference of the Environmental Law Center:

Before dissecting the complex interrelationships among the "front companies," the many political and private players on both sides of the Atlantic, including the Bush family, Rumsfeld, Reagan, former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, her many level officials, Kock's vital role as MI6 infiltrator and overseer, the suppression of the infamous but little known Scott Report, the role of Peter Levine as former British defense official made chairman of Lloyd's of London, it's wise to look at the public statement made by former Astra Holdings PLC Chairman from 1980-90, Gerald Reaveley James, head of the company which became a leading ammunition and weapons manufacture and supplier to Iraq and Iran.

Much of James' statements regarding the Scott Report and the corrupt British legal system have never been adequately reported by the compliant press or followed up by investigators, as it appears to have fallen into the same "deep black hole" where Dr. Kelly and Bull's illegal arms sales information has also been laid to rest.

Before reading James's lengthy comments, remember the Scott Report he refers to has for the most part been suppressed from the public record, as well as the MI6 and CIA role in overseeing the illegal arms deals and the money trail leading back to the U.S. and UK politicians who put the whole devious plan together.

Although James's statements, made as an invited guest and speaker at a UK conference of the Environmental Law Center, are lengthy and only one man's recollection and experience, they are left with only a few insignificant deletions for clarity due to the past suppression of information on this aspect of the sale of arms to Iran and Iraq and his role as Chairman of the company in the middle of the illegal deals.

A more in depth look story of Astra can be found in James' little known book, published in the UK by Little Brown, called "In the Public Interest."

Here are his statements:

"I am reminded of the very appropriate quote from Edmund Burke (1729-97) "It is necessary only for the good man to do nothing for evil to triumph."

"The Astra case and my case reflect much that has been to the fore in recent years in not only scandals around arms companies like Astra, Matrix Churchill, Ordtec, Forgemasters, Walter Somers, Ferranti and other companies like Polly Peck, BCCI and Maxwell but also in the Scott Inquiry, the BSE Inquiry and the Lloyds of London affair and other scandals. The underlying problem is secret unaccountable government which bypasses Parliament and how the law is administered in the UK, gives aid and succor to such a state of affairs. The most common device is the concealment of evidence and manipulation of cases. There is a tendency when challenged for those in authority to talk of conspiracy theories. My experience is that those who do so are usually part of the conspiracy.

"My company Astra gave rise to much of the circumstances which created the Scott Inquiry, the Supergun revelations (we reported it first), the Aitken affair, the murder of Gerald Bull in Brussels in March 1990 and much else.

"Until March 1990 and between 1980 and 1990 I was chairman of Astra Holdings PLC ("Astra") which became a leading ammunition and weapons manufacturer. By the late 1980's Astra had factories in the United States (9), Canada (2), Belgium (5), United Kingdom (5) and administrative headquarters in

Washington Dc, Brussels and London and employed 4,000 personnel.

"Astra became involved in covert weapons and ammunitions operations organised by MI5 and MI6 and the CIA, the MOD, DOD, FCO and the State Department and the DTI. To such an extent was Astra involved with its principal subsidiaries, Walters, Accudyne, Kilgore USA PRB Belgium, BMARC UK; in the covert trade manipulations of Foreign Policy. In 1989/90, following a reappraisal of Foreign Policy in the light of the demise of the Cold War and changing circumstances in the Middle East, where it became apparent the US, UK and EEC had transferred Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical weapons technology as well as conventional weapons to countries like Iran and Iraq, and the discovery Pakistan had the atomic bomb, the whole covert network was reorganized.

"This involved the collapsing of companies like Astra, Ferranti/ISC, Polly Peck, BCCI, Maxwell Group etc and the prosecution of lesser fry Companies and their directors ~ companies like Matrix Churchill, BNJ, Ordtec, Euromac, SRC, Forgemasters, Walter Somers are examples. The directors of Astra were to a large extent ignorant of the full range of covert activities carried out in their name but aware of some of these activities and the likely destination of their goods. As however all operations were sanctioned by the DTI, MOD, FCO, and in the U.S. by the DOD and the State Department and in Belgium by the Belgian Government, not too many questions were raised initially.

"However, in late 1988 and 1989 it became clear to me as Chairmen that the clandestine operations far exceeded anything remotely sanctioned by the full Board and I set out to investigate in depth. I became aware that certain plants were used to secretly store and ship goods; that monies were being transferred to other operations without book records or board approval in secret commission payments; that our paper work and parallel bank accounts were being used to process arms shipments from major UK defense companies like British Aerospace, Royal Ordnance, GEC Marconi, Thorn EMI etc. A leading British Defence Journalist wrote a report which was largely kept secret which indicated 100m was stolen from the Export Credit Guarantee Department ("ECGD") in a fictitious subcontract for propellant which BMARC, an Astra subsidiary, had secretly obtained in 1988 from Royal Ordnance.

"I also became concerned about payments to and business with MI6/CIA front company Allivane which had occurred between 1983 and 1988 via Astra. It also became clear that all our main operations were involved in covert operations in the USA, Belgium and the UK, and that Astra, when it acquired these companies, had inherited a hard core of MI6, MI5, DIA agents who operated behind the back of the original directors and who treated them as "useful idiots".

"All our main companies were involved with Space Research Corporation ("SRC") and the late Dr Gerald Bull who was behind the Supergun and other secret projects which Astra companies were also involved in. In 1989 I realized we had a hugely dangerous individual on our main Board and the BMARC Board who was an MI6 agent.

"This individual, Stepanus Adolphus Kock had high level political connections to Thatcher, Hesletine, Younger, Hanley, etc as well as MI5 and MI6 connections. It is now clear to me that he was involved in the murder of Dr Gerald Bull in Brussels on 22nd march 1990 and Jonathan Moyle in Santiago, Chile on 31st March 1990. BMARC was the only company outside the Atomic Weapons research Establishment and Government Arms depots with the capability to store nuclear bombs like Redbeard and WE177.

"By early 1990 my probing had become a major problem and a plot was hatched to remove me as Chairman shortly before the Supergun and other revelations and Bull's murder. A new dummy board was formed in reality by Kock with two MI6/MI5 stooges ran the company into the ground over the next two years. In order to explain away the destruction of the company with a 350m order book and a market capitalization of 120m desperate attempts were made to find evidence of malpractice by the original directors. Gumbley, my Managing Director, who had been with Bull until an hour before he was shot had discussed with Bull suing UK Government and senior civil servants using Bull's extensive knowledge of high level corruption and illegal operations.

"It had been agreed I would return with Gumbley to agree with lawyers how to proceed a week later. I had discussed such matters with Bull some six months previous but no further action had been taken. Gumbley was immediately framed up for corrupting an MOD official and jailed for 9 months and after desperately trying to find something on me and failing, Kock and MI6/MI5 decided to institute through Peter Lilley and the DTI a DTI Inquiry. Lilley was Secretary of state at the DTI at the time.

"The DTI Inquiry lasted three years and cost 2.5m plus (as much as the Scott Inquiry). The announcement of the Inquiry and the misleading press statements issued by the DTI and Government ensured the downfall of Astra. Crooks and MI5, MI6, agents or informers were put in charge of Astra, including Kock, Roy Barber FCA and Tony McCann. Barber and McCann whose managerial and industrial competence and experience were negligible paid themselves 330,000 and 280,000 respectively. Barber took 100,000 in the first month. Barber's annual payment was more than I received in salary and expenses as Chairman over ten years while I built the company. PRB was sold off immediately for 3m to avoid embarrassing revelations. MI5, MI6 and MOD police and Customs launched 17 raids on Astra premises in order to steal any sales and other documentation incriminating Government.

"No new orders were obtained in spite of the Gulf War and the company ran on the 350m order book we had left for two years, before it was put into receivership on 2nd February 1992 on the eve of me giving evidence to the House of Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee re Supergun, Project Babylon and arms to Iraq (and Iran etc). Press coverage was hue and adverse. This facilitated, as clearly city interests like Banks and Astra's main shareholders 3i, Prudential and Clerical and medical cooperated with Government for their own interest and purposes against the interests of smaller shareholders (a parallel with Lloyds techniques).

"Kock had a cover as a consultant in Midland Bank's secret arms department, Midland and Industrial Trade Services ("MITS"). This was staffed by ex service officers, MI5, MI6, agents and intelligence affiliated bankers. Midland with the Bank of Boston were Astra's main bankers and dominated by MI6 CIA agents. Kock was also said to be head of Group 13, the Government's assassination and dirty tricks squad according to Richard John Rainey Unwin, a close associate of Kock himself who was a contract MI6 agent and Consultant to Astra. Kock and Unwin, with Martin Laing Construction, negotiated the 2bn Malaysian defence deal before George Younger, the Defense Secretary even knew of it.

"The MOD police arrested several of my colleagues, framed Grumbley up. I was subjected to harassment, burglaries; I was arrested by Customs, investigated by the Inland Revenue, subjected to surveillance, threats, bugging, telephone tapping (all documented), a DTI Inquiry which lasted 3 years and a DTI prosecution which lasted 4 years. In addition I had to give copious evidence to the Scott Inquiry over 4 years, 2 DTI Select Committees, Foreign Affairs Select Committee, Defense Select Committee, Public Accounts Select Committee, Public Services Select committee, Police (SOI), a huge law suit in the United States (Dooley case). My family suffered considerably, my two eldest sons army careers suffered, my youngest son's education because of adverse publicity, my brother was killed in an accident never satisfactory explained which could have been intended for me.

In the course of my own experiences I took considerable note and interest in parallel cases like Matrix Churchill, Ordtec, Euromac, Atlantic Commercial, BNJ, SRC, Forgemasters, Walter Somers, Polly Peck, Foxley Ferranti/ISC, BCCI, Maxwell etc. All these cases and others and the Astra case involved the gross abuse of power by Government and its agencies and servants, concealment of key evidence, intimidation, threats, false and selective prosecutions, manipulation of evidence, perversion of the course of justice. It has also been clearly demonstrated that there is no separation of powers within the United Kingdom. Key legal appointments like Lord Chancellor and attorney General, Solicitor General are wholly political.

"It has also been clearly demonstrated that Parliament has no control of knowledge of events and that a vast apparatus of permanent unelected Government exists. This permanent Government consists of senior civil servants, intelligence and security officers, key figures in certain city and financial institutions (including Lloyds of London), key industrialists and directors of major monopolistic companies, senior politicians. The Lord Chancellors Office which is responsible for the appointment of Judges, Clerks of the House of Commons select Committees and approval of Chairmen of such committees and the approval of the Queen's Counsel, holds a total control of the legal administrative framework and has strong connections to the security and intelligence services.

"We have seen from the arms to Iran, Iraq affairs, the Sandline affair and other scandals that politicians and Parliament have little or no control and are more like players in a pantomime put on for the general public and gullible public.

"Secrecy breeds corruption, secrecy is power, information is power particularly confidential information. There is no accountability and the calibre of MP deteriorates with each Parliament. The young politician with no experience outside is naive and powerless and many now have a blind loyalty to their party. Ironically the hereditary peers of the House of Lords provided one of the last vestiges of honesty and independence now largely destroyed by self-important and self-deluding figures like Blair and Baroness Jay.

"It has never been more vital for people to challenge the views of politicians and opinion formers. We live in an age where much if not most of the media is controlled. The legal mechanism and Judges and the court system need to be beyond reproach. Sadly they are not and the chronicle of abuse and manipulation of cases is appalling. Judges are not independent in most government related cases and are no different to salaried and pensioned civil servants. The independence of the Judiciary is an allusion fostered by the Judiciary. Too often a Judicial Inquiry is a system for cover up and concealment. Too often the courts are influenced by political considerations as in the Scott Inquiry and the recent Lloyds of London case. Perhaps with pressure this can be changed."

Extract from:

The Big 'Allivane – Astra' Picture. The Trail of Illegal Weapons Sold to Iran And Iraq Starts In Washington And London

by Greg Szymanski

Arctic Beacon

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