



MAPW - Health Professionals Promoting Peace

Professor Chris Manzie
Head of Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering
Director of the Melbourne Information, Decision and Autonomous Systems (MIDAS) Laboratory
Melbourne School of Engineering
University of Melbourne

18th June 2018

Dear Professor Manzie,

Re: Losing Esteem: Melbourne University's reputation at risk
Lockheed Martin, BAE and the University of Melbourne

Thanks for meeting with us today.

Due diligence is crucial when the university is considering partnerships.

In the 2015-2000 Strategic Plan "Growing Esteem", Glyn Davis, Melbourne University's Vice-Chancellor wrote:

"Through education we advance knowledge and add value to people's lives, along with the expertise and skills to make a better world." He wrote of research "adding to the stock of human knowledge and addressing the major social, economic and environmental challenges of our time."

Melbourne University's partnerships with Lockheed Martin and BAE, two of the world's largest weapons manufacturer, are contrary to these aims. The reasons are many, and include:

- In July 2017, by a vote of 122 to 1, the UN adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, placing these on the same footing as chemical and biological weapons. The Treaty opens for signature at the UN in New York on 20 September 2017, and will enter into force once 50 states have ratified it. This places nuclear weapons on the same footing legally as biological weapons and chemical weapons. Lockheed Martin and BAE are two of the world's largest manufacturers of nuclear weapons systems.¹

¹ <https://www.dontbankonthebomb.com/nuclear-weapon-producers/>

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- As with tobacco and gambling companies, divestment is a powerful statement of social norms. Many companies and investment firms are divesting from nuclear weapons². Most recently, Deutsche bank, the largest Dutch Pension Fund and major Belgian bank KBC are divesting from nuclear weapons manufacturers³
- Lockheed Martin has been involved in many scandals over the years⁴. Bribes and contributions made from the late 1950s to the 1970s caused huge political controversy in *Japan, and also in West Germany, Italy and the Netherlands*. There are numerous and ongoing controversies involving questionable foreign payments, cost-overruns, overbilling of governments, undue spending and influence on US defence and appropriations panels, race and age discrimination, and environmental racism. The Project On Government Oversight's Federal Contractor Misconduct Database has 84 entries for Lockheed Martin misconduct involving more than \$812 million in fines, damages and other payments over the last two decades⁵. To quote an article in Forbes magazine in 2015 "Lockheed's astonishingly corrupt influence peddling, with illegal taxpayer funds, has so many sleazy aspects that only the ten worst can be briefly covered"⁶.
- Lockheed Martin provided interrogation services (through subsidiaries) in places like Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay⁷. Mamdough Habib, a former Sydney taxi driver, spent over three years at Guantanamo. Lockheed Martin provided private contract interrogators at Guantanamo, some of whom are alleged to have tortured Mr Habib so badly he received a large confidential settlement from the Australian government after his release.
- BAE Systems is a major weapons supplier to Saudi Arabia, with continuing sales and engineering support of its Eurofighter Typhoon jet to the Royal Saudi Air Force. The Saudis stand accused of severe human rights abuses and war crimes⁸. Bombing raids on schools, medical facilities, mosques and markets, according to the UN, have violated international humanitarian laws, with regions of Yemen facing acute levels of famine.
- BAE has had multiple allegations of corruption made against it over a long period, and a \$400m criminal fine in the US in 2010⁹. (Some of this history is documented here¹⁰, and in Andrew Feinstein's book "The Shadow World: Inside the Global Arms Trade").

² <https://www.dontbankonthebomb.com/2018-hof/>

³ <https://www.dontbankonthebomb.com/>

⁴ <http://www.corp-research.org/lockheed-martin>

⁵ <http://www.contractormisconduct.org/>

⁶ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/charlestiefer/2015/08/31/lockheed-fined-4-7-million-for-fraudulent-taxpayer-paid-lobbying-with-most-corrupt-ex-rep-wilson/2/#5b67508967f0>

⁷ <http://www.govexec.com/contracting/2004/07/gsa-queries-lockheed-martin-on-interrogation-contracts/17276/> (cached)

⁸ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia-bombing-civilian-targets-in-yemen-is-helping-grow-bae-systems-sales-says-amnesty-a6882221.html>

⁹ <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/bae-systems-plc-pleads-guilty-and-ordered-pay-400-million-criminal-fine>

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The University requires all research projects at masters and doctoral level to undergo rigorous ethics review. Yet the University has provided no details of whether any ethical reviews of the University's partnerships with Lockheed Martin or BAE were undertaken, or the nature and outcome of these reviews. The ethics filters that are so strictly applied to individual research projects seem to be completely absent when it comes to weapons dealers.

It was therefore both extremely disappointing and surprising to find the University of Melbourne accepting funds from companies like BAE and Lockheed Martin.

The University of Melbourne cannot ignore the ethics of weapons manufacturers without suffering serious damage to its reputation and standards. Pope Francis calls them the "Merchants of Death" while Tim Costello describes Australia's push to become a major weapons exporter as "Exporting death and profiteering from bloodshed"¹¹¹².

The University's letter of the 13th June 2017, responding to the MAPW student group, claimed "fundamental research can have many applications, and it is impossible to foresee all future uses and consequences". However this statement is highly disingenuous, given that the University's own media release when the partnership was announced talked about "deepening and broadening its engagement with the defence industry" and "placing Melbourne University in an ideal position to assist Lockheed Martin with their research goals."

Lockheed Martin is the US's and the world's biggest weapons-producing company. Its arms sales in 2015 totaled over \$46 billion (US), and its profit was \$3.6 billion¹³.

Lockheed Martin's website tells us: "*We solve complex challenges, advance scientific discovery and deliver innovative solutions to help our customers keep people safe and provide them essential services.*" The "innovative solutions" are mostly weapons and related goods, with weapons systems making up 79% of its total sales⁵.

Lockheed Martin is working on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), which threaten to become the third revolution in warfare, after gunpowder and nuclear weapons¹⁴. Once developed, they will enable armed conflict to be fought at a scale greater than ever, and at timescales faster than humans can comprehend. There are serious global concerns they will be *de facto* weapons of mass destruction. Industry experts have come out condemning these weapons¹⁵.

Another major concern is the "opportunity cost" of weapons research. Focusing expertise and funds in one area means there is less research effort and funds for other areas such as diplomacy and peacemaking, public health

¹⁰ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/industry/defence/8216172/BAE-Systems-timeline-of-bribery-allegations.html>

¹¹ <https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2017/06/03/pope-franciss-prayer-stop-merchants-death/>

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/profitting-from-bloodshed-tim-costello-criticises-christopher-pyne-weapons-export-plan-20170717-gxcomj.html>

¹³ <https://www.sipri.org/databases/armsindustry>

¹⁴ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/01/05/growing-international-movement-against-killer-robots>

¹⁵ <https://futureoflife.org/autonomous-weapons-open-letter-2017/>

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interventions, renewable energy and other critical issues. The University should indeed be working as Glyn Davis recommends “addressing the major social, economic and environmental challenges of our time”, to “make a better world”.

Job creation is often used as a justification for weapons manufacturing subsidies, but a number of studies show that, for the same investment, many more jobs are created in health, education and renewable energy¹⁶. Investments in elementary and secondary education create nearly three times as many jobs as defence spending, while health care creates about twice as many jobs, so the jobs argument is ultimately specious.

Lockheed Martin has a reputation as one of the most corrupt companies in the world’s most corrupt industry and BAE has also a number of corruption convictions.¹⁷

Partnerships between the University Lockheed Martin and BAE will be an ongoing issue that will continue to damage very significantly the University’s reputation, both with its students, staff, alumni and in the wider community, including other potential desirable partners.

We hope that the Faculty of Engineering will reconsider the partnership agreements with Lockheed Martin and BAE in the light of these concerns, decline any future funding and withdraw from current research at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Margaret Beavis
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Founders of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons



¹⁶ <https://news.brown.edu/articles/2017/05/jobscow>

¹⁷ <https://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2011/01>

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