

For Starters (WS49)

Workers Solidarity Movement

1996

July 2nd saw the JFK aircraft carrier sail into Dublin Bay. The scale of the vessel was staggering, it was as big as New York's Empire State Building and carried 75 aircraft on its 4.5 acre flightdeck. We were supposed to see this as something wonderful, a floating city harnessing all the latest technology. We were not supposed to see it for what it is: a massive killing machine. The Workers Solidarity Movement joined several hundred protesters in Dún Laoghaire who were happy to welcome American tourists but were not going to welcome a visit by this death ship.

As the WSM bulletin Anarchist News pointed out "The US embassy has admitted that planes launched from the JFK dropped 3.5 million pounds of explosive during the Gulf War. [This was the war where the US lined up with Kuwaiti and Saudi tyrants against an Iraqi tyrant. Hurrah for liberty!].

"Among the recipients of this gift from Uncle Sam were over 300 men, women and children burnt to death in a civilian bomb shelter in Baghdad. The US authorities didn't care, in their own words this was just "collateral damage". Planes from the JFK also took part in the "turkey shoot" on the Basra Road where tens of thousands of retreating Iraqi conscript soldiers were massacred after they had been defeated."

The US now supplies just over 48% of the world's arms. There is a fortune to be made from selling weapons of war. In 1994 alone the developing world spent close to £90 billion on weapons. Yet the United Nations estimates that just £11 billion of this money would pay for all the primary health needs of people in the developing countries.

Anarchist News went on to say "Think of all the suffering that could be ended, the diseases eradicated, the homeless housed and the hungry fed if all this wealth and expertise was put to worthwhile use. This will not happen by appealing to politicians & bosses — decades of petitions and pleas have achieved nothing. It will only happen when we end the rule of the millionaires and build a society based on satisfying people's needs."

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