

22 March 2007

Sir Crispin Davis
Chief Executive Officer
Reed Elsevier Group
1-3 Strand
London WC2N 5JR

BY FAX: +44 20 7166 5799 (three pages total)

Dear Sir Crispin:

As you will be aware, since September 2005 there have been statements made by the editorial board and readership of *The Lancet*, deploring the Reed Elsevier Group's commingling of a medical publishing business with an arms trade exhibition business. The specific grievances have been set out before in *The Lancet* and, most recently, in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*.¹ Yet apart from a terse and disappointing statement from Reed Elsevier in 2005, there appears to have been no action taken by the company to address the grievances.²

Probably nothing substantive has changed.

Accordingly we are writing this open letter to remind you of those grievances, and our sustained displeasure at Reed Elsevier. We believe, however, that rather than rush to condemn Reed Elsevier for inaction, fairness obliges us to ask about the steps Reed Elsevier has taken or will take, and to make a genuine effort to understand your point of view. Our great respect for *The Lancet* requires this as well.

We accordingly would be grateful for your answers to these questions concerning Reed Elsevier Group:

Q1: Can Reed Elsevier please elaborate for our understanding the reasons that it perceives no problematic tension between the promotion and advocacy of the arms trade through its Reed Exhibitions (REx) subsidiary, and promotion and advocacy of public health through the publication of academic journals such as *The Lancet*?

Q2: Alternatively, if Reed Elsevier agrees with us that the aforesaid tension is problematic, can you please inform us, in detail, of the future steps it will take to eliminate the tension and the timeline for doing so?

Q3: Why is Reed Elsevier backward, relative to the leading publicly traded companies, in lacking a corporate social responsibility officer appointed at Board level, and having only a Corporate Responsibility Officer who infrequently (once a year) presents to the Board?³

Q4: Noting that twice a year Reed Elsevier convenes a Corporate Responsibility Forum⁴ under your management, would you agree to extend an ongoing invitation to delegates chosen by those signing this open letter?

We also would be grateful for your answers to these questions concerning REx specifically:

Q5: With respect to the enforcement of the law relating to arms trading, REx forbids exhibiting certain materiel (e.g. cluster bombs), a list of which is found on the "Compliance" page it

¹ Smith R. Reed-Elsevier's hypocrisy in selling arms and health. *J Royal Soc Med* 2007;100:1-2.

² Reed Elsevier. Making an Impact: Corporate Responsibility Report 2005, at page 20.

³ Ibid, at page 7.

⁴ Ibid, at page 7.

maintains for Defence Systems and Equipment international (DSEi; see <http://www.dsei.co.uk/compliance/>). It has been reported that exhibitors violated the Compliance standards at the 2003 DSEi exhibition, to sell prohibited materiel.⁵ What were the (i) investigative, (ii) corrective, and (iii) punitive steps taken against exhibitors by REx to enforce the Compliance standards and the law on that occasion?

Q6: Apart from the aforesaid violation of the “Compliance” standards respecting cluster bombs in 2003, what other complaints has REx received of violation of those standards in 2004 and later? For each such instance, what were the (i) investigative, (ii) corrective, and (iii) punitive steps taken against exhibitors by REx to enforce the Compliance standards and the law?

Q7: Given that Reed Elsevier says it upholds the UN Global Compact, Principle 2 of which reads that “Businesses should ... make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses”, and Principle 10 of which reads that “businesses should work against all forms of corruption, including extortion and bribery”, what steps has REx taken to ensure that exhibitors do not transact with rights-violating regimes, and do not use bribery to win business?

Q8: We note Reed Elsevier’s leading justification for its arms exhibition business is a legal one: “The sale of equipment and services for national defence is sanctioned and supported by leading governments around the world and is recognised in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter”.⁶ However, as a matter of law, Article 51 authorizes the use of force only in international armed conflict; it does not authorize the use of force in civil wars, which rank among the most mortal conflicts—in Afghanistan, in Chechnya, in Darfur, or parts of the Congo. Taking Reed Elsevier’s justification to its logical conclusion, will REx immediately take steps to prohibit exhibitors trading with persons supplying materiel to civil wars?

Q9: Given the statement that the “Reed Exhibitions defence portfolio accounts for less than 0.5% of the total revenue of Reed Elsevier”, is the REx business inseparable from the other 99.5% (by revenue) of Reed Elsevier businesses, and if so, why?⁷

When answering, and to avoid confusion, please do so in sequence (A1, A2...) corresponding to the questions as set out here. We would be pleased to receive your reply in not later than three weeks, with thanks for the imposition on your time to make it so. For ease, you may address your reply to me, and I will gladly distribute it to the others.

Regards,



Professor Amir Attaran
Communicating for the herein named Editorial Consultants of *The Lancet*

*Prof. Amir Attaran
Institute of Population Health
University of Ottawa
One Stewart Street
Ottawa K1N 6N5; Canada
Tel: +1 613 562 5800 ext 2015*

⁵ Norton-Taylor R. Welcome: this way for cluster bombs. *The Guardian* 10 September 2003.

⁶ Reed Elsevier. Making an Impact: Corporate Responsibility Report 2005, at page 20.

⁷ *Ibid.*, page 20.

Additional signatories among Editorial Consultants of *The Lancet*

Khabir Ahmad, John Amuasi, Amir Attaran, Mauricio L Barreto, José Belizan, Julián Benito-Léon, Robert Black, Zulfiqar Bhutta, Andrew Bottomley, Daniel Brotman, Jennifer Bryce, Peter Butler, Andrew Carr, Lalit Dandona, Josef Decosas, Lara Devgan, Yanpeng Ding, Stephen J Duffy, Diana Elbourne, Jose A Este, Edwin A M Gale, Héctor Garcia, Judith R Glynn, Nancy S Green, Martin Grobusch, Davidson R Gwatkin, Farrokh Habibzadeh, Wayne Hall, Graeme Hankey, Mohamad Hussein, John Ioannidis, Rachel Jewkes, Shibo Jiang, Paulus Kirchhof, Sanjeev Krishna, Nils Lambalk, Alan Lifson, Daniel Luchins, Maurie Markman, Martin McKee, Beat Müller, David R Murdoch, Paul S Myles, Marion Nestle, Bruce Ovbiagele, Didier Pittet, Michael A Polis, Miquel Porta, Horacio Ruiseñor Escudero, Ayesha Sania, Karen Sliwa-Hähnle, Liam Smeeth, Barbara Starfield, S V Subramanian, Anne Szarewski, Mei Tan, Mangesh Thorat, Maria C Zambon, Anthony Zwi

Karachi, Pakistan (KA, ZB); Kumasi, Ghana (JA); Ottawa, Canada (AA); Salvador-Bahia, Brazil (MB); Buenos Aires, Argentina (JB); Madrid, Spain (JB-L); Baltimore, USA (RB, DB, JB, LD, BS); Brussels, Belgium (AB); Los Angeles, USA (PB); Sydney, Australia (AC); Hyderabad, India (LD); Accra, Ghana (JD); Boston, USA (YD); Melbourne, Australia (SD); London, UK (DE, LS, JRG, SK, M McKee, A Szarewski, MCZ); Badalona, Spain (JE); Bristol, UK (EAMG); Lima, Peru (HG); White Plains, USA (NSG); Johannesburg, South Africa (MG, KS-H); Bethesda, USA (DRG, MP); Shiraz, Iran (FH); Herston, Australia (WH); Perth, Australia (GH); Tampa, USA (MH); Ioannina, Greece (JI); Pretoria, South Africa (RJ); New York, USA (SJ, MN); Münster, Germany (PK); Amsterdam, Netherlands (NL); Edina, USA (AL); Chicago, USA (DL); Houston, USA (M Markman); Basel, Switzerland (BM); Christchurch, New Zealand (DRM); Melbourne, Australia (PSM); Los Angeles, USA (BO); Geneva, Switzerland (DP); Barcelona, Spain (MP); Mexico City, Mexico (HRE); Dhaka, Bangladesh (A Sania); Boston, USA (SVS); Zhejiang, China (M Tan); Indianapolis, USA (M Thorat); and Mosman, Australia (AZ)