



Obituary for Paul Stonor who conceived Shield

THE **THE TIMES** REGISTER



DAILY REGISTER

COURT & SOCIAL
200 YEARS OF THE ROYAL
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
Page 46

OBITUARIES

PAUL STONOR

Advocate of Shield — a standing multinational military force, under the UN, to forestall wars

ON ACQUIRING substantial wealth, many people buy a country estate or a yacht, but Paul Stonor was different. After Sound Diffusion, the electronics company he had founded, went public in 1965, he spent an increasing amount of his time and wealth creating and promoting the concept of Shield, a means of eliminating war between sovereign states by creating an armed UN intervention force.

Stonor, pointing out that the original UN Charter had envisaged the setting up of a standing military force, accepted that his mission might take 50 years and that he might not live to see it accomplished. But in a stream of letters to world statesmen, politicians, editors, academics and other people of influence he urged them to focus on the benefits to humanity that such a UN force would bring.

Supported by three colleagues who shared his conviction, he steadily increased the scale of his advocacy, holding meetings in Downing Street, Westminster and Brussels, talking to ministers, MPs, MEPs and ambassadors, giving interviews and lunching defence academics and senior military men. Many of these, including a former prime minister, several foreign secretaries, and figures such as Jimmy Carter and Mikhail Gorbachev, acknowledged the Shield thesis.

The Shield force would consist of professional, voluntary military personnel from UN member nations, serving for three to five years. The force would be answerable to but not controlled by the UN, in the way that a national police force in a democratic country is answerable to its government and courts but not operationally controlled by them. Thus the force could intervene immediately anywhere in the world, and would be obliged to do so to prevent or stop war without further reference to the UN.

The Shield force would be effectively immune to reciprocal attack from any rogue state, because such an attack would be upon all UN members whose nationals comprised the force. Similarly, because it would not have its own towns and populations to defend, or large fixed bases, the force would be hard to target.

Stonor was tireless in promoting Shield, pointing out that if a UN force had existed today it would have possessed the strategic heavy-lift air capability necessary to intervene in Africa to end the terrible wars current there, in areas where UN intervention has proved impossible or impractical.

Paul Stonor was born in 1922, the fourth child of a successful Liverpool cotton broker. His father, however, was ruined in the 1929 Wall Street Crash, and he and his siblings saw their material world change rapidly.

Stonor, leaving school at 14, joined an electronics company in Liverpool where his inventive mind and technical skills were quickly recognised — to the extent that his work became a reserved wartime occupation. The horror of war was brought home to him literally, however, when the family house was bombed in the Liverpool blitz. Worse was to come. Stonor never forgot the sight of his mother clutching the War Office telegram that brought the news that his eldest brother had been killed in action when the Japanese captured Hong Kong.

At the time he said to his other brother that he was filled with blind rage at the collective stupidity of all statesmen and politicians that had led to war. From then on he never tired in his quest to bring about change in the world order, however unattainable that might seem.

But first he was sufficiently realistic to know he needed practical success in life too. In 1948 he started his own electronics company, designing and constructing public address, intercom and other systems. It was extremely successful, and he was able to go public and then retire. He continued to use his electronic skills to the full, building up another highly successful venture, Heathmere, which is also based on creative innovation in electronics.

Stonor, unfailingly courteous and polite, was essentially a modest man. He was kind and generous, and never forgot those who had helped him when his family hit hard times in the Thirties. Success in business meant that large sums of money were available to him, and so the Chownes Foundation, named after his fine house near Haywards Heath, came into being. From this, many people in Sussex and many more outside the county receive annual grants.

Stonor married his wife Joan in 1946 and they were together for 50 years until her death in 1996. There were seven children of the marriage, five of whom survive.



Stonor turned to positive account his rage at the wartime loss of his brother

Paul Stonor, businessman and proponent of Shield, was born on June 14, 1922. He died on January 16, 2004, aged 81.