



Is Arnold the running man?



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Tough-guy Arnold Schwarzenegger is a man more familiar with the red carpets of a movie premiere than a white-collar business seminar, so the sight of the Terminator escorting Warren Buffet, the second-richest man on the planet, to the European Economic Round Table conference on Monday was slightly strange.

After a string of flops - remember Eraser, End of Days and Collateral Damage? Probably not - the actor needs next year's Terminator 3 to hit paydirt. Should the film nosedive he plans to move into politics and run for the governorship of California, the platform from which Ronald Reagan propelled himself into the White House. A spokesman for NetJets, the corporate aircraft firm owned by Buffet - which sponsored the seminar - insisted Arnie was an ordinary delegate, as well as a customer, just there to listen. He was not there to talk nor paid to attend.

From the sidelines it seems a slick piece of synergy by the billionaire Buffet: organise a lavish conference at Waddesdon Manor in Buckinghamshire, the ancestral home of the Rothschild banking family, invite the world's leading businessmen and financiers, and dazzle them with a major Hollywood star. Schwarzenegger, an astute businessman himself with a degree in business and economics from the University of Wisconsin, gains the wisdom and knowledge of guest speakers such as James Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank, Jorma Ollila, chief executive of Nokia and Roland Berger, a prominent consultant in global strategy. After two days of handshakes and drinks he'll have boosted his credibility with the men who may one day bankroll his political ambitions. He might well also point out how happy he is with NetJets' services. The company, whose other clients include Pete Sampras and Martina Hingis, sell an eighth or a 16th of a private jet to customers, entitling them to a certain number of flying hours without the expense of

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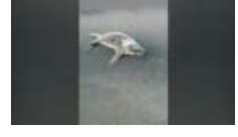
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maintaining ground crews and hanger space.

A Republican - though one married to a Kennedy - Schwarzenegger signalled his support for Dubya Bush in his choice of footwear. While his fellow guests shuffled around in their handmade Italian shoes, Arnie had the additional swagger bestowed by a pair of black cowboy boots with stainless steel tips.

What appeared to be a promotional stunt may instead be the actor's next step towards joining the President's political posse.

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