

### STOKING THE TSUNAMIS OF WAR AND REPRESSION:

## Canada's military exports arm world's most belligerent nations

By Richard Sanders

Finally, after years of delays and just a few hours after Japan's horrifying earthquake on March 11, the Harper government finally released its latest deeply-flawed report on Canada's military exports between 2007 and 2009. This timing ensured that the latest data on Canada's participation in the international weapons trade was conveniently buried beneath a tsunami of news about Japan's natural catastrophe.

The corporate media have not deigned to report on Canada's new arms-export figures, let alone expose how the government's report covers up far more than it reveals.

Although Canada's top military-industry association states that Canadian companies exported \$15 billion in "defence" and "security" products between 2007 and 2009, the government's limited report accounted for less than \$1.5 billion during that period.

Despite gaping loopholes in the report, it does reveal that almost all of Canada's military exports went straight into the arsenals of about 40 belligerent nations fighting in the Iraq and/or Afghanistan wars, which have killed over 1.5 million people.

Although reprehensible, the highly-profitable business of fuelling war has been conducted with impunity by all Liberal and Conservative governments. And, because this trade in arms contributes to a virtual tidal wave of war, repression, and environmental destruction, it is arguably even more horrible than the earthquake and tsunami that devastated Japan because it cannot be explained away as a natural disaster beyond human control.

On the contrary, the arms trade — as our government proudly explains — is "closely controlled," using "policy guidelines mandated by Cabinet."

This is the real horror obscured by the latest dry, statistical report from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) on Canada's big business of war-industry exports. Canada's arms trade is not just monitored, administered, and controlled by DFAIT, but is also praised and promoted by our government. As DFAIT explains, with its usual penchant for euphemism, "Canada's defence industry makes a valuable contribution to the nation's prosperity."

Since 2003, each of DFAIT's arms-trade reports has opened with the same audacious claim: "A key priority of Canada's foreign policy is the maintenance of peace and security." Similarly, DFAIT's eight previous annual reports began: "The

promotion of international peace and security constitutes a key Canadian foreign policy objective."

Every arms-export report, since its inception in 1990, has extolled the government's "export control policy guidelines," which unequivocally state that "Canada closely controls the export of military goods and technology to countries... involved in or under imminent threat of hostilities."

Canada's "guidelines" also blithely assert that DFAIT "closely controls" military exports to countries "whose governments have a persistent record of serious violations of the human rights of their citizens, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable risk that the goods might be used against the civilian population."

Although DFAIT bureaucrats see "no reasonable risk" that Canadian munitions exports "might be used against the civilian population," the people facing repression in the Middle East and elsewhere may view those risks differently. Canadian officials seem ever-willing to "risk" the lives of innocent civilians, if a tsunami of profits might

make a "valuable contribution to the nation's prosperity," or at least enrich Canadian military corporations.

To be clear, Canada's strict "guidelines" are meant to "control" the flow of weapons systems, not actually stop them. Canada's military products are in great demand, not only by governments waging war, but by business-friendly regimes that control their populations through intimidation, threats, and the fear of state "security" forces.

But there's no need for concern, we are soothingly assured. Our government has it all under control. And in fact Canadians generally aren't concerned, because we too are under control. Thanks to government obfuscation, the corporate media's acquiescence, and national myths portraying Canada as a global peacemaker, most citizens have no idea their country is awash in war technology. Few know that, in 2009, Canada was virtually tied in a three-way race for sixth place among the world's top arms exporters, right behind the U.S., Russia, Germany, the U.K., and China.

War is a booming business. It is also a "racket," as U.S. Major-General S. Butler said, following his retirement in the early 1930s. A racket, he explained, "is not what it seems to the majority... It is conducted for the benefit of the very few at the expense of the masses."

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# Despotic Arab states using Canadian arms to suppress democracy

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Speaking of his 33-year Marine Corps career, Butler said: "I had, as the boys in the back room would say, a swell racket... I could have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was operate his racket in three districts. I operated mine on three continents."

Nowadays, with \$4 billion a year in military products flowing to the U.S., Canada is America's top military supplier, and our hardware is deeply embedded in U.S. weapons being deployed on three important war fronts: North Africa (Libya), the Middle East (Iraq and Israel), and Central Asia (Afghanistan). Such U.S.-led invasions, occupations, proxy wars, and regime changes have long enforced unjust structures of economic control over resources in the Third World. Canadian complicity in manufacturing, exporting, and deploying the instruments of war has helped maintain our high ranking among the world's most prosperous nations.

But, because one would never know this from the tsunami of corporate news inundating Canadians, the world remains secure for those back-room boys who profit from the "swell racket" of war.

## Loopholes

According to the Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries (CADSI) — a government-funded lobby group representing 860 member companies — Canada now exports \$5 billion to \$7.5 billion in military and so-called "security" products per year. This represents an increase over the previous five years, when CADSI reported annual exports to be worth \$5 billion.

DFAIT's recently-released military export data document only \$475 million in military exports per year between 2007 and 2009. That's less than 10% of CADSI's estimates.

This huge discrepancy is largely due to two bookkeeping loopholes. Although celebrated by successive governments since 1990 as proof of their commitment to "transparency," DFAIT's arms-trade reports have never included Canada's exports to the U.S. According to CADSI, the U.S. gets the lion's share (80%) of Canada's military exports.

Another limitation is that DFAIT's reports only include restricted munitions on Canada's "Export Controls List." So, even when Canadian helicopters were sold to Colombia's Air Force, DFAIT didn't count them, because no weapons were attached.

According to DFAIT's 2007-2009 report, Canadian companies sold \$1.1 billion worth of restricted munitions to 107 countries. Of these, 39 were fighting in Iraq and/or Afghanistan. Knowing that the U.S. receives 80% of our military exports, Canadian sales to the U.S. were about \$5.7 billion. This means that 96% of the munitions tabulated by DFAIT went to countries waging these two wars.

DFAIT's list includes 14 other countries fighting armed struggles within their own borders or, in Israel's case, within occupied territories. Between 2007 and 2009, these belligerents received \$47 million in Canadian munitions tracked by DFAIT. This increased to 97% the value of Canada's military exports to warring governments.

Because we also are at war, and half our military production

flows into Canada's armed forces, the total percentage of our military-industrial output that is supplying belligerents rises to 98.5%. This gives the lie to DFAIT assurances that it "closely controls" the stream of military hardware to those "involved in or under imminent threat of hostilities."

## "Controlling" Export Permits

For decades, Conservative and Liberal governments have preached peace and human rights, while issuing a steady flow of export permits for military sales to repressive, undemocratic regimes in the Middle East and North Africa. DFAIT data for 1990 to 2009 reveal that Canadian exports of \$1.99 billion in restricted munitions — including small arms, ammunition, tear gas, rockets, missiles, armoured vehicles, and high-tech electronics for major weapons — went to 16 countries in that region: Algeria (\$21.4 million), Bahrain (\$1.4m), Egypt (\$34.1m), Iraq (\$59m), Israel (\$18.4m), Jordan (\$5m), Kuwait (\$4.1m), Lebanon (\$1.5m), Morocco (\$2.5m), Oman (\$80.2m), Qatar (\$1.9m), Saudi Arabia (\$1.7 billion), Tunisia (\$3.1m), Turkey (\$67.6m), the United Arab Emirates (\$39.5m), and Yemen (\$500).

If all Canadian military and police equipment was included, these amounts would be perhaps twice as high, considering the disparity between DFAIT and CADSI figures. And, although Border-Services' customs data include Canadian small-arms exports to Iran, Libya and Syria, their absence from DFAIT's report is unexplained.

The heavily U.S.-backed governments gracing DFAIT's list include undemocratic regimes where human rights abuses are systemic, and torture endemic.

- The absolute monarchies of Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the UAE are run by royal decree, political parties are banned, and elected legislatures do not exist. (Although the UAE finally had an election in 2006, only 2% of those over 18 were allowed to vote, and half the legislature was appointed by hereditary Emirs from the country's seven absolute monarchies.)
- In 2008, women held less than 5% of parliamentary seats in Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Turkey, and Yemen.
- Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and UAE spent more on their militaries than on health and education combined. (Saudi military expenditures were almost twice their combined health and education budgets.)
- Israel and Jordan spent more on their militaries than on either health or education.

## Workers' Rights Suppressed

Trade union rights in the Middle East and North Africa are among the least protected in the world. Migrant workers in particular face extremely exploitative conditions, sometimes resembling slavery. Underpaid and often confined to employers' homes, they are forced to work excessive hours and have their passports confiscated. Foreign workers are also victimized sexually and face beatings, arrest, and deportation for daring to assert their rights. Comprising a large percent of the workforce in Persian Gulf states, they are particularly at risk in Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

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# For Canada's many weapons makers, war is a booming business

Arming the Iraq and Afghan Wars: Canadian Military Exports to Countries Fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan (2007-2009)						
Recipient Country	Troops Deployed		Canadian Military Exports (in Cdn \$)			Totals (2007-2009)
	Afghan War	Iraq War	2007	2008	2009	
Australia	2007-2009	2007-2009	35,463,651	35,157,554	82,711,376	153,332,581
Belgium	2007-2009	---	5,267,214	18,417,149	22,409,259	46,093,622
Bulgaria	2007-2009	2007-2008	0	2,159	7,580	9,739
Croatia	2007-2009	---	0	0	17,203	17,203
Czech Repub.	2007-2009	2007-2008	469,626	20,540	241,007	731,173
Denmark	2007-2009	2007-2008	8,337,465	14,245,347	10,219,544	32,802,356
Estonia	2007-2009	2007-2009	17,189	29,951	23,141	70,281
Finland	2007-2009	---	1,058,764	1,114,897	1,850,065	4,023,726
France	2007-2009	---	14,144,162	23,716,298	31,873,106	69,733,566
Germany	2007-2009	---	14,273,973	34,524,765	22,535,654	71,334,392
Greece	2007-2009	---	475,120	476,276	633,110	1,584,506
Hungary	2007-2009	---	1,600	33,675	47,215	82,490
Iceland	2007-2009	---	10,635	2,570	1,120,663	1,133,868
Ireland	2007-2009	---	161,699	12,100	81,707	255,506
Italy	2007-2009	2007	9,234,109	26,853,292	9,512,389	45,599,790
Japan	---	2007-2008	15,462,485	6,857,822	7,144,737	29,465,044
Jordan	2007	---	0	1,361	9,697	11,058
Kazakhstan	---	2007-2008	7,548	2,623	36,400	46,571
Korea (South)	---	2007-2008	10,919,414	20,760,324	15,638,649	47,318,387
Latvia	2007-2009	2007-2008	879,689	3,304,871	1,181,538	5,366,098
Lithuania	2007-2009	2007	711,400	29,500	0	740,900
Luxembourg	2007-2009	---	127,766	1,938,115	3,875,048	5,940,929
Macedonia	---	2007-2008	0	458	0	458
Malaysia	---	---	82,406	4,757,927	45,039,453	49,879,786
Moldova	---	2007-2008	0	926	0	926
Netherlands	2007-2009	---	3,733,504	13,620,160	22,116,121	39,469,785
New Zealand	2007-2009	---	10,748,368	46,165,865	15,535,574	26,283,942
Norway	2007-2009	---	33,740,821	32,507,179	5,584,082	71,832,082
Poland	2007-2009	2007-2008	1,273,909	584,335	744,765	2,603,009
Portugal	2007-2009	---	438,311	1,723,315	1,461,610	3,623,236
Romania	2007-2009	2007-2009	3,287,306	1,679,710	1,758,784	6,725,800
Singapore	2009	2007-2008	4,245,773	7,320,884	17,874,810	25,195,694
Slovakia	2007-2009	2007	69	15,500	1,500	17,069
Spain	2007-2009	---	7,134,075	10,315,367	7,871,569	25,321,011
Sweden	2007-2009	---	3,835,646	8,738,259	13,771,443	26,345,348
Switzerland	2007	---	5,738,958	5,738,958	5,738,958	17,216,874
Turkey	2007-2009	---	743,363	5,236,459	4,712,148	10,691,970
Ukraine	2008-2009	2007-2008	101,665	117,525	85,456	304,646
U.K.	2007-2009	2007-2009	75,644,213	100,442,467	119,658,896	295,745,576
U.S.	2007-2009	2007-2009	1,304,645,000	2,232,019,000	2,168,040,000	5,704,704,000
<b>Totals</b>			<b>1,572,416,896</b>	<b>2,658,485,483</b>	<b>2,641,164,257</b>	<b>6,821,654,998</b>

Note: U.S. figures are based on statements from the Canadian Assoc. of Defence & Security Industries. All other data is from DFAIT's *Export of Military Goods from Canada, 2007-2009*. DFAIT data only includes specific, restricted munitions on Canada's "Export Control List."

# Most Canadians unaware their country a major military exporter

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- In Saudi Arabia, all unions, collective bargaining and strikes are illegal and the "crime" of union organizing can lead to dismissal, imprisonment, or deportation.
- UAE labour laws do not permit unions, strikes, or collective bargaining.
- Collective bargaining is also illegal in Bahrain and Jordan, and unions are still rare in Oman.
- The right to strike is very limited in Oman, Qatar, and Yemen, and is illegal in the Kuwaiti and Qatari public sectors. In Jordan, strikes are illegal without government permission.
- The governments of Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and Yemen impose a trade union monopoly, granting official recognition to only one union.
- In Algeria, unions have been unduly denied registration in 2010, and hundreds were arrested for legitimate union activities.
- In 2010, Egyptians were permitted to form their first independent union in half a century, but its members have been intimidated and assaulted.

## Arming Democracy's Enemies

Although this year's protests throughout the Arab region have inspired the progressive world, popular demands for democracy and human rights have come up against the heavily-armed bulwark of state "security" institutions. Military and police forces are formidable obstacles to achieving peace, democracy, security, and human rights.

According to DFAIT's reports, the vast majority of Canada's restricted munitions' exports to the region went to one country, Saudi Arabia, which received about 87% (\$1.74 billion) of the \$2-billion total since 1990.

According to Human Rights Watch's 2010 report, Saudi authorities "continue to systematically suppress or fail to protect the rights of nine million Saudi women and girls, eight million foreign workers, and some two million Shia citizens. Each year thousands of people receive unfair trials or are subject to arbitrary detention. Curbs on freedom of association, expression and movement, as well as a pervasive lack of official accountability, remain serious concerns."

Although the Saudi theocracy has imported Canadian small arms, ammunition, electronics, and various weapons-systems and components, their main import was armoured military vehicles from General Dynamics (formerly General Motors) in London, Ontario. Since 1992, DFAIT issued export permits totalling about \$1.5 billion for these vehicles. Apparently, DFAIT saw no "reasonable risk" they "might be used against civilians." (Canadian customs data reveal \$1.85 billion in armoured-vehicle exports to Saudi Arabia during the same period.)

On March 5, with protests spreading throughout the region, Saudi Arabia banned all demonstrations. Then, on the ides of March, Saudi armoured vehicles carrying more than 1,000 troops were sent into neighbouring Bahrain. Saudi and UAE troops have been aiding Bahrain's deadly crackdown on non-violent protests in this kingdom, which hosts the U.S. Fifth Fleet. Saudi troops have since attacked peaceful Bahrainis rallying for democracy.

Meanwhile, in Egypt, millions took to the streets to end decades of autocratic corruption. Being the most populous Arab nation and a centre of culture and communication, the uprising in Egypt has stirred the region. But, despite mass peaceful protests, Egypt's military, at the time of writing, still had not relinquished power or ended the country's 30-year emergency rule.

DFAIT reports show about \$35 million in restricted munitions exports from Canada to Egypt since 1990. Most were aircraft parts, probably for nine Canadian-made military transport planes built by de Havilland. But Canada's direct sales to Egypt and Saudi Arabia represent only one way for munitions to end up there. More significantly, Canadian military hardware is funneled through the United States.

For example, Egypt's arsenal includes U.S. weapons systems embedded with ample Canadian technology, such as F-16, F-4, C-130, and E-2C warplanes, and CH-47, AH-64, and UH-60 helicopters. The Saudi Air Force also has billions worth of U.S. war machines equipped with Canadian components, including F-15s, C-130s, AH-64s, and UH-60s.

Since 1979, Egypt received about \$2 billion per year in U.S. military aid, second only to Israel, which now gets about \$3 billion. Canada's direct exports of \$18.4 million to Israel since 1990 probably pale in comparison to the value of Canadian-made parts within U.S. weapons sent to Israel. For example, many Canadian companies have supplied parts for U.S.-made F-16 and F-18 fighter planes and AH-64 helicopter gunships used in Israeli air-strikes against Lebanon (2006) and Gaza (2008-2009).

## No Quick-Fix Solutions

Military powers have been arming client states in the Middle East for thousands of years. Canada is now part of this long-running saga. The solution to the age-old problem of brutal autocratic regimes is not to authorize those who armed the dictators in the first place to launch humanitarian invasions to protect human rights. Such naïve, quick-fix military remedies perpetuate violence and merely empower new hand-picked regimes with better PR.

Long-term solutions are required. Primary among these is to stop arming regimes that use war and repression to take or maintain power.

Citizens can use boycotts, divestment, and electoral campaigns to withdraw consent from companies and governments complicit in militarism.

Given the widespread ignorance of Canada's complicity in the arms trade, public education is essential. One approach is to focus on the most glaring manifestation of the military-industrial complex: the perennial arms bazaar.

In Canada's case, the biggest weapons exhibition is CANSEC, to be held in Ottawa on June 1-2. Organized by the CADSI, it will include some 250 companies, of which about one-third are known to have exported directly to the Middle East or North Africa. It is therefore a potent symbol of Canada's control over the horrifying flood of military products that inundate war zones and arm oppressive regimes around the world.

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