

Military Equipment Export Restrictions

The reason for this motion is that there is widespread concern among many groups of Canadians that the existing Canadian policy, as it applies to the export of military equipment, is inadequate both in substance and in its application. This was certainly highlighted last fall when it was learned that Canadian firms had been exporting helicopter parts to Iran. Those helicopter parts reportedly could be used by the Iranian military in its war with Iraq. That indicated that Canadian firms exporting military equipment were doing so in such a way that it brought the whole policy of military exports into some question.

I think it is important to recognize that Canada is in fact a significant player in the arms trade. In fact, we are in the top 10 when it comes to the total value of our exports, although we are certainly surpassed by the largest arms exporters such as the United States, the Soviet Union, France, West Germany and others. The United States is our largest customer. It received about 80 per cent of our military equipment exports over the last number of years.

A growing share of our exports, however, are going to Third World countries. In the 1970s, our exports to Third World countries averaged about \$100 million per year. Today it is closer to \$300 million per year. Our military exports are regulated by guidelines put out by the Department of External Affairs. However, I want to say that there is no public scrutiny in the application of these guidelines. In fact, it is almost impossible to get any detailed information on Canada's export of military goods.

Canada's export guidelines have undergone some review in recent years. Before March, 1985, there were four basic restrictions placed upon our exports of arms. They were, first, that no arms could be shipped to countries that were a threat to Canada, in other words, countries like the Soviet Union; second, that no weapons could be shipped to countries on which a United Nations sanction existed, such as South Africa; third, that no weapons could be shipped to countries engaged in hostilities such as Iran and Iraq; and fourth, that no weapons could be shipped to "regimes considered to be wholly repugnant to Canadian values and especially where such equipment could be used against civilians".

In March, 1985, these guidelines were amended without any consultation with Canadians, and the human rights restrictions were dropped. In June, 1985, I brought evidence to the House of Commons in the form of copies of export permits which showed that Canada had been allowing the export of military equipment to regimes such as Chile, South Korea and the Philippines, all of which had been cited by Amnesty International as countries which engaged in the detention and torture of their citizens.

I have in my hand at the moment, in fact, copies of some of these export permits. I have one for exporting spare parts for tanks to Chile for the total amount of \$73,000 U.S. I have another one for Chile with respect to military aircraft parts for \$200,000, and another one for Chile for suits and helmets to be used by the Chilean National Police. From a request I made

on December 1, 1986, I found that, yes, permits had been given for the export of military equipment to Chile, Syria, Pakistan and Indonesia in the amount of millions and millions of dollars. So we are talking about something where ample proof exists in terms of just what Canadians are doing with arms exports.

It is also interesting to note that after these revelations, I was no longer able to secure this information on arms exports from the Department of External Affairs under Access to Information, as I had previously.

In September, 1986, the guidelines were marginally revised. The first three restrictions I mentioned earlier remained. However, under the new policy, there is to be a secret list kept of countries which have a persistent record of serious violations of the human rights of their citizens. The fact that this is all done in secret is one of the most objectionable aspects of this new policy. The policy goes on to state that if the exporter can satisfy the Government that the goods will not likely be used against civilians, then an export permit can be granted. This means that if an arms exporter from Canada receives a little note from General Pinochet promising that these arms will not be used against civilians, whether they are tanks, gun parts or shields for Chilean police, that would then satisfy the requirements and the exports would take place.

There are really three basic problems with the existing policy. First, the Government's compliance with its own guidelines is kept secret in that there is no public scrutiny of just what types of military equipment we are sending abroad and to whom. Do Canadians know that certain types of military goods are being authorized for shipment to Chile? The answer is that under the current policy, they do not, because the information is kept secret. I believe the public's right to know deserves priority over the arms sellers' preference for privacy.

Another item of concern is the fact that the current regulations do not adequately make allowance for what is known as "manufacturing". What this means is that Canadian aircraft engine parts could be sent to France and placed in a war plane which is then shipped to Iraq or to Syria. Under these circumstances, of course, Canada could not block this type of sale. Therefore, we could be sending parts to the United States, to France, or to West Germany where they can be re-manufactured or assembled in such a way that they end up as military hardware, which is then exported to countries of questionable repute.

Another problem with the present regulations is that current regulations remove restrictions on strategic goods such as computers, communications equipment and so on. Thus surveillance equipment can be shipped to Chile to be used by the secret police in its operations against civilians. Therefore, I believe it is time that a public review of these regulations took place.

I want to make it clear that while we have received hundreds of letters on this issue from Canadians living in Sooke, British