

Restrictions on arms exports dropped

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Canadian arms exports to "regimes considered to be wholly repugnant to Canadian values, especially where such arms could be used against civilians."

When NDP MP Nelson Riis raised the issue in the House of Commons in November, External Affairs Minister Joe Clark assured him that the provision had not been deleted in order to facilitate arms sales to Chile. Dave Adam, chief of the department's Export controls Division, said the phrase had been deleted because it created "confusion" for Canadian exporters and government officials.

But External Affairs spokesperson Denis Comeau now attributes the deletion to "an administrative error." He says a provision dealing with human rights violators will be put back into the restrictions after department officials complete their internal review of Canadian export policy.

Regardless, it would still be possible for Canadian exporters to pursue arms sales in countries with poor human rights records if new provisions restricting such

sales are interpreted by the External Affairs Export Controls Division as liberally as the previous regulation, under which arms sales to Indonesia and Pakistan were allowed.

"As that perception has changed, it's become easier for those wanting to export arms to do so."

And, in any case Canadian manufacturers can circumvent federal restrictions by selling military hardware to go-betweens in places like the United States, Israel and Brazil, who in turn export arms to human rights violators. For instance, Ottawa Ploughshares member Jon Segal says helicopter engines manufactured by Pratt & Whitney Canada of Montreal have been sold to

Guatemala. The engines are sold to the United States for use in the Bell 412 helicopter, which in turn is sold to the Guatemalan government. Amnesty International says that the Guatemalan government regularly practices torture and extrajudicial killings ("a pseudonym for murdering citizens who get in the way," says Segal).

A similar arrangement, according to Segal, allows Bristol Aerospace Limited of Winnipeg to supply helicopter engines to El Salvador, whose government is presently embroiled in a bloody civil war with nationalist and leftist guerrillas and, says Amnesty International, is violating human rights on a regular basis.

Perhaps Segal's best example of how Canadian military goods can end up in the wrong hands is found in Canadair's export of T-33 jets to Bolivia, a country noted not only for its frequent human rights violations, but also for its extreme political instability. According to Segal, Canadair has sold at least 14 T-33 jets to Bolivia since 1974. And on November 5, 1979, these jets were used by the Bolivian airforce "to fire machine gun and rocket salvos in strafing runs over a crowd of civilians" in the capital city of La Paz, he says.

After leading me out of the conference hall, Archie Campbell agrees to answer a few questions about "Hi-TEC '86".

We're in a more crowded part of the reception area now. Businesspeople and civil servants are leaning back in their padded chairs, sipping coffee and chatting amicably. Over their chatter, an announcer's voice booms out about the technical merits of the latest in Canadian military technology.

One new product allows for "easier tank repairs in the field." Another is "coated with an infrared reflective camouflage paint... providing the best possible protection against all types of visual and adjacent infrared sensor.

The accompanying video display shows tanks and armoured personnel carriers rumbling through the jungle on a wall-sized screen.

Throughout our chat, Campbell stresses "the growing importance of the civilian sector" at the high-tech conference. It doesn't seem to bother him that 10 of the countries represented by Canadian trade representative at Hi-TEC '86 have been cited by the review of World Military and Social Expenditures for their "frequent official violence against citizens," or that every major Canadian arms manufacturer has been invited to the conference.

He says "it's not necessarily the case at all" that arms "intended for the defence of a country against outside regimes" will be used against civilians.

Asked if there isn't a greater possibility of his occurring in countries like Indonesia or Chile, Campbell says that "if the equipment has a significant chance of being used against civilians they (Canadian manufacturers) would

not get an export permit."

And when confronted with the fact that export permits have been issued for arms sales to Indonesia, Campbell says he's "not aware" of such permits being issued.

countries for defence and high-tech product exports." He proudly announced that he's met with ministers in eight Pacific rim countries, including Indonesia and South Korea, to promote



That evening, federal international Trade Minister James Kelleher, Conservative MP for Sault Ste. Marie, gives a speech to participants in the conference.

The Hi-TEC conference, he says, is only one of the many ways the federal government assists "high-tech and defence" exporters. Kelleher explains how other federal programmes, such as the Defence Industry Productivity

Programme and the Programme for Export Market development assist Canadian arms dealers.

the sale of Canadian "defence and high-tech products." "We will continue our efforts," Kelleher tells the businesspeople and civil servants, "to increase market access, improve trade competitiveness and help you do more effective international marketing. But it is really up to you and your companies to develop your own export priorities and initiatives."

In doing so, the minister tells the assembled arms dealers, "you are acting on behalf of all Canadians, including our shareholders."

Jon Segal, who quit his job at an Ottawa high-tech firm because it was moving into military production, doesn't agree. Because Canada generally makes components rather than complete weapons systems, Segal says, doesn't "absolve us of responsibility in any way."

"You're involved in the final weapon," says Segal, "and I think you have to take responsibility for what that weapon is going to be used for."

"Anything else is sort of a psychological evasion."

"You're involved in the final weapon."

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After boasting that Canadian military exports to the U.S. "reached a level of 1.6 billion in 1985, an increase of 20 per cent," Kelleher tells his audience about his government's other "priority



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