

At ten o'clock on a cloudy March morning,

Archie Campbell, head of the Overseas Division of External Affairs' Defence Programmes Bureau, welcomes me to the second floor of the Ottawa Congress Centre.

Canada is expected to sell about \$2 billion in military goods this year. Eighty percent of that, according to Murray Thomson, co-founder of Project Ploughshares, an independent peace research organization, will go to the United States, with the remainder split evenly between other NATO countries and the Third World.

Sweden. While not among the biggest exporters, those countries still do a brisk business in arms sales.

Canada has had one of the world's more restrictive policies governing arms exports, but John Lamb, executive director of the Canadian Institute for Arms Control and disarmament, says that policy "has begun to drift."

July 30, 1985, A.G. Vincent director of the Southeast Asia Relations Division of External Affairs, wrote that "we do not consider that the situation in East Timor warrants a suspension of arms sales to Indonesia."

Regehr says sales to countries like Indonesia are wrong in principle. "they bolster the overall capacity of unjust regimes to

logically, that Ms. des Rivieres is all booked up for the morning. So are Donald Cameron, Canadian trade commissioner in Indonesia, and John Cheh, his counterpart in South Korea.

However, I am permitted a few minutes with Warren Maybee, Canada's trade representative in Cairo.

While Egypt is by no means the worst human rights violator at the conference, it's clear that Campbell is going to continue



HOW CANADA ARMS THE THIRD WORLD

By Alex Norris

maintain themselves in power."

Lamb adds that purchases of military goods harm Third World countries in a number of other ways. Such purchases, he says, soak up resources that could be used for social and economic development. And they often increase the power of the military, thereby stunting political and democratic development, fostering corruption and encouraging despotism.

Thomson compares arms

steering me away from trade attaches brought in from the more "controversial" countries.

Does Mr. Maybee, I ask, have any ethical qualms about promoting arms sales to Egypt? After all, the country is located at one of the world's most volatile flashpoints, and it has been cited by Amnesty International for a good number of human rights violations.

Maybee's smile weakens and Campbell looks uncomfortable, clearing his throat repeatedly and glancing at his watch. He tells me it's time to get going.

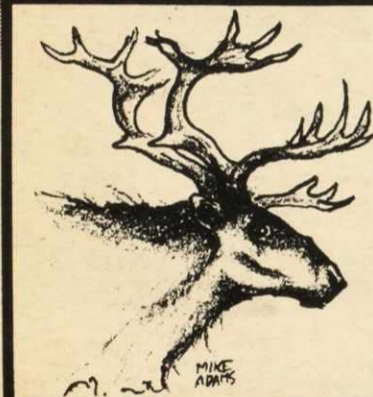
Federal government assistance to arms manufacturers exporting to the Third World is increasing, according to Lamb. For instance, since 1979, Canadian embassy defence attaches have been told to find opportunities for military sales to each country where they are stationed, he says. As well, the bonus of proving whether or not a military export is harmful has shifted from the exporters to the government regulators. Moreover, both Liberal and Conservative politicians and upper-level bureaucrats, he says, are wavering in their commitment to regulation of Canadian arms exports.

Lamb attributes this "drift" to lack of public pressure. "During the Vietnam War, the public was particularly sensitive about the military, and the climate was very difficult for those promoting arms exports to the Third World," he says.

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

In March of last year, the government's export regulations were amended, resulting in the deletion of a phrase prohibiting

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Three hundred and eighty of Canada's top "high-technology and defence manufacturers" have gathered here at government expense to meet with Canadian trade commissioners from around the world. The trade commissioners are advising the businesspeople on how to increase their sales overseas.

The conference is not open to the public or the press. Peace activists protesting the participation of trade attaches from countries known for their systematic human rights violations have made organizers especially wary of outsiders.

But when the business reporter asks to see the list, Campbell pauses for a moment and then decides her request is reasonable. He scurries off to a computer terminal on the other side of the reception area.

With Campbell gone, the business reporter turns to me. She appears over-worked and anxious to file a quick story. "Not very dynamic, is he?" she complains.

There's a pause, and then she asks if I am with "the protestors". "I understand their point," she explains, "but we're in difficult economic times right now. These days you have to think about jobs."

Those figures may seem impressive, but they pale in comparison with those of the world's largest arms merchants — the U.S., the U.S.S.R., France, Britain, West Germany, Italy and Israel — which account for more than 70 per cent of global military exports.

Still, Canada is a significant arms exporter. Ernie Regehr, Project Ploughshares research director, says Canada belongs to a second tier of arms exporters which includes countries like Czechoslovakia, Belgium and

"It's become gradually more elastic and less restrictive over the last seven or eight years," he says. Even before then, according to the review of World Military and Social Expenditures, published yearly by a Washington-based research group, Canadian arms were ending up in the hands of repressive regimes.

A 1980 study conducted by the review showed that \$100 million worth of Canadian arms had gone to Third World governments with "the poorest human rights records" in the five preceding years.

More recently, Canadian arms sales to Indonesia have come under fire by Project Ploughshares. Indonesia has recently bought military vehicles from Levy Auto Parts Company of Toronto and ammunition from Valcartier Industries of Montreal, according to the organization. Meanwhile, Indonesia has been embroiled in a bloody war in the former Portuguese colony of East Timor. Amnesty International says that since the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975, about one-third of the territory's population has been killed.

Canadian law forbids the export of military goods to continue currently waging wars. But the Canadian government does not recognize the 200,000 dead East Timorese as victims of Indonesian aggression. In a letter dated

Does Mr. Maybee, I ask, have any ethical qualms promoting arms sales to Egypt?

exports to the drug trade. "They debase the supplier and bankrupt the receiver," he says.

Moreover, says Regehr, exports of Canadian arms to countries with poor human rights records undermine Canadian credibility at international negotiations aimed at controlling the arms sales of the major powers. Without negotiated international agreements, says Regehr, the world arms trade will remain "essentially out of control."

Regehr says the present uncontrolled world trade in arms has made possible more than 100 wars with more than 20 million combat deaths since World War II.

When Archie Campbell takes me on a stroll through the interview booths in the main area of the conference, I see Genevieve des Rivieres, Canada's trade commissioner from Santiago, Chile, deep in discussion with an industry representative.

I ask Campbell if I might have a word with her, but he says apo-

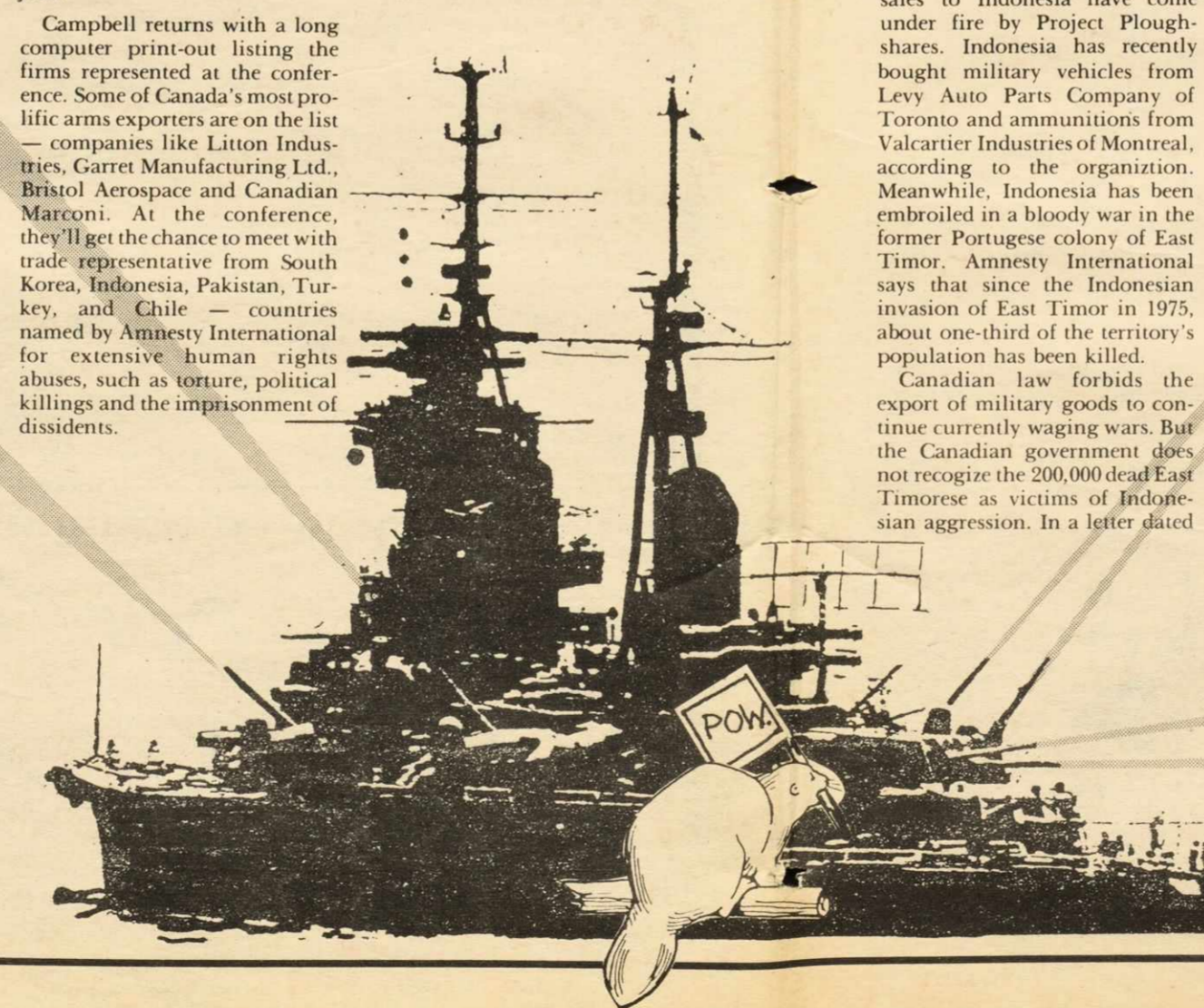
"Oh no," he says apologetically. "You see we've had a problem in the past with the protestors."

But someone has decided that a Quebec business reporter and I should be given a quick tour of "Hi-TEC '86". Apparently we are the only two members of the press to have expressed an interest in seeing the conference this year. And Campbell has been assigned the job of giving us the tour.

Campbell is a pleasant, soft-spoken man, balding, bespectacled. Before showing us through the conference, he sits us down in the reception area to give us a briefing, and I ask him if I might obtain a copy of the list of firms participating in the conference.

"Oh no," he says apologetically. "You see, we've had a problem in the past with the protestors. We don't want them to get a hold of the list, so we're not giving it out to anyone outside of the conference."

"If the protestors were to get that information," Campbell explains, "they'd just misinterpret it."



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