

Proposal for the Establishment of a National Arms Body to Monitor and Track the Export of Small Arms and Light Weapons

Most Canadians view Canada as a peacekeeping nation and take this idea as a sense of patriotic pride. This statement is correct but it is marred by the fact that Canada is large exporter of small arms and light weapons. There is little transparency in the business of Canadian arms exports and the vast majority of people are unaware of what Canada sells, how much we are selling and to whom we are selling these weapons . Taking these factors into consideration and merged with the cryptic and misleading term of “small arms and light weapons”, Canadians need to be fully informed of these sales. Therefore, the Canadian government needs to establish a National Arms Body to monitor and track their exports of small arms and light weapons.

Organization and Operations

The National Arms Body would be an independent government body that would be funded by a new tax imposed on all arms sales to make the program self sustaining. The chairperson shall be appointed from the general public by the Prime Minister . The body would require that all sales are to be reported to it and fall into the proper classifications. The body would require that small arms and light weapons be registered upon the point of manufacture. The registration would use Canadian civilian gun laws to classify the weapons that are sold. Thus weapons sold to other nations would fall under the non-restricted, restricted, prohibited categories plus the establishment of a new category of weapons components and/or known dual use equipment.

The national arms body would only allow weapons to be sold if the company confirmed that the initial sale was the final destination of these weapons. If the company broke one of these agreements such as the weapons were refitted or modified and sent to another nation, the seller shall be placed on corporate probation. This company would be placed on

probation regardless if they knew the weapons were going to be redistributed or not. If it is breached again the company will be imposed with heavy sanctions. These strict measures will encourage and force full disclosure of the sales between the seller and buyer. The element of full disclosure must be present as small arms and light weapons are potentially highly destructive weapons as compared to goods such as the export of grain.

The body of oversight at the end of each fiscal year would provide to the public a detailed document of arms transaction for that year. The document would also be accessible through the new body's website to ensure many Canadian's can have access to it.

The Principles

The principles of the National Arms Body is to make Canada's arms exportations accessible and known to the public. Avoiding events which could diminish our role as a peaceful nation such as third party weapons transfers. The body would work with other nations buyers so it will be known this is how Canada shall conduct its arms exports with the utmost responsibility. The principle ideal of the National Exports Arms Body is the accountability of our military industrial complex, which is thoroughly lacking.

Disagreements

In the design of this program there was dissension among its architects. One area of dissension was whether it not stop with Canada. Should not Canada attempt to bring this program into the being on an international scale? The disagreement arose around the implementation and feasibility of such a program.

The second area of dissension was centered around dual use equipment . The body would catagorize weapons components and suspected dual use equipment but how is one to know for sure if a material or piece of equipment is dual use or not.