



## The Ploughshares Monitor

### Summer 2009, volume 30, no. 2

#### The ATT and Canada

Since it co-sponsored the UN resolution, “Towards an arms trade treaty,” Canada has been a clear and consistent advocate for an ATT. The 2007 Canadian submission to the UN Secretary-General on the Arms Trade Treaty responded positively on treaty feasibility, scope, and parameters and acknowledged the NGO-proposed global principles as a “useful framework...around which to begin negotiations.” During interventions at the first session of the UN Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) on the ATT in March 2009, Canada again strongly endorsed an effective ATT. As noted in the 2007 submission, “Canada believes that a comprehensive legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms is in the interest of both individual States and the broader international community.”

Although existing Canadian arms export controls are comparatively strong, emerging ATT standards will require Canada to improve its policy and practice in several important areas. Most notably, to comply with the expected and fundamental ATT principle that all transfers of conventional weapons should be authorized by states, Canada must end the exemption that now applies to arms exports to the US by instituting an export permit requirement for US shipments.

The end of the US exemption would also serve to close a glaring omission in Canadian arms exports transparency. Currently, Canadian government arms export reports do not include data on US shipments, despite the accepted fact that exports to the US are larger than the combined shipments to all other states. When export permits are required for arms shipments to the US, Canada will be able to insert US data into a more complete report. To fully comply with the expected ATT standards, Canada will also need to strengthen its export controls in other areas.

*For recommendations to improve Canadian arms export controls consistent with the proposed ATT, see Kenneth Epps and Kyle Gossen, 2009, On the Record: An audit of Canada’s report on military exports, 2003-05, Project Ploughshares, January, <http://www.ploughshares.ca/libraries/Control/Audit2003-05MilitaryExports.pdf>, p. 66.*

Project Ploughshares  
57 Erb Street West  
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 6C2  
Tel (519) 888-6541 Fax (519) 888-0018 Email: [plough@ploughshares.ca](mailto:plough@ploughshares.ca)