
The Big Business of War Profiteering

By Richard Sanders, Editor, *Press for Conversion!*

"Know Thine Enemy"

For decades, the Canadian government and its corporate allies have been deeply involved in the business of supplying a wide variety of essential parts and services for the world's deadliest machines of war, including dozens of weapons delivery systems used in the latest, illegal, U.S.-led war in Iraq. These weapons systems have been used to commit grave crimes against peace, crimes against humanity and war crimes. This issue of *Press for Conversion!* painstakingly documents the criminal conspiracy between the Canadian government and its partners in the corporate world to aid, abet and profit from the racket of war.

But the scandal goes beyond this war profiteering by those in government and business. In need of vast amounts of money to invest in their criminal enterprise, the Canadian government and its corporate allies, long ago recruited a silent partner into their plan. In recent years alone, this third partner has invested billions of dollars into the scheme and, knowingly or not, is an integral part of the whole criminal endeavour. This unwitting partner in international war crimes, entrapped largely without its knowledge or consent, is the Canadian public.

This issue of *Press for Conversion!* reveals how the government has used two major strategies to drag the public into the shameful business of war trafficking:

(1) Canada Pension Plan (CPP)

Currently, at least \$2.55 billion of Canadians' hard-earned CPP funds are invested in domestic and foreign military corporations, included 15 of the world's top 20 military corporations. The CPP now has investments totalling \$347 million in 36 top-ranking U.S. corporations that landed U.S. military contracts worth over US\$352 billion dollars between 1996 and 2002. Canadian citizens are forced by law to invest in, and profit from, the production of major weapons systems used to wage the latest war in Iraq. (See pages 4-8.) CPP investments include most of the prime contractors producing bombs, guns and missiles (pages 32-37) and their delivery systems (pages 11-30).

(2) Government Grants

Canadian government programs have shamelessly handed out billions in tax dollars to "corporate welfare bums" that are engaged in the immensely lucrative business of war. Over the past four decades, two Industry Canada programs alone have taken more than Cdn\$4 billion from Canadian citizens and doled it out to over 600 of the country's most profitable war contractors. (See pages 44-45.)

Machines of War in Iraq

This issue of *Press for Conversion!* provides details on some of the world's deadliest machines of war. Besides being used in the current Iraq war, these same weapon systems had also previously been used in many other U.S.-led wars and invasions. The Pentagon relies on Canadian corporations to provide thousands of major components that are embedded in their war machines. (See pages 9-41.)

Knowing who your Friends are

While the Canadian government funnels billions of dollars from Canadian citizens into the bank accounts of military contractors, many of these businesses return the favour by stuffing the war chest of Canada's ruling political party. Although there are various loopholes that legally allow corporations to give *secret* donations to political parties, we do know that between 1993 and 2002, Canadian military contractors gave at least \$7.93 million to the three biggest political parties. Of these *disclosed* donations, the Liberal Party received \$4.93 million (62%), while \$1.81 million (23%) went to the Progressive Conservatives, and \$1.19 million (15%) was given to the Alliance and Reform parties.

While the amounts of these disclosed political donations may seem relatively small, at least when compared to the billions invested by government in their friend's military corporations, we must keep in mind that *secret* political donations probably make the *actual* totals, much higher. Also, the business of running a political party is not nearly as costly as the business of manufacturing the highly capital-intensive machinery of war. (See pages 46-49.)

One thing is for sure, Canadian military contractors know who their friends are in the political arena. *Do Canadian citizens know who their political friends are?* To be better able to make informed choices in the upcoming federal election, the public should know about the cozy relationship between government and the military industrial complex. (For some ideas on what citizens can do, see the back cover.)

The Scam Relies on Public Trust

How can the government get away with taking billions of dollars away from unwitting citizens and pouring it into the coffers of military contractors that export their wares for assembly into the world's deadliest weapons of war?

Despite hollow claims that it "closely controls" the sale of military technology to countries "involved in or under imminent threat of hostilities," the Canadian government allows the **completely unrestricted** export of military hardware to the U.S. What's worse, the government not only permits this totally unfettered arms trade to the U.S., it actively encourages and facilitates it.

The functioning of this whole criminal enterprise relies heavily on maintaining public trust. The scam has worked because people have faith in their nation-defining myth of "Canada the Peacemaker." Considering all the evidence to the contrary, it may seem amazing that so many Canadians, and many millions elsewhere, still believe the lie that Canada – and particularly the governing Liberal Party – is a global force for peace and human rights.

The current Iraq war is only the latest U.S.-led military operation in which the Canadian government and business (and by default, the Canadian public) have been deeply complicit. For decades, Canadians have invested in, and profited from, corporations whose products have been integrated into weapon systems that have killed millions of innocents, all in the name of peace, freedom and democracy.