A Nation of Feminist Arms Dealers? Canada and Military Exports

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The Canada–Saudi light-armoured vehicles (LAVs) deal is likely to be remembered as the Trudeau government’s first scandal. Situating this deal in a historical-comparative context and using the best available quantitative arms trade data, this analysis advances two main claims. First, Canada’s Liberal governments are just as likely as Conservative governments to encourage exports of Canadian military goods, including goods going to human rights-abusing customers. Second, Canada’s overall arms exporting behaviour is similar to the behaviour of its “international do-gooder” peers, Sweden and the Netherlands. How Canadian governments will respond to the ever-increasing international demands for accountability in this area remains to be seen.

Keywords: arms trade, human rights, Canadian foreign policy, Canada, LAVs, Saudi Arabia, militarization, militarism

Le contrat canado-saoudien des véhicules blindés légers (VBL) est susceptible d’être retenu comme le premier scandale du gouvernement Trudeau. La présente analyse avance deux hypothèses principales en situant ce contrat dans un contexte historique comparé et en utilisant les meilleures données quantitatives disponibles sur le commerce des armes. Premièrement, les gouvernements libéraux du Canada ne sont pas plus susceptibles que les gouvernements conservateurs de s’opposer aux biens militaires, y compris ceux approvisionnés aux clients qui abusent des droits humains. Deuxièmement, le comportement général du Canada en matière d’exportation des armes est similaire à celui de ses pairs « bons citoyens internationaux », la Suède et les Pays-Bas. Il reste à voir comment les gouvernements canadiens répondront aux demandes internationales, sans cesse croissantes, pour la responsabilité dans ce domaine.

Mots-clés : commerce des armes, droits humains, politique étrangère canadienne, Canada, VBL, Arabie Saoudite, militarisation, militarisme

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Introduction

The “Saudi arms deal” will be remembered as the first scandal of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s Liberal government. In their 2015 campaign, the Liberals made many promises but notably absent was any notion of cancelling a $15 billion sale of Ontario-built light armoured vehicles (LAVs) to Saudi Arabia. Instead, Trudeau and his ministers stood by the deal the Conservatives had made, notwithstanding with the “risk” of the Saudis using these vehicles for bloody internal repression and/or interventions abroad. Then, in April 2016, The Globe and Mail published a heretofore secret policy memorandum indicating that key export permits have been signed by the new Foreign Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion, rather than any of Dion’s predecessors in the government of Stephen Harper.¹

The uproar was immediate. “The government lied to Canadians about who signed what when in the Saudi arms deal,” declared New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Thomas Mulcair.² Some reacted with outrage, other with wit. The Beaverton, a satirical webzine, published a fictitious interview with Trudeau, a self-declared feminist and champion of human rights:

I am going to keep saying loud and clear that I AM a feminist…And that I AM going to keep selling weapons to an oppressive regime that imposes travel and employment bans on women, until both statements are met with a shrug!³

¹ Steven Chase, "Dion quietly approved arms sale to Saudi Arabia in April: documents,” The Globe and Mail April 12, 2016. The newspaper placed the story on the front page, then followed up with a series of dissections of the transaction penned by Chase, Paul Webster, and others. The deal—the largest foreign sale of military goods in Canadian history—was first announced by the Conservatives in February 2014.
² Steven Chase, “Liberals accused of lying about Saudi arms deal,” The Globe and Mail April 13, 2016. The NDP never opposed the LAV deal itself. On 24 January 2017, the Federal Court ruled to reject the bid to stop the LAV deal launched by a Montreal-based group, Opération Droits Blindés (Armoured Rights Operation), which was led by Prof. Daniel Turp. The group’s website, http://droitsblindes.org, has since been discontinued and the legality of the transaction is no longer challenged.
³ Kevin Dowse, “Trudeau says he is ‘proud to be a feminist arms dealer’,” The Beaverton April 19, 2016. https://www.thebeaverton.com/2016/04/trudeau-says-he-is-proud-to-be-a-feminist-arms-dealer/
The LAV scandal raises both new and old questions about the nature, determinants, and ethics of Canadian foreign policy.⁴ In this article, I focus on two questions. One concerns partisanship and policy: most scholars of Canadian foreign policy would agree that a Liberal–Conservative consensus exists in most foreign policy areas most of the time,⁵ but what of arms trade, including Canada’s export control policies? Are Liberal and Conservative governments equally inclined to facilitate exports of Canadian-made military goods, including goods going to “risky” destinations? Next, how does Canada’s overall arms-exporting record compare internationally? The previous question leads logically to this one, given that Saudi LAV-style scandals occur in virtually every democracy in which leaders simultaneously support progressive foreign policy goals and export-oriented defence industries.⁶ Existing analyses of Canada’s arms trade and human rights policies offer no such cross-national comparisons, thus missing an opportunity to further advance our understanding of Canadian foreign policy.⁷

To answer these questions, I conduct a quantitative historical-comparative analysis of Canada’s arms exports since the 1980s. The results indicate that Liberal and Conservative

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governments have similar records, both overall and in terms of their willingness to grant export permits for military goods going to human rights-abusing buyers. I similarly find far more similarities than differences in comparing Canada to Sweden and the Netherlands, two of Canada’s “recognized peers” in the area of progressive foreign policy. Indeed, the percentage of recorded transfers that went to recipients with “bad” or “very bad” human rights records in the 1981–2010 period is 15% for Canada, 10% for Sweden and 14% for the Netherlands.

The rest of the article breaks into three sections. The first introduces the data used, visualizes the ebb and flow of Canadian arms exports from 1970 onwards, and defends to the decision to compare Canada to Sweden and the Netherlands. The second section analyzes Canadian arms exports from the perspective of human rights in the 1981–2010 period, both in terms of the Liberal versus. Conservative governments and cross-nationally, from a Canada–Sweden–Netherlands perspective. The last section reflects on the future of Canada’s arms trade accountability in the light of two major new developments. One is Canada’s accession to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the first and only legally-binding treaty designed to regulate the multi–billion dollar global trade in small and major conventional weapons. The other is the Trudeau government’s “feminist foreign policy” turn—a convenient shorthand I use here to refer to Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland’s speech in the House of Commons on June 6, 2017 and the new defence and international assistance policy documents released later that week.

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9 The new documents were introduced by Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan and Transport Minister Marc Garneau on June 7 and by International Development Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau on June 9. I leave others to examine how hierarchical relations between masculine and feminine subjectivities, among other power relations, are implicated in arms exports and in modern militarism more generally. On this tradition of scholarship, see Claire Turenne Sjolander, Heather Smith and Deborah Stienstra, (eds.), Feminist Approaches to Canadian Foreign Policy (Don Mills:
Canadian Arms Exports in Context

The industry standard in quantitative arms trade research is the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database. Covering eleven categories of “major conventional weapons” (MCW) from 1950 onwards, this database is widely used to identify suppliers and recipients and their relationships over time, the type, number, and approximate financial value of conventional weapon systems bought and sold, the ebb and flow of militarization of specific states and non-state actors, and many other developments.¹⁰

To understand how the SIPRI database works, one must first understand the Trend Indicator Values (TIV). Expressed in constant 1990 USD, this number captures the quality and quantity of military resources being transferred from one country to another, taking into account the price paid, development and production costs, life cycle and other characteristics of said resources. For instance, a Canadian-made LAV transferred to Saudi Arabia may be priced differently from the identical LAV going to the US Army, but their TIVs should be the same. TIV figures are more reliable from the 1990s onwards, as are figures for high-income states, especially those that are democracies.¹¹ For example, the SIPRI data on Canada in the 2000s are more reliable than the same data on Canada in the 1960s or on China in the 2000s. The SIPRI

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relies on input from local arms trade-monitoring non-governmental organizations such as Project Ploughshares, an agency of the Canadian Council of Churches founded in 1976 in Waterloo, Ontario. In Canada, the agency has been instrumental in disclosing information about arms trade in general and the Saudi LAV deal in particular.  

Figure 1 plots Canadian arms exports based on the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database TIVs from 1970 to 2015, a period spanning eight ministries from Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau’s 20th to Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s 28th. The data reveal a pattern familiar to students of international politics. The “peace dividend” of the 1990s meant a drop in the Cold War-era level of exports, with a bump in the middle for the offloading of excess (a.k.a. surplus) equipment. Then, the 9/11 attacks and two major United States-led wars in Asia lead to steady increases in Canadian arms exports for most years shown in the figure, with the numbers from the late 2000s onwards surpassing those of the early 1970s. The final upward trend could be associated with a number of developments, including the Harper government’s effort in 2011 to increase foreign military sales. Overall, however, the highs and lows of Canada’s arms exports have little to do with the party in power.

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12 Project Ploughshares’ “Canadian Military Industry Database” goes back to the mid-1980s; phone conversation with Ken Epps, former Senior Program Officer and Cesar Jaramillo, Executive Director, on 16 February 2016. Also see Regehr. Arms Canada, pp. 218–42, and Lucas Powers, “Canadian Arms Trade Much Larger Than Data Suggests, Experts Says,” CBC News February 23, 2016.

13 A simple four-year moving average signals that the SIPRI data cover deliveries, not deals. In the Canada–Saudi LAV contract, one government made the deal, the next government granted key export licenses, and the subsequent two to three governments will oversee the deliveries. See Appendix for alternative figures.

14 Recall that CF-116 jets went to Botswana and CH-147 helicopters to the Netherlands, for example. In addition to information of second-hand transfers like these, the database also assembles data involving multiple suppliers—transfers of weapons produced by two or more cooperating countries—as well as deals between “unknown” suppliers and/or “unknown” recipients.

15 Appendix; Lane and Gutterman, “Beyond LAVs,” p. 80.

16 There have in fact been very few dramatic deviations from the average of $200 million per year in MCW sales since 1950. Appendix, Figure 1.
One way to situate Figure 1 in a cross-national context is to compare Canadian MCW exports to those of Sweden and the Netherlands. This is appropriate for three reasons. First, Canada, Sweden and the Netherlands are all “upper second tier” weapons exporter—they consistently appear in the SIPRI’s annual Top-15 supplier rankings, for example. Second, Canadian, Dutch and Swedish defence industries are similar. All three can be safely described as mature, mid-sized, well-connected, and capable of designing, developing, and manufacturing.

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many kinds of exportable conventional military gear. (This, of course, is not to ignore differences in terms of the global market share, total revenues, share of the GDP, number of employees, number of firms, self-sufficiency, connectivity, and the number and type of weapon categories in which their industries compete internationally). Last, all three countries are defined by themselves and others as “international do-gooders,” “good international citizens,” “internationalist middle powers,” “humanitarian superpowers” and “global good Samaritans.”

This is reflected in, and reinforced by, their long-standing support for the United Nations (UN), international human rights, international humanitarian law, multilateralism, foreign aid, and other progressive dimensions of the so-called liberal (a.k.a. rules-based) international order. Standard examples include Canada’s historical commitment to peacekeeping and the consistently high level of official development assistance provided by Sweden and the Netherlands.

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Constructivist International Relations (IR) theorists would suggest that Canada, Sweden and the Netherlands are “like-minded countries” who seek status primarily in relation to each other. Thus, rather than being merely similar to Canada on a set of dimensions, Sweden and the Netherlands are, in fact, Canada’s most immediate recognized peers—“small- and middle-sized states that are both rich and democratic” and, crucially, “eager to spread their moral capital.”

If the point about status-seeking is true, then Canadian foreign policy practices are significantly influenced by Dutch and Swedish developments, and vice versa. It is entirely possible that such peer effects might be operative in the case of arms exports. Following the LAV scandal, for example, some Canadian journalists showed interest in the changes to the Swedish arms-exporting regime towards Saudi Kingdom. Also significant is the way in which Canadian parliamentarians in June 2016 discussed the LAV deal with one eye on the Swedish and Dutch parliamentary activities regarding their own Saudi Arabia–related arms scandals. Even Canada’s new feminist foreign policy may be subject to said peer effect. In June 2017, Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström, the driving force behind Sweden’s own feminist foreign policy turn in 2015, and Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland had a Twitter exchange

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22 De Carvalho and Neumann insist that Canada, Sweden and the Netherlands constitute a single status group. Other states that might warrant comparison with Canada in this regard are Denmark, Norway, Finland, Australia, and Switzerland. However, these five countries are either lower-tier arms exporters (e.g., Finland [Appendix]) and/or poor international citizens (e.g., Switzerland [De Carvalho and Neumann, “Introduction,” p. 13.]. Note also that Anthony J. Dolman was the first to explore the concept of the like-minded countries with relation to the Nordic countries and the Netherlands, but not Canada. Dolman, “The Like-Minded Countries and the New International Order: Past, Present and Future Prospects.” Cooperation and Conflict, XIV, 1979, 57–85. For more rationales for Canada-Netherlands comparisons, see Joseph T. Jockel and Justin Massie, “In or Out? Canada, the Netherlands, and Support of the Invasion of Iraq,” Comparative Strategy 36:4 (2017), 166–81, at p. 167.


24 The Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, Minutes of Proceedings, 1 June 2016, 7:17.
about women’s rights as human rights that ended with Freeland commenting: “So glad to have #Sweden as a model and ally in feminist foreign policy!”25

Figure 2 is similar to Figure 1, but plots two additional trend lines, one each for Swedish and Dutch arms exports. The visualization reveals that Canada exports fewer MCW than the two European countries. Canadian exports were greater than Dutch exports and equal to Swedish exports only in the early 1970s; after that, the exports by the European countries were consistently higher. Indeed, sometimes they were significantly higher than the Canadian exports—consider the Swedish exports around the turn of the millennium or the Dutch exports in either the late 1970s or the late 2000s.

![Figure 2. Canadian, Dutch and Swedish Arms Exports (MCW), 1970–2015](https://example.com/figure2.png)

25 June 10-11, 2017. Available at [https://twitter.com/cafreeland/status/873883717911162880](https://twitter.com/cafreeland/status/873883717911162880)
Seasoned observers of the international arms trade will probably not be surprised by these findings. Per head of the population, Canada trails behind the Netherlands and Sweden even more. The causes behind these developments are varied. For Sweden, they have to do with huge Cold War-era investment in indigenous defence industry and for the Netherlands, the ability of its industry to capitalize on national strengths in shipbuilding, aerospace, logistics, and, in the more recent years, the Dutch government’s interest in surplus sales.

Based on this analysis, Canada appears to export much less than its recognized peers. The appearance is misleading, however, for three reasons. First, SIPRI generally focuses on whole-unit MCW, ignoring the traffic in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), subsystems, components, software, and services. Related, the Canadian defence industry is part of a larger North American system. Today, over sixty thousand Canadians work in the sector, contributing over $10 billion annually to GDP, with 60% of its sales being export-dependent. Project Ploughshares estimates that between one-half and two-thirds of Canadian arms exports are to the US (the majority of which are in fact exempt from export permit requirements). Following the Canada–United States Defence Production Sharing Agreement of 1959, the defence sector in Canada has come to revolve mostly around small- and medium-sized enterprises that specialize

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26 Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society (SPAS) produces “per-capita rankings” annually, using a combination of SIPRI and UN data. Sweden is always in the top 3, while Canada switches between the top 20 and the top 25. See Appendix. For the latest English language releases by the SPAS, see http://www.svenskafreds.se/reports-press-releases-and-other-publications Also see the ‘alternative annual report’ series published by the Dutch Campaign against Arms Trade. For English language summaries, see http://stopwapenhandel.org/taxonomy/term/67.

27 Bromley and Wezeman, Current Trends, pp. 7–8, 11–14, 24–25.


29 Cesar Jaramillo, “Canada’s ATT Legislation Has A Loophole You Could Drive A Tank Through,” Huffington Post, July 6, 2017 http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/cesar-jaramillo/canadas-arms-exports_a_22533341/ The author’s phone conversation with Epps and Jaramillo on 16 February 2016; and Powers, “Canadian Arms Trade Much Larger Than Data Suggests.”
in supplying components and subsystems for Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, General Dynamics, and other US firms.\textsuperscript{30} Crucially, many of these flows do not count as Canadian exports. Finally, arms trade data is deeply political. This is especially important in the Canadian context. One former official I interviewed suggested that the federal government at one point in recent history “deliberately” avoided collecting data on “small scale transfers” in order to keep some Canadian arms trade practices “away from the media spotlight.”\textsuperscript{31} If it were possible to measure and aggregate all this information—that is, SALW, continental and other hidden flows with MCW—and then plot it as Figure 2, then Canada would doubtless look more far more formidable vis-à-vis Sweden and the Netherlands.

More Context: Human Rights

Where does Canada stand on the “risks” of arms trade—specifically, the risk that the military gear it exports is used for human rights abuses? Thanks to path-breaking new scholarship by Jennifer Erickson, it is now possible to match data on arms exports to the recipient’s human rights records during the entire period of 1981 to 2010, thus shining new light


\textsuperscript{31} Interview with a former Foreign Affairs official with experience in the arms trade file. Ottawa, 24 November 2016. Of course, other governments may be doing the same.
on the question of risk. In this approach, “human rights records” are constructed by the Political
Terror Scale (PTS), a cross-national dataset that relies on annual country assessments of physical
integrity rights by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the US State Department,
providing a human security score for each country-year, starting in 1976. There are five levels or
scores, where 1 refers to “rare or extremely exceptional human rights violations or no violations”
(e.g., Botswana, 1994) and 5 to “frequent and severe violations extended to whole populations”
(Rwanda, 1994).32

To produce a “truer” analysis of the arms trade-human rights nexus, Erickson combines
the SIPRI MCW data with her own coding of SALW transfers drawn from the raw data compiled
by the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers (NISAT).33 Although far less reliable than
its SIPRI counterpart, NISAT data remain the best available to quantitatively trace the
international traffic in SALW such as revolvers, rifles, and explosives. This approach helps
correct some of the data limitations mentioned earlier, namely excluding smaller arms flows.

Tables 1–7 are simple cross-tabulations of PTS Score (1 through 5) and Transfers—a
dichotomous variable indicating whether there was a record of either a SALW transfer or an
MCW transfer in a given year. (The non-standardized nature of the NISAT data enables only the
simplest of quantifications—the presence of a record of a transfer in a dyad-year is 1, the
absence is 0.34) Tables 1–3 break down all Canadian, Swedish and Dutch transfers in the global
arms market by the frequency and percentage of deliveries per groups of recipients categorized

32 Erickson finds US State Department numbers more useful for her purposes. Erickson, Dangerous Trade, p. 169.
For more, see Mark Gibney, Linda Cornett, Reed Wood, Peter Haschke, and Daniel Arnon, The Political Terror Scale
33 Erickson, Dangerous Trade, including the book’s Appendix.
34 Some records list both price and volume, but most list only one of the two. See “NISAT database public user
manual” at http://nisat.prio.org/Trade-Database/. It remains to be seen how SALW that Canada sent to the
Kurdish Peshmerga in 2015–2016 will be coded there.
by PTS scores. Totals show that Canada has more recorded country-year transfers (1,662) than either Sweden (1,375) or the Netherlands (1,108). This does not contradict the discussion in the previous section because this dataset counts the transfer of one hand grenade in a given year the same as the transfer of 100,000 grenades—both are coded as “transfer present.”

We thus see that 644 or 38% Canadian arms transfers in the 1981–2010 period were coded as “very good” on human rights, 458 or 27% as “good,” 321 or 20% as “neutral,” 196 or 12% as “bad,” and 43 or 3% as “very bad.” We also see that the three counties behave similarly. More than half of all recorded Canadian, Swedish and Dutch arms transfers in 1980–2010 were to states with “very good” or “good” human rights records. Put differently, the percentages for

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<td><strong>Table 1. Canada</strong></td>
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<td>%</td>
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<td>%</td>
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Sweden (45% are PTS level 1, 28% are PTS level 2) and the Netherlands (43% and 27%, respectively) are either equal or only slightly higher than the Canadian percentages (38% and 27%, respectively). The three countries also act similarly when dealing with countries with “bad” and “very bad” human rights records.” Of all recorded Canadian arms transfers in this period, 12% were to PTS level 4 recipients and 3% to PTS level 5 recipients. For the Netherlands, these figures are, respectively, 11% and 3%; for Sweden, they are somewhat lower at 9% and 1%, respectively. Thus, when it comes to the so-called irresponsible transfers, Canada does not stand out as exceptional. Analysis of the “Cold War” versus “post-Cold War” periods and of “MCW only” versus “SALW only” does not change this interpretation.³⁵

The same analysis can be extended for comparing Canada’s weapon exporting practices under Liberal and Conservative governments. Tables 4–8 are cross-tabulations of PTS scores and all recorded MCW and SALW transfers (N=1,662) for Canada in three periods: “Liberal I” (1981–1985, containing data on transfers approved by the Liberal governments of Prime Ministers Pierre Trudeau and John Turner); “Conservative I” (1984–1994, containing data on transfers approved by the Progressive Conservative governments of Prime Ministers Brian Mulroney and Kim Campbell); “Liberal II” (1993–2007, containing data on transfers approved by the Liberal governments of Prime Ministers Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin) and “Conservative II” (2006–2010, containing data on transfers approved by the governments of Prime Minister Stephen Harper).³⁶

³⁵ Available upon request. Looking at the frequency figures, the Netherlands has over twice as many recorded dealings with countries with “very bad” human rights records (34) than either Sweden (14) or Canada (16), while Canada has a slight lead on countries with “bad” human rights records—196, compared to 198 for Sweden and 118 for the Netherlands. Due the nature of data and measurement used here, however, we can make valid inferences only on the basis of percentages.
³⁶ Due to the changing norms and practices of record keeping, earlier data is less complete than more recent data, which weakens the comparability between the periods. Another challenge is the time lag between “deals”
The results indicate little variation between Liberal- or Conservative-governed periods. Exports to countries with either “bad” or “very bad” human rights records on the PTS scale are always below 5%, except during “Conservative I” and “Liberal II” periods when level PTS level

("agreements") and “deliveries”—some transfers approved in “Liberal periods” are recorded in “Conservative periods” and vice versa. To offset this weakness, the periods overlap and government changeover years (1984, 1993, and 2006) were also cross-tabulated and analyzed separately, in search for additional information. Results available upon request.
2 countries (“bad”) received, respectively, 10% and 12% of Canadian transfers. As expected from the cross-national analysis presented earlier, most Canadian-made weapons transferred abroad went to countries with “very good” and “good” human rights records—67% to 68% in each period. If there is one partial deviation from this general pattern, it is the “Liberal II” period, which is characterized by 826 recorded transfers, by far the highest in simple frequency as well as in the number of transfers per year in office. Together, these results suggest the Liberals and Conservatives do not radically differ in the way they steer the export permit regime for the military goods and services Canada sends abroad.

These findings accord with the previous research on Canadian arms transfers. They are also a reminder that Canadian-made LAVs have now been transferred to the Saudis for well over two decades. “Ottawa sees Saudi Arabia as an increasingly positive force in the Middle East,” wrote Ernie Regehr in 1987, reflecting on a proposed sale of weaponized armoured vehicles to the desert kingdom that gained *Globe and Mail* headlines. In Regehr’s words:

> Military commodities are sold to countries in either conflict or imminent conflict on the grounds that there are more important strategic reasons for supporting them. The sale of the LAVs to Saudi Arabia is further defended on the grounds that these vehicles are defensive rather than offensive…

Then, like today, Canadian decision-makers cited “economic and strategic considerations” as paramount, while pledging to “monitor” their use. (That Canada should sell to the Saudis as a way of undercutting competitors, namely Germany and France, whose governments may be less

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37 See Lane and Gutterman, “Beyond LAVs” and Shiab, “Marchandises militaires.” The latter uses Freedom House data to show that over the past quarter century Canada sold $18.5 billion worth of military goods to 144 countries, 50 of whom were classified as dictatorships in the year of delivery.


committed to such end-use monitoring, is a more contemporary frame.). Indeed, it is hard to find exceptions to this rule. The SIPRI Arms Transfers Database’s trade registers (detailed written reports) show Canadian-made LAVs have gone to human rights-violating customers in most years since at least the late 1980s. This includes the heyday of the “human security” era at 125 Sussex Drive under the foreign ministership of Lloyd Axworthy in the Chrétien government.  

From Canada with LAVs, Forever?

This analysis advances two main claims. One is that Liberal- and Conservative-governed Canadas have rather similar arms exporting records, including goods going to countries accused of human rights abuses. This is useful information for Canadian foreign policy scholars who emphasize “consensus” over “partisanship.” The other claim is that Canada’s dealings with such countries are similar to those of Sweden and the Netherlands—two nations that, like Canada, export arms everywhere, while and thinking of themselves as “global good Samaritans.” In the period under study, 15% of Canada’s military deals were with buyers with “bad” or “very bad” human rights records; the figures for the other two countries are 10% and 14%, respectively. In other words, when it comes to arms exports, Canadian, Dutch and Swedish ethically-driven foreign policies are suspended one or two times out of ten.

People supportive of Canadian arms exports might wish to interpret said 15% as a sufficiently low figure, while also pointing to Figure 2 as evidence that Canada should export more, not less. In contrast, those who favour arms trade restrictions might wish to underscore the

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40 Shiab finds that Ottawa very rarely blocks exports on the basis of human rights considerations, including in cases when the recipient is engaged in violent civil war (e.g., Algeria in the 1990s). In 2015, for example, Ottawa blocked only 0.1% of exports. “Marchandises militaires.”
limitations of data and thus the value of quantitative cross-national comparisons. Indeed, they might say that arms trade research should focus on tracing the ways in which Canadian-made subsystems, components, and software are assembled into weapon systems abroad and then exported to human rights-abusing actors.\footnote{Stefan Labbe, “Seven human rights violators buying Canadian military goods,” \textit{OpenCanada} 16 August 2016, available at \url{https://www.opencanada.org/features/seven-human-rights-violators-buying-canadian-military-goods/}. Rather than just states with poor PTS scores, such actors can also be transnational and/or underground groups engaged in bloody conflicts, such as assorted non-state armed groups that receive Western support, including support of Western intelligence agencies.}

The export of arms is likely to remain a major policy challenge for Canada. While the new institutional architecture introduced through the ATT adds new layers of accountability in arms trade, future Canadian governments will continue to make their own calls about specific deals, balancing support for indigenous defence industries against the need to reduce trade with human rights-abusing actors.\footnote{On the limits of the ATT regime in Canada and more generally, see, respectively, Jaramillo, “Canada’s ATT Legislation Has A Loophole, and Anna Stavrianakis, “Legitimizing liberal militarism: politics, law and war in the Arms Trade Treaty,” \textit{Third World Quarterly} 37: 5 (2016), 840–865.} Can we imagine a scenario in which Ottawa says “no” to a Saudi LAV-like blockbuster defence contract? The new feminist turn in Canadian foreign policy suggests a prima facie affirmative answer. If, indeed, the Canadian government truly wishes to help build gender-equitable societies around the world, then a good place to start would be nixing massive arms sales to countries with lousy records on women’s rights.

To ponder such a scenario further, consider once again the case of Sweden. In February 2015, Foreign Minister Wallström stood up in the Swedish parliament to denounce the Saudi state, offering a harsh criticism of the latter’s human rights abuses and oppression of women. While the speech shocked many diplomats, it was entirely consistent with “standing against the
systematic and global subordination of women”—a core idea behind Sweden’s “feminist foreign policy” that Wallström announced upon assuming office a year earlier.43

In reporting on Wallström’s speech, the media made a link to a separate decision by the Swedish government—a coalition of two left-leaning parties, the Social Democrats and the Greens—not to renew a memorandum on military collaboration and weapons technology exchange with the Middle Eastern sheikdom. Then, in June 2015, after a parliamentary committee recommended that Swedish arms export should be made conditional on “democracy criteria,” the media came to interpret Wallström’s intervention as a feminist foreign policy-driven “moratorium” on arms exports to Saudi Arabia. In reality, however, it is not at all clear that Sweden ever stopped its dealings with the Saudis. In October 2016, a state visit to Saudi Arabia led by Prime Minster Stefan Löfven notably included Marcus Wallenberg, Chairman of Saab, the Swedish aerospace and defence giant. Furthermore, the new bill on arms trade regulations the Swedish parliament passed in June 2017 was much weaker on said democracy conditionalities than expected by local arms control and human rights advocates. Rather than making an arms sale impossible, the “poor democratic status” of a recipient merely decreases the chances of an export permit.44 To the extent that these Swedish activities are indicative, Canada’s own feminist foreign policy is likely to be characterized by “inconsistencies,” “contradictions,” and “exceptions,” especially in the area of arms trade.45

45 Sweden’s feminist foreign policy makers have faced a number of criticisms from the beginning: why shun the Saudis but strike deals with China or Iran; why curb arms exports but ignore the plight of refugees; why reintroduce the military draft? Such “whataboutisms” fail to appreciate that the idea of “feminist foreign policy”—
Much like Canada’s belated accession to the ATT, attempts to implement Canada’s new feminist foreign policy are likely to draw further attention to the Trudeau government’s unedifying role in the LAV deal. Coupled with the fact that the deal effectively commits Canada to “helping prop up the Saudi government until 2028”46 and also to the “second largest arms exporter to the Middle East” label,47 the chances of the Saudi scandal re-appearing in Canadian federal elections are solid. In the worst case scenario, the Saudi National Guard or a nearby Saudi state security organization will deploy its Canadian-made LAVs in a major internal crackdown or in a military intervention in Yemen, Bahrein or some other state Riyadh considers to be within its sphere of influence.48 If and when this happens, the government will hear it from Canadians again—just think of the volume of clever political satire that will appear in the old and new media.

What, then, should the Trudeau government—this or the next—do? Two policy ideas come to mind. One is to follow the 2017 Swedish model and legislate additional stringency in the Canadian regulations regime. The other is for the ruling Liberals to reverse their stance on the 2016 proposal by NDP MP Hélène Laverdière to establish a British-style House of Commons and the rhetorical endorsement thereof by the Swedish and Canadian governments—already challenges much of the senso communo that informs prevailing international norms, institutions, and practices. For illuminating discussions, see Aggestam and Bergman-Rosamond, “Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy,” pp.329–31; Behringer, The human security agenda, p. 163; and Valerie Percival, “What a real feminist foreign policy looks like,” OpenCanada 12 May 2017 https://www.opencanada.org/features/what-real-feminist-foreign-policy-looks/ 46 Simpson, “Canada’s arms deal with Saudi Arabia,” p.15.

47 See the figures from 2016 from Jane’s Defence Weekly, as cited in Steven Chase, “Canada now the second biggest arms exporter to Middle East, data show,” The Globe and Mail June 14, 2016. Also see Appendix.

48 Keep in mind likely Saudi war crimes and crimes against humanity in the ongoing conflict in Yemen. Ibid.

committee tasked with reviewing defence exports. Either one of these policy moves would make it harder for Canada’s arms industry to sell their wares to repressive governments in the future—a minimum demand made by the critics of the LAV deal. Now that it has expressly committed itself to advancing feminist foreign policy objectives, the Trudeau government might even decide to revisit Canada’s arms control regime for reasons other than public relations damage control.

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49 The motion was defeated in the House of Commons vote on 29 September 2016. Disclosure: in the House of Commons sitting on International Women’s Day, March 8, 2017, Laverdière cited the title of my study in her question to Foreign Minister Freeland. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jG1VmQSqkZk.
Appendix

This document summarizes additional data analysis and interpretation done in preparation of the article “A Nation of Feminist Arms Dealers?”, accepted for publication in *International Journal* in July 2017.

Additional figures and tables based on the SIPRI Arms Trade Database and other datasets are available upon request (e.g., Total Arms Exports by Year; Top Arms Exporters by Volume; Top Arms Exporters Per Capita; Canadian Arms Exports by Recipient; Canadian Arms Exports by Weapon Category; Canadian Trade Registers etc.)

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<td>Arms Exports Per Capita</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rather than using 4-year moving average for the period 1970–2015, this figure visualizes the per-year volume of arms exports for Canada, Sweden and the Netherlands. In this context, the “golden age” of Canadian arms trade was in the early Cold War period. Sweden and the Netherlands appear to “overtake” Canada in the 1980s.
The SIPRI Arms Transfer Database covers eleven categories of MCW: aircraft, air defence systems, anti-submarine warfare weapons, armoured vehicles, artillery, engines, missiles, sensors, satellites, ships, and “other.” The database is updated every year, and released together with the SIPRI Yearbook (which is now published in languages other than English as well).

According to this database, 94 states participated in the international arms trade during the Cold War (1950–1991). Canadian exports were less than 1% of the global total, making Canada a top-15 exporter on average. Canada exported to 76 states, with the US and NATO countries receiving 53% of all Canadian arms exports. The largest non-NATO customers were Brazil, at 6.5% of all Canadian arms exports, and Turkey, at 6.5%.

Canada’s arms exports overwhelmingly consisted of aircraft—a virtually 80% of all exports from the Canadian arms industry, with engines a distant second, at 9%. Ships, sensors, and armoured vehicles made up the remaining 10%.

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50 SIPRI defines the “aircraft” weapon category as “all fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters, including unmanned aircraft (UAV/UCAV) with a minimum loaded weight of 20 kg,” though “exceptions are microlight aircraft, powered and unpowered gliders and target drones.” See “SIPRI Arms Transfers Database – Methodology.”

51 The “engines” weapon category includes “(a) engines for military aircraft, for example, combat-capable aircraft, larger military transport and support aircraft, including large helicopters; (b) engines for combat ships - fast attack craft, corvettes, frigates, destroyers, cruisers, aircraft carriers and submarines; (c) engines for most armoured vehicles - generally engines of more than 200 horsepower output.” Ibid.

52 The “sensors” weapon category includes “(a) all land-, aircraft- and ship-based active (radar) and passive (e.g. electro-optical) surveillance systems with a range of at least 25 kilometres, with the exception of navigation and weather radars, (b) all fire-control radars, with the exception of range-only radars, and (c) anti-submarine warfare and anti-ship sonar systems for ships and helicopters.” Ibid.

53 The “armoured vehicles” weapon category includes “all vehicles with integral armour protection, including all types of tank, tank destroyer, armoured car, armoured personnel carrier, armoured support vehicle and infantry fighting vehicle,” though “vehicles with very light armour protection (such as trucks with an integral but lightly armoured cabin) are excluded.” Ibid.
After the Cold War, the global arms industry took a nosedive, and the exports fell by almost 60%—a trend somewhat reversed by the US declaration of the “War on Terror” in 2001. Canadian exports fell by 40%, but other figures remained the same: around 1% of global arms exports and a top 15 rank in the supplier market.

Between 1991 and 2016, Canada exported to 60 states: 18 fellow NATO members, including the US, who together received 62% of all Canadian arms exports. Europe, Latin America, and Africa saw the total quantity of Canadian arms exports they received significantly decrease, while the Middle East gained ground, taking up 17% of Canadian exports. The biggest new buyer in this period was Saudi Arabia, purchasing 15% of all Canadian arms exports (compare with a quarter of a percent during the Cold War).

In this period, Canada’s arms exports shift in favour of armoured vehicles—a category that accounted for only 3% of all Canadian arms exports between 1950 and 1991, but rose to become Canada’s largest weapon category between 1991 and 2016, at 51% of all Canadian arms exports. Most of these were APCs and LAVs going to the US Army, followed by Saudi Arabia, followed by Australia and New Zealand. Aircraft sales fell, but engine and sensor sales increased.
SIPRI Arms Transfers Database 2012-2016

Table 1. The 25 largest exporters of major weapons and their main clients, 2012–16

Note: Percentage of total is rounded to 1 decimal (except for percentages over 10 which are rounded to whole numbers).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exporter</th>
<th>Share of arms exports (%)</th>
<th>Per cent change from 2007–11 to 2012–16&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Main clients (share of exporter's total exports, %), 2012–16</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2012–16</td>
<td>2007–11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>Russia</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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</table>

<sup>a</sup>Figures show the change in volume of the total arms exports per exporter between the 2 periods.

.= not applicable; UAE = United Arab Emirates
Main Destinations of Exports from Canada, Sweden, and the Netherlands, 2012–2016

Where do the weapons go?

Supplier: Canada

Region:
- Africa
- Americas
- Asia and Oceania
- Europe
- Middle East
- Other

International transfers of major weapons 2012-16
Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (20 Feb 2017)
Where do the weapons go?

Supplier: Sweden

International transfers of major weapons 2012-16
Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (20 Feb 2017)
Where do the weapons go?

**Supplier**

United States | Mexico | 
--- | --- | ---
Canada | Peru |  
Jordan | Turkey | Oman |  
Saudi Arabia |  |  

**Region**

- Africa
- Americas
- Asia and Oceania
- Europe
- Middle East

International transfers of major weapons 2012-16
Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database (20 Feb 2017)
Arms Transfers and Recipients’ Human Rights Records, 1981–2000, by Country (see Tables 1–3 in the main text)
Canadian Arms Transfers and Recipients’ Human Rights Records, 1981–2000, by Government (see Table 3–7 in the paper)
# Arms Exports Per Capita, 2011

<table>
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<th>Country</th>
<th>Arms exports</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Rank</th>
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<td>806</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>7,4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>6039</td>
<td>141,9</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
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<td>141</td>
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<td>Brazil</td>
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<td>193,7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The compilation covers the top 25 arms exporters in the world in 2010 according to SIPRI.

1. Sales of "major conventional weapons" 2010, according to SIPRI "trend indicator value" and refers to the 1990 prices in millions of dollars, see http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/toplist.php
3. Ranking of arms export 2010 according to SIPRI, per population of 2009 according to the UN.