

The Arms Show CANSEC 2010 Ideology and Usefulness in the 21st Century

By Koozma J. Tarasoff. May 14, 2010 — Link: goo.gl/zniC4J
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Dear Editor,

As the military industrial complex in Ottawa prepares for Canada's largest war-industry trade show June 2-3, 2010, it is time to step back and look candidly at its ideology and usefulness in the 21st Century.

A March 13th, 2009, DND memorandum promoted CANSEC and encouraged military personnel and DND staff to attend with free meals totaling over \$300 each. In 2010 around 1000 people are expected to attend these lavish events paid for by Canadian taxpayers.

Let's speak the truth by saying that arms trade helps fuel wars raging around the world. Many exhibitors profit from the sale of high-tech components assembled into the world's deadliest weapons systems. These weapons have killed tens of thousands of innocent civilians in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. This is why a broad group of concerned citizens (coordinated by the [Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade](#)) from Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal will again be gathering outside Ottawa's fair grounds to protest Canada's blatant symbol of war profiteering.

It was 100 years ago this year that the famous Russian author [Lev N. Tolstoy](#) died in Russia in 1910. As an outstanding thinker, teacher and moral leader, Tolstoy absolutely condemned all wars including the preparation for wars by the military industrial complex. His view was a manifestation for nonviolence and nonkilling behaviour for what he considered to be the true nature of human beings.

As 'the conscience of humanity', Tolstoy influenced the genius of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr. and others in prodding us to be responsible, loving and caring human citizens in our civilization. For example, King's '[Beyond Vietnam](#)' speech in 1967 led to the US to withdraw from Vietnam — a situation which today is comparable to that of the quagmire in Afghanistan.

Earlier in 1935 a retired U.S. Marine Major General Smedley Butler, one of only 19 people to be twice awarded the Medal of Honor, revealed his experience in a book as a career military officer for 33 years how business interests have commercially benefited from warfare. Butler pointed to a variety of examples, mostly from World War I, where industrialists whose operations were subsidized by public funding were able to generate substantial profits essentially from mass human suffering.

'[War is a racket](#)', Butler concluded. 'It always has been. It is possibly the oldest, easily

the most profitable, surely the most vicious. It is the only one international in scope. It is the only one in which the profits are reckoned in dollars and the losses in lives. A racket is best described, I believe, as something that is not what it seems to the majority of the people. Only a small "inside" group knows what it is about. It is conducted for the benefit of the very few, at the expense of the very many. Out of war a few people make huge fortunes.'

CANSEC appears to fit the same category — it is a racket whose goal is to make money, lots of money, ultimately on the backs of dead bodies. The companies with a vested interest in war answer to their shareholders, not to the general public. Unfortunately, much of the public has become desensitized and easily accustomed to the 'normalcy' of militarism and war.

At a time when more and more world political leaders are engaged in cooperative talks aimed at resolving conflicts in peaceful and diplomatic ways, it is not necessary for CANSEC and its associates to spend billions on armaments.

As we recall the wisdom of our moral ancestors, let's consider the big questions of our time — the answers of which can lead to the creation of a wholesome world community.

1. Is it not smarter to use 'nonkilling' as the new strategy in our society? The [Center for Global Nonkilling](#) in Hawaii was established to implement this new way of thinking. Here Tolstoy's legacy has helped inspire the creation of this Center.
2. Would not a [Department of Peace](#) serve our society better than a Department of War (or 'Defence')? Do we really need the military industrial complex and military bases around the world to pump our economic wells?
3. Has not [NATO](#) outlived its usefulness? Let us not forget that United States President Dwight Eisenhower's [farewell address](#) to the nation in January 17, 1961, warned that the military industrial complex is a danger to democracy.

To overcome poverty in the world, inequality of opportunity, lack of health care and the availability of free education to all, requires us to speak the truth about the institution of militarism and war and its impact on society — the taking away of young people's lives, the robbing of society of its valuable resources, and the ruining of our civilization. Surely as responsible citizens we have a vision to ensure that all of us have a future on our Planet Earth! Surely the time has come to make this decision now beginning with the dismantling of CANSEC.

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