

Democracy under Attack at Home and Abroad: Ottawa's Mayor O'Brien, Calian Technologies and CANSEC

By Richard Sanders, coordinator, Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade

For three months this year, while peace activists were busily campaigning to oppose the use of Ottawa's publicly-funded municipal facilities for private military arms exhibitions, the City's mayor—Larry O'Brien—was on trial.

The mayor of Canada's capital city remains a board member of Calian Technologies, a prominent Ottawa-based military industry that he founded in 1982. The company is a regular exhibitor at Ottawa's annual CANSEC war show and Mayor O'Brien has unapologetically flaunted ethical guidelines by promoting the City's official support for the event.

O'Brien is one of those colourful corporate-class executives who entered the political arena by threatening to run government as if it were his own private business enterprise.

While this apparently is no crime, attempted bribery and purported influence peddling, are. These charges were lodged when a fellow right-wing mayoral candidate, Terry Kilrea, swore in a legal affidavit that O'Brien had offered him \$30,000 and a plum federal

job on the National Parole Board in exchange for withdrawing from the mayoral race in 2006.¹

Although O'Brien was acquitted on August 5,² Kilrea still maintains that he spoke the truth³ and many Ottawans remain very doubtful of O'Brien's commitment to the basic principals of local democracy.

However, there is a far more insidious and largely unspoken dimension to this chronicle of O'Brien's perceived willingness to undermine elections. This hidden aspect of the O'Brien narrative, which the corporate news has not deigned to report, has to do with how Canadian military industries—like O'Brien's very own Calian Technologies—supply scores of high-tech products and services for wars that undermine democracy in various countries around the world.

Like the unseen subsurface mass of an iceberg, this is the much larger yet invisible saga of how Canadian military industries profit from the big business of equipping those whose professional occupation is to wage war. In practical terms, for Canadian war industries, this means supplying what some indiscreetly call the "US war machine." That's because about three



quarters of all Made-in-Canada military hardware is exported and 80% of those exports are sold, without any federal restrictions, to the United States.

Once south of the border, Canadian technology—much of it in the form of high-tech components—is assembled into complete, American weapons systems. Although some of these major weapons are then exported to other governments, they are—for the most part—used in whatever war, or wars, the US is then waging. This usually means either some convenient "regime change" (to physically topple an unwanted foreign government) or "regime maintenance" (to help business-friendly governments retain their iron grip on political power).

Calian is one of these lucrative Canadian military industries. It supplies software, training, personnel and high-technology components and support services to the world's biggest institutions of war. Each of its various subsidiaries is deeply ensconced in the business of war. Let's take a brief look at a few examples of the Calian contracts that have aided and abetted the planning and waging of large-scale armed conflicts around the world.

IF YOU DON'T COME TO DEMOCRACY

B-52

Canadian War Industries helping build B-52s

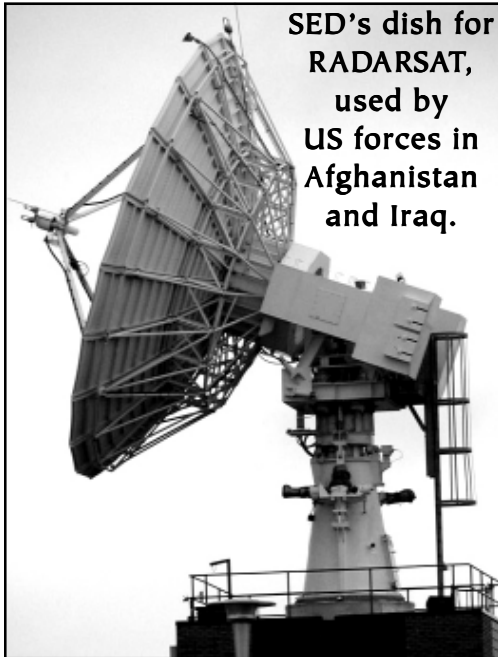
Alt Software		
Alta Precision		
CMC Electronics	✓	✓
Curtiss-Wright Controls	✓	✓
General Dynamics Cda.	✓	✓
Heroux Devtek	✓	
Lynch Dynamics		
Presagis	✓	✓
Sparton Electronics	✓	
Technologies Harness	✓	

CADS member
CANSEC 2009

DEMOCRACY WILL COME TO YOU

SED Systems

SED Systems is a wholly-owned division of Calian Technologies, based in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. It provides ground services for various satellites including those used by US intelligence and military institutions.



SED's dish for RADARSAT, used by US forces in Afghanistan and Iraq.

RADARSAT 1 and 2

SED has been under contract since 1995 to “control and monitor the RADARSAT-1” satellite. SED also provides “flight operations services to the RADARSAT-2 mission.”⁴ SED’s pivotal role in the ongoing operations of these state-of-the-art satellites is important because RADARSAT is probably Canada’s single-most important technological contribution to the militarisation of space and to U.S. warfighting in general. It cost Canadian taxpayers more than one billion dollars to produce the RADARSAT systems, which are the world’s most advanced commercial satellites. However, U.S. military and intelligence agencies are among RADARSAT’s top users.

In exchange for launching RADARSAT-1 in 1995, the U.S. government directly controls 15% of this satellite’s total observation time. The Pentagon has used RADARSAT-1 data for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance operations during the wars against Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq. When the Liberal government privatised RADARSAT-1 it was handed over to Vancouver’s MacDonald Det-

weiler and Association (MDA). MDA, which is a regular exhibitor at the CANSEC military trade shows, was wholly owned by Orbital Sciences, a U.S. war industry that manufactures “missile defense” rockets. (Interestingly, Liberal-cum-Conservative Cabinet Minister, David Emerson, was on MDA’s Board of Directors.)

Long before RADARSAT-2’s launch in 2007, U.S. and NATO warfighters used numerous war games to practise using its data to track and target moving, ground vehicles. The ability to exploit this RADARSAT-2 data was developed by Canada’s Department of National Defence in collaboration with the US Ballistic Missile Defence Organization. Together they developed detailed plans to use RADARSAT-2 data in first-strike attacks during “Theatre Missile Defense” (TMD) operations. The goal of TMD is not to defend the “homeland” but to protect missiles, troops and warships that are deployed to distant war zones. The many military and intelligence functions of RADARSAT-1 and -2 are exposed in a detailed, 52-page issue of *Press for Conversion!* called: “Canada’s Role in the Militarisation of Space: RADARSAT - The Warfighters’ Eye in the Sky and its links to ‘Missile Defense.’”⁵

Manportable Surveillance and Target Acquisition Radar

SED also supplies “various systems and components” for the so-called “Manportable Surveillance and Target Acquisition Radar” (MSTAR). This US military system “locates moving targets and uniquely classifies them as personnel, tracked or wheeled vehicles.” MSTAR is said to have “performed admirably in service with U.S. and Allied Forces in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Balkans and other locations.” Users of this weapons targeting system include the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Army. There are now “more than 500 MSTAR radars...in service throughout the world.”⁶

As during previous years, SED Systems was an exhibitor at the CANSEC 2009 military trade show in Ottawa this May 27 and 28. This landed

Mayor O’Brien in hot water. After going public in a front page newspaper article on March 29 to defend the leasing of City property to CANSEC,⁷ O’Brien was accused of blatant conflict of interest.⁸ Because he still sits on the Calian Technologies’ Board of Directors, O’Brien stood to personally benefit financially from the CANSEC military trade show because SED was an exhibitor.⁹

Calian Technology (US)

This branch of Calian Technologies prides itself on helping to facilitate the export of US military equipment to foreign governments around the world. It does this through contracts which provide “Foreign Military Sales management training in support of the International Programs Office of the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA).” The DLA is the “logistics combat support agency whose primary role is to provide supplies and services to America’s military forces worldwide.”¹⁰

But Calian does more than assist the US government agency responsible for getting war technology into the hands of a million or more US warfighters strategically based around the world. Calian’s “management support” is specifically designed to help the “international purchasers of US weapons systems.”¹¹ Calian contracts include, for example, teaching the DLA’s “Foreign Military Sales management course.”¹² This is significant evidence of Calian Technologies’ integral role in supporting the international arms trade.



MSTAR: A US weapons targeting system used in Afghanistan and Iraq



RAAF F/A-18

Australia's Fighter/Attack warplanes, supported by Calian Technologies since 1988, have been used in both the Afghan and Iraq wars.

Australia's F/A-18 "Hornet"
Calian Technology (US) Ltd., has been supporting the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) F/A-18 program since 1988. It provides "professional, technical, and administrative support services" to the RAAF's Technical Liaison Office that "include financial and administrative support, logistical analysis and systems engineering support" for Australia's fleet of F/A-18s.¹³

The RAAF has operated its US-made F/A-18s in both the Afghan and Iraq wars. The Australian military has used these fighter/attack warplanes to fulfil various combat roles including the escort of bomber aircraft during bombing sorties, the suppression of enemy air defences, reconnaissance, forward air control, close and deep air support, and day and night strike missions.

Calian Content Management Services

Calian CMS has provided high-technology software products and services for several major US weapons delivery systems, such as the C-130, F-117, MQ-8B, RQ-4, U-2¹⁴ and F-16.¹⁵ These warplanes, and the MQ-8B robotic attack drone, are outlined on pp.40-48 of this issue of *Press for Conversion!*

Business & Technology Services Division

In March 2009, Canada's Department of National Defence (DND) renewed a major contract with Calian's Business and Technology Services Division to provide advanced military training services. DND is expected to pay out a total of \$200 million to Mayor O'Brien's military company. Calian's role is to create and use high-tech computer-simulated synthetic environments to train soldiers, particularly Canadian warfighters waging the war in Afghanistan.

Calian's use of artificial, electronically-created 3-D environments will enable Canadian soldiers to practice and rehearse combat tactics that they will eventually use on the battlefield in Afghanistan.¹⁶ This Calian contract is for the continued provision of Training and Capability Development Support Services with DND's Directorate of Land Synthetic Environments (DLSE). The DLSE is responsible

"to provide demanding and realistic battle simulation to support collective training [and]...to assist in the development and validation of combat development solutions for the Army in operations throughout the spectrum of conflict."¹⁷

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