

# Justin Trudeau and the Canadian Military-Industrial Complex

A Conversation with Richard Sanders. Global Research News Hour Episode 121

By [Michael Welch](#) and [Richard Sanders](#)

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Region: [Canada](#), [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [GLOBAL RESEARCH NEWS HOUR](#),  
[US NATO War Agenda](#)

*“Why is Canada transferring Russian or Iraqi knock-offs of Russian machine guns with silencers to somewhere in Iraq from outside Iraq? It makes you wonder...Why weren't they using Canadian-made automatic weapons? They're using Russian-made ones! Is that so that the Russians are going to then be accused of putting these weapons in the hands of certain people?” -Richard Sanders (from this week's interview)*

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Less than a day after being elected to power, newly minted Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced to the U.S. President that he would be withdrawing from the war theatre against the militant group ISIL in Iraq and Syria. [1] This move was consistent with an election promise, and in fact messaging he has relayed for over a year. [2][3]

Trudeau had vowed instead to focus contributions to the international effort on “training of local forces (in Iraq), while providing more humanitarian support and immediately welcoming 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada.” [4]

During the recently concluded election campaign, Trudeau also pledged to cancel the purchase of the 65 Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter bombers his predecessor had committed to in principle. Instead the Liberal leader would commit to a process for replacement of existing CF-18s that was “open and transparent” and would “exclude requirements that do not reflect Canada's interests, such as first-strike stealth capabilities.” [5]

Harper for his part scorned the Liberal policy, mostly citing economic arguments and calling Trudeau's stance “incomprehensible.” [6]

Do these departures from the previous Harper government's agenda represent a

fundamental change in Canada's foreign and military policies?

Not according to long-time anti-war activist and researcher Richard Sanders. Sanders has long believed that the Canadian government's involvement in the international arms trade and fueling of wars around the globe has been fairly consistent across party lines. [7][8]

In a feature length interview for this week's Global Research News Hour, Sanders takes a deeper look at Canada's role in militarism and military profiteering. He discusses the contract to sell armoured vehicles to human rights scofflaw Saudi Arabia, and the recent discovery of Russian-made arms being shipped illegally by Canada to the Kurds. He addresses the parties' disappointing commitment to maintaining or increasing military spending, even among the supposedly progressive NDP and Green parties. He talks about how the decade old election-financing law may have strengthened the influence of military companies like Lockheed Martin and General Dynamics in Ottawa. And he proposes a theory as to why the anti-war movements in Canada and around the world have proven to be such a dismal failure when it comes to confronting the increasing militarization of foreign policy.

**Richard Sanders** is the coordinator of the Ottawa-based Coalition Opposed to the Arms Trade, and editor of its magazine, *Press For Conversion*. For more information visit <http://coat.ncf.ca>

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**Notes:**

1. AFP October 20, 2015), “Canada withdrawing fighter jets from Iraq, Syria, Trudeau tells Obama”;  
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3281814/Canada-withdrawing-fighter-jets-Iraq-Syria-Trudeau-tells-Obama.html>
2. <https://www.liberal.ca/files/2015/09/A-new-plan-to-strengthen-the-economy-and-create-jobs-with-navy-investment.pdf>
3. Campbell Clark (September 11, 2014), Globe and Mail, “Canadians don’t want combat role in Iraq, Trudeau says”;  
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/canadians-dont-want-combat-role-in-iraq-trudeau-says/article20543968/>
4. <https://www.liberal.ca/files/2015/09/A-new-plan-to-strengthen-the-economy-and-create-jobs-with-navy-investment.pdf>
5. ibid
6. Kathleen Harris (September 21, 2015), CBC, “Liberals ‘living in a dream world’ on F-35 cancellation, Stephen Harper says”;  
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-election-2015-f35-trudeau-harper-monda-y-1.3237046>
7. <http://www.globalresearch.ca/canada-s-military-industrial-complex/24447>
8. <http://coat.ncf.ca/mideast/tables.htm>

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