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## **Submission from the Campaign Against Arms Trade to the Committees on Arms Export Controls into matters covered by the Government's report into Strategic Export Controls for 2016**

1. The Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) in the UK is working to end the international arms trade. This trade has a devastating impact on human rights and security, and damages economic development. CAAT believes that large scale military procurement and arms exports only reinforce a militaristic approach to international problems.
2. This submission looks at arms sales to Saudi Arabia; the tension between export controls and promotion; the implications of Brexit; the influence of the arms companies; and skilled arms industry workers.

### **Saudi Arabia**

3. In March 2015, a Saudi Arabia-led coalition commenced a military campaign in Yemen. It supported the the internationally recognised, though internally disputed, President of Yemen, Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, and targeted Houthis and allied rebel groups backing the former President , Ali Abdullah Saleh. The latter was killed in December 2017 as he tried to switch his allegiance to Hadi. The fighting between the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthis continues.
4. From the start, there have been numerous reports of breaches of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) by all sides in the Yemen conflict. Thousands have died in the bombing and other fighting and there is a humanitarian disaster featuring both famine and cholera. The situation in Yemen has recently deteriorated further.
5. In December 2017 the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs warned of a dangerous escalation of armed clashes and air strikes in Sana'a City. ([OCHA, 4.12.17](#)) At the end of the same month, senior UN officials described the aerial bombing of a market which killed 54 civilians and other recent attacks as "indiscriminate" and showing a "complete disregard for human life" by the Saudi-led coalition as well as other parties to the conflict. ([Statement on behalf of the Humanitarian Co-ordinator for Yemen, 28.12.17](#)) All the air strikes have been by the Saudi-led coalition as the opposition does not have an air force.
6. On 29 December 2017, the Directors of the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme and UNICEF issued a [joint statement](#) noting "escalating violence" in Yemen and declaring that the "conflict in Yemen has created the worst humanitarian crisis in the world – a crisis which has engulfed the entire country".
7. The UK has continued to support air strikes and to provide arms despite the evidence that there have been repeated IHL breaches by Saudi Arabia. Since the ongoing bombardment began in 2015, the UK has [licensed](#) over £4.6 billion worth of arms to Saudi Arabia, including:
  - \* £2.7 billion worth of ML10 licences (aircraft, helicopters, drones)
  - \* £1.9 billion worth of ML4 licences (grenades, bombs, missiles, countermeasures)
  - \* £442,000 worth of ML6 licences (armoured vehicles, tanks)
8. The UK government [admits](#) that Saudi Arabia has used UK supplied weapons in its attacks on Yemen. The equipment being used includes Eurofighter Typhoon and Tornado aircraft,

manufactured by BAE Systems, have been central to the attacks. Since March 2015 further Typhoon aircraft under an existing contract were delivered to Saudi Arabia from BAE's Warton site.

9. There is intimate involvement by the UK government in these deals as they are UK-Saudi government contracts, complemented by contacts between the UK government and BAE. The Ministry of Defence Saudi Armed Forces Project (MODSAP) covers the Saudi British Defence Co-operation Programme, formerly known as Al Yamamah (Tornado, Hawk and PC-9 aircraft) and the Al Salam programme (Eurofighter Typhoons). On 1 April 2017 over 200 UK military personnel and civil servants worked for MODSAP with Saudi Arabia paying the salaries and other costs. ([Parliamentary Written Answer, 8.11.17](#)) Under these arrangements, BAE is continuing to provide "operational capability support". ([BAE Annual Report 2016](#), page 50)
10. UK-supplied precision-guided weapons have also been used in Yemen: Raytheon's Paveway bombs, MBDA's PGM500 bombs and Brimstone and Storm Shadow missiles, and BAE's ALARM (anti-radiation) missiles. The UK government [confirmed](#) that it accelerated delivery of Paveway precision-guided bombs in response to Saudi requests.
11. In December 2016, the UK government finally [admitted](#) that UK-made cluster bombs had been deployed in the conflict. These had been supplied in the 1980's illustrating how weaponry can continue to have deadly consequences long after it leaves its manufacturer.
12. As your Committees will be aware, CAAT has challenged the UK government's decision to continue to licence the export of military equipment to Saudi Arabia. This is on the grounds that Criterion 2c of the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria says that licences should not be granted if there is a clear risk the equipment might be used in a serious violation of IHL. The High Court hearing took place in February 2017; the judgment in July 2017 was in the Government's favour. CAAT has now applied for permission to appeal. All the court documents in the public domain can be found [here](#).
13. The legal process may not be exhausted for some months to come. However, if CAAT is not ultimately successful in its challenge, this will have a profound influence on export controls at UK, EU and, through the Arms Trade Treaty, international levels. It is not disputed that UK-supplied weaponry is being used by Saudi Arabia to kill both directly and indirectly in Yemen. The Saudi action has led to a major humanitarian crisis. Yet despite the existence of regulations that most people would have expected to have prevented the UK from supplying arms that might further the conflict, the weaponry has continued to flow.

## **Tension between desire to export and the existence of regulations**

14. The Strategic Export Controls report for 2016 cites the need for "rigorous export controls" and gives three reasons for this. They are to:
  - \* safeguard Britain's national security by reducing the risk that military or dual use equipment may fall into the wrong hands or be used to undermine peace and stability;
  - \* strengthen our prosperity by enabling responsible British exports; and
  - \* uphold our values by taking account of potential risks to human rights, international humanitarian law and sustainable development.
15. Given the level of [support it receives](#), it is highly questionable whether arms exports do increase UK prosperity. Leaving this aside however, the Saudi case unfortunately illustrates only too well the incompatibility between the first and third of these reasons on the one hand, and the second on the other. Governments, not least in the UK, actively promote arms sales while at the same time seeking to regulate them. Whenever these two aims are in conflict, the promotion of arms exports is given priority. Thus, while abhorring the human tragedy of Yemen, and, through the Department for International Development, contributes taxpayer money towards alleviating it, the prospect of a new Eurofighter Typhoon deal mutes any UK government criticism of Saudi Arabia.
16. Indeed, on 25 October 2017, then Defence Secretary Michael Fallon told the Commons' Defence Committee that criticism of the Saudi Arabian regime and its brutal bombardment of Yemen was a hindrance to arms sales. As part of an update he gave on negotiations to sell a further batch of

Eurofighter Typhoon jets to the Saudi Air Force [he said](#), answering Question 39: "I have to repeat sadly, to this committee, that obviously other criticism of Saudi Arabia, in this Parliament, is not helpful and ...I'll leave it there, but we need to do everything possible to encourage Saudi Arabia towards batch two. I believe they will commit to batch two and we need to work away on the timing."

### **Support for arms exports**

17. In the same Defence Committee session, at Question 32, the then Defence Secretary said that he co-ordinated cross-Government work on major export campaigns - the Eurofighter Typhoon, complex weapons and F-35 support. This Ministry of Defence (MoD) support is in addition to that given to military exports more generally through the Department for International Trade's Defence and Security Organisation (DIT DSO). This body is the latest incarnation of the UK government's arms sales agency, originally set up in 1966.
18. DIT DSO has a budget of nearly £10million and 120 staff ([Hansard, 13.12.17](#)) who coordinate government support for arms exports. They have access to the highest levels of government and the military; invite overseas government and military delegations to UK arms fairs; arrange UK delegations and/or exhibitors at overseas arms exhibitions; and use the UK armed forces to demonstrate and sell weaponry for companies.
19. Priority markets are identified annually by DIT DSO. These are selected to reflect "the markets (which) present the most significant defence and security export opportunities". ([Parliamentary Written Answer, 20.9.17](#)) That human rights are not taken into account is all too evident as the [2017-18 Priority Market list](#) includes Bahrain, Colombia and Saudi Arabia, all also on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's list of Human Rights Priority Countries.
20. Such exports are clearly at odds with the views of the [76% of UK adults](#) who oppose the promotion of arms sales to human rights abusing regimes.

### **Implications of Brexit**

21. Export regulations are unlikely to change dramatically when the UK leaves the European Union (EU). However, as the regulations do little to impede exports, UK government willingness to export military equipment to even the world's most concerning governments and military forces looks likely to be exacerbated in the search for post-Brexit trade deals
22. Looking for trade links beyond the EU, in January 2017, Prime Minister Theresa May secured a [£100million fighter jet deal](#) with a Turkish government under President Erdogan that, since a failed coup attempt in July 2016, has purged over a hundred thousand workers from state jobs and arrested thousands. More journalists are imprisoned in Turkey than in any other country. Emphasising that he would like to see more such deals, Michael Fallon, then Defence Secretary, told delegates at London's Defence and Security International exhibition in September 2017 that the UK would will "spread its wings across the world" with increased arms and equipment exports after Brexit. ([Independent, 13.9.17](#))
23. It is not just the Government either. In August 2016 the ADS, the trade body for arms companies, said: "Europe will continue to be important, but there are perhaps other areas where there is now a bigger incentive to develop longer-term relationships... Brexit provides the circumstances and the catalyst for faster and more efforts." ([Bloomberg, 5.8.16](#))

### **Influence of the arms companies**

24. The arms industry is at the very heart and machinery of government giving it totally disproportionate access and influence over vital areas, warping public policy.
25. Arms companies have long enjoyed a close relationship with the UK government, giving them immense influence over government decision-making. There are many opportunities for arms companies to gain access to and influence the Government:
  - \* from the thousands of hours of [meetings](#),

- \* to the [revolving door](#) between companies, military and government,
- \* to the industry bodies [within government](#) itself.

26. The 'groupthink' that grows out of such a network of relations and massive integration slants government priorities in favour of private commercial interests and leads to the public interest becoming conflated with corporate interests. There needs to be a clear separation between Government and private interests to allow decisions to be made that are in the interests of the public. The closeness between the UK government and the arms industry can preclude wider debate and the exploration of policies that may well do more for the long-term security of people in the UK and elsewhere.
27. It is, therefore, disappointing, but not surprising, that the MoD's December 2017 ["Refreshing Defence Industrial Policy"](#) proposes tightening rather than questioning Government-industry links. The MoD report also makes it clear that the UK government would like the arms companies to continue to enjoy post-Brexit the new EU research and monies that are becoming available, largely as a result of arms company influence at the EU level. A report, ["Securing Profits: how the arms lobby is hijacking Europe's defence policy"](#), by CAAT's Flemish counterpart Vredesactie shows how the arms industry effectively developed EU policy that excluded civil society input.

## Skilled workers

28. An argument frequently made in support of the arms trade is the number of jobs it supports; according to [ADS](#) 142,000 were directly employed in military industry in 2016. This sounds a lot, but, to put it in context, in the latest figures, covering August to October 2017, [total UK employment](#) was over 32 million. Additionally, arms industry workers tend to be highly skilled in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics fields where there is an acknowledged shortage of workers.
29. The arms companies are global businesses. They may have their headquarters in one country, but subsidiaries in several others. While the companies will talk of their contribution to the UK economy, this is not their primary consideration. Production takes place wherever it is likely to maximise the profits of the international shareholders.
30. The support given to the arms industry is at the expense of other sectors which could make a similar or greater contribution to the UK economy, without the extremely negative consequences that military exports have. In response to a report from the Defence Industries Council, the *Financial Times* stated that: "Spending on defence is no better at creating jobs than support for other sectors. Defence R&D may produce spin-offs, but so too may R&D with civilian applications." ([2.9.09](#)) If the political support were to move, so too could the jobs and economic benefits.
31. The arms industry is in long term decline. In October 2017, BAE announced that it would be cutting almost 2,000 jobs across the UK. The Defence Committee is currently holding an inquiry into this. CAAT would call on the Government to see the skills of these workers are put to good use in positive and sustainable industries, such as renewable energy and low carbon technologies.
32. The current Chancellor, then Foreign Secretary, Philip Hammond, talked of the economic advantages of investment in renewables. He [told](#) an audience in Boston on 9 October 2014 that renewables would be "critical to reducing our vulnerability to energy supply shocks" and meeting the climate change challenge. Other benefits would also arise, such as cleaner air, more efficient transport and cities, and better health. He continued: "50 years ago, the US showed how a strategic challenge, putting a man on the moon, could guarantee innovation through economy-transforming investments. Today, we have an opportunity to do that again in response to the challenge of climate change ... The potential is immense. And by seizing the initiative, we can take first mover advantage."
33. As Chancellor, Philip Hammond is in a good position to influence a shift in focus by the UK government from supporting the arms industry to promoting renewable energy and low-carbon technologies. Both the arms and renewable energy sectors are highly skilled. As CAAT's [Arms to Renewables](#) briefing, October 2014, shows, they have similar breakdowns across broad

categories of skill levels and employ many of the same branches of engineering. The expansion of offshore wind and marine energy considered by the briefing would lead to many more jobs than displaced arms workers would need and there would also be appropriate work available in most areas where arms workers are located.

### **Defence Diversification Agency**

34. In September 2017, the Trades Union Congress passed a [motion](#) calling for the Labour Party to set up a shadow Defence Diversification Agency (DDA). The BAE job cuts show just how urgent the establishment of a DDA is. It could be established immediately by the current Government.

**January 2018**