

CONVENTIONAL ARMS

BASIC FACTS

- VIRTUALLY ALL COUNTRIES EXERCISE SOME SORT OF CONTROL OVER THEIR ARMS EXPORTS. CANADA IS ONE OF THE MORE "RESTRICTIVE" SUPPLIERS, WHICH EXERCISES CAREFUL UNILATERAL CONTROL OVER ITS ARMS EXPORTS;
- HOWEVER, THERE ARE NO GLOBAL, COMPREHENSIVE OR LEGALLY BINDING INTERNATIONAL MEASURES TO CONTROL ARMS TRANSFERS.
- RESOLUTIONS AIMED AT PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY OR THE REGULATION OF ARMS TRANSFERS HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED IN THE UNITED NATIONS SINCE 1965. A RESOLUTION COSPONSORED BY CANADA IN 1988 RESULTED IN THE FORMATION OF AN EXPERTS STUDY ON THIS QUESTION, WHICH WILL SUBMIT ITS CONCLUSIONS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIS FALL.
- CANADA HAS UNILATERALLY AGREED TO MAKE AVAILABLE STATISTICS ON THE EXPORT OF ARMS, BEGINNING WITH THE 1990 CALENDAR YEAR, IN AN EFFORT TO INCREASE TRANSPARENCY IN THE ARMS TRADE.

CURRENT CONCERNS

- THE 1970S AND EARLY 1980S SAW A LARGE INCREASE IN THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN CONVENTIONAL ARMS. ARMS EXPORTS TO THIRD WORLD DESTINATIONS ARE ESTIMATED TO HAVE HAD A VALUE AS HIGH AS US\$60 BILLION IN 1983, WITH OVER 40% OF THE WEAPONS INVOLVED GOING TO THE MIDDLE EAST.
- A HIGH LEVEL OF ARMS ACQUISITIONS IS A FACTOR IN ESCALATING CONFLICTS. THE SPREAD OF SOPHISTICATED CONVENTIONAL WEAPONRY INCREASES THE PROBABLE LEVEL OF DEVASTATION SHOULD WAR OCCUR.

PROGRAMME OF ACTION

- WE WILL URGE A MEETING OF THE MAJOR ARMS EXPORTERS TO ENCOURAGE A FORMAL COMMITMENT TO GREATER SENSITIVITY IN THE EXPORT OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS (I.E., GREATER TRANSPARENCY; CONSTRAINT; CONSULTATIONS IN SITUATIONS WHERE UNUSUAL BUILD-UPS SEEMS TO BE DEVELOPING).
- WE WILL ADVOCATE EARLY ACTION ON AN INFORMATION EXCHANGE SYSTEM REGARDING ARMS TRANSFERS, INCLUDING SERIOUS EXAMINATION BY ALL STATES OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS EXPERTS GROUP NOW STUDYING THE QUESTION OF TRANSPARENCY IN ARMS TRANSFERS.
- WE WILL PROPOSE A COMMITMENT BY THE 22 SIGNATORIES OF THE CFE TREATY TO ENSURE THAT ARMS AFFECTED BY THE ACCORD ARE NOT EXPORTED TO REGIONS OF TENSION.