

weapon: CN or CS gas is mixed with the water to further assist in breaking up unruly demonstrations. Pepper spray or oleoresin capsicum (OC) is another type of dispersant frequently advertised as a self-protective device for use against animals or criminals. It is also used by police in some jurisdictions to subdue or force into the open uncooperative suspects.²⁶ Other crowd dispersal and riot control weapons include electric prods, various type of entanglement wire such as razor wire, and rubber bullets. Additional non-lethal weapons include tranquilizer darts, netting and bean bag guns, to name a few. The use of these weapons is sometimes controversial, and new developments – particularly military ones – will heighten this controversy.

Directed energy weapons (DEWs) should be another area of unique concern to those seized of the SALW issue. Of particular importance is the use of “light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation” (laser) technology. The primary use of the laser with regard to SALW is in target acquisition and range finding. Laser ancillary equipment for SALW targeting is currently in common use and generally available not only in the military but also the civilian market. However, it could also be used in an offensive capacity, given its potential for use as a blinding weapon.

A SHORT HISTORY OF SALW INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC CONSTRAINTS

Rules of War and Arms Control

Rules of war and arms control agreements have existed from very early times:

“The laws of war have two basic sources: customs and treaties or conventions. Customary law comes down to us from ancient practices and from case-by-case development, much like English and American common law. Treaties and conventional laws are the result of international agreements, conferences, and conventions. Before the mid-1800s, bilateral treaties represented the only source of law aside from customary law. Conventional law, which did not develop until the second half of the 19th century, is the outgrowth of international conferences such as those at The Hague (Netherlands) and in Geneva (Switzerland). Many of the early conferences took up the task of codifying customary law. As a result, much of the early customary law is also part of the conventional codes. The principal aim of the laws of war is to specify the rights and obligations of belligerents and the rights of neutrals and noncombatants.”²⁷

²⁶ According to S/Sgt Michael Johnson of the Ottawa-Carleton Police Tactical Unit, OC is his preferred agent as it is easier to handle and, unlike tear gas, is not prone to starting fires near combustible material when fired as a cannister grenade.

²⁷ Gary Anderson and Adam Gifford Jr., *Order Out of Anarchy: The International Law of War* 15 (1), Cato Institute WEB Site <http://www>.