

# I The Causes and Consequences of Conventional Proliferation

The national and international security agenda in the post-Cold War world is crowded and confused. Policy makers are engaged in resolving ethnic conflicts, managing multilateral peace and security operations, negotiating arms control treaties, addressing new issues such as environmental change or human rights concerns, and aligning foreign policies with domestic economic interests and social concerns.

As the shape of the post-Cold War era has started to crystallize, most states have been forced to rethink many of the fundamental pillars of their national and international security policies. Concepts such as common, cooperative or human security provide some of the new architectural scaffolding for the foreign and security policies of Canada and its friends and allies.<sup>1</sup> Greater attention to the global, regional and internal dimensions of security supplement the traditional focus on national and inter-state relationships. The inter-dependent nature of security, and its link to democratization, good governance and respect for human rights, is now widely recognized.<sup>2</sup>

Concern with the global spread of conventional weapons has earned a spot on this crowded foreign policy agenda, and is an integral element of any post-Cold War peace and security policy. High-level interest in the subject was catalyzed by the 1990-91 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and the realization that the major arms suppliers had helped to create the arsenal they faced on the battlefield. Ways and means of constraining conventional proliferation are being explored in a multitude of forums, and it rises on the policy agenda whenever public attention is focused on such tragedies as the war in the former Yugoslavia (with its violations of the UN embargo), the massacres in Rwanda (which were fuelled by significant arms purchases in the preceding four years), the thwarting of democratization projects by the armed forces in places such as Haiti or Nigeria, the civil wars in Somalia and Angola, the difficulties of post-conflict peace-building in Cambodia and El Salvador, and a host of other conflicts and wars whose human toll mounts daily.<sup>3</sup>

Behind these issues lie a series of contradictory perceptions. On one hand, the end of the Cold War has meant that the perceived political, strategic and military value gained from supplying weapons to states in the developing world (broadly defined) has diminished. Insofar as political and strategic considerations were used to override more humanitarian concerns with regional and internal conflicts, this change has forced a reexamination of Western policies. The end of the East-West confrontation has also opened new opportunities for multilateral cooperation in peace and security issues (in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), for example) and revitalized the role of the United Nations in this area.

On the other hand, under the United Nations Charter, every state possesses the right of self-defence, which has traditionally been interpreted to mean that they have the right to acquire appropriate means to achieve

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<sup>1</sup> On common security, see the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues (the Palme Commission), *Common Security: A Blueprint for Survival* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982); on cooperative security see Janne Nolan, ed., *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1994); Ashton Carter, William Perry and John Steinbrunner, *A New Concept of Cooperative Security* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1992); on human security see United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report 1994* (New York: UNDP, 1994), 22-46. For an overview, see David Dewitt, "Common, Comprehensive and Cooperative Security," *The Pacific Review*, 7:1 (1994), 1-15.

<sup>2</sup> See Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and War," *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1995), 79-97. President Clinton also asserted that "democracies don't attack each other" in his 1994 State of the Union address.

<sup>3</sup> See Stephen D. Goose and Frank Smyth, "Arming Genocide in Rwanda," *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 1994), 86-96; "Arms Trafficking to Bosnia Goes on Despite Embargo," *New York Times*, 5 November 1994.