

military forces by mutual consent for mutual benefit."<sup>3</sup> The implication is that efforts to constrain conventional proliferation must be embedded in a broader process, which is based on "a change in the principle mechanisms of control from denial of access to cooperatively induced restraint," and which "involv[es] extensive agreed-on constraints on military preparations [that] would have to require all parties to accept a level of intrusive monitoring of their defense programs."<sup>2</sup> This latter point highlights the importance of verification and compliance monitoring mechanisms.

## Conclusion

Constraints on conventional proliferation can be defended on humanitarian, developmental and self-interested grounds. Efforts to stem proliferation of weapons of mass destruction cannot be advanced without some attention also being paid to the conventional side of the equation, since in some regional contexts (especially the Middle East), the proliferation of conventional and unconventional weapons is inextricably linked. It is also possible that measures to control weapons of mass destruction may have increased the desire of states to obtain sophisticated conventional weapons, creating a "balloon syndrome" whereby restraint in one area merely creates a bulge in another. The vast quantities of resources consumed by conventional arms acquisitions in the developing world also highlight that a non-proliferation agenda that stops at conventional weapons fails to address the real security concerns of most of the world's population.

Given the increased involvement of multilateral (United Nations) and Canadian forces in peace and security operations in a range of regional conflict environments, the direct implications of a failure to address this emerging problem are clear. Multilateral forces may face (as the French did in the Persian Gulf) their own weapons on the battlefield. Even if they do not, the proliferation of more sophisticated weapons systems (precision-guided missiles, for example) could drastically alter the threat environment in which these forces would operate. Finally, the vast effort and expense that the international community has put and will put into peace-building operations in various conflict-riven regions and states will be wasted, if they are not coupled with efforts to constrain the weapons that fuel these conflicts.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 36, 38-39.