

## PREFACE

In October 1987 the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security organized a conference on *The International Transfer of Conventional Arms*. Experts and interested members of the public participated in two days of discussions that focused on five general themes: the nature of the international arms trade, the motives that drive states to supply arms, the motives of recipient states, Canada's role in the system, and the prospects and problems associated with controlling the trade in conventional arms.

This report presents the fruits of those discussions. Although the sessions were organized around specific topics that correspond closely to the five themes developed in this report, many of the themes were raised in different forms throughout the two days of discussions. For that reason, this report does not present a purely chronological summary of the proceedings. The programme indicates the sequence of presentations and Appendix I provides a list of participants.

The Canadian government supplied a catalyst for the conference. The report of the Special Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations (The Hockin-Simard Report) included as one of its conclusions/recommendations that Canada should seek support for proposals to establish an international system to register weapons exports and imports, as one means of controlling the expanded trade in conventional arms. The government's response to this recommendation was to invite the Institute to study the concept of such an arms register and to bring the facts to the attention of Canadians. This report meets part of this mandate.