

- 2) lack of funds to acquire more sophisticated weapons;
- 3) emphasis on internal security by the U.S. in their aid programs to the area;
- 4) widespread presence of groups (e.g., guerrillas) equipped with light weapons alone;
- 5) growing privatization of security forces in the region.

This problem affects all levels of society, and is fuelling intra-societal violence which poses "...the greatest threat to peace, security, human rights, and the advancement of democracy in the region" (p. 86).

Six conclusions are drawn to help future research into the field of light weapons:

- 1) Latin American countries produce, domestically, a significant number of light weapons;
- 2) light weapons remain in service long after the conflict for which they were made is over;
- 3) the U.S. and Soviet Union bear a significant part of the responsibility for the continued gun culture in the area since they shipped vast quantities of arms to the region over 50 years;
- 4) the black market poses a significant threat to the region's stability;
- 5) private producers in the U.S. are a major source of guns for the region;
- 6) present national and international measures to curb light weapons transfers are inadequate.

In addition, three recommendations are made for future progress. First, increase the transparency of light weapons transfers (e.g., establish a regional register of conventional arms). Second, enhance export controls (e.g., improve border controls). Third, demilitarize and disarm the region (e.g., reduce the size and pervasiveness of the armed forces). In each case, the goal is to work towards restraining the proliferation of light weapons.

An appendix includes a table of light arms production in Latin America.

- 614.** Latham, Andrew. "The Light Weapons Problem: Causes, Consequences and Policy Options." In *Multilateral Approaches to Non-Proliferation: Proceedings of the 4th Canadian Non-Proliferation Workshop*, ed. Andrew Latham, Toronto: Centre for International and Security Studies, York University, 1996, pp. 33-54.

Conventional weapons proliferation has earned a more prominent place on the post Cold War international security agenda. However, Latham maintains that the diffusion of light weapons remains seriously under-examined. His purpose is to "...contribute to recent efforts to raise the profile of the light weapons issue within the Canadian non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament community" (pp. 33-34).

Light weapons are defined in a variety of ways:

- 1) those not covered by the SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute), or the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms;
- 2) those carried by infantry;
- 3) those transported by animals or light vehicles;
- 4) those used in internecine conflict.

Latham posits his own working definition which includes "...all weapons that fall below the threshold of major conventional weapons systems" (p. 34). A further distinction is made between low- and high-tech light weapons. The former is the focus of this paper and denotes arms that are based on simple, widely-diffused technologies, do not require much skill to operate, and require only basic maintenance (e.g., AK-47).

The deleterious effects of the ready availability and widespread diffusion of light weapons are analysed. These factors have several negative impacts:

- 1) they undermine both traditional and modern institutions of human security;
- 2) they help sustain authoritarian governments and thwart progress towards democracy;
- 3) they create and sustain a 'culture of violence';
- 4) they contribute to 'inhumane' conflict;
- 5) they undermine confidence building measures (CBMs) and economic reconstruction.

Also examined are the factors contributing to the proliferation of light weapons:

- 1) the absence of durable political institutions in many parts of the world;
- 2) cultural factors which condone/encourage ownership of guns;
- 3) increased availability of light weapons in recent years;
- 4) poor import and export controls in many countries;
- 5) numerous and diverse supply channels (ranging from state-to-state sales to individual black market transactions);