

Natural opponents of such a treaty can also be identified. Many governments will resist what they perceive as an attempt to interfere with matters of domestic security. It should be noted that while the study on firearms was unanimously approved, the concept of the UN Small Arms Panel was disapproved by 16 states, based on this rationale. At the Expert Group on Firearms Regulation workshop in Slovenia, the National Rifle Association spelled out what was purported to be U.S. policy on a treaty of principles on firearms regulation. Among other points, the U.S. position is that there should be no international standards, no central registries, no obligation to accept evaluations from other countries regarding compliance, and no permanent entity to police compliance. While all of these objections can be easily dealt with, and have not been suggested in this paper, they reflect the type of thinking that many states will have going into such a campaign.

Another major reason for some states to resist this campaign is that in some regions, the conflicts are still ongoing. At the previously mentioned Capetown NGO conference held in July 1997, Central African states were briefed on the recommendations of the UN Small Arms Panel. Their response to the idea of a moratorium on exports and imports, and the collection and destruction of surplus, was the same. "Things are still in flux in this part of the world. We may need these weapons." And the arms dealers who make transfers happen in conflict areas are operating with increased impunity. Attempts to "register" their activities will be resisted.

Others who will resist include actors within states who possess surplus weapons but are reluctant to give them up. Military commanders in the former Soviet Union still sit on stocks which they periodically sell to pay their troops. There are 200,000 military weapons in storage in South Africa, where a police effort to destroy them is being resisted by the army, who want to export them. In Mozambique, the government still has significant stocks remaining from that long civil war.

Gun owners are often put forward as another group that will resist the campaign. This is somewhat exaggerated, as the humanitarian focus of the campaign has little to do with citizens who are armed for either self-defense or recreation. To the extent that the gun lobby continues to use this as a theme to oppose the entire effort, it could be simply dealt with in a video that showed responsible gun owners shooting for sport, juxtaposed against armed children using AK-47s.

III. Capacity-building to support treaty

Once a treaty is developed and the campaign for signatures commences, a full-scale effort will be needed to support states which have either signed or do not think that they have the resources to meet the requirements of the treaty. This will be accomplished, as in the land mine campaign, by the coalition of governments and NGOs. A good place to start is with the collection and destruction of those weapons that a state declares surplus. In many cases such a declaration will be politically charged, as in South Africa. States which take such a risk should know that donor states will be there to support such action. In the case of Mali, the UN and several donor states provided the resources to successfully reintegrate the guerrillas who turned in and destroyed their weapons.