

THE MACHINERY OF WAR AND THE MACHINERY OF ORDER

Even while this new world tries to come to grips with the philosophy of international and world order, we are forced to reassess and retool all the machinery for managing and promoting acceptable relationships. One fundamental and pervasive change that must be implemented if the world is to successfully manage the further changes to a viable global order, is finally to take seriously and act decisively upon the issues of the proliferation of weaponry, of trafficking in weaponry, of arms races and arms build-ups all around the world.

For decades during which the developing countries have steadily increased their share of world arms purchases, and arms production, they have resented and resisted international expressions of concern. They have claimed, once again, that a double standard was being applied when Northern countries still accounted for an overwhelming, and hugely disproportionate share of the world's armaments, and when nothing was being done by the industrialized world to control and limit arms. Arms reductions between East and West have finally begun to undermine the charge of double standards, and further reductions will further strengthen the moral and political case for limitations worldwide. The last review conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, in September 1990, was evidence of how the sterile diplomatic posturing of the past is irrelevant and unhelpful to meeting today's real needs and opportunities. There is now no inconsistency or discrimination if Canada pushes, as a first-order priority in our foreign policy, for further steady arms reductions among industrialized countries and for tough regimes against proliferation elsewhere.

Arms in themselves do not cause wars, but the capacity to control the flow of arms, particularly into volatile regions and particularly with today's horrifically destructive "conventional" and non-conventional weapons, can do a great deal at least to contain conflicts and limit their damage. Clearly the history of armaments diffusion in a region like the Persian Gulf, where the capacity of Saddam Hussein to menace his neighbours was largely imported – sold to him mainly by the Soviets and the French, with special advice from a Canadian arms designer – has been short-sighted and dangerous. The logic of supporting regional