

Demand-Side Issues

To date the demand side of the problem of conventional proliferation has been little addressed, although some efforts in the United Nations and other multilateral institutions have been started. Canada's long record of official development assistance and its concern with North-South issues make it well-placed to devote resources to exploring measures in four areas:

- development of regional transparency, confidence-building and information-sharing measures;
- development of restrictions on the acquisition of particularly destructive or destabilizing weapons;
- exploration of the linkage between military and armaments spending, the promotion of human rights, and social and economic development;
- promotion of practical early-warning and post-conflict disarmament measures.

The last two of these represent the most important medium and long-term issues to be addressed. With respect to the linkage between military and armaments spending and social and economic development, Canada should adopt a targeted approach that focuses on states with which it has long-standing partnerships, which are newly-democratizing, or which devote a disproportionate amount of resources to the armed forces. Canadian policies could work:

- to reduce the burden of the armed forces on society, via retraining or resettlement programs for former soldiers or the expansion of national service into civilian areas;
- to ensure that development assistance does not facilitate the diversion of resources into the military or armaments, and to ensure a proper balance of spending on the military and social and economic welfare;
- to develop government capacities for transparency and accountability in military and armaments spending, and to foster institutions and organizations within civil society to act as a check on arbitrary or secretive policies.

Some of these measures are being explored by multilateral financial or development institutions, which have underlined the importance of a cooperative rather than confrontational approach.

Finally, Canada could advocate a range of practical early-warning, micro-disarmament and post-conflict disarmament measures, including:

- the implementation of post-conflict micro-disarmament measures such as gun buy-back or weapons cantonment programs;
- the development of post-conflict disarmament mechanisms and procedures for United Nations peacekeeping or post-conflict peace-building forces;
- the exploration of "preventive micro-disarmament" measures, either through buy-back or weapons registration programs, or other measures to stem the licit and illicit trade in light weapons;
- the enhancement of measures to assist in mine clearance and rehabilitation efforts.

Future Research

Further research is needed on a wide range of issues connected with efforts to constrain conventional proliferation, as the linkages between arms production, conventional proliferation, conflict and insecurity