

itself, to a greater or lesser degree, caught on the horns of this dilemma. My country is no exception.

Of course, any particular country intent on making a contribution to world security could decide to abstain from producing arms. But what significance would such a gesture actually have? So long as arms are being bought, arms will be produced. There is no particular moral merit in a country that is buying arms not producing them. And if the main reason for not producing them is not to be involved in selling them, it will have no practical impact on the arms race because other suppliers will readily fill the gap.

One way out of this dilemma would be for suppliers, acting in concert, to practise restraint. That is easier where the incentive for arms sales is mainly commercial. It is more difficult where considerations of foreign policy are involved. Canada is not an important exporter of military equipment. We could accept any consensus that might be arrived at among suppliers to cut back on military exports. We recognize that our position differs from that of others.

The major powers, in particular, sometimes see arms sales as a means of maintaining a balance of confidence in situations where political solutions continue to elude the parties. But the major powers must also recognize that a balance of confidence can be achieved in such situations at lower levels of cost and risk. I welcome the recent decision of the United States and the Soviet Union to look for a basis of mutual restraint in their sales of conventional weapons.

Restraint by suppliers will help. But it is an incomplete answer to the arms-traffic problem. It may also cause resentment among potential arms-purchasers. For better or for worse, much of the arms traffic takes place between industrialized and developing countries. The purchasing countries seek, as is their right, to ensure their own security. In many cases, they seek no more than to maintain law and order on their national soil. To curb their right to acquire arms by purchase — even to place qualitative restraints on such purchases — would revive much of the acrimony of the North-South dialectic. It would be regarded, rightly or wrongly, as another instance where the rich are trying to substitute their judgment for that of the poor. Moreover, attempts to curb the transfer of conventional weapons would do nothing to change the incentive for acquiring them.

It is at the level of incentives that we are likely to manage best to come to grips with the problem of conventional weapons. The incentive to acquire arms is rooted in apprehensions of insecurity. The best way to allay such apprehensions is through collective regional arrangements. The countries of Latin America have set the world a useful example in turning their continent into a nuclear-weapon-free zone and in persuading outside powers to respect that status. Similar arrangements are conceivable, in Latin America as elsewhere, to deal with the acquisition of conventional arms. It would be for regional decision-makers to devise incentives for restraint and sanctions for excess in the accumulation of conventional arsenals and in the build-up of conventional forces. That, in the long run, seems to me the best prospect of curbing the conventional-arms race without damage to the relations between nations.

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