

It is important to note how these concerns operate within a broader understanding of security, and tie directly into the *causes* and *consequences* of conventional proliferation identified in the introduction. The focus on threats to peace and security draws attention to the traditional inter-state and regional dimensions of conventional proliferation. A focus on the land mines and other light weapons, however, draws attention to the internal dimensions of conflict (mostly in the developing world), and the increasingly glaring contradiction between the expansion of UN peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building operations and the unrestricted trade in conventional weapons. Indeed, as intra-state conflicts crowd the post-Cold War security agenda, greater attention needs to be paid to international obligations in areas once viewed as the sole responsibility of the state, as well as to national obligations to participate in multilateral security measures. This is especially true of the state's asserted right to acquire weapons, and suggests that important avenues of constraint could arise from attempts to balance the relative weights of humanitarian concerns and the rights of state security. This issue is central to the debate over a proposed global ban on landmines, with advocates of a ban arguing that given the current use of mines in (almost exclusively) internal conflicts, their destructive humanitarian impact outweighs their utility to the armed forces of states.

The focus on the relationship between military spending and social welfare also follows this logic, by highlighting the societal aspects of security and the way in which unconstrained conventional proliferation can consume scarce resources that could be devoted to social and economic development. These latter two issues will be addressed directly in chapter five. Finally, the focus on the major suppliers acknowledges that the arms trade may be in part supply-driven, as arms producing states feel compelled to promote exports to maintain their shrinking defence industrial base (this will be explored more fully in the next chapter). It thus draws attention to the linkages between the suppliers and recipients, and the need to consider restraint measures on the supplier side as well.

Chapter four of this report focuses more directly on Canadian interests and involvement in constraining proliferation of conventional weapons. These interests, although based on an expanded definition of security, are not unique to Canada. Most could translate readily into multilateral interests. Indeed, the interests of weapons suppliers, trading nations, and countries with peacekeeping troops - to name a few examples - are likely to overlap with Canadian interests in each category. Thus, by framing the question of "why constrain conventional weapons proliferation?" in a broader security context, not only can one place the issue within the post-Cold War environment but one can argue for its urgency across a range of multilateral interests.

### Meeting some Obvious Objections

Critics of efforts to constrain conventional proliferation have traditionally rested their arguments on four related objections:

- states have a legitimate right to build arsenals for self-defense, and to determine their composition;
- dominant powers in the system are also major weapons exporters and have a strong economic interest in maintaining export;
- the high-level political attention required to build non-proliferation regimes is absent;
- multilateral mechanisms to constrain conventional proliferation are too difficult to conceptualize and implement.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Keith Krause, *The Maturing Conventional Arms Transfer and Production System*, report for the Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (September 1994), 23-28.