

Persian Gulf alone accounted for almost one-quarter of global arms transfers between 1980 and 1988), it is not the only region that suffers from the burden of armaments. Military spending and arms acquisitions in Central America and parts of Sub-Saharan Africa have also outstripped the economic resources of states and fuelled regional conflicts.

■ Control can mean *regulation* as well as *restraint*. Regulation acknowledges the legitimate security requirements of recipients, and the dependence of some suppliers on exports either as a tool of foreign policy or to maintain defence industries for national security reasons. Recipients unwilling to forego advanced weapons permanently may be amenable to medium-term regulation in the interests of regional security.

■ Focus on preventing the spread of destabilizing or costly weapons systems into specific areas of the globe. It matters little to Peru if Saudi Arabia acquires more F-16 fighters, as long as its neighbours do not! Several high profile modern weapons, such as cruise missiles, advanced multi-role fighters (such as the F-15 or MiG-29) or sophisticated main battle tanks (such as the M-1) are not now in wide circulation, and steps to keep them out of particular regions might be more acceptable to both recipients and suppliers. The perilous state of most developing world economies offers a unique opportunity, as simple penury forces states to consider alternatives to continued arms buildups as a means to guarantee national security.

WHILE EFFORTS TO CONTROL THE PROLIFERATION OF HIGH-PROFILE WEAPONS such as ballistic missiles or chemical and nuclear weapons are well advanced, an exclusive focus on these exceptionally frightening weapons would be a mistake. In the long run, it is probably more important to control "ordinary" conventional weapons: tanks, aircraft, and helicopters are capable of wreaking immense destruction all on their own.

A more troubling future problem is the diffusion of technologies for producing arms. Today, eight developing world states can build fighter aircraft, six can make main battle tanks, and six can manufacture military helicopters. Up to fifteen states in the developing world may be able to produce missiles by the year 2000. Between ten and twenty-five states possess chemical weapons. Most of these weapons are not at the forefront of modern technology, but producers of them could well upset any future control arrangements.

Most arms producers in the developing world have had their ability to import arms restricted at some point: India and Pakistan during their clashes in the 1960s and early 1970s; China after its break with the Soviet Union; Brazil during the late 1970s; Israel after the 1967 war, and South Africa under the UN embargo. Iraq, after its embargo experience in the early stages of the Iran-Iraq war, launched a multi-billion dollar effort to produce its own ammunition, artillery, ballistic missiles and chemical weapons. It would be a bitter irony if attempts to control the arms trade merely resulted in a vast expansion of arms production in the developing world.

Controlling the diffusion of arms-producing technologies is much more difficult. As far back as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, England and the Italian city-states tried to control the diffusion of new technologies for manufacturing cannon by restricting the migration of skilled workers. Today, technology is transferred not by migration, but through license and co-production arrangements with major producers willing to trade away their technological monopoly in order to win the contracts they need to sustain their defence industries. Controls on technology transfers have had mixed success, however, in part because it is often impossible to distinguish between civilian and military technologies.

At least one good precedent exists for efforts to control the diffusion of arms producing technologies: the 1987 Missile Technology Control Regime. It began with seven Western states agreeing to restrict exports

of technologies that could be used to produce ballistic missiles, and now includes sixteen states.* It is an informal agreement, requiring only the coordination of national policies. It does not contain demanding verification or reporting requirements. Unfortunately, it neither includes all possible suppliers of ballistic missile technology (the most notable omissions being the Soviet Union, China, Brazil and North Korea), nor involves recipient states; it is thus only a partial model to follow. But its rapid expansion in membership and the informal agreement of states such as Sweden to follow its guidelines are hopeful signs for future efforts.

CANADIAN INITIATIVES TO CONTROL THE ARMS TRADE HAVE BEEN somewhat quixotic. Although Canada may export up to two billion dollars worth of arms (mostly components) each year, more than eighty percent of this goes directly to the US. This low level of participation in the global arms market allows Canada to pursue a relatively restrictive export policy while maintaining a defence industry.

But as a consequence, Canadians do not always take seriously the motives driving states to export or acquire weapons, and often promote technical or apolitical solutions that ignore these powerful political or economic considerations.

Supplier-only controls, or efforts to subject the arms trade to more public scrutiny (via a UN register), must be coupled with attempts to address the regional conflicts that ultimately fuel Third World arms races. The link

between arms control and the underlying conflicts or insecurities, so clear in the East-West context, is at work just as much elsewhere in the world.

Certainly pious pronouncements against the arms trade or for increased transparency of exports will not alone win points among friends and allies, as suggested by President George Bush's public rebuff, during his March visit to Ottawa, of the Canadian initiative for a weapons summit. Canada cannot single-handedly spearhead such major international initiatives, but it can pursue more limited initiatives in fora such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the UN and the Missile Technology Control group to expand or enhance the scope of existing measures. In every case, the guiding principle should be to promote actions that will be effective and cumulative, not merely to settle for cosmetic gestures that reap diplomatic brownie points.

Further, Canada needs to link its efforts to control the arms trade with its broader involvement in peacekeeping and conflict management around the world. Certain regions are thus more appropriate foci for Canadian initiatives: Central America because of geographic proximity; the North Pacific because of concerns with stability and arms buildups in the region; Sub-Saharan Africa because of Canada's position within la Francophonie and the Commonwealth.

None of these efforts will eliminate the commerce in weapons. The arms trade is a consequence of the "self-help" nature of international politics: states see themselves locked into a permanent struggle to survive or improve their position in the global hierarchy. This can only change if there are alternative means to achieve security. Regulation of the arms trade could at least help create a space in which these means can flourish. □

* For more on this subject see Marie-France Desjardins. "Ballistic Missile Proliferation," Background Paper 34, CIIPS, Ottawa, September 1990.

