

international or regional power and a spur to industrial development. Whether or not it *in fact* contributes to development, or represents a good strategy, was much debated at the conference.

Although "increasing security against perceived external threats" is the publicly-cited justification for most arms purchases, in practice the motives of recipient states are difficult to analyze. Arms acquisitions often appear more connected with a regime's desire to maintain internal order and ensure its survival than with external threats. Further, on occasion the perception of threats can be conditioned by a relationship with a superpower patron, and a client can be integrated into that patron's security sphere.

No overall consensus on how to group states or on the relative ranking of internal and external factors emerged at the conference. There was agreement, however, that the level of arms acquisitions by Third World states will remain high, but that the increased level of transfers of the past two decades has increased neither the security of recipient states nor the influence of supplier states. This raises the obvious question: "if the objectives of suppliers or recipients are *not* being met, why do arms transfer levels remain high?" Numerous other factors account for this, including the perceived economic benefits to suppliers, the acquisition of arms to maintain one's regime in power, and the perceived threat of competition from the other superpower. These factors were discussed throughout the conference and particular attention was focused on the gap between perceived benefits and real outcomes.

Canada plays a relatively minor role in the international arms trade and follows a restrictive, if eroding, policy. Although Canada's arms sales have shifted to the Third World along with those of other suppliers, only 21 percent of arms exports end up in the Third World (often as American weapons with Canadian components). This is a lower figure than other second tier suppliers, and represents only about 0.2 percent of Canada's total trade. Nevertheless, arms sales to the Third World remain controversial and numerous suggestions were made as to how Canada's policy could be made more open and less *ad hoc*.

The last major subject of discussion at the conference was the prospect for restraining the conventional arms trade. One prominent proposal was for an "international arms trade register" that would provide information that could be used to pressure supplier and recipient governments. No conspicuous past success in this realm has been enjoyed, and considerable scepticism about its potential utility was manifest among participants.