



OAS – Small Arms

8. Security Issues: Small Arms

Focus on Small Arms

On April 28, 2000, the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, in partnership with the Non-proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament Division and the Inter-American Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, organized a roundtable on small arms in the Hemisphere. The roundtable brought together experts, academics, NGOs and government officials to share views, ideas and recommendations on various small arms initiatives. Participants included, among others, Wendy Cukier (Ryerson University), Peggy Mason (Council for Peace and Security), Juan Ronderas (York University), Renata Wielgosz (Canadian Permanent Mission to the OAS) and Mark Gaillard (Non-proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament Division, DFAIT). Yvon Dandurand (International Centre for Criminal Law and Justice Reform), Edward Laurence and

William Godnick (Monterey Institute) joined the roundtable by phone. The participants agreed that the assumed distinction between the “licit” and the “illicit” poses challenges of developing an effective small arms non-proliferation regime in the Hemisphere. Many raised the need to bring Latin American civil society into the process. Among the recommendations were the need to amend the 1997 *Convention* to include domestic weapons control, the need for capacity-building measures to address the gap between formal multilateral regulations making and domestic capacity to ratify/implement treaties, and finally, the need to address the culture of violence and widespread disrespect for the rule of law in many Latin American countries. At the closing, Canadian and other NGOs were encouraged to mount an awareness raising campaign along the lines of the campaign to ban landmines.

Possible Canadian Foreign Policy Niches:

- Canada as “the Nordics” of the Hemisphere (Social policy, environment, human rights experience, peacekeepers, non-colonial power position),
- Canada as a long-standing partner (trading and other) with the United States (knowledge of the U.S., long experience in bilateral relations.),
- Canada as a leader in civil society engagement and good governance,
- Canada as a leader in closing the “digital” divide.

“Canada wishes to see a clear and forceful commitment to strengthening democracy and fostering social inclusion in Quebec City [w]hich extends to our democratic institutions, our electoral machinery, and the impartiality of justice; to protecting human rights and freedom of expression; to fighting drug trafficking and corruption; to empower local governments and safeguard the rights of minorities, Indigenous Peoples, migrants and the disabled; and make the strongest possible pledge to promote the legal, economic and social equality of women and men.”

– Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, Address to a Special Session of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States, February 5, 2001