

go before an effective and verifiable ban is achieved, however, particularly as the arguments about discrimination and double standards take on a further edge here since a number of Arab states have demanded recognition of their right to possess chemical arms as long as Israel is presumed to have a nuclear weapons capability.

This latter argument for localized "mutually-assured destruction" through horrific weapons systems is made even more ominous by the growing proliferation of ballistic missile technologies and other delivery systems that have greatly increased the potential for mass destruction even with non-nuclear weapons.

In addition to participating in international efforts toward an effective chemical weapons ban, backed by the preventive scrutiny of the "Australia Group" of chemical suppliers, Canada has now taken steps to demonstrate the defensive character, and safety, of its own chemical weapons research, including the visit of a Soviet delegation to its Suffield, Alberta installation in July 1989. Ottawa has also turned its attention very usefully to the problem of verification, which will be an especially difficult one in a chemicals ban. Before a satisfactory regime to control this threat is reached, Canada and other countries will have to make a substantial political and technical investment – with an eye always as well to the possible re-emergence of biological agents and toxins as usable weapons.

### **Arms Transfers**

There is an ever present danger that Third World conflicts will be stoked or escalated by growing flows of conventional armaments (and reference has already been made to the need to prevent the diversion of equipment or export capacity to these markets as an unintended side-effect of East-West arms reductions; see p.12). Perhaps largely as a consequence of the economic difficulties of many developing countries, their aggregate arms imports have not in recent years continued the rapid growth patterns of some earlier periods. The total exports of major weapons to Third World countries in 1988 totalled some US \$21 billion, as compared to US \$27.6 billion in 1987 and an average of US \$22.2 billion annually in the 1984–1986 period.<sup>4</sup>

While these aggregate figures may reflect some measure of political and/or budgetary, restraint among Third World governments, there can be little doubt that those faced with what they consider critical external or internal security problems will somehow squeeze out the