

to UN peacekeeping did not include a disarmament section.³⁶ Many did, however, have a verification component to the agreement and mandate which involved UN observers ensuring that certain geographic areas did not contain more than a specified number of military weapons (normally large calibre weapon systems such as tanks and artillery) or troops. In all of these cases the task of the observers was to observe, report and in some cases negotiate with opposing sides to encourage compliance. There was seldom an enforcement mechanism. Those missions that had a micro-disarmament component are relatively recent and invariably are concerned with internal conflict -- albeit the belligerents were in many instances supported by states or groups outside of the country concerned.

Advisory Missions Concerned With Light Weapons Proliferation

There are two primary reasons to discuss the Sahara-Sahel and Rwanda missions concerning the issue of light weapons. First, they highlight the destabilizing problems of light weapons proliferation in Africa. Second, within the context of the Canadian experience discussed in the next section, the issues and difficulties reflect possibilities where countries such as Canada can provide financial and expert assistance.

Sahara -Sahel. The Secretary-Generals Advisory Mission to the Sahara-Sahel was not a UN peacekeeping operation; it was however the first UN advisory venture addressing the issue of light weapons proliferation and hence is a landmark from which a few valuable insights can be gleaned. Several useful sources are available on this Mission whose sole responsibility, initially, was to address a states concern over the destabilizing proliferation of light weapons. This report draws primarily from those sources listed in the footnote³⁷

In October 1993 a request by the President of Mali to the UN Secretary-General to assist in the collection of an increasing excess of light weapons within his country met with agreement and a UN Advisory Mission was formed, visiting Mali in August 1994. The mission reported, among other things, that the problem of light weapons was not unique to Mali but had to be addressed on a sub-regional basis and that the overall security situation had to improve before collection could commence. In early 1995 the Mission visited six other countries in the area, Burkina Faso, Chad, Cote d' Ivoire, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. These states were requested to establish a *National Commission on Illicit Small*

³⁶ A review of the literature on micro-disarmament issues points to an apparent lack of understanding regarding the latitude in devising UN Mandates. Unless disarmament forms part of the peace accords on which a mandate is formulated there is little a mandate can do to address the issue. Too many authors merely state that peacekeeping operations must include a systematic comprehensive disarmament program. What should be stated is that Peace Accords and Agreements for which the UN mounts a peacekeeping operation should include disarmament. The facilitators or third party negotiators and the belligerents must try to incorporate disarmament features within the Peace Agreement.

³⁷ See, 1995 Sahara-Sahel Advisory Mission Report (Excerpts) Unattributed; also Henry J. van der Graff . *Proliferation of Light Weapons in the Sahel*, Presentation to Experts Panel on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Regional Workshop in Pretoria, South Africa, 23 September 1996..