

This paper provides a framework in which to analyse policy proposals designed to limit the global flow of light weapons. While policies used for major weapons systems are a useful starting point, strategies for controlling light weapons proliferation must take into consideration the characteristics of this kind of weaponry. The first step is to raise awareness of the scope and consequences of light weapons proliferation.

Traditional approaches for controlling major weapons systems are credited with providing a foundation from which to address the issue of light weapons: transparency, oversight, and control. Transparency refers to the "...amount of information that is available on countries' arms transfer policies as well as on the transfers themselves" (p. 127). Several options are discussed which would modify this concept for light weapons:

- 1) expand the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms to include light weapons;
- 2) develop regional registers;
- 3) open up national export policies to scrutiny;
- 4) encourage disclosure of information on transfers as early as possible;
- 5) require transparency on military spending.

Oversight refers to the process of regulating arms transfers and could be adapted in several ways to address light weapons proliferation:

- 1) include light weapons in the COCOM (Coordinating Committee on Multilateral Export Controls) successor regime;
- 2) establish a norm against selling weapons to states involved in armed aggression or human rights violations;
- 3) increase national awareness of the problem of light weapons by stringently enforcing oversight mechanisms;
- 4) enhance national customs regulations.

Control emphasizes limiting the quantity or quality of weapons transferred. As was the case with transparency and oversight, several proposals are offered and analysed:

- 1) improve domestic gun control;
- 2) eliminate or restrict certain types of weapons;
- 3) stop black market military sales;
- 4) support regional recipient restraint;
- 5) cooperate to create more effective border controls;
- 6) limit the supply of surplus weapons;
- 7) strengthen international law;
- 8) investigate technical approaches (e.g., measures that render weapons inoperable after a certain time);
- 9) implement economic measures (e.g., aid contingent on participation in the UN Register).

Dyer and Goldring emphasize that there are issues which cut across these three factors. For instance, responses to conflicts must be tailored both to regional dynamics and to the stage of the conflict. In addition, new institutions must be created to suit the post Cold War world. The "New Forum" (i.e., the successor to COCOM) is introduced and analysed as a vehicle to discuss disarmament issues.

The authors conclude that the process of disarmament must be examined as a work in progress. While a universal solution would be welcome, at this juncture it is sufficient to work in that direction. The immediate task is to raise the profile of the issue, and to create an environment that is supportive of control. More information is needed on light weapons transfers and, when attained, should be publicized to demonstrate to policy makers the severity of the problem. The utility of case studies is noted, but Dyer and Goldring suggest that case studies of particular cities known as central players in the trade of small arms (e.g., Bangkok and Miami) would also be useful. A coalition of various groups (e.g., doctors, trade unionists, and environmentalists) should be drawn together to inform different aspects of the problem (e.g., health, economic and environmental consequences). Researchers would also be well served to learn from the progress made in the campaign against anti-personnel landmines.