

## 18. ARMS TRANSFERS

### Background

The global trade in conventional arms has expanded considerably during the past decade, from a worldwide total of deliveries of US\$ 63.3 billion during 1974-77 to US\$ 150.5 billion during the 1982-85 period.<sup>1</sup> Although the share of the supplier market held by the superpowers has decreased since the 1960s, the United States and the Soviet Union still accounted for 56 per cent of total arms deliveries in the years 1982-85. Britain, France, Italy and West Germany together held 21 per cent of the market during that period. The total of world arms deliveries has declined since 1982 from a peak of US\$ 42 billion (1983 dollars) to US\$ 27 billion.<sup>2</sup>

Arms imports of developing countries have also declined. In 1985 developing countries imported US\$ 21.8 billion in arms as opposed to US\$ 33.2 billion in 1982.<sup>3</sup> Overall, between 1982-85, 80 per cent of global exports of conventional arms were purchased by developing countries. Half of these (51 per cent) went to the Middle East, followed by 18 per cent to Africa, 13 per cent to East Asia, 9 per cent to Latin America and 7 per cent to South Asia.<sup>4</sup>

There have been important attempts to regulate both the supply and demand side of the global arms trade. In 1974 eight Latin American countries signed the Declaration of Ayacucho, in which they pledged to work towards arms acquisition limitation agreements in their region. No concrete agreements were reached, but the initiative was revived by the Peruvian Government in 1985. The Contadora draft treaty, debated in 1985, contains provisions for the comprehensive limitation of arms transfers to Central America.

<sup>1</sup> Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers, Washington, ACDA, 1986, p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 147.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 147-148.