

than \$13 billion in 1991 and 1992 respectively, reinforced this perception. Although arms transfers from all major suppliers (the P-5 plus Germany) may have declined since the late 1980s, there is no reason to think this has been the result of a conscious policy of restraint.

Finally, opponents of efforts to control the proliferation of conventional weapons point out that the high-level political attention required to build non-proliferation regimes is absent. Since the end of the Gulf war, the non-proliferation agenda has progressively narrowed to focus on dramatic and pressing threats: nuclear and chemical proliferation in Iraq as uncovered by the UNSCOM, implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention; and the nuclear proliferation crisis on the Korean peninsula. The perception is that action on these fronts, and towards the indefinite extension or renewal of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, will preoccupy policy-makers for the foreseeable future, and hence that the less urgent and diffuse agenda of conventional weapons is not worth bothering with.

Proponents of bringing the spread of conventional weapons onto the proliferation agenda begin their response to these points by noting that none of the arguments adduced above (with the possible exception of the final one) provide any reason to conclude that all forms of control of conventional proliferation are impossible. The right of states to self-defence, for example, does not preclude regional discussions on arms control in the Middle East, discussions which will necessarily require the involvement of arms suppliers as guarantors. Similarly, the existence of a supplier interest in exporting weapons technology has not precluded arrangements such as the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) to deal with particular technologies and weapons systems that pose direct and concrete threats. This observation leads directly into the arguments in support of bringing conventional weapons into non-proliferation discussions, of which there are five.

The first argument is that the proliferation of conventional and unconventional weapons is inextricably linked, especially in specific regional contexts. Efforts to stem proliferation of NBC weapons, therefore, cannot be advanced without some attention also being paid to the conventional side of the equation. This is most clear in the Middle East, where the Arab states have threatened not to ratify or abide by the CWC unless the Israeli nuclear arsenal is subject to negotiation and control. In turn, the Israeli nuclear arsenal is defended on the grounds that Israel suffers from a perceived conventional imbalance (at least in terms of personnel) in the region. A similar story applies to the Persian Gulf, where the Iranian pursuit of a nuclear program is starting to trigger regional fears. Perhaps more importantly, the line between conventional and unconventional weapons is extremely blurry in practice, and when advanced conventional weapons such as aircraft can be used as delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction, the justification for focusing control efforts only on the weapons themselves is weak. By this logic, the International Atomic Energy