

areas. A ban of such sales and transfers would avoid a negative spin-off effect of the CFE Treaty.

Many proposals have been put forward to increase transparency in the international arms business. Among these are the creation of a United Nations registry for arms shipments. All nations could be required to inform a UN Commission of any arms sales of \$14 million or more. Such a register might be made more reliable by using UN forces to monitor arms shipments, aided perhaps by satellite and aerial surveillance.

THERE WAS SOME HOPE THAT THE PARIS MEETINGS of the five major weapons exporters on 8 and 9 July might result in adoption of some of these and other controls on conventional arms transfers. The meetings ended, however, only in the vague statement that the suppliers "would not transfer conventional weapons in circumstances which would undermine stability." At a further meeting held in London on 17 and 18 October, the big five arms merchants reached agreement on a voluntary system of limits in which they would discuss among themselves all contemplated major weapons sales. Although objections could be raised, no country would have the right to block a planned export. As *New York Times* correspondent Craig Whitney phrased it, "the guidelines they agreed to ... commit them to do jointly what all of them swear they have been doing separately for years."

This kind of approach is too modest to match the problem. Nor is it commensurate with the exemplary role that the major industrialized countries must perform if there is really to be a new and better world order. It is not, I believe, a valid excuse for continued profligacy in arms sales to argue that all nations have legitimate security concerns and are entitled to acquire the means to defend themselves. As applied to the Middle East, and many other regions, the end of the Cold War means presumably that any further arms buildup will be in preparation for defending themselves against one another. At a minimum, a policy on arms restraint would mean that any subsequent conflicts would be at a lower level of violence.

A GLARING EXAMPLE OF THE WRONG WAY TO go is the suggestion made in March by the Bush administration that Export-Import Bank funds might be used to underwrite arms sales to foreign countries. Senators Christopher Dodd of Connecticut, Christopher Bond of Missouri and Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, along with Sam Gejdenson of Connecticut back the idea, but would preclude financing

of such sales to Third World countries. This would abandon the sound policy that Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan followed in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, during which the Export-Import Bank was used as a front to supply other countries with weapons at the expense of the US taxpayer. Such financing can be better used to facilitate exports of the non-military equipment badly needed in developing economies.

Unquestionably, strong economic pressures militate against conventional arms control. With the inevitable and very substantial decline in the US defence budget, arms producers will be strongly motivated to fill the void by selling more arms overseas. In other countries like France, where arms production plays a larger part in the economy, there will be comparable or even greater pressures. But a decent respect for our common humanity should lead the more prosperous countries to avoid further impoverishment of the less fortunate by peddling weaponry that they do not need and can ill afford.

The real causes of regional instability are poverty, lack of respect for human rights and a failure to devote available resources to even the minimum needs of the people in the developing countries. Further arms purchases by the governments of these countries inevitably means further deprivation and greater internal unrest.

YUGOSLAVIA AND HAITI ARE ONLY THE MOST recent examples of the fact that conflicts may now become far more frequent within states than between states. International means must

be developed to cope with ethnic and religious hostility and civil war within internationally recognized boundaries.

The world community was notably more able to deal effectively with external aggression when Iraq invaded Kuwait than it was to handle the aftermath when a Sunni-dominated Iraqi army slaughtered their Shiite and Kurdish countrymen. In much of the world, artificial boundaries have encapsulated divergent groups who harbour historic hatreds. Continued unrestrained arms transfers will intensify the conflicts and will also interfere with future UN peacekeeping operations which may well be required.

Certainly unilateral intervention by the United States cannot become the pattern nor can the Persian Gulf crisis serve as a useful precedent, with the United States being by far the dominant factor in a cosmetically international effort. But UN peacekeeping – or perhaps peacemaking – operations should not have to be conducted in a global duplicate of our inner cities, where the problem of policing ghetto areas is massively increased by the fact that assault rifles are now in the possession of drug dealers.

FORTUNATELY, ONE MAJOR STIMULUS FOR international arms transfers no longer exists. For decades, these sales were spurred by the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. During the Cold War, an arms customer was regarded as a client state and developing nations became proxies in the superpower struggle. Today, the notion that supplying arms can help buy international influence has become obsolete.

It is not overly optimistic to expect increased acceptance of the fact that the East-West confrontation is over and that North-South problems cannot be solved by providing more arms to the developing world. It may instead become increasingly clear that genuine world influence will be the reward for those who provide technological, political and economic assistance. This type of assistance will put the supply-side on the right side. □

This article was adapted by the author from a presentation made in Ottawa on 21 June to an international conference sponsored by the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security on supply-side arms control. For more on the conference and the issue of the international arms trade see the following publications from the Institute: Arms Export Controls to Limit Weapons Proliferation, a report of the June 1991 international conference, forthcoming; and Canadian Controls on the Export of Arms and Strategic Goods, by Jean-François Rioux, Background Paper #37. Also, a selection of papers presented at the conference will be published in the forthcoming Spring 1992 issue of the journal Orbis.

