

violation of the law; grey trade encompasses those dual-use systems that have both a civilian and a military purpose and that are purchased on the pretext that they are for civilian use.³ Official statistics on the arms trade captured only the “white” or “opaque” government-to-government or government sanctioned sales that were legally approved and relatively narrowly defined. Although no one knows the full extent of the black and grey arms trade, according to Dr. Klare, it has been estimated at ten billion dollars (US) annually.

These trends were not captured in most of the arms trade statistics. The internal satisfaction of defence needs was not *trade*, and black and grey market transactions by definition escaped notice. If one included these sources of arms, statistics would rise back to their 1970s levels. Thus the conclusion that the level of arms acquisition by developing world states had declined (or that the international arms trade itself had declined) might be premature.

What were the consequences of these developments? The first was that states obtained weapons from an increasingly diverse number of sources. This diversification produced a decline in the political influence wielded by suppliers. According to Klare, gone were the days when a superpower’s relationship with a weaker client conferred a significant amount of influence.

An important corollary of this was that the utility/efficacy of arms embargoes (a form of wielding influence) had also declined. Neither superpower was able to implement effective unilateral embargoes, and joint action would require the participation of many more suppliers than in the past. The inability of the United States and the Soviet Union to affect the course of the Iran-Iraq war (through a United Nations embargo or otherwise) was cited as an example of this development.

Finally, there appeared to be an increase in the incidence of “low-intensity conflict.” Insurgent groups around the world, in places like Angola, Afghanistan, and El Salvador, have found it relatively easy to obtain enough weapons to sustain operations against governments, to disrupt agriculture, communication and transportation, and development projects. The persistence of black and grey markets makes it more difficult for either supplier or recipient governments to exercise any control. This has negative implications for the possibility of resolving some of the endemic conflicts in the Third World.

³Examples would included helicopters, computers, and communications systems.