

**Conclusion: A Role for Canada?**

Canada plays a relatively minor role in the global arms transfer and production system: we are at the bottom of the top ten arms producers, three-quarters of our production is exported to one customer (the United States), and we export few completed major weapons systems. Given this, Canada's options for playing a leadership or catalyzing role in multilateral initiatives to control conventional proliferation are limited. As a relatively small player, Canada also has few unique or specialized resources to bring to bear on these issues, and there is always the possibility that Canadian proposals will be viewed as self-interested, if they propose measures that impose few if any direct costs or consequences on Canada (in restricting exports, for example), while other states bear the burden of constraining conventional proliferation.<sup>58</sup>

There are, however, at least three strengths or issue areas that arise from our domestic experience and expertise that could be built upon.<sup>59</sup> The first is Canada's participation in a wide range of multilateral institutions that involve most of the industrialized world (OECD, NATO, CSCE), or that bridge the gap between North and South (UN, OAS, Commonwealth, la Francophonie). This would facilitate the creation of linkages between the different measures outlined above, many of which can be enhanced if made to work together. The second strength is Canada's role as a major contributor of overseas development assistance, which opens the way to creative efforts (if carefully targeted) to meet some of the non-proliferation goals outlined above, especially in exploring the role of positive inducements in catalyzing restraint. The third is the general thrust of Canadian foreign policy, with its emphasis on building international peace and security through cooperative measures. The need to bridge the gap between suppliers and recipients in the North and South, and the almost inevitably multilateral nature of future non-proliferation efforts, is perfectly suited to Canada's commitment to active multilateralism.

The case for acting in concert to constrain conventional proliferation has received renewed energy since the end of the Cold War, and the fiscal crises faced by Northern and Southern states alike has provided renewed urgency to the quest to reduce expenditures on armaments and the military. The possibilities for the development of ever-more destructive conventional weapons in the near future

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<sup>58</sup> There is some evidence that these factors played a role in the lukewarm reception that Canada's major post-Gulf War proliferation control initiative received. For a discussion of the fate of this initiative, see Keith Krause, "Arms Transfers and International Security: The Evolution of Canadian Policy," in Fen Hampson and Christopher Maule, editors, *Canada among Nations 1992-93: A New World Order?* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1992), 283-301.

<sup>59</sup> See, for an overview of this issue, Shannon Selin, "Applying Canadian Strengths to Non-Proliferation," paper prepared for a Non-Proliferation Verification workshop sponsored by the Verification Research Unit, Department of External Affairs and International Trade Canada, 28 November 1993.