

procurement base to make advanced weapons production even conceivable (Israel, India and China being the main exceptions). The much-vaunted "expansion" of these producers in the 1980s (with Brazil being the most widely publicized case) was an aberration, mostly driven by demand from the eight-year long Iran-Iraq war, which was fought by two cash-rich states labouring under arms embargo restrictions (at various times).<sup>12</sup> It was also, in global terms, not very important, as these states collectively never produced more than 10 percent of the world's total arms production (ie: around \$20-25 billion worth of weapons). The most important third tier producers (in declining order) have been: China, India, Israel, the former Yugoslavia, South Africa, Brazil and South Korea.

Table I provides an overview of the position of the major producers and exporters in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as measured by several indices. It highlights the dominance of the two superpowers, the large gap between them and second tier industrialized producers, and the relatively small role of third-tier states. Table II describes the pattern of arms exports by the major suppliers for the period from 1963 to 1991, in both dollar and percentage terms. The dominance of the United States and Soviet Union in exports is apparent, as is the relatively large share of the second-tier states. Finally, the slow rise in importance of third-tier producers ("developing" in the table) is also clear.

The recipient side of the arms transfer equation is more diverse and complex. Table III summarizes the regional distribution of arms imports over the same time period. It highlights the shift from the dominance of NATO Europe and the Warsaw Pact (which accounted for almost 40 percent of global arms imports in 1963-67), to the developing world (which accounted for three-quarters of arms imports since 1975), and especially to the Middle East. In the 1980s, for example, the Middle East accounted for almost 40 percent of global arms imports, although it has less than five percent of the world's population! At the end of the 1980s, five of the top ten arms recipient states were in the Middle East, and they accounted alone for roughly one-quarter of total sales.

---

<sup>12</sup> See Keith Krause, "Transferts d'armements et gestion des conflits: les cas de la guerre Iran-Irak," *Cultures et Conflits*, no. 4, (hiver 1991-92), 13-40.