

In the past three decades, more than a trillion dollars worth of weapons have been bought and sold in the global arms market.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps four or five times that value have been procured for domestic forces from indigenous arms industries. In 1993, global military expenditures exceeded 800 billion dollars, of which more than 200 billion was spent in the developing world. This spending maintained more than 24 million soldiers under arms, with more than 17 million of these in the developing world. It also sustained an arsenal that today includes about 100,000 main battle tanks, 30,000 combat aircraft, 11,000 military helicopters and 140,000 armoured fighting vehicles.<sup>2</sup>

Virtually all of the international arms control and non-proliferation efforts (multilateral and bilateral) since 1945 have focused on weapons of mass destruction, culminating recently in the signing of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the decision to extend indefinitely the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. At the same time, all of the wars and violent conflicts since 1945 have been fought almost exclusively with conventional weapons, and most have taken place in the developing world. Many of these conflicts have been protracted and extremely resistant to resolution. Virtually all of the 20 to 40 million war-related deaths since 1945 have been from conventional weapons, and up to three-quarters of these deaths have been civilian.<sup>3</sup>

Paradoxically, increased attention to the proliferation of conventional weapons has coincided with a precipitous drop in the global arms trade. Twenty-five years of near-relentless increase peaked in 1987, when global arms transfers reached a total value of 74 billion dollars (1993 constant U.S. dollars). By 1993, however, the trade had dropped to no more than 22 billion dollars, although it may have levelled off near this point. These figures, however, measure only the annual *flows* of weapons; the *stocks* that have been built over the past thirty years have in many regions of the world not diminished appreciably. The most significant exception, of course, is Europe, where the Conventional Forces Europe (CFE) treaty has produced a dramatic decline in weapons arsenals.

The contemporary arms trade is highly stratified, and concentrated among a few major sellers and buyers.<sup>4</sup> In 1993, the United States sold 10.3 billion dollars worth of weapons, and captured 47 percent of the global market. Russia accounted for 12 percent (2.6 billion dollars), Germany, France and Britain together occupied 28 percent (6.1 billion dollars) and China 4 percent (950 million dollars). Together, these six suppliers accounted for 91 percent of the conventional arms market.

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<sup>1</sup> The figure for total spending on armament is in constant 1993 U.S. dollars, and has been compiled from successive issues of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency publication, *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers* (Washington: Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, various years). Hereafter cited as ACDA, *WMEAT*. The ACDA definition of "developing world" includes all of Africa (except South Africa), Latin America, Asia (except Japan, Australia and New Zealand) and the Middle East (including Turkey and Greece). Except where indicated, other figures in this section are from the same source.

<sup>2</sup> Figures for the developing world compiled from the International Institute of Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1992-93* (London: IISS, 1993), and for CFE states from 1 January 1993 holdings of treaty signatories, as reported in *The Military Balance, 1993-94*. The figures in 1995 are lower.

<sup>3</sup> The 20 million figure for war-related deaths is from Ken Booth, ed., *New Thinking about Strategy and International Security* (London: Harper-Collins, 1991), 355; the higher figure is from David Morrison, "Sounding a Call to Arms for the 1990s," *National Journal* (13 November 1993), 2728. A figure of 23 million can be found in Ruth Leger Sivard, *World Military and Social Expenditures 1993* (Washington, D.C.: World Priorities, 1993), 21. The 75 percent civilian casualties is cited in U.S. Congress, Bill S.326, "A Bill to Prohibit United States Military Assistance and Arms Transfers to Foreign Governments that are Undemocratic," 104th Congress, 1st session. This is Senator Mark Hatfield's "Code of Conduct" for arms transfers.

<sup>4</sup> Figures in this paragraph concern *deliveries*, not agreements, and are in U.S. dollars. ACDA, *WMEAT, 1993-1994*.