

II. BACKGROUND TO UNDC'S CONSIDERATION OF GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICAL DISARMAMENT MEASURES IN THE CONTEXT OF PEACEBUILDING

While the United Nations had been engaged in activities bearing on the subject for some time, the Secretary-General's comments were a bold attempt to put the issue of small arms and light weapons squarely on the international arms control agenda.

These earlier initiatives have been summarized in detail elsewhere, particularly in respective German and Canadian studies:

- *Brief 7: The New Field of Micro-Disarmament: Addressing the Proliferation and Buildup of Small Arms and Light Weapons*⁸, and
- *Light Weapons and Micro-Disarmament*.⁹

It is the purpose of this Section, therefore, to build upon these earlier studies and to report on the most recent developments.¹⁰

United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms

By its resolution 50/70 B of 12 December 1995, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report, with the assistance of a panel group of qualified experts¹¹, on the question of small arms and light weapons for submission in the autumn of 1997. The resolution focuses the report on:

- "(a) the types of small arms and light weapons actually being used in conflicts being dealt with by the United Nations;
- (b) the nature and causes of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and transfer of small arms and light weapons, including their illicit production and trade; and

⁸ Bonn International Centre for Conversion, September 1996. Based on a study prepared for the German Foreign Office.

⁹ The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, with the assistance of Mr. David Declercq. (September 1997)

¹⁰ In some cases, as with some of the discussion of the OAS and the OAU, earlier developments not found in the above noted Reports, are also included.

¹¹ Note that the resolution refers to a "panel group of qualified governmental experts" so that the words "panel" and "group" and "Expert Group" are used interchangeably in this discussion.