

on mimicry. Moreover there is the risk that as second generation non-lethal weapons are developed, first generation weapons will gravitate into increasingly less responsible hands. No U.S. restraint, however, will guarantee against the development of weapons by others. Reports indicate that Russia, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Israel have developed or are developing significant non-lethal capabilities”.

It would seem that from a SALW issue perspective the potential impact of non-lethal weapons is at present not one of significant concern when contrasted with that of small arms. Non-lethal weapon development and acquisition should however be monitored to ensure that some easily available and inexpensive alternatives to small arms are not developed with a mind to circumventing present and future constraints on conventional SALW (thus enabling various groups or individuals to achieve their objectives as if they had used SALW). Of perhaps greater concern is the potential misuse of these weapons by authorities, particularly if they can influence a situation where subsequent events generate more fatalities than one might find if only SALW had been used. Of course, one will always have to deal with a situation where the outcome may be undesirable regardless of the weapon used. In such instances the central question becomes one of means versus ends. Is oppression with fewer physical casualties preferable to oppression with many physical casualties? Is a crime committed using a non-lethal weapon preferable to one where a lethal weapon is used?<sup>94</sup> If attempts to control the proliferation of SALW are seen primarily as an attempt to minimize or limit physical casualties (public health), does it follow that the development of non-lethal weapons is preferable relative to lethal weapons? As always when addressing the tools of violence only (in other words, the *means*), attention is often taken away from the initial reason for the violence (the *end*), which is the aim of coercing or eliminating a human obstacle by force. Whether this is done with a gun, pepper spray, machete, or baseball bat may not matter to the potential or real victims if the outcome is the same. That said, it is apparent that 10 people using cans of pepper spray or baseball bats against 100 unarmed people would probably inflict far fewer fatal casualties than one or two individuals indiscriminately using an assault rifle. However, in a one-on-one situation the outcome may be somewhat less predictable.

## **DIRECTED ENERGY WEAPONS (DEW)**

Most research on DEW has centered on space-based systems for ballistic missile defense, including the destruction of satellites.<sup>95</sup> DEW R&D has focused on lasers, high-power

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<sup>94</sup> The problem with such explanations is that there is no way of knowing whether or not the criminal would have used a gun, baseball bat, or knife to commit the crime if pepper spray were not available, or even if he/she would have committed the crime to begin with. This is another area that may be ripe for study.

<sup>95</sup> See N.A. *Jane's Information Group Ltd* (9) 1 May 1997, p. 305.