

# A CALL TO RESTRAIN THE INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRADE

The Gulf War, like other Middle East wars before it, showed the folly of pouring arms into volatile regions. For a short time afterwards there seemed to be a general political consensus that "something had to be done" about the arms trade. In fact very little has been done. It is doubtful whether a single arms transaction has been cancelled as a result of this new concern.

This call is for some sales to be actually stopped. Seven well-established criteria are given for restraining supply. Ten specific proposals for implementing reductions in supply and demand are listed.

The emphasis is on cutting off the supply of weapons at their source, because this is something that the governments of the main supplying countries can do now. We recognise that in the long run it is better that restraint should come from the demand side - that countries in particular regions should agree to limit their arms purchases and deployments. We include suggestions for this approach also.

## **Restrain Supply**

One of the prime justifications used for arms sales is that "if we do not sell, some other state will." The permanent five members of the Security Council have agreed on certain common criteria for conventional arms sales: but they are vaguely worded, and will probably have little effect. We suggest a much tougher set of criteria (adapted from criteria originally put forward by Dr. Michael Brzoska). The permanent five, the twelve members of the European Community and the members of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe should discuss and then implement them.

Arms sales should be banned in the following circumstances:

1. A state of war.
2. A high danger that a state will commit aggression (including terrorism).
3. Absence of popular participation in government.
4. Gross violations of human rights.
5. High levels of expenditure on arms.
6. Especially dangerous and threatening weapons.
7. Refusal to join in arms control negotiations.

To implement these criteria and limit demand, specific measures should be taken now:

- i. A moratorium on arms sales to the Middle East for at least twelve months. This initiative should be led by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.
- ii. A ban on arms sales to the states which torture their citizens.
- iii. Strict controls leading to a ban on exports of all systems limited by the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. The main protagonists of the Cold War agreed that these are offensive weapons. It is sensible to conclude that they contribute to offensive capability in other continents as well as Europe.
- iv. A joint assessment (by the permanent five, or the EC, or the CSCE) of the scale of military spending, and a ban on arms exports (and possible restrictions on economic aid) to states where military spending is excessive.
- v. Much tighter end-use controls. In theory, exporting states require permission before arms which they have bought are transferred to third parties. In practice, these end-use restrictions tend to be very loosely policed.

## **Proposals to reduce demand**

In the long term, supplier controls will be ineffective unless they are matched by recipient restraint. Suppliers can help produce a climate conducive to restraint by encouraging regional arms control negotiations and confidence and security building measures.

- vi. Countries in regions of conflict should themselves try to work out arrangements for temporary moratoria on specific arms imports. Recipients should pursue both qualitative and quantitative limitations on arms transfers. The Contadora process, and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (part of the CSCE process) are useful models for such regional limits.
- vii. Supplier governments should support regional processes to limit regional conflict and the resultant demand for arms transfers, perhaps through increased economic aid and/or debt relief.

## **Reporting**

- viii. The United Nations Arms Register should be fully implemented, including data on arms production as well as trade.
- ix. All governments should fully disclose their arms sales, purchases, and production to their legislatures and to the public.
- x. The UN Arms Register should be expanded to include public notification six months before contracts are exchanged, to allow time for debate and consultation.

We who have signed this call endorse the general tone and content of the document, but do not necessarily endorse each and every detail. We are signing as individuals--our signatures do not commit the organizations with which we are, or have been, connected.

## **Signed,**

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**Lord Zuckerman, OM KCB FRS**, Member, House of Lords, UK

*24 June 1992. This call has been endorsed by 130 people.*

## PROJECT ON THE ARMS TRADE

The British American Security Information Council (BASIC) has set up a new Project on the Arms Trade, which will create a network of individuals worldwide who are working on weapons proliferation issues. Our aim is to increase the flow of information about developments in different regions of the world. By providing this information to researchers, journalists, activists and policy makers in a timely manner, we hope to help foster an international atmosphere favoring arms trade control. Thanks to the generosity of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, our Project expenses are ensured for the first year. We have hired a new staff member, Mary Susan Twohy, in our Washington office who will help us coordinate our contact with the network.

We have gathered initial names for our network from various sources, including: BASIC's own contacts; Lucy Mathiak (an advisor to the Project); Cora Weiss (International Representative for SANE/FREEZE); and the European Network Against the Arms Trade. We look forward to your suggestions on others, particularly in developing countries, who may benefit from this network.

We plan to include works from different regions in each mailing. We encourage you to send us copies of any publications on the arms trade which you recommend - primary documents are also welcomed. We will accept information in any language, but request you send us an English summary of the main findings if at all possible. We will compile an ongoing bibliography, which we will share regularly with all Project participants. Should you wish to receive a copy of an item we have not mailed out, we will be happy to provide you with one at your request, barring any copyright restrictions.

We will also serve as a clearinghouse for queries on the arms trade. For example, if you are looking for information on a particular topic, we can bring this to the attention of the rest of the network.

If you have not yet done so, please feel out the form on the other side of this sheet. If you would like to pass this along to someone else working on these issues in your country, please do so.

Project staff include: Daniel T. Plesch, Director; Dr. Natalie J. Goldring, Deputy Director; Sandra J. Ionno, Senior Analyst; Bronwyn Brady, Associate for European Affairs; Dr. Sean Howard, Senior Analyst; Mary Susan Twohy, Administrative Associate; Mark Sternman, Scoville Fellow. Dr. Michael Klare and Lucy Mathiak serve as advisors to the Project.

In addition to the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the following foundations also provide support for BASIC's arms trade work: the John Merck Fund, the Samuel Rubin Foundation, the Barrow and Geraldine S. Cadbury Trust, and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, among others.

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Report on Working Group 2

Arms Transfers and Production

Introduction

Constraining the trade in nonnuclear or conventional weapons is an intermediate rather than a final objective. The long-term objective is to reduce the amount of killing around the world by reducing the frequency and ferocity of conflict. Strategies to reduce arms transfers are useful to the degree that they facilitate this process.

Any discussion of arms transfer restraint must begin by acknowledging the poor record of past efforts to limit the weapons trade. Such efforts have been characterized by bursts of energy to limit arms transfers, usually precipitated by a calamitous event, and then followed by longer-lasting lapses of interest. Today we are witnessing such a lapse. Despite the "Permanent Five (P-5) initiative" launched by the major weapons suppliers in the aftermath of the Gulf War to limit arms transfers to the Middle East, major contracts are now outstanding with almost every Middle Eastern state.

Nonetheless, certain forces that drove the arms trade in the past have weakened today. The end of the Cold War has meant an end to the bipolar jockeying for regional influence waged through a pattern of competitive arms transfers. Also, cash shortages in many buying states--including some of the wealthiest--have dampened demand for weapons.

Other pressures driving the arms trade have increased. Overcapacity in the supplier states--especially the United States, Russia, Britain, and France--has intensified the economic motivation to sell arms. The aim is to obtain hard currency, preserve the so-called defense industrial base, keep military production workers employed, or to bring down the unit cost of production of sophisticated equipment by increasing the production run. The increasing overlap of civilian and military technologies also complicates efforts to constrain arms transfers as does the increasing number of weapons producers--especially producers of small arms.

A final difficulty is how to pursue limits on the arms trade while respecting the principles of equity and nondiscrimination--especially since some limits are desirable despite the fact that they are discriminatory.

Transparency

Transparency is a precondition, not a substitute, for control. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, a transparency measure, is a unique first step, which, limited as it is, constitutes the only current international effort in which both supplier and recipient states cooperate to address the excessive accumulation of weapons worldwide.

The Register will be successful to the degree that it provides an international accounting of conventional arms, whether obtained through domestic production or import, and not merely a register of arms transfers. It is the excessive accumulation of weapons, not simply their export or

import, that is the main concern for international security.

The initial response to the Register is encouraging. To date, 60 states have made submissions, an impressive showing measured either by number of countries participating or percentage of trade represented.

The working group supported the widest possible participation by states. It endorsed early publication and wide dissemination by the United Nations and member states of the main Register as well as its annexes in order to promote openness both in the international community and in countries where debate about military practices has been restricted.

The group noted several weaknesses of the Register. The Register's seven categories (the five of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, plus ships and missiles and missile launchers) excludes many of the weapons--especially small arms--most likely to be used in conflicts. The data gathered by the Register is skeletal. Information such as type and model of weapon and dollar values is not requested. Information about weapons holdings is treated as an optional category, while data about arms transfers is not.

The group agreed that the following issues should be considered when the U.N.'s experts committee convenes in 1994 to review the operation of the Register. The committee should consider expanding the Register to include more categories and it should consider refining definitions of weapons in existing categories. The committee should consider the feasibility of requiring states to provide more complete information, such as type and model of weapon and dollar values. The Register should not treat information about holdings and production as optional submissions.

Care must be taken, however, not to overburden the Register or assign it tasks that cannot be fulfilled. For example, the Register should not be expanded to include weapons of mass destruction.

On the issue of transparency generally, the group supported investigating the feasibility of producing a statistical yearbook of worldwide military production.

### Small Arms

A much higher priority must be assigned to the problem of the open and covert trade in small arms. A rifle is far more likely to be used to kill someone than an F-15, especially in a world in which long suppressed nationalist and ethnic tensions have resurfaced. Despite its criticality, however, the trade in small arms remains an underscrutinized subject. We know little about the extent of the trade and less about how to control it. A major research project may be warranted to try to build up a world picture of production and trade in small arms.

Nonetheless, governments and NGOs probably can play a fundamental role in curbing this trade. The main source of small arms appears to be governments which trade directly in small arms, give their tacit approval to arms sold by private dealers, or fail to adequately monitor and control the flow of weapons through their borders.

The group agreed that states have an obligation to maintain tight control of their borders and to establish and maintain strict export control systems. The group agreed that Western governments should be encouraged to provide assistance to new or developing states, especially those where export controls may be lax or nonexistent.

The group took special note of the heinous nature of antipersonnel land mines and endorsed efforts in support of a worldwide ban on their production and transfer. The group also discussed whether there were other weapons for which a worldwide ban could sensibly be advocated.

### Conversion

The group discussed the role of economic conversion in reducing



pressure in the supplier states to export arms. It noted that a lack of political will was a primary reason for the failure to make more progress in this area.

The group took special note of the heavy dependence of the Russian economy on military production. The group agreed that Western governments should provide Russia and other states of the former Soviet Union with appropriate levels of aid and assistance in support of efforts to rebuild and convert their economies.

The group also expressed concern about the huge existing arsenals in a number of the former Soviet states and agreed that steps should be taken to prevent these weapons from being dumped onto the international market.

### The Need to Integrate Supply- and Demand-Side Solutions

Both supply-side and demand-side approaches to controlling the arms trade should be pursued. It is essential to move beyond the "Either-Or" debate which has become an unnecessary fixture of discussions on how to limit the arms trade. Supply-side and demand-side efforts ought to be pursued in parallel, and wherever possible they should be integrated. The essential point is to support whichever side favors restraint, whether supply or demand. The general predisposition should be to pursue the mechanism which supports restraint.

Whatever restraint mechanism is pursued, in general, it is incumbent on the supplying state to consult with states in the recipient's region before making a transfer. Judgments about the regional security impact of particular transfers should not be left to individual states, whether suppliers or recipients. Countries have a legitimate concern about security in their area and in general should be included in discussions about transfers to their own regions. The principle suggested was: No arms transfer without regional representation.

The group disagreed on the relative promise of supply- versus demand-side approaches. Demand siders made the following three observations. 1) Demand-side initiatives have a record of success, such as the CFE agreement and the rapprochement between Argentina and Brazil. 2) Supply-side efforts, although highly desirable, are highly unlikely. Even if they could work, they would do so only for a short period. 3) Supply-side restraints are discriminatory and paternalistic.

The supply siders offered the following four responses. 1) Supply-side mechanisms have not failed. They have just failed to get started. Where they have been tried, there is evidence that they can succeed. 2) Demand-side initiatives are highly desirable but even less likely than supply-side initiatives to get off the ground. 3) Supply-side controls are not paternalistic. Suppliers have an obligation to accept responsibility for their actions and should not be able to evade such responsibility by citing the perceived or real inability of recipient states to agree on restraint. 4) Supply-side initiatives reflect political reality. The most powerful actors, the suppliers, must support initiatives if they are to be successful.

Despite these differences, the group agreed on several promising approaches. On the demand side, the group endorsed the following:

- \* CFE-type ceilings applied to other regions;
- \* Confidence-building measures, including discussions and information exchanges on military strategy and doctrine, such as those adopted by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

During its discussion of supply-side initiatives, the group made the following recommendations about the P-5 talks, which broke down last fall. The group criticized the high volume of sales which continued after the initiation of the talks and led, ultimately, to the breakdown of the discussions. The group lamented the inability of the participants to agree on notifying one another of their pending sales.

The group called for an early resumption of the P-5 negotiations

and supported expanding the discussions to include other major suppliers. The group agreed that it was highly desirable that China rejoin the negotiations. A majority of the group, however, supported resumption of the talks, even if Beijing extends its current boycott. The group agreed that any future discussions among the suppliers should include input from states in the region.

A majority of the group agreed that suppliers ought to pursue unilateral initiatives to constrain the arms trade. Unilateral steps can influence other suppliers to adopt similar measures. In addition, even if inconsistently applied, domestically set unilateral criteria for arms transfers may create useful standards by which supplier-state actions may be judged.

#### Further Research and Activities

The group discussed an initiative designed to integrate supply- and demand-side control efforts. The concept calls for establishing an international commission to sit in judgment of arms sales. The nongovernmental group, composed of former statesmen and women and representing equally suppliers and recipients, would provide "security impact assessments" of proposed arms transfers.

The commission, supported by a staff of specialists in the field, would be asked to provide its judgment on whether a particular transfer would improve regional and international security. The group would use existing criteria for arms transfers, such as the guidelines adopted by the P-5 in London in 1991, for their determinations. The purpose of the commission would be to draw greater attention to particularly egregious sales and also to underline the importance of the concept that decisions on arms transfers must take into account global concerns, rather than simply those of individual suppliers and recipients. Interested members of the group agreed to develop a preliminary proposal describing the commission and to circulate it among the members of the working group.

Some members of the group also agreed to identify areas of research or policy initiatives that could be pursued by a Pugwash study group or a Pugwash project.

Lee Feinstein  
Rapporteur

Background paper for Working Group 2

Frank Blackaby

The arms trade

The purpose of this paper is to present some arms trade policy issues for discussion in the working party.

Introduction

Physical scientists can conduct controlled experiments. Those concerned with the study of international relations cannot. They have a poor substitute for controlled experiments, however - in history. This provides the equivalent of uncontrolled experiments. History unfortunately tends to move all the variables simultaneously. Still, it is all that we have.

Attempts to do something about the arms trade have a long history - and it is in general a history of failure. For those who are concerned to do something now, the question arises - are the circumstances different? If so, in what way? Do they make the chances of success greater than in the past, and, if so, why? If not, are there other ways, which might in the long run have more chance of success, of dealing with the problem which the arms trade represents?

This paper is addressed to this question. First, it defines the objective. Secondly, it has an excursus into some of the history of control attempts. It then considers the driving forces behind this trade, and the changes which there may have been in those driving forces. The assessment of the current chances of success follows. There is a final section, which discusses whether or not there might be more mileage in a rather different approach.

The concern throughout the paper is with "horizontal proliferation" - the spread of weapon systems from the industrial to the developing world. The trade in weapon systems between the industrial countries presents a different set of issues - such as questions of a division of labour, and the problems of joint production - which are not so closely linked to conflict risks.

The objective

A limit on arms sales to states in the developing world is an intermediate rather than a final objective. The final objective is to reduce the risk of conflict, or to reduce the deaths and destruction resulting from conflicts, in developing countries. (There is a secondary, minor objective: to reduce the economic

burden of military expenditure in those countries). This distinction between intermediate and final objectives is of some importance. It means, for example, that if supply side arms sales constraint proves for any reason to be extremely difficult, that still leaves open the possibility of some other approach.

There have indeed been times when some of those who favoured arms sales were accustomed to argue that it made no difference to the risk of conflicts, because the weapons sold often simply gathered rust on the docks: and even when uncrated their use and maintenance required skills that were not available. This particular form of Western arrogance has not been used much in recent years: skills are now available in many developing countries, or can be bought from abroad.

In what ways do arms sales make conflicts more likely, or serve to exacerbate them? If states invest heavily in military capabilities, they expect some return on that investment. If there is a dispute with a neighbouring state, then those in political control (who are often the military themselves) will certainly consider the use of military force as an option, as a possible way of resolving the dispute in their favour. We are also seeing the way in which arms supplies from outside can make internal conflicts much more vicious. The arms used by the competing clans in Somalia are, to a large extent, arms supplied when Somalia was being used, first by the USSR and later by the USA, as part of their competition for influence and control in the horn of Africa. They left behind large stocks of weapons. There is no reasonable doubt that in Somalia many more people have been killed because weapons were so easily available.

Because of the arbitrary way in which many of the borders in the old colonial world were decided, there are a great many border disputes in the developing world. The militarisation of developing countries makes it more likely that one or other party will attempt to settle such disputes in their favour by military means.

The economic consequences are clear (and are now, belatedly, recognised by international lending institutions). It is not simply that foreign exchange reserves are used for purposes which do nothing to improve the standard of living or the economic capability of the country. More sophisticated weapon systems have a further effect: they also serve to drain scarce skills from the civil sector. About fifty times more manhours are required for the maintenance of a tank than for the maintenance of a truck.

Some history

We now have one hundred years without any Treaty to impose any curb on the trade in conventional weapons with developing countries. The last - and indeed the only - time that any such

Treaty was signed was in 1890: The Brussels Act for the Repression of the African Slave Trade. It was signed by 13 European states, together with the USA, Iran, Zanzibar and the Congo Free State. It prohibited the introduction into a particular part of Africa (except under effective guarantees) of any fire-arms or ammunition except flint-lock guns and gunpowder.

After the First World War, through the twenties and thirties, a great deal of effort was put into attempts to curb the arms trade. This was partly because the trade was in private hands, with little national control; it was widely believed that the "merchants of death" had a strong interest in promoting war. A number of articles of the Covenant of the League of Nations - article 8 and article 23 - referred to the arms trade. In article 23, the member states expressed their intention to "entrust the League with the general supervision of the trade in arms with the countries in which the control of this traffic is necessary in the common interest".

The plenipotentiaries of the peace conference took this article sufficiently seriously to draft the St. Germain Convention of 1919; had it come into force it would have established the rather remarkable principle that in general there were to be no arms exports, save for certain exceptions to be permitted by means of export licences. Article 1 of the Convention bravely begins: "The High Contracting Parties undertake to prohibit the export of the following arms of war.." There follows a long list including - and these are examples only - artillery of all kinds, bombs, grenades, machine-guns and rifles. The Convention foundered because the United States refused to ratify it: the arms-producing countries had decided to ratify it together or not at all.

This old example illustrates two points which recur again and again in arms trade history. First, concern about the arms trade is triggered by some major cataclysmic event - in this case the appalling slaughter of the First World War. Proposals are put forward for action. Then interest and concern wane, and in the end nothing of substance is done. Secondly, individual countries are reluctant to contract out of the arms trade unless their competitors are willing to do so as well: thus the Convention had to be ratified by all the arms-producing states at the Conference, or not at all.

The arms trade issue was then handed over to a body called the Temporary Mixed Commission. The idea of an international limitation of arms exports was effectively dropped, and the Commission concentrated on the question of publicity. It proposed that the League of Nations should publish a Yearbook, and this proposal was accepted. In fact between 1924 and 1938 the League published fifteen volumes each of an Armament Year-book and Arms Trade Statistical Year-book. Here again, an issue arose which is still alive today - the issue of discrimination. A number of states demanded that there should be a register of production as well as a register of trade. For instance, the Brazilian delegate said: "...what we are contemplating is... publicity with regard to the purchases of those countries which are obliged to import arms because they do not manufacture them. [This] would simply mean that the non-manufacturing countries were under supervision, while the manufacturing countries would escape altogether".

The history of the inter-war years brought out issues which are still alive today: short-term enthusiasms to "do something about the arms trade" - enthusiasms which last about two years; the problem of getting agreement from all the main suppliers, to avoid the argument "if we don't supply, someone else will"; and the need to avoid discrimination as between weapons producers and non-producers.

## After World War II

After World War I the arms trade was a live issue, with a great deal of public concern. After World War II, there was no such immediate concern. Whereas the Charter of the League of Nations made specific reference to the arms trade, and the private manufacture of arms, this was not mentioned in the Charter of the United Nations.

These are some of the relevant ways in which the international relations background differed in 1945 from 1918:

- \* There was not the same concern with private "merchants of death". Export licensing of weapons exports was virtually universal: the arms trade had largely come under state control.

- \* The "third world", or developing world, emerged from the colonial era. So the post-war period saw a immense multiplication of the number of independent states.

- \* The main change was to a bi-polar world, dominated by the struggle between what was labelled (on the Western side) the "free world", and on the other side the "Socialist camp".

During this period the flow of major weapons to developing countries was very large, and it rose fast - in the second half of the sixties, for example, it was three times greater than in the first half of the fifties. Already by 1975, for example, the Middle Eastern states, taken together, had built up armouries of jet combat aircraft and tanks which were of much the same order of magnitude as those of NATO forces in Europe. (Jet combat aircraft: Middle East 2,300, NATO Europe 3,000. Tanks: Middle East 10,500, NATO Europe 12,250). The two charts trace the proliferation of two advanced weapon systems - surface-to-air missiles and supersonic military aircraft. What were the forces behind this process? Any attempt at control or limitation requires knowledge of the forces which have to be combatted.

The main force was the competition between the USA and USSR. This was not simply a competition for influence. The USA sought to contain what it believed to be Soviet expansionism; this involved a set of military alliances - NATO, CENTO, SEATO - and the arming of "forward defence areas". In the early years, weapons were frequently given free, or alternatively at low cost. The USA was interested, not just in influence, but in building up the military capabilities of states in the developing world which could be

expected to resist Communism. US Secretary of Defence Clark Clifford pointed out that an Asian soldier cost only one-fifteenth as much as an American soldier. Both the USA and USSR were busy arming their client states.

In the early post-war years, the USSR limited its weapon supplies to states which were in the "Socialist camp". In 1955, the policy changed, with weapon supplies, routed through Czechoslovakia, to Egypt. These supplies continued for some time, in spite of the fact that Nasser was imprisoning Communists. Weapon supplies continued to be sent, or sold, to Socialist regimes - but to others as well. The purpose was to break through the Western attempt at encirclement.

This competition enabled recipient states to play one supplier off against the other. When the US refused some weapon request from Jordan, for example, Jordan would make overtures to Moscow and the US supplies would then be forthcoming. Further, developing countries had the distressing habit (from the point of view of the major powers) of changing sides. Egypt decided that the USA was likely to be more useful than the USSR, and threw out some thousands of Soviet advisers. The regime in Indonesia changed, and the weapons the USSR had supplied were used to massacre local Communists. The USA poured weapons into Iran - and then when the Shah fell the USA became the Great Satan. In the Horn of Africa, first the USA supplied Ethiopia under Haile Selassie, and the USSR supplies Somalia. When the emperor was overthrown, they changed sides: the USSR became Ethiopia's supplier, and the USA supplied Somalia. The USA and other Western powers tacitly helped Iraq in its war with Iran, because they feared that Iran would become dominant in the Gulf. Iraq then proceeded to attack Kuwait.

The other main driving force on the supply side was economic. This was a particularly strong force in Britain and France, where the unit cost of major new weapon systems would have been very high, if there were no sales abroad. The very large R & D cost of major new weapon systems makes it highly advantageous to lengthen the production run as far as possible.

There were a few industrial states which followed a relatively restrictive policy - Japan, West Germany, Sweden and Switzerland. Japan, in line with its constitution, took no significant part in arms sales at all. West Germany did relatively little business in arms sales in the early years. Sweden and Switzerland both had restrictive rules - though both states also had scandals involving successful attempts at evasion. This restraint certainly does not seem to have hindered economic progress in these countries. Unfortunately it probably did little, if anything, to reduce the sum total of arms exports: there were other suppliers.

On the demand side, both new and old states in the developing world were anxious to build up their military capabilities. In many of the new states, the military staged successful coups against the civil administrations; in others, the politicians knew that, to remain in power, they had to pay close attention to military demands. One constant military demand was, of course, for more and better weapons. Throughout this period there were strong pressures on the demand side as well.

Given these strong forces, both on the supply and on the demand side, it is not surprising that there was no effective constraint. There were the usual short spells of concern after conflicts in the Middle East, when it did occur to politicians that there was a certain irrationality in putting arms into an area and then deploring the fact that they were used. Krushchev suggested an international agreement to regulate arms supplies to the area in a press conference in London in April 1956, and again in 1957 the Soviet Union suggested that the four powers should agree to a "reciprocal refusal to deliver arms to Middle Eastern countries". The Western side disliked the idea of the Soviet Union having any say in Middle Eastern affairs did not take up these suggestions.

After the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, this time suggestions came from the USA. US Secretary of State Dean Rusk said "What we would like to have is some sort of understanding... that the arms-supplying nations will not themselves be responsible for a major renewal of an arms race in the Middle East." No understanding was reached; the arms race was renewed - with a vengeance. By the mid-seventies imports of major weapons into the Middle East (measured at constant prices) were five times greater than in the mid-sixties.

Once more, in 1991, after another Middle East war, there was the same short-term reaction as in 1967. Another US Secretary of State, James Baker, in words which were indistinguishable from those used by Dean Rusk about twenty-five years earlier, said: "The time has come to try to change the destructive pattern of military competition and proliferation in this region and to reduce the arms flow into an area that is already very over-militarised". Will it be different this time round? A search through the military journals for the period from August 1990 to October 1991 lists some 74 major arms transfer contracts being either delivered, ordered or negotiated with Middle Eastern countries; they cover every Middle Eastern country except Iraq and Lebanon.

For those who would like to see something done about the arms trade, the history from 1945 to 1990 is not encouraging. The forces behind this trade were very strong. The countervailing forces were very weak - almost non-existent: only the quiet voice of reason, saying - for example - that if the major powers wanted to avoid wars in the Middle East, it might be better if they stopped equipping Middle East states for war. Constraint on arms supplies was a lost cause.

Are things different now?

Are the driving forces behind the arms trade now weaker than they were?

\* The process of "competitive arming" is certainly weaker. In conflicts between - or within - developing-states we do not any longer have the process of US-Soviet "conflict by proxy" - as we had previously in Angola, Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, Nicaragua, and so on. (Unfortunately many of these areas are still



awash with the arms - particularly small arms - which were provided by the two sides during the period when competitive arming was prevalent).

\* However, arms supplies are still used in a less specifically competitive way to "maintain influence". Thus US arms supplies to Saudi Arabia, to Egypt and to Israel serve as a reminder that the US will want to maintain a degree of control over Middle Eastern events.

\* There is also another way in which the supply-side forces behind the arms trade may be weakening in some respects. The Northern industrial states have, of course, long been concerned with the threat of proliferation of nuclear weapons. Now this concern is being extended to other "weapons of mass destruction" and their delivery systems. In place of the old "threat from the East" we are beginning to see the development of the idea of the "threat from the South". Put rather crudely, the concern is mainly with weapon systems which states in the South might use to threaten or attack the Northern industrial states themselves. There is not the same degree of concern about weapon systems with which the states in the South might threaten each other.

\* Hence the Missile Technology Control Regime, for example. The object is to prevent, or at least make it much more difficult, for certain states in the South to acquire medium- or long-range missiles. It was clear that this involved, not just the control of the export of missiles, but also the control over a wide range of technologies. The regime has many difficulties - described below.

\* Hence also the "Australia group", whose object was to control the export of certain precursors to the production of chemical weapons. The Chemical Weapons Convention, when it comes into force, will largely supersede this particular attempt at control. So a form of control which was in the nature of things discriminatory - some states were judged responsible and others not - is to be superseded by a ban which applies equally to all states which ratify the convention: this will include all the major industrial states.

\* So far as conventional weapon systems are concerned, the rather vague objective appeared to be to prevent third world states acquiring massive armouries; the UN register is supposed to provide warning of this - though it is open to question whether it will do so. In some ways it is surprising that the Northern industrial states - particularly those in Europe - are not more concerned with the proliferation of conventional weapons. The European states have agreed on fixed limits for the numbers of the weapon systems which are Treaty-Limited Items in the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe. Now that we are tending to have more discussion of the possible "threat from the South", one might have expected the industrial states to be more cautious about building up stocks of these conventional weapons in states outside Europe, at a time when European states themselves are reducing them. There is not much sign of this as yet.

The conclusion here is that the political

pressures to export to developing states has diminished somewhat, particularly for technologies linked to the production of weapons of mass destruction: but it is much less marked for routine conventional weapon systems.

On the other hand, the economic pressure to export weapon systems has increased, both in NATO states and also in the states which used to form the Warsaw Pact. In NATO states, the combination of reduced home demand for weapons, together with high and rising unemployment, have lead to a situation where every weapon sale is treated as a triumph for the Government. The statements made immediately after the war with Iraq are now forgotten. Bush, in his election campaign approved the sale of a large number of F-16s to Taiwan. Major, in a post-election campaign, brought back in triumph a confirmation of sales of Tornados to Saudi Arabia. Weapon sales preserve employment - and that is the dominant objective.

The economic pressure to sell weapons is even stronger in Russia and the new states which were once part of the Soviet Union. There is clearly a large amount of military hardware which can be classed now as "surplus to requirements": and there are states, such as Iran, which are in a position to pay with foreign currency. Given the weak structures of control, it would be surprising if sales were not made. There have been statements from the Russian military side which express the view that sales could be made to any state which was willing to pay. It is also hard now to establish what transactions have taken place: and it will be interesting to see what entries are put forward for the UN register by the republics which one formed part of the Sobiet Union.

To sum up the position on driving forces on the supply side: there is no longer the drive, on the US side, to arm any possible opponents of the Soviet Union, and on the Soviet side also there seems little of this kind of political pressure. On the other hand, the economic pressures to export arms are stronger than they were in all the main industrial exporting states.

On the demand side, the money in general is not there. The states of South America and Africa are heavily in debt. The states which can still buy weapon systems are, first, the oil-producing states of the Middle East - though of course Iraq is an exception; and there is not the huge increase in revenues which accompanied the oil price explosion of the nineteen-seventies. Secondly, most of the states around the Pacific rim have expanding economies and are using part of their increased earnings of foreign currency to buy weapons. In aggregate, arms sales to the developing world are not rising any longer. The reason is not supply-side constraint: it is the reduction in demand. It is interesting that the World Bank is now ready to take military expenditure explicitly into its judgements on the credit-worthiness of developing states - though it is doubtful whether this has made much difference as yet.

Assessment

When from time to time - as in 1956, and 1967, and 1991 - the folly of pouring arms into conflict-ridden regions becomes particularly apparent, there is a temporary surge in demand in the industrial countries for supply-side constraints. It was particularly marked on this last occasion, because this time the states, which had helped in the arming of Iraq because they wanted to curb the power of Iran, found themselves engaged in a war with the country which they had helped to arm. The demands that "something should be done" about the arms trade, and in particular that there should be constraint, or indeed a moratorium, on arms supplies to Middle eastern countries were stronger than usual. However, again as usual, public interest turned to other subjects; and the large contracts available from oil-producing states proved too tempting.

The unfortunate conclusion from the historical examples in this century - from 1914 to the present day - is that it is extremely difficult to get effective agreement on supply-side constraint: and indeed there are reasons for thinking that it is, if anything, more difficult than it was, say twenty years ago. These are some of the obstacles:

\* Any agreement, to be effective, has to cover all the main suppliers. There was a time - before 1955, when the USSR came into the market - when an agreement between three states, the USA, France and Britain - could control reasonably effectively the flow of weapons into the Middle East. Now the list of potential suppliers grows year by year. China can supply virtually all major weapon systems. The decision of the Bush Administration to sell F16s to Taiwan must have been taken in the knowledge that as a consequence China would stop any effective cooperation in constraining arms sales. To take another small example, there is now a new independent state - Slovakia - which is quite heavily dependent on sales of main battle tanks for its foreign currency. Indeed this was one factor in the breakup of Czechoslovakia: the Czechoslovak Government wanted to contract out of the arms trade, and Slovakia saw this as a decision which was particularly damaging to its economy. Brazil, Chile, India, North Korea can - and do - sell quite advanced weapon systems.

\* In theory, suppliers can decide to supply certain states and not others by requiring end-use certificates. The weapons are for the use only of the State named in that certificate, and that state must seek permission before it sells the weapons to any other country. In fact it is very difficult to police these end-use provisions. Some manufacturers export, knowing quite well that the state named in the end-use certificate is not in fact the genuine end-user, and that the weapons will be later transferred. On other occasions, they may export in good faith. In any case, there is very little effective policing of the second-hand market: the destination control of weapons exports is weak.

\* There are developing countries which are seeking to buy, not the weapons themselves, but the means to make them. The Matrix-Churchill machine-tools exported to Iraq are a good example. The list of technologies enumerated in the documentation of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) is another. It is agreed, under the MTCR regime, that developing states should not be

prevented from acquiring the wherewithall for civil space exploration. But of course the technology needed for constructing a rocket to send a satellite into space is the same as the technology needed to build a rocket with a military warhead. There is a very extensive overlap between technologies needed for civil and for military purposes. Governments in third world countries complain, with some justification, that controls on dual-use technology transfer serve to prevent them from building up industries which might compete in the world market.

\* Supply-side constraints are in essence discriminatory. They are saying, in effect, that we - the supplying states - are responsible and can be trusted with these weapon systems: but you - the developing countries - are irresponsible and cannot be trusted. Now this may be true in some instances: but it is not an argument which any developing country is likely to be willing to accept. A supply-side constraint, therefore, presents a challenge to some third world countries, to see if they can find ways of getting round it. Egypt, for example, is hardly to be classed together with Iraq. However, the Missile Technology Control Regime has certainly put obstacles in the way of any Egyptian development of a medium-range missile - whereas Israel, of course, suffers no such handicap. There are many Egyptian military officers who say that sooner or later they will have to find ways of building their own missile.

This last argument is perhaps the most potent one against the success of supply-side constraints in the long run. Some of the texts on supply-side constraints speak rather vaguely of the need to get the agreement of recipient countries. It is hard to see under what circumstances recipient countries would voluntarily agree that they are too irresponsible to deploy weapon systems which the industrial states deploy themselves in large numbers. There is a general failure, in many of those in the industrial states of the North, to consider this problem from the other end, and to appreciate the extent to which states in the developing world feel a certain rather impotent anger with the casual hegemonic assumptions of the major powers.

The multiplicity of suppliers, and the problems of dual-use technology have added to the difficulties on the supply side. In answer to the question - has there been a radical change in circumstances, such that the chances of supply-side constraint are better than in the past? - the reply surely has to be that there are few signs of it as yet.

#### Alternative approaches

The main alternative approach is to work on the demand side.

The major powers have done very little about this - except in the Middle East, which is the most unpromising region of all. There are perhaps two main reasons for this relative neglect. The first is that most of the main supplying states are busy trying to sell weapons to the states in the third world. They can hardly at one and the same time urge them to reach some agreement to reduce

their stocks of weapon systems, while at the same time some officially-sponsored sales mission is trying to persuade them to buy more. So, secondly, they tend to say that any move towards demand-side restraint is for the states in the region themselves, and it is not for the major powers to interfere.

This lack of interest in any kind of regional agreement does not apply, of course, in the Middle East. The United States is deeply engaged in trying to orchestrate a peace process there - a process which would certainly involve a regional agreement about some weapon systems. But the US, the UK, France and Russia are at the same time competing for large contracts to supply the the region with more weapons.

In most other regions of the world, the conditions for some kind of agreement are less unfavourable than they are in the Middle East. The idea of regional security and arms control agreements, outside Europe, is only just beginning to appear on the world agenda. In Europe now there is an agreement which limits conventional forces and - for all its deficiencies - there is a the recognition that some form of regional "security architecture" is needed. Why should these basic ideas not be developed for Central and South America; for North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa; for the Indian sub-continent; and for the ASEAN countries in the South Pacific? It really is more promising to approach the problem of the arms trade from the other end, and to look for regional security, arms control and disarmament agreements. Further, the major powers, which have so long been simply concerned with Communist versus non-Communist struggles in the developing world, could do much more to show some enthusiasm for these ideas. Up to now, they have not done so: for example, the United States was very scathing about the Contadora process in Central America. They could encourage and finance academic institutes in the regions to develop ideas for regional demilitarisation and consequently on some agreed limits on weapons stocks.

These studies should ideally be undertaken, of course, at some institute within the regions themselves - but, in the relatively open world of academic study, that is not an overriding consideration. We ought to have by now studies suggesting possible agreements in all these regions for limits on weapon stocks. For once, this would not be a discriminatory proposal. The Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe exists. We need studies which suggest analogous treaties for other regions of the world. If these proposals are not prepared in the regions themselves, then the states - or institutes - in those regions can have no cause for complaint if suggestions are made to them from outside. What kind of agreement might be appropriate for conventional forces in the Indian sub-continent, or in the ASEAN area, or in South America? Many states in the developing world are somewhat at fault in this matter. They have tended to treat questions of arms control and disarmament as if they were simply the problems of the major powers. They have shown little interest in addressing the problems of their own regions.

One approach would be to build on the ideas in the UN Secretary-General's document, An Agenda for Peace - written at the request of the Security Council. This does have some

discussion of regional security organisations - as does the UN Charter itself, in chapter VIII. It could be a good time now for the UN General Assembly to organise a special session on regional security, regional arms control and regional disarmament.

A second non-discriminatory approach to the problems posed by the arms trade is to look now for other weapon systems for which a global ban could be proposed. The major powers have accepted the principle of a global ban on chemical weapons, in spite of the difficulties of verification and enforcement. It is envisaged that states which fail to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention may as a consequence find it more difficult to import certain chemicals - much as most supplying countries are only prepared to export nuclear technology to states which have agreed to IAEA full-scope safeguards. A global ban on military missiles with a range of over - say - 50 kilometres would not be more difficult to enforce than a chemical weapons convention. If the major powers want to stop the proliferation of this weapon system - as they do - then in the long run the only successful method will be a global ban which they themselves observe.

It is, in a curious way, the responsibility of non-Governmental bodies concerned to reduce the amount of killing in the world to choose their issues carefully - selecting approaches which have some reasonable prospect of eventual success. It is possible that in this matter of the arms trade some organisations may have got hold of the wrong end of the stick (using this metaphor correctly for once). It is at least a point worth discussing. The immediate reaction, particularly for those living in the supplying countries, is to look for supply-side constraints. Past experience - or indeed present-day experience - is not encouraging. It might be better to go to the other end of the stick, and look at the possibility of regional security and arms control agreements, and the possibility of extending global bans to other weapon systems. With arms as with drugs, in the long run the attack on the demand side may have much more long-term promise.

**Collection Number: AG1977**

**END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)**

**PUBLISHER:**

*Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive*

*Location:- Johannesburg*

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