



BONN INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CONVERSION

B · I · C · C

BONN INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CONVERSION • INTERNATIONALES KONVERSIONSZENTRUM BONN



brief 16

Practical Disarmament

august 2000

Contents

Zusammenfassung
German Summary 4

Introduction 6

Part I: Concepts

Crisis prevention: Lessons for
Development Cooperation 10
Evita Schmieg

Preventive Conversion: New Directions
and Opportunities for Disarmament
and Security-Building? 16
Keith Krause

Part II: Case Studies in Practical Disarmament

The Elusive Peace Dividend in South Asia 32
Richard Ponzio

Civil Disarmament in Post-Conflict
Cambodia 39
Edgar Janz

The Regulation of Armaments in
South-Eastern Europe 44
Ian Anthony

The Small Arms 'Joint Action' of the
European Union 58
Walter-Jürgen Schmid

The authors

Ian Anthony is Senior Researcher at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Sweden.

Edgar Janz is a member of the Working Group for Weapons Reduction, Cambodia.

Keith Krause is Professor at the Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, Switzerland, and Director of its Programme in Strategie and International Studies.

Walter-Jürgen Schmid is Head of the Security, Disarmament and Arms Control Division of the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Evita Schmieg works in the Planning Department of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany.

Richard Ponzio is a Visiting Fulbright Fellow at Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Herbert Wulf is Director of the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), Germany.

Editing:
Connie Wall

Cover photo:
Sergej Grits/transparent
Destruction of arms in Belarus



BONN INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CONVERSION • INTERNATIONALES KONVERSIONSZENTRUM BONN

brief 16

Practical Disarmament

by
Herbert Wulf (ed.)

august 2000

Zusammenfassung

German Summary

Besonders während des letzten Jahrzehnts sind Abrüstungs- und Konversionsprozesse in verschiedenen Teilen der Welt initiiert und durchgeführt worden. Diese reichen von der Konversion der Rüstungsindustrie in Industrieländern bis zur Demobilisierung von Soldaten und anderen Kämpfern in Entwicklungsländern. Die sechs in diesem *brief* veröffentlichten Beiträge beschäftigen sich mit Waffen in Konfliktsituationen, analysieren Konzepte der Krisenprävention und präventiver Konversion (Part I: Concepts) und beschreiben Erfahrungen aus Asien und Europa (Part II: Case Studies in Practical Disarmament). Sie wurden ursprünglich bei der internationalen Konferenz des BICC *"The Contribution of Disarmament and Conversion to Conflict Prevention and its Relevance for Development Cooperation"* vorgelegt. Zusammenfassungen sämtlicher dort präsentierter Papiere sind im Februar 2000 als BICC *report 14* erschienen.

Evita Schmiege analysiert die Erfahrungen der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit in der Konfliktprävention und stellt fest, dass es keine einfachen Lösungen gibt, da gewaltsame Konflikte nicht auf singulären sondern immer auf komplexen Ursachen beruhen. Sie betont die Bedeutung der Frühwarnung und konstatiert, dass Konflikte nur von den jeweils betroffenen Gesellschaften selbst gelöst werden können. Externe Geber können hier lediglich Unterstützung anbieten. Trotz der externen Faktoren, die Konflikte bedingen oder beeinflussen können, ist Entwicklungszusammenarbeit allein keine Krisenprävention.

Keith Krause diskutiert in seinem Beitrag, ob das Konzept der Konversion um die Begriffe ‚präventiv‘ oder ‚proaktiv‘ erweitert werden sollte. Er plädiert für pragmatische Lösungen und praktisches Vorgehen im Hinblick auf die Frage, ob der präventive Aspekt hilfreich ist oder die Erreichung des beabsichtigten Ziels behindert. Eine Erweiterung des Konzeptes erlaubt, einige neue Aktivitäten unter den Begriff Konversion zu subsumieren. Damit wird Konversion um die engere Verbindung zu wichtigen Aspekten von Frieden und Sicherheit ergänzt. Die ‚präventive Konversion‘ macht auch einige der ursprünglichen Visionen von Konversion, die in den Hintergrund gedrängt wurden, wieder sichtbar und zwingt so Befürworter, sich expliziter mit einem breiteren Kontext auseinander zu setzen. Doch ‚präventive Konversion‘ stellt keine Kritik an existierenden Konversionskonzepten und -praktiken dar. Vielmehr kann es als Zusatz zum existierenden Konversionskonzept in bestehende Zielvorstellungen eingegliedert werden. Der endgültige Bewährungstest der ‚präventiven Konversion‘ ist nicht ihre konzeptionelle Grundlage, sondern die Tatsache, ob sie von den Befürwortern und Praktikern als angemessene Beschreibung ihrer Aktivitäten akzeptiert oder abgelehnt wird.

Richard Ponzio untersucht das Potenzial für eine Friedensdividende in Südasiens, einer Region, in der Abrüstung und Konversion während des letzten Jahrzehnts nicht stattgefunden haben. Das traumatische Erbe der Teilung des Subkontinentes ist auch nach fünfzig Jahren der Konfrontation, wirtschaftlicher Teilung und des Misstrauens nicht überwunden. Die jüngste Krise zeigt jedoch möglicherweise einen Silberstreifen am Horizont,

da sowohl Indien als auch Pakistan realisieren müssen, dass es keine militärische Lösung der politischen Differenzen gibt. Während die Aussichten für eine Friedensdividende, die das Leben der Menschen in Südasiens bereichern würde, weiterhin schlecht sind, könnte die vorsichtige Umsetzung von Demilitarisierungsstrategien Hoffnungen auf Prävention und Lösung von Konflikten stärken, das breite Verständnis von Sicherheit erweitern und knappe Ressourcen für langfristige Entwicklung umlenken.

Edgar Janz berichtet über erfolgversprechende Bemühungen zur Kontrolle des riesigen Kleinwaffenarsenals in Kambodscha, das sich oftmals in privater Hand befindet. Das bekannteste Problem Kambodschas sind die Landminen, die nach 30 Jahren interner Konflikte im ganzen Land verstreut liegen. Weniger bekannt ist das gleichsam tödliche Erbe der Kleinwaffen, die in den Jahrzehnten der Kämpfe und des Misstrauens angehäuft wurden. Obwohl die Waffen nicht die direkte Ursache der Konflikte sind, haben sie sie jedoch intensiviert und verlängert. Heute sind die überwältigende Allgegenwärtigkeit der Kleinwaffen und deren weitverbreiteter Einsatz zwei der vielen Probleme, mit denen sich Kambodscha in der Nachkriegszeit auseinander setzen muss. Vielversprechende Programme sind in jüngster Zeit sowohl von der Regierung als auch von Nichtregierungsorganisationen begonnen worden, doch die Kultur der Gewalt im Lande verhindert oft den einfachen Weg zum Erfolg.

Ian Anthony analysiert die Bemühungen, die Rüstung in Südosteuropa zu regulieren und fordert dazu auf, die Rolle und die Struktur von Rüstungskontrolle und Abrüstungsmaßnahmen als Element einer erweiterten sicherheitspolitischen Umwelt zu betrachten. Die Diskussion um die Erweiterung der NATO wie auch der

Krieg um Jugoslawien im Jahr 1999 haben dazu geführt, dass im Hinblick auf die Schaffung von Sicherheit in Europa das Augenmerk stets auf der Rolle militärischer Instrumente ruhte. Kooperative Rüstungskontrollinstrumente, vertrauens- und sicherheitsbildende Maßnahmen, Embargos und Exportkontrollen werden bereits jetzt in der Region angewendet. Jede dieser Maßnahmen, die Waffenembargos und Sanktionen gegen verschiedene Territorien der Region, der Vertrag zur konventionellen Rüstungskontrolle in Europa (KSE) und die Maßnahmen, die im sogenannten Florenzabkommen im Anschluss an den Friedensvertrag von Dayton beschlossen wurden, hat spezifische Charakteristika.

Schließlich behandelt Walter-Jürgen Schmid die ‚Gemeinschaftsaktion‘ der Europäischen Union zur Kleinwaffenkontrolle. Er legt die Ziele der Aktion dar und betont insbesondere die Bedeutung der exzessiven und unkontrollierten Akkumulation militärischer Kleinwaffen und leichter Waffen, die als globales Problem den Frieden und die Sicherheit in vielen Teilen der Welt bedrohen. Außerdem berichtet er über bereits ergriffene Maßnahmen in einer Reihe von Krisenregionen und Ländern.

Die Beiträge verdeutlichen, dass zwar noch vielfältige Aufgaben der Krisenprävention, Abrüstung und Konversion zu bewältigen sind, dass aber durchaus bereits positive praktische Erfahrungen in verschiedenen Teilen der Welt gesammelt wurden.

Introduction

During the last decade a number of practical disarmament and conversion processes have been initiated and implemented in different parts of the world. They range from industry conversion in industrial countries to demobilization in developing countries. The six papers published in this *brief* look specifically at weapons in conflict situations. They were originally presented at an international BICC conference, entitled "*The Contribution of Disarmament and Conversion to Conflict Prevention and its Relevance for Development Cooperation*". Summaries of all the papers of that conference are published in the BICC *report 14*, February 2000. The papers chosen here for publication concentrate on two aspects: concepts on crisis prevention and preventive conversion (Part I: Concepts) and four case studies with experience from Asia and Europe (Part II: Case Studies in Practical Disarmament).

Evita Schmieg analyses the lessons learned from development cooperation in conflict prevention and hypothesizes that there are no quick fixes for development cooperation since conflicts are always caused by a complex set of factors. There are no single causes of conflict or violent crisis. She considers early warning as still an issue and also emphasizes that conflict can only be prevented by the societies themselves. Outside players can only support them in their efforts. Development policy by itself is not crisis prevention, although conflicts do have external dimensions.

Keith Krause asks if the concept of conversion should be expanded to a 'preventive' or 'proactive' conversion approach. His advice is to choose a pragmatic framework for practical action. Does the concept in question

help or hinder the achievement of intended goals? In this respect, the concept of 'preventive conversion' does have some attractions. It allows one to incorporate some new activities under the conversion umbrella, and expands conversion to link it more closely with some important aspects of peace and security-building that have hitherto been less prominent. It also recaptures some elements of the original vision of conversion that have been left aside, and forces conversion advocates to be more explicit about the broader context of (and constraints on) their efforts. But 'preventive conversion' represents neither a critique of existing conversion concepts and practices, nor a wholesale re-invention of these. As an 'add-on' to an existing concept therefore, the extensions and amendments suggested above can clearly be incorporated within the existing vision of conversion. The final test of 'preventive conversion' will not be its conceptual soundness, but whether or not it is accepted or rejected by conversion advocates and practitioners as an appropriate label for their activities.

Richard Ponzio looks at the potential for a peace dividend in a region where disarmament and conversion have been absent during the last decade—in South Asia. After fifty years of confrontation, economic bifurcation, and mistrust, the traumatic legacy of the subcontinent's partition shows little sign of diminishing. The region's latest crisis, however, may yet have a silver lining, in that both India and Pakistan might realize the futility of seeking a military solution to their ongoing political discord. While the prospects for a peace dividend that enriches human lives remain bleak in South Asia, the cautious application of gradual demilitarization strategies

offers the best hope for fortifying conflict prevention and resolution efforts, building a broad sense of security, and redirecting scarce resources to long-term development needs.

Edgar Janz reports on positive efforts in Cambodia to get control over the vast arsenals of small arms—mainly in private hand. Cambodia is well known for its scourge of landmines, littering the entire country after almost 30 years of internal armed conflict. Less well known is the equally lethal legacy of small arms that accumulated over the decades of fighting and mistrust. Although the weapons were not a direct cause, they certainly fueled the intensity and duration of the prolonged conflict. Today, the overwhelming presence of small arms and their widespread use is one of the many crucial issues that Cambodia must deal with as it emerges as a post-conflict society. While promising programs have been initiated both by the government and NGO's in recent years, the culture of violence in the country offers no easy road to success.

Ian Anthony analyses the efforts to regulate armaments in South-Eastern Europe and argues that it is important that the role and structure of arms control and disarmament arrangements are discussed as an element of the wider security environment. The discussions about the enlargement of NATO as well as the 1999 war in and around Yugoslavia have tended to focus attention on the role of military instruments in managing European security problems. He points out that a number of cooperative arms control, confidence and security building measures, embargoes and export controls are already in place in the region, each of which has specific characteristics: the arms embargoes and sanctions against various

territories; the region is part of the wider European CFE Treaty; and localized measures have been defined in the Florence Agreement established following the Dayton Peace Accords.

Finally, Walter-J. Schmid looks at the European Union's 'Joint Action' to control the circulation of small arms. He presents the goals of that action, namely to stop excessive and uncontrolled accumulation of military small arms and light weapons as a global problem exacerbating threats to peace and security in many parts of the world. Furthermore, he reports on efforts in a number of crisis areas and countries where first measures have been implemented.

The published papers illustrate that a range of tasks of in the field of crisis prevention, disarmament and conversion are still to be tackled, but that there are at the same time positive practical experiences in different parts of the world.

1

Concepts

***For technical reasons photo
available in printed version only***

Crisis Prevention: Lessons for Development Cooperation

by *Evita Schmieg*

Introduction

During the 1990s, the prevailing type of conflict was not the traditional conflict between states but conflict between groups within state borders, examples of which are Somalia, Rwanda and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Kosovo). The issue of security has therefore been less a question of the peaceful co-existence of states and more one of the peaceful co-existence of people within state borders. Traditional military instruments have often proven inadequate for dealing with the new nature of crisis or for resolving the underlying causes of crisis. In the early 1990s, starting with the *Agenda for Peace* of the United Nations Secretary-General and followed by, for example, the *Human Development Report 1994* of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), policymakers and academics started to develop a more complex understanding of 'security' that places not the security of states but the security of the individual at the center of concern.

This approach acknowledges that security is influenced by a range of economic, social, ecological and psychological factors. In order to prevent violent conflict, societies themselves as well as international players must deal with these different factors. It is thus obvious that the

prevention of conflict must be the common task of all policy areas, above all development policy, diplomacy and security policy. In all these areas an intense discussion has taken place on how to refine instruments and mechanisms to better tackle the new task of contributing to conflict prevention. This paper presents an overview of the tasks of societies in developing countries and of development policy. It first describes the potential of this policy field for the developing countries and then turns to the need for coordination with other policy areas.

Crisis prevention—a challenge for societies in developing countries

Conflict is an unavoidable element of social interaction and is even necessary to advance development. The social challenge consists in developing mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of conflicts. Societies and the field of development policy are confronted with the task of eliminating or diminishing the root causes of conflict, on the one hand, and promoting the capability of societies to resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner, on the other. It is necessary to recognize, however, that violent conflicts can only be prevented by the societies themselves, although outside players can support their efforts.

Early recognition of conflict lines

Traditional analysis of the causes of conflict distinguishes between the structural causes and the triggering factors. This distinction might be interesting for an *ex-post* analysis of crisis but not for the practical purpose of analyzing societies with a view to taking early conflict-prevention action. For this purpose, it is more useful to distinguish between three factors contributing to the emergence of crises:

- Long-term structural factors, such as poverty or social disparities
- Short- and medium-term structural change that brings about change in the social position of groups (e.g., land reform, structural adjustment and large-scale projects)
- Triggering factors, which are often found in the political conduct of the parties to the conflict or their support networks.

In order to take preventive action it is necessary to follow the development of societies and to recognize emerging lines of conflict at an early stage. It has often been stated that there has always been sufficient information on emerging crises but the political will has been lacking. The link between information and political action has been missing. The information was available, but in a dispersed manner and not collated so as to serve as a basis for the policy decisions of political actors and decision-makers. Development policy has lacked the appropriate 'early-warning' instruments in that sense. German development cooperation is currently introducing early analysis of emerging conflict into its instruments for planning bilateral cooperation in order to close that gap.

No single cause of conflict

The analysis of conflict and preventive action is rendered more difficult by the fact that crises can never be attributed to a single cause but always to a complex set of causes. Even the distinction made above may be misleading: the root causes and structural change lead to the emergence of different parties to the conflict. As soon as these parties start to act, for example through the media, a process of interaction starts which is defined by their strategies and decisive for the further development of the conflict and whether it can be resolved in a peaceful manner. There is a clear interdependence between the causes and the dynamics of conflict up to the point where it is no longer possible to objectively identify the root causes because the views of the parties on that matter differ. The importance of the root causes may even fade so far into the background that addressing them is no longer central to resolution of the conflict. The conflict has developed a dynamic of its own. This is one of the reasons why new branches of research have centered not on the causes of conflict but on the causes of peaceful development, the determinants for peace. Crisis prevention as a political objective therefore requires—apart from analysis of the structural causes of conflict—analysis of the organization of society and of social change. The indicators which have been developed for the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) for the analysis of emerging conflict therefore include such issues as the social climate and new ways of dealing with conflicts.

Notwithstanding the complexity of conflict, development cooperation can contribute to conflict prevention in two ways:

- By tackling the long-term structural causes of conflict
- By strengthening the capability of societies to deal with conflict in a peaceful manner.

Long-term structural causes of conflict

Poverty and social disparities are among the most important structural causes of conflict. Many conflicts can be traced to such causes, but leaders frequently use ethnic or religious differences as a pretext for depicting the other side as ‘the enemy.’ More often than not, these leaders are more concerned with pursuing their own interests. The description ‘ethnic’ or ‘religious’ conflict should be used with caution.

The reduction of poverty and social disparities is one of the most important objectives of development cooperation. This is not to say that development cooperation is identical with conflict prevention, which is a much more complex task. It does, however, target the basic causes of conflict.

German cooperation aims at economically revitalizing the northern region of Mali in order to strengthen the peace process. The region was especially hard hit by the Tuareg rebellion, and the project includes support for returning Tuareg and Moorish refugees and internally displaced people. It takes an approach that combines efforts to reintegrate the refugees with support for the local population in order to avoid the creation of new lines of conflict. It is accompanied by investments in the rebuilding of destroyed infrastructure. The project succeeded in addressing the basic causes of conflict and in stabilizing the region, but it also showed that the procedures and mechanisms of cooperation must be handled flexibly in order to facilitate quick reactions to changing circumstances.

In tackling poverty and social disparities, however, caution must be exercised in development cooperation so that it does not become a substitute for national efforts. An evaluation of the effects of development cooperation in conflict situations in six countries recently carried out for the BMZ pointed out that, in the case of El Salvador, there is a danger that external donors will take over social responsibilities to such an extent that the government feels relieved of these duties. This, of course, runs counter to the principles and objectives of good governance which have been formulated as conditions for successful sustainable development.

Natural resources are another potential source of conflict. Lack of access to resources underlies the continuing social conflicts in Brazil (in this case the resource is land). Movable resources such as oil, diamonds and minerals play a role in many of the conflicts in Africa. Water is of increasing importance in large parts of the world. The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) pointed to the link between resource degradation and migration. Migration itself often causes social conflict in neighboring countries that take in refugees. Population growth, too, may intensify conflicts over scarce resources and contribute to migration.

All these areas are traditional fields in the long experience of development. There is thus great scope for using this experience in crisis prevention if development cooperation is targeted to that purpose.

Strengthening the capability of societies to deal with conflict in a peaceful manner

The same constellation of structural causes of conflict may lead to the outbreak of violent crisis in one country but not in another. The reason for this lies in the different capabilities of societies to deal with conflict. Certain social mechanisms can contribute to peaceful conflict resolution. Research in the mid-1990s identified conditions for peaceful development which resemble the criteria that had been identified in development policy: a process had started in development cooperation to orient it toward social and political issues as a precondition for successful and sustainable development cooperation. In 1991 German development cooperation started the discussion with the introduction of five criteria for successful and sustainable development: human rights, legal certainty, political participation, a market-oriented economic system and development orientation of state action. In the 1990s a lively debate about good governance ensued in the donor community. Since perfect conditions cannot be assumed to exist in partner countries but are a precondition for the success of development projects, the criteria denote important fields of action or openings for development policy. They are at the same time areas of central importance for political and social stability. If greater emphasis is to be placed on crisis prevention, support in these areas is the obvious place to start.

In a society that allows all individuals and groups to articulate their interests and has at its disposal mechanisms for achieving a balance between these interests, the essential elements of peaceful co-existence are already in place. Support for democratization, political participation and the development of civil society should help to introduce such mechanisms and

familiarize the population with their use. Support for democratization can be provided in different ways, the most widespread of which is direct assistance for the preparation and conduct of elections. It is important, however, to create participatory structures at the grass-roots level and establish a basic democratic consensus within the population. The call for democratization should not be equated with the simple transfer of the Western system of democracy, which presupposes a level of information, popular participation and acceptance of the system which is not found in the societies of many developing countries. Democracy must therefore be judged in a historical, cultural and social context.

It is also possible to support democratic change and development of civil society by fostering the media—an independent press, radio and television. In situations of deepening crisis, the media can provide targeted information, making a major contribution to the defusing of tension. On the other hand, as illustrated by the role played by the Milles Collines radio station in the Rwandan genocide, media policy also has a destructive potential since the media reach large groups and can therefore play a significant negative role in intensifying conflict.

Decentralization can also contribute substantially to the political participation of the population and support democratization processes. Experience has shown—for example in the case of decentralization in El Salvador in the 1980s under the Duarte government—that decentralization can be misused to disguise the central government's strengthening of its control over regional and local authorities.

Although a participatory system supports peaceful development in the long run, the opening up of formerly closed systems may in the short term contribute to political destabilization and the outbreak of violence. This was seen in Kenya, where strict donor conditionality in the early 1990s promoted the democratic opening of the country. This led to greater freedom of speech and the press and facilitated the formulation and articulation of interests, but it has also led to an increased tendency toward violence. The opening up of closed and oppressed societies must therefore be accompanied by support measures to ensure that it does not lead to uprisings and violence.

An independent legal system that is accessible also to poor people as well as transparency and calculability of the state as the legislator are vital for legal certainty and the protection of human rights. If people have confidence in their country's legal system, a great potential for conflict is eliminated.

A functioning police force and military can also contribute to stability in society. The military in developing countries often play a traditionally strong role as the only institution apart from the diplomatic corps that represents the nation-state. This is often accompanied by a lack of civil control over the military. In many developing countries the role played by the military and police causes social instability: in many cases it is the security forces themselves that commit human rights violations. After the termination of civil wars, there is the additional risk that armed groups will engage in criminal activity, thus posing another threat to the peace. The police and military forces must therefore be given intense attention when formulating strategies for conflict prevention. Development cooperation can contribute to the downsizing of the military through demobilization and help reintegrate former soldiers and combatants.

An intense discussion has started on the more far-reaching role of development cooperation in security sector reform. However, such support may have no or even negative effects if the conditions are not conducive to success. For example, training courses for military in developing countries lead to a strengthening of the military if measures are not taken to promote reform and subject the military to civil control.

Crisis prevention as a strategy

The examples above show that development cooperation, even if it is applied to areas directly related to conflict, does not necessarily lead to the prevention of violent crisis. This assumption has been confirmed by the recently completed country studies of El Salvador, Ethiopia, Mali, Kenya, Rwanda and Sri Lanka. They show that development cooperation cannot be assumed to play a neutral role in conflict-prone societies—in most cases it will have either a positive or a negative impact on the conflict situation. This forces actors in the field to actively tackle the challenge of contributing to crisis prevention rather than pretending to be able to continue with ‘business as usual.’ An encouraging result, however, has been that projects and programs specifically designed to defuse tension and contribute to crisis prevention have succeeded in most cases.

Work on prevention strategies has made great advances in the past few years. In 1997 donors in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) adopted the “DAC guidelines on conflict, peace and development co-operation on the threshold of the 21st century,” after which the European Union and

bilateral donors prepared strategy papers. Instruments and mechanisms for putting strategic ideas into practice, however, need to be further developed. Many tasks lie ahead:

- Theoretical concepts and practical guidelines require further work. The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development carried out the above-mentioned evaluation in order to gain insight into practical experiences and draw general conclusions for future development cooperation in conflict settings. The results of the evaluation need to be examined and discussed internally and with the institutions involved, and conclusions must be drawn.
- Systems for early recognition of conflict lines in societies have to be tested, and mechanisms for response to ‘early warning’ must be implemented and improved.
- The staffs of the ministries and implementing agencies have to be trained and encouraged to be receptive to new ideas and challenges. In the current system, there is a tendency among project personnel and those at country desks to ignore conflicts in order to be able to demonstrate good performance and compete for funds. It will be necessary to create an atmosphere that is more conducive to critical evaluation.

A Civil Peace Service has recently been introduced in German development cooperation. It will be active primarily in the socio-political area and will broaden the possibilities for preventive projects and programs in the short and medium term. Activities will range from strengthening the potential for peace or measures to encourage mutual trust between members of conflicting parties to mediation in conflicts

between members of different interest groups, ethnic groups and religions, to mention just a few. The Civil Peace Service will complement these efforts by introducing elements of conflict prevention into bilateral development cooperation.

Development cooperation can only be expected to have a perceptible impact on conflict prevention if donors agree on common positions and work together. It must be kept in mind that development cooperation can only be successful if the governments and societies of developing countries have the will to resolve conflicts and work for peace.

The need for coordination with other policy areas

Because of the nature of conflict in developing countries, deliberations must not be restricted to the internal aspects of their societies. Usually, conflicts also have a range of external dimensions, such as direct political intervention by interested states, historical regional problems or problems resulting from the international financial or economic system. Crisis prevention and the promotion of durable peace as policy objectives therefore require consideration of all policy areas and coherence between policies.

It is obvious that diplomacy, development cooperation and security policy need to be closely coordinated. In that respect, the role of political dialogue and donor conditionality linked to crisis prevention must be further elaborated. Current developments in NATO to expand action in the civilian area after military intervention, the Civil–Military

Cooperation (CIMIC), have to be discussed carefully. The primacy of civil over military action has to be ensured, and civil organizations, whether government or non-governmental actors, should complement military intervention and take control as quickly as possible. Otherwise there is a great danger that the existing structures and long-standing experience of development work will not be used, with the result that money is wasted and the sustainability of action jeopardized.

There is an important link between arms export policy and conflict. In view of the nature of violent conflicts in developing countries in the past decade, more importance has recently been attached to the issue of small arms and light weapons. Although they do not themselves cause the conflicts in which they are used, small arms and light weapons can exacerbate them and increase their lethality. In contrast to major conventional arms, export restrictions and provisions for transparency in small arms are much less strict. One explanation may lie in the fact that, during the Cold War, interest was directed at controlling high-technology conventional arms. In addition, effective control over the production, export and transfer of small arms can only be achieved at the international level, where it is difficult to reach agreement. From a development point of view, strict measures are indispensable. The resolutions on small arms and light weapons adopted in the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, on the one hand, and of the Development Council, on the other hand, are the first steps in the right direction. More steps must be taken at the national and international levels.

Links to other policy areas may be less prominent but cannot be ignored. Financial and economic policies are two examples. The financial crisis in Asia contributed to an increased

conflict potential that resulted in violence in Indonesia, where traditional tensions between the local population and Chinese immigrants persist. Another example is the area of economic policy. The evaluation pointed to the importance of international coffee prices for Rwanda and stated that the slump in prices at the end of the 1980s contributed to the developments that eventually led to the Rwandan genocide. The reason for the sudden slump in coffee prices seems to have been forgotten: until the end of the 1980s, the world coffee market had been regulated by the International Coffee Agreement between the exporting and the Western importing countries. This agreement provided for export quotas, which resulted in a higher world market price than would have occurred under free market conditions—a situation familiar from the experience of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). In the negotiations on an extension of the accord at the end of the 1980s, agreement could not be reached between the exporting and importing members. As a result, free-market conditions were introduced overnight and coffee prices dropped by almost one-half—a catastrophe for Rwanda, whose economic basis was hit hard. The economic setback necessarily had an impact on the already conflict-prone country. It would have been possible at that time to foresee these effects, but no appropriate action was taken. This example illustrates the links between international economic policy and security and stability, links which are largely ignored. The consequences of policies in one area for other countries and other policy areas have to be taken into account to a much greater extent, and this is what is behind the demand for greater policy coherence stated in the Maastricht Treaty on European Union.

Conclusion

In the history of development cooperation, deliberations on its potential contribution to crisis prevention are relatively new. In the past few years, progress on the development of concepts has been remarkable. More thought needs to be given to the role of the military, the possibility of downsizing the military through demobilization, conversion, civil control over the military and the contribution of development cooperation.

Implementation of the concepts is, however, strongly dependent on the will and ability of developing countries' governments and conflicting parties to peacefully settle internal conflicts. International players can support such efforts. To facilitate the prevention of violent conflict, they also need to improve the coherence of their policies. In order to have a real impact on conflict resolution in developing countries, it is necessary for international players to pursue common objectives. The task ahead is very demanding.

Summary Hypothesis

1. Conflicts are always caused by a complex set of factors. There are no single causes of conflict or violent crisis.
2. Early warning is still an issue.
3. Conflict can only be prevented by the societies themselves. Outside players can only support them in their efforts.
4. Development policy itself is not crisis prevention.
5. Conflicts have external dimensions. Donors need to work for stronger policy coherence.

References

- BMZ. See: Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung.
- Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung. 1999. *Ziviler Friedensdienst—Ein neues Element der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit*. Bonn, August.
- _____. 1999. *Sicherheitspolitische Bezüge der Entwicklungspolitik*, Rede von Bundesministerin Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul zur Abschlussveranstaltung des Kernseminars der Bundesakademie für Sicherheitspolitik am 28. Mai 1999 [...], press release, Bonn.
- _____. 1997. *Entwicklungszusammenarbeit und Krisenvermeidung*, BMZ aktuell 79/97, Bonn.
- Klingebl, Stefan. 1999. *Querschnittsauswertung der Serienevaluierung EZ-Wirkungen in Konfliktsituationen*. Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik, Berlin.
- Matthies, Volker, Christoph Rohloff and Sabine Klotz. 1996. *Frieden statt Krieg*. Materialien und Studien der Stiftung Entwicklung und Frieden, 21, Bonn.
- OECD/DAC. See: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee. 1997. *DAC guidelines on conflict, peace and development co-operation*, Paris.
- Spelten, Angelika. 1999. Study for the German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development, Bonn.
- UNDP. See: United Nations Development Programme.
- United Nations Development Programme. 1994. *Human Development Report 1994*, New York.
- United Nations, Group of Governmental Experts. 1999. *General and Complete Disarmament: Small Arms*, Geneva.
- Wissing, Thomas. 1995. *Mögliche Beiträge der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit zur Krisenprävention*. Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik. Berichte und Gutachten 8/1995, Berlin.

Preventive Conversion: New Directions and Opportunities for Disarmament and Security-Building?

by Keith Krause

Introduction¹

The concept ‘conversion’ has a long and distinguished heritage as a frequently advocated, if infrequently practiced, approach to one aspect of the problem of arms control and disarmament—the efficient reallocation of resources from military to other purposes (Renner, 1992; Roberts, 1991; Melman, 1986; Melman, 1970). In the contemporary context it has been strongly influenced by *inter alia* the work of the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), which defined conversion broadly as having six basic elements: the reallocation of defense expenditures; the reorientation of research and development (R&D) activities; the restructuring of defense industries; the reintegration of military personnel into civilian life; the redevelopment of military bases and facilities for other purposes; and the dismantling, scrapping or reusing of surplus weapons (Laurance and Wulf, 1995).

This definition of conversion encompassed most of the activities of modern military establishments and served as a convenient template for a wide range of practical and policy-

relevant conversion activities in the industrialized world and elsewhere. These activities included defense industry downsizing in Western and Eastern Europe, demobilization and retraining projects in African states, the scrapping of major weapon systems under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), the destruction of small arms and light weapons after conflicts, large-scale assistance programs for industrial restructuring in the United States, and the redevelopment of military bases in the United States and elsewhere (BICC, 1996; BICC, 1997; BICC, 1998; Batchelor and Willett, 1998; UNIDIR, 1994; Specht and van Empel, 1998; Kingma, 1997). The range of activities covered by the current understanding of conversion should not, however, give the impression of universal acceptance or even conceptual coherence. Many of these activities would not have been defined as examples of conversion by practitioners, who would have seen no need for a general label to cover their diverse activities. In addition, it is not easy to differentiate conversion from related activities such as product diversification, economic adjustment or industrial spin-off. It is for this reason that Renner uses “economic adjustment” as his umbrella concept (Renner 1992).

There is a need to clarify and distinguish between the different uses of the concept of conversion. Most authors distinguish three: a ‘core’ use of the concept, linked closely to military spending and defense industrial issues and their effects on overall economic performance; a ‘broad’ definition corresponding to that used by BICC (see above); and a vision that includes “all kinds of economic, psychological, cultural and political changes happening in societies where military efforts are reduced.” Michael Brzoska, for example, makes the distinction between a narrow definition of conversion focusing on “the transformation of defence plants from the production of military to civilian goods,” a broad definition corresponding to BICC’s usage, and a broader use quoted above (Brzoska, 1999, p. 133; Ward, Cohen and Betsill, 1995). The analysis in this paper sets aside this third concept of conversion and concentrates on the interaction between the traditional core concept and the contemporary broad one.

It is worth noting that the two issues in the core usage of conversion—military spending and defense industrial issues—emerged out of a concern in the Western industrial world with the excessive resources devoted to the military and with the pervasive influence of the military–industrial complex on political and socio-economic life in many states, in particular the United States (Chan, 1995; Ball, 1988; Brzoska, 1999; Cooper, 1995). The underlying belief was that the military–industrial complex exerted a powerful negative influence on the positive evolution of arms control, disarmament and security-building policies, especially when they might threaten the basic interests of stakeholders in continued employment, high levels of procurement spending, preservation of high-technology industrial expertise and so forth (Melman, 1974; Markusen, 1991, p. 41; Ball, 1986).

¹ I am grateful to Kai Kenkel for his research assistance for this paper and to various BICC staff for their critical input. All errors of fact and interpretation are of course mine.

Only if paths could be charted toward alternative and equally beneficial activities (in economic terms) would activists, especially those in the peace movement, be able to argue credibly for reductions in military activities and for the possible reorientation of freed resources to other, more peaceful ends. As Seymour Melman put it, “the apparent lack of alternatives to the military economy helps to fuel the arms race and erode the industrial base” (Melman, 1986, p. 64). Another example is the disarmament and development debate of the 1970s and 1980s (for a comprehensive overview of the literature see Chan, 1995).

This presentation of the history of the concept of conversion is incomplete (and contestable), but it points to at least three important issues. First, has the pattern of global military activity, in all its dimensions, changed since the end of the Cold War in such significant ways that the concept of conversion needs to be re-examined? Second, has our perception of the most pressing problems, or areas for urgent policy intervention, changed in such a way that a ‘retooled’ concept is needed to facilitate more effective and practical action? Third, does either the core or broad concept of conversion present an appropriate conceptual framework for the development and implementation of practical disarmament activities, or do either in any way hinder a positive evolution of these activities?

This paper puts forth new thoughts by presenting the best case for reorienting the concept toward ‘preventive conversion’ and examining the various implications of such a concept. In the following steps it will:

- Present the significant changes (and continuities) in the post-Cold War military–strategic environment and their impact on the traditional concept of conversion

- Analyze the general consensus on today’s most pressing problems of peace and security and the role of conversion in dealing with them

- Examine the potential weaknesses or occlusions of the current broad understanding of conversion that may warrant a reorientation to preventive conversion

- Discuss the idea of preventive conversion, the costs and benefits of using it as a guidepost for practical disarmament activities, and its relationship to closely related concepts such as early warning, preventive diplomacy or post-conflict peace-building.

Overall, the goal is not to promulgate a new concept of preventive conversion or to question the importance of activities (such as those of BICC) that are oriented around a particular vision of what conversion is, but simply to raise issues that should be considered if the concept is to remain relevant and useful into the medium-term future. Even the best organizing concepts warrant occasional review and scrutiny, and their meaning must evolve to take account of changed practical and political circumstances.

The contemporary military–strategic environment

There is little doubt that the contemporary global military–strategic environment is vastly more secure than it was 15 or 20 years ago, as shown by several concrete indicators. First, military spending has declined from the peak of approximately US \$1.36 trillion in 1987 to about US \$860 billion in 1995–1996 (in real terms)—a drop of 36 percent (figures in this section from ACDA, 1997, in constant 1995 US dollars). This decline is also

reflected in an even greater decline (in percentage terms) in the proportion of global gross national product (GNP) devoted to the military: it stood at 2.8 percent in 1995, as against a Cold War peak of over 5 percent.

This positive indicator has to be balanced against significant regional differences in the pattern of demilitarization. The bulk of the decline in military spending (in dollar terms) has occurred in one region—Eastern Europe—where military spending declined by more than 75 percent (from US \$468 billion to US \$99 billion a year). This accounts for about 75 percent of the drop in world military expenditures noted above. It could also be in part a statistical artefact, owing to severe currency devaluations and revaluations and to a possible over-estimation of military expenditures during the Cold War. Nevertheless, the remaining drop of US \$160 billion a year is still significant and was distributed fairly widely across Africa, the Middle East, North America and Western Europe. In some regions, however, such as South and East Asia before the economic crash of 1997, military spending and its correlates (in particular arms procurement) were on the increase in real terms, although rapidly growing economies made the share of GNP decline (Huxley and Willett, 1999). In still others—such as South America—it remained relatively stable.

The number of soldiers in uniform has also diminished greatly in recent years: from a peak of more than 28 million in 1987 to about 22.5 million today (about a 20 percent decline). Again, however, this globally positive figure masks significant differences between regions and between the states of a region. Large declines have occurred in the Americas and throughout Europe; only small declines have occurred in Africa and Asia, in particular South Asia. Perhaps more worrying, there appear to be two trends that partially offset this positive development: an

increase in the number of police and paramilitary forces with mainly internal security and regime-maintenance functions; and a slight erosion in the monopoly of the state over organized violence with the appearance of relatively large-scale military and paramilitary non-state forces. Comparisons are difficult to make, since guerrilla movements and non-conventional forces are not new (and perhaps were even more prominent in the 1960s and early 1970s than today), but the scanty empirical evidence points to persistently high levels of men and women under arms in one way or another (see also Shearer, 1998; Harker, 1998).

The hardware side of the military equation has also changed, with steep declines in arms procurement and global arms exports. The figures are telling: from a Cold War peak value of around US \$260–290 billion a year, global arms production has probably declined between one-third and one-half, to about US \$160 billion a year (first figure from Krause, 1992, p. 93; second from SIPRI, 1998, p. 198). A similar decline in the global arms trade can be documented, with the value of total arms exports declining from a high of US \$84.3 billion in 1987 (in 1996 US dollars), to about one-half of that amount—US \$42.6 billion—in 1996 (ACDA, 1998). Finally, there has been a steep decline (of almost 50 percent) in military R&D: from a Cold War high in the mid-1980s of perhaps US \$110–130 billion per year, by the mid-1990s it stood at around US \$58 billion (first figure from Krause, 1992, p. 90; second figure from SIPRI, 1998, pp. 268–269). These reductions in procurement, transfers and R&D alone, however, do not immediately result in disarmament, since the global stock of weapons remains very high. Nevertheless, even this is a positive development, especially with the

reductions brought about by implementation of the CFE Treaty and various smaller-scale post-conflict disarmament measures. According to BICC figures, the aggregate number of major weapon systems worldwide declined from a high of 596,000 in 1990 to about 456,000 in 1996 (a drop of about 23 percent), with the greatest percentage declines occurring in Eastern Europe, followed by East Africa, Southern Africa and Western Europe (BICC, 1998, p. 294).

Other changes in the global military-strategic environment have been of a qualitative nature. Perhaps the most important of these was the decline in the intensity and scope of inter-state conflicts, which may be coupled to a more general decline in violent conflict. Only one of the 25 major armed conflicts reported by SIPRI in 1997 was inter-state (that between India and Pakistan over Kashmir) and subsequent events confirm the persistence of this conflict (SIPRI, 1997, p. 17). Of course, significant non-violent disputes between states (such as those between China and Taiwan and between North and South Korea) persist, but they are arguably less likely to break into open warfare than they were in the recent past. This decline in the threat of major inter-state war might be the most significant change in international peace and security in the 20th century.

The second important qualitative change has been the massive restructuring underway in defense industries. The pace and complexity of the various mergers, acquisitions, plant closures and reorganizations are so rapid that they cannot be summarized, but three tentative observations can be made. First, there are significant differences in the pace and scope of defense industry restructuring between the United States and Western Europe. The United States has witnessed the creation of several very large industrial conglomerates that together control a high percentage of the prime contract awards, while in Western Europe firms

remain smaller and cross-border integration is relatively weak. Second, in many parts of the non-Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) world, firms have massively downsized or gone out of the defense business (or out of business) entirely. Third, there is little evidence that this restructuring has led to more efficient or competitive defense industries, and in some cases the reverse may be true.

A final change worth noting is the disappearance or non-appearance of any significant peace dividend. At the end of the Cold War, optimists (or idealists) hoped for an explicit redirection of defense savings into either productive social spending, increased civilian R&D or North–South transfers (foreign aid, etc.), none of which has taken place. Reductions in defense spending have proceeded in parallel with growing pressure on welfare state entitlements, reduced (or stagnant) civilian R&D and declining foreign aid budgets. Instead, reduced defense spending has almost entirely disappeared into deficit reduction and budget balancing, although this, too, may have long-term economic benefits (Chan, 1995, pp. 69–71; Knight, Loayza and Villanueva, 1996).

What are the implications of all these changes for contemporary conversion activities? On the one hand, they have spurred great interest in the development of adequate policy tools to deal with the massive, rapid downsizing of world military forces. The problems of transition (especially in East–Central Europe and former war zones in Africa and elsewhere) were so great that at the outset it was assumed that only careful planning would guarantee a safe and efficient transition to a ‘peace economy.’ On the other hand, 10 years after the Cold War, one can safely say that many of the adjustments that did occur were not planned or managed under a

coherent conversion policy directed toward such activities as worker retraining, base reutilization, industrial restructuring and so forth (the main exception being the United States, where the federal government spent more than US \$3 billion a year on conversion programs between 1993 and 1997) (BICC, 1998, pp. 108). There were, of course, some significant conversion programs elsewhere, but even there the basic decisions about how to proceed were often taken at either the firm or the local level, not as part of an overall conversion strategy designed around best practices and careful analysis.

More importantly, the scope and pace of these changes call into question the basic idea of conversion in at least two ways. First, one can rhetorically ask whether or not the process of conversion has been largely completed. If one accepts that *some* level of armaments and military expenditure is necessary, given the existing structure of world politics, it may be questioned whether the Cold War structure has been effectively dismantled, leaving only a few regional 'hot spots' to defuse. With new cooperative security structures in place or emerging in many regions, how much disarming and concomitant converting is there left to do? Second, one might question the role that conversion played in this disarmament process and whether its transformative potential was actually realized. As the United Nations study on the relationship between disarmament and development stated, "preparation for conversion should be among the first steps on the road to disarmament" (United Nations, 1982, p. 545). This vision implies that conversion is more than just a 'clean-up' process that follows the transformation of political–security relations as essentially a technical and managerial task. It implies that conversion can play a role in the transformation of political–security relations themselves, as argued below.

The contemporary focus of policy attention

Alongside these transformations in the global military–strategic environment, the agenda of international peace and security issues has been reoriented.

This reorientation has been more qualitative than quantitative, since it is difficult to evaluate precisely the shifts in the international peace and security agenda. At least four issues seem to be important:

- The shift from an overriding concern with inter-state conflict to a concern with intra-state or internal conflicts
- The paradoxical role of weapons of mass destruction
- The rise of 'new' issues such as anti-personnel landmines, small arms and light weapons, and child soldiers
- The increased role of the international community in managing (or mismanaging, in many cases) non-strategic conflicts, especially in so-called 'collapsed states.'

With respect to the first issue, it is misleading to claim that intra-state conflicts are something new and qualitatively different. The long history of liberation struggles and guerrilla warfare, the continued pattern of civil war in the post-independence period and the persistence of what during the Cold War were called 'low-intensity conflicts' all testify to the long heritage of internal conflict (Holsti, 1996; Klare and Kornbluh, 1988). What has changed is that these conflicts have captured center stage as the potential for major inter-state conflict has receded. As noted above, the vast majority of the world's conflicts are today internal, and the majority of

international peace and security operations (United Nations or other) have been involved in such conflicts, in such places as Kosovo, Somalia and Angola. The role that conversion efforts can play in such conflicts is usually linked to post-conflict demobilization and retraining of combatants or to disarmament and weapon destruction programs. Neither of these would have been considered a major element of conversion, as classically conceived, and they often implicate 'social engineering' on a larger scale than that originally conceived in all but the broadest visions of conversion.

The declining risk of inter-state conflict has also brought a somewhat paradoxical change in the perceived role of weapons of mass destruction. On the one hand, the traditional process of dealing with nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction seems to have run out of steam, at least after the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1997, the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1995 and the signing of the START II Treaty in 1993 (it has not entered into force). A START III accord is by no means a *fait accompli* but its outlines are at least known. On the other hand, proliferation concerns on the periphery have increased, with the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests (and recent fighting over Kashmir), the testing of longer-range ballistic missiles (in particular, but not exclusively, by North Korea), and residual proliferation concerns regarding states such as Iran. All these concerns point to the continued threat posed by weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. The conversion implications of these developments are not clear, although strategic arms control has generated major conversion and disposal problems with weapon-grade fissile materials and forced the re-employment or unemployment of several thousand weapon researchers in Russia and the United States. Various

programs to deal with both of these issues have been established, with mixed success (BICC, 1997, pp. 215–255; BICC, 1998, p. 37).

The rise of such ‘new’ issues as anti-personnel landmines, small arms and light weapons, and child soldiers is linked both to the shift in attention from inter-state to intra-state conflicts and to the enhanced role of the international community in managing non-strategic conflicts, primarily but not exclusively through the United Nations. In each issue area, a new coalition of like-minded states, non-governmental actors and international organizations have mobilized to raise the profile of the issue and to develop (with varying degrees of success) new arms control and disarmament measures. Only in the case of the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Ottawa Convention) can one claim success so far. Although the problem of collecting and destroying landmines is a formidable one, it is not a conversion problem *per se*. The destruction of surplus small arms and light weapons (and even heavy weapons, such as in Bosnia and Herzegovina), especially in the context of post-war peace-building and demobilization efforts, is a more complex matter that implicates conversion in one way or another, but the defense industrial dimensions (conversion of production facilities for small arms and light weapons, for example) have so far been unexplored.

Is conversion obsolete?

In light of these changes in the global military–strategic environment, and the agenda of international peace and security priorities, it is worth asking whether conversion, like other concepts in the peace and security arena, is an idea whose time has passed. To put it in stark terms, if conversion is an idea inextricably

linked to the Cold War problem of the military–industrial complex or to unjustifiably high levels of defense spending, and if it cannot easily be transferred or adapted to new contexts, then its usefulness is limited by two factors. First, massive defensive industrial restructuring has been undertaken over the past decade, often with little (or no) necessary input from ‘conversion advocates.’ Second, this process may have stabilized, with new and quite different military–strategic priorities competing for the attention of policy-makers and for resources. The work of organizations such as BICC, the National Commission for Economic Conversion and Disarmament, and the Center for Defense Information testifies to the continued vitality of the concept and highlights the way in which the contemporary activities conducted under the label of ‘conversion’ already represent new or modified uses of an older, narrower (and somewhat discredited) concept. (Cooper, 1995; Brzoska, 1999). Nevertheless, one can ask whether the aspects of conversion that are currently the focus of such work actually capture the most important and policy-relevant issues we face today.

In order to resolve this issue there is a need for additional analytic criteria with which to assess the viability of the concept of conversion. This section first discusses the premises that seem to be integral to the core understanding of conversion and then examines whether the current (broad) focus of conversion work respects these premises or neglects or downplays some aspects of them, perhaps thereby excluding important aspects of contemporary security-building and disarmament processes.

The core concept of conversion seems to rest analytically on three pillars. The first is a focus on the macro-economic or industrial aspects of defense spending and in particular on its negative effects (in terms of opportunity costs, slowed growth, distorted development, etc.). Evidence of this orientation can be found in the different strands of the debate on conversion, which included issues such as the macro-economic consequences of military spending (the guns-versus-butter arguments), its opportunity costs (the competitiveness argument), the efficiency and spin-off benefits arising from investments in high-technology military production and so forth (Krause, 1997, pp. 4–13; Väyrynen, 1992; *Defense and Peace Economics*, 1995). Not surprisingly, the main participants in such debates had an economics background or orientation (defined broadly), although they took other variables into account in their assessment of the potential for and desirability of conversion efforts (Bishak, 1991). The main tools were cost–benefit analysis, econometric data analysis and studies of particular conversion experiences within regional economies.

The second pillar was the belief that the process of moving from a military to a civilian economy required careful planning and deliberate policies. It would be going too far to state that conversion advocates were whole-hearted state-interventionists, but the idea of conversion management, evoked in the first BICC *Conversion Survey* (pp. 20–21), reflects this. They distinguished themselves from free-marketeters in at least four ways. First, they argued that even if particular restructuring or downsizing exercises were “mere bubbles in a big pond” the local and regional consequences of unplanned defense conversion were seen as worthy of policy attention (Melman, 1986, p. 62). In other words, they were as much concerned with

micro- as with macro-economic effects. Second, they argued that planning (usually national) was required in order to ensure the efficiency of conversion efforts, since defense was a national policy concern. Third, they argued that the defense industry was so far from a laissez-faire model that interventionist industrial or employment policies did not represent any significant change in orientation (Melman, 1997; Lynch and Markusen, 1994). Finally, and connected with the third point, they recognized that powerful interests were involved in the military-industrial complex and that these interests needed to be somehow accommodated or worked around in the short term in order to reduce, in the long run, their influence on the positive evolution of disarmament and security-building policies.

The third pillar was the idea that conversion efforts contained a ‘transformative potential’ that could play an important role in security-building processes as a means to reduce inter-state conflicts and tensions (Melman, 1986). This was only a small part of a broader set of Western beliefs concerning the nature of inter-state security relations, rooted in a liberal understanding of the mutual or cooperative nature of security relations (for an overview see Krause and Latham, 1998; Macintosh, 1996). It is important to be clear about what this transformative potential represents: it is *not* (at least not usually) an idealist or utopian vision of conversion leading to a pacific world but is based on an understanding of the complex and interactive nature of threats to and beliefs about security, the possibility of meaningful change in conflictual relationships and the role of formal or informal arrangements in fostering this positive change. Conversion activities would be part of a longer temporal chain of conflictual and cooperative interactions and could play a role (along with other instruments) in easing tension and building security.

Not all of these analytical premises are equally reflected in contemporary conversion activities (taking the BICC list of six areas as representative). While the second aspect (managed change) has been retained, the emphasis on the purely economic (or macro-economic) dimension has been downplayed. One result is that little attention has been paid to the macro-economic questions associated with contemporary disarmament and conversion efforts (that is, whether economic growth has or has not increased as a result of declining military spending). On the other hand, the transformative potential of conversion has been almost entirely left aside, perhaps simply because the practical problems of dealing with disarmament after the Cold War warranted greater attention.

What are the consequences of this? On the one hand, the concept of conversion has been rescued from premature oblivion by ‘retooling’ it to deal with an impressive range of contemporary problems stemming from the end of the Cold War and the changed international security agenda, including in particular the disarmament and demobilization of military personnel into civilian life and the dismantling or scrapping of surplus weapons (including small arms and light weapons). On the other hand, it has been turned—intentionally or not—into more of a managerial tool for dealing with the *consequences* of changed security relationships than its more ardent proponents would have wished (BICC, 1996, p. 16). It has also seldom taken the form of the broadest vision of conversion to analyze the “economic, psychological, cultural and political changes happening in societies where military efforts are reduced” (Brzoska, 1999, p. 133). Is there anything that can or should be done to redress this situation?

Preventive conversion and cognate activities

This absence of a broader reflection on the transformative potential or implications of conversion activities spurs reflection on a concept of preventive conversion. The attraction of new concepts is that, Alice in Wonderland-like, they can be made to mean whatever one wants them to mean. Unfortunately, however, ‘framing concepts’ must take their place in a field already crowded with other similar signposts, many of which have particularly strong political, normative or practical associations. This section sketches out a possible definition of preventive conversion, together with some of the practical activities it could encompass, shows how preventive conversion might be related to similar peace- and security-building activities, and discusses the costs and benefits of using such a concept. What *is* preventive conversion, how does it differ from other ideas, and is it useful?

A definition of preventive conversion: ‘preventing’ and ‘converting’ what?

A coherent definition of preventive conversion requires specification of the ‘governing logic’ of the two terms and an examination of the practical orientations and activities to which they would give rise. The logic of the core concept of conversion discussed above implies three things: a concern with the economic dimension of military expenditures and related activities, an orientation toward a process of ‘managed change’ whereby a deliberately formulated set of conversion policies is regarded as more likely to bring a beneficial outcome than an unmanaged or laissez-faire process, and a focus on the potential of conversion activities to transform the role and weight of institutions of

organized violence in social, political and economic life within and between states. The logic of prevention implies action taken to avoid a specific and undesirable outcome.

According to this formulation preventive conversion is:

The pro-active development and timely implementation of conversion policies to prevent the escalation of protracted conflict relationships (inter-state or societal) into violence, to diminish or avoid the accumulation of excessive and destabilizing quantities of arms or the waste of economic and human resources, and to reduce the militarization of social, economic and political relations (within societies and between states).

The activities that preventive conversion encompasses would not on this account necessarily differ greatly from those currently undertaken (i.e. the reallocation of defense expenditures, reorientation of R&D activities, restructuring of defense industries, reintegration of military personnel into civilian life, redevelopment of military bases and facilities for other purposes, and dismantling, scrapping or reusing of surplus weapons), although some new ones would be added. What would change is that conversion activities would be inserted into the entire 'cycle of conflict,' not just as a technical or managerial solution to disarmament problems created as a result of a change in political or security relationships, but as a pro-active tool that could help (albeit in a small way) to transform these relationships. This also recaptures in a more focused way the broadest vision of conversion outlined above. Before discussing the strengths and weaknesses of this understanding, preventive conversion will be situated vis-à-vis related concepts.

Situating preventive conversion: five related activities

A host of new or reinvented peace- and security-building practices have been applied to contemporary security problems. Five of them would seem to be implicated in or related to preventive conversion activities and hence need to be distinguished from it: early warning, preventive diplomacy, post-conflict peace-building, confidence- and security-building, and security sector reform. The purpose of this section is to show not only how preventive conversion 'fits' these activities but also that it represents a distinct value-added element, either because it complements an existing range of policy tools or because it adds a new (and perhaps neglected) policy tool to a particular security-building and conflict-management activity.

Early Warning

The Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER) defines early warning as:

"The systematic collection and analysis of information from crisis-prone and affected areas for the purposes of: analysis and prediction of the escalation of violent conflict, development of strategic responses to these crises, and the presentation of options to critical actors for the purposes of conflict prevention decision-making." (FEWER, 2000).

Early-warning activities thus focus primarily on mobilizing actors (international or domestic) to prevent the escalation of existing conflicts, not on transforming these conflicts into more cooperative relationships. In this respect, although preventive conversion could be one of the strategic responses to these crises, it is more likely to intervene later in the cycle or chain of conflict relationships and be a set of policies designed to

prevent escalation to the point where early warning (and subsequent action) would be required. The failure of preventive conversion efforts could, in some circumstances, represent an early-warning indicator of the persistence of preparations for conflict escalation. Preventive conversion would thus be an element of confidence- and security-building measures (see below) designed to manage or resolve conflicts.

Preventive diplomacy

Preventive diplomacy is often linked to early warning as the diplomatic process that is unleashed once early warning of conflict escalation is present. More generally, it can be seen as "action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur" (United Nations Secretary-General, 1992, para. 20). As such, it does not overlap preventive conversion and preventive diplomacy (other than by the word 'preventive') since the latter does not directly imply any concrete or practical measures beyond diplomatic discussions or negotiations. The only possible connection would be attempts to link preventive conversion activities to ongoing or future arms control and disarmament negotiations (global, regional or local), as a catalyst or a spur to such efforts.

Post-Conflict peace-building

Borrowing again from the UN Secretary-General's *Agenda for Peace*, one can define post-conflict peace-building as "comprehensive efforts to identify and support structures which will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people." A whole range of activities fall under this rubric, including:

“Disarming the previously warring parties and the restoration of order, custody and possible destruction of weapons, repatriating refugees, advisory and training support for security personnel, monitoring elections, advancing efforts to protect human rights, reforming or strengthening governmental institutions and promoting formal and informal processes of political participation” (United Nations Secretary-General, paragraph 55). Here it is clear that conversion can play a role in peace consolidation, especially in the area of disarmament and weapons destruction or in security sector reform (as noted above).

It may seem that there is nothing particularly ‘preventive’ about *post-conflict* conversion activities until one recognizes that almost all contemporary conflicts are part of much larger enduring rivalries or protracted social conflicts in which violent episodes are frequent. Viewing preventive conversion as one tool to help break a cycle of violence and conflict should therefore help to clarify the goals of post-conflict conversion efforts. These should involve working with relevant authorities to ensure that conversion efforts are calibrated with broader peace-building or peace-maintenance efforts (Chopra, 1997). For example, one would want to avoid promoting or supporting a conversion program that exacerbated tensions between communal groups in a fractured society (by being disproportionately burdensome or by altering communal balances of power). Similarly, one would want to avoid conversion programs that inadvertently increased inter-state tensions through the creation of a more lethal and offensively structured armed force, for example.

Confidence- and security-building

In some respects, preventive conversion may be closest to some understandings of confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs).

The most narrow vision of CSBMs encompassed “measures that tend to make military intentions explicit ... to help separate unambiguous signals of hostile intent from the random noise of continuous military activity” or the “communication of credible evidence of the absence of feared threats” (Richter, 1994, citing the definitions of Alford, 1981, p. 134; and Holst and Melander, 1977, p. 147). In the 1980s and early 1990s, however, this originally narrow set of stabilizing measures in the East–West conflict grew into a series of cooperative security measures designed “to regulate the size, technical composition, investment patterns, and operational practices of all military forces by mutual consent for mutual benefit” (Carter, Perry and Steinbrunner, 1992, p. 6). Preventive conversion would be a natural part of this larger set of measures, in particular through regulation of the size, technical composition and investment patterns of military forces, and by its attention to the broader social or macro-economic (e.g. defense industrial) implications of these sorts of cooperative security measures.

It should also be noted that the debate between the ‘traditional’ and ‘transformative’ views of CSBMs might be mirrored in the distinction between ‘traditional’ and ‘preventive’ conversion. Traditionalists focus on the military and strategic benefits of CSBMs (reducing the threat of surprise attack, the risk of escalation or crisis instability); transformationalists argue that “the confidence-building process can facilitate, focus, and amplify the potential for a significant positive transformation in the security relations of participating states” (Macintosh, 1996, pp. 22–23). Traditional conversion advocates focus on the economic costs and benefits of reducing military spending or restructuring defense industrial concerns; preventive conversion advocates see it as playing a larger role in transforming conflictual relationships within and between states.

Security sector reform

One of the most interesting fields to have opened up in recent years, and one that may contain great potential to incorporate preventive conversion activities, is security sector reform. As broadly defined by Nicole Ball, the goal of security sector reform is to “establish good governance in the security sector and to enhance a country’s capacity to develop systems of economic and political governance that benefit society as a whole and foster the creation of a safe and secure environment at the international, regional, national, and local levels” (Ball, 1999, p. 1; see also Ball, 1998). This approach to security-building essentially links the development and peace and security agendas by making the security apparatus of a state (institutions and policies) subject to the logic of good governance that has taken hold in the development field. It is also perhaps the domestic face of inter-state confidence- and security-building.

A vast array of measures can be developed to achieve these goals although, of the several that Ball identifies, only one (practical disarmament and demobilization) appears to have a conversion aspect. The other measures are primarily institutional or policy-oriented and include military accountability to civilian authorities, financial and policy-making transparency, civil-society monitoring, and regional security-building. On a deeper level, however, preventive conversion can be seen as a crucial component of many dimensions of security sector reform. The best way to illustrate this is to pose a simple question: “How can one achieve security sector reform in a ‘hostile’ environment where major societal actors have deeply entrenched interests in the status quo?” (Ferguson, 1994).

The answer to such a question is not simple but it echoes the logic of one of the core premises of conversion. Important, powerful interests exist in states and societies in need of security sector reform, and these interests are seldom easy to dislodge. Instead of the interests easily recognized in advanced industrial states (bureaucratic self-protection, maintaining employment, preservation of high-technology industrial expertise and so forth), a number of other interests manifest themselves in underdeveloped states, including:

- Communal group survival (Tutsis in Burundi)
- Maintaining a grip on power (Tikriti Sunnis in Iraq, Alawites in Syria)
- Resisting economic reform (pre-revolutionary Nicaragua under Somoza)
- Protecting a self-image as ‘guardians of the nation’ (Algerian, Chilean or Turkish armed forces)
- Maintaining lucrative economic activities (Chinese or Egyptian armed forces, among others).

These sorts of ‘military–pre-industrial complex’ are often the most powerful social, economic or political forces in states with weak political institutions, little popular legitimacy and/or repressed or non-existent civil societies. In several of the examples offered above, they have also persistently been an obstacle to regional security-building and have driven the process of state-building down ‘pathological paths’ fraught with violence and repression.

What role could the concept of preventive conversion play in a strategy of security sector reform? It would attempt to reduce the role and importance of the institutions of organized violence in social, economic and political life through practical

measures that demilitarized different facets of society, politics and the economy. It would be a ‘third-party intervention strategy’ to work with local actors who wanted to begin (or accelerate) the process of shifting the balance of forces in society and the state toward less militarized models (for various definitions see Ross, 1987). One could imagine, for example, identifying and then working with civilian governments that wanted to reduce the role of the military in the economy (e.g. its control of civilian industrial or non-industrial firms) through a ‘privatization’ program that followed successful diversification efforts (BICC, 1998, pp. 124–129 and pp. 226–231). Preventive conversion could also assist the separation of the internal (police) and external (armed forces) security functions of the state in order to convert the armed forces exclusively to an external role. One might also imagine preventive conversion of related activities (military schooling systems or a large-scale role for the armed forces in state infrastructure projects) that entrench the armed forces’ role in society. Finally, one might work on the ‘conversion of policy’ in an attempt to open up security policy-making processes to civilian control and non-governmental oversight, especially in areas or states identified as ripe for such practical interventions.

The costs and benefits of ‘preventive conversion’

As outlined above, preventive conversion is a supplement to ongoing conversion activities that does not overturn the logic of the broad concept of conversion used by BICC and others but accents it with the addition of three elements:

- A focus on the entire chain of conflict
- The mobilization of new actors and stakeholders
- The reclaiming of practical elements from the original ‘transformative’ vision of some conversion advocates.

Incorporating each of these elements into a project of preventive conversion has several benefits as well as a few costs (or pitfalls) of which one must beware.

The first benefit of preventive conversion is that it reintegrates the logic of conversion activities into the entire cycle or chain of conflict and cooperation within and between states. Conversion is no longer regarded as a one-off activity to be undertaken as a consequence of disarmament decisions or activities and then completed, nor is it only a technical solution to a post-conflict problem of resource reallocation. It is a proactive tool that could help (albeit in a small way) to transform conflictual relationships (conflict prevention) and assist peace maintenance through practical action at different stages of conflict, including the stage before it has become violent or exacerbated. The focus of conversion remains on the efficient reallocation of resources from military purposes to other ends, but this reallocation can be planned and implemented as a crucial element of broader security-building processes than just disarmament.

The second benefit is that it may mobilize new actors or stakeholders in conversion activities. The traditional focus on economic issues in an advanced industrial state rested upon two assumptions about the nature of the state and society: that a proper balance of civil–military relations existed (with enough decision-making power in civilian hands to make

conversion possible); and that civil society (including independent economic actors) was robust enough to absorb, with help, the conversion process. However, beyond the advanced industrial world, these two assumptions hold to varying degrees. This means that preventive conversion activities will have to engage stakeholders in discussions about the reshaping of civil–military relations (and the role of the armed forces in all policy- and decision-making processes) and broader processes of economic reform. Preventive conversion activities may also have to provide direct support to civil society—either to strengthen it as a counter-balance to the socio-political or economic weight of the armed forces or to enhance its ‘absorptive capacity’ (in, for example, demobilization programs for ex-combatants). This requires working more closely with development, human rights and grass-roots communities, and projects in preventive conversion processes.

The third benefit is the recapturing of the proactive and transformative elements of the broadest vision of conversion noted in the introduction (“all kinds of economic, psychological, cultural and political changes happening in societies where military efforts are reduced”). I am not arguing that preventive conversion efforts must abandon the technical and problem-solving focus of conversion for an exclusively ‘critical’ stance toward existing states and social forms, but rather that this dichotomy is false and needs to be rejected (see Cox, 1986, p. 208). All problem-solving approaches contain a transformative potential in their choice of which social agents to focus on, their assumptions about the desirable direction of change, and their implicit models of state and society. Thus, for example, something seemingly so straightforward as the

distillation of ‘best practices’ from West European base-closure experiences for exportation to East–Central European states still involves an advocacy claim. In order to advocate preventive conversion as something additional to contemporary conversion efforts, one has to acknowledge this normative orientation and make explicit the direction of change one is promoting. In other words, practical work on the conversion of military electronics plants in Moldova must be linked to broader societal and regional peace-building efforts.

These three benefits of preventive conversion, however, necessitate some difficult choices that should be considered as potential costs or pitfalls. Making explicit the link between practical projects and broader peace-building requires a willingness to recognize circumstances under which practical conversion projects should *not* be undertaken. If the conversion of a military production facility may contribute to the entrenchment and enrichment of a parasitic and aggressively nationalistic or repressive ruling elite (through flawed privatization, for example), then perhaps it should not be supported by outside actors. Similarly, if conversion efforts that include opportunity costs (time, energy and international resources) are to be undertaken, choices may have to be made between difficult projects with low chances of success and less difficult but longer-term efforts aimed at prevention and slow transformation.

The wider objective of preventive conversion activities—to reduce the militarization of social, economic and political relations between and within states—also raises the usual dangers associated with large-scale social engineering projects. For example, if the best practices of conversion (and related norms, such as transparency and accountability) are to be

transmitted between different regions, some regard has to be given to the socio-cultural context of these projects so that conversion does not become just another form of Western invention imposed on the rest of the world (for a general overview of this problem see Krause, 1999). This is especially important if preventive conversion is undertaken as part of broader peace- and security-building initiatives, where the entire apparatus of confidence-building, multilateral diplomacy and international development assistance is engaged.

Conclusions

Our choice of frameworks for practical action ought to be a pragmatic one: Does the concept help or hinder achievement of the intended goals? In this respect, the concept of preventive conversion as developed above does have some attractions. It allows for the incorporation of new activities under the conversion umbrella and expands conversion to link it more closely to important aspects of peace- and security-building that have hitherto been less prominent. It also recaptures elements of the original vision of conversion that have been left aside and forces conversion advocates to be more explicit about the broader context of and constraints on their efforts. Finally, it represents a ‘repackaging’ that might better situate conversion activities within a wider field of peace- and security-building efforts. This is important for several reasons. From the standpoint of political saleability and winning the support and attention of major funding bodies, well-thought-out repackaging reflects a commitment to success in a complex world, not a caving-in to fashion. But preventive

conversion represents neither a critique of existing conversion concepts and practices nor a wholesale re-invention of them. As an add-on to an existing concept, therefore, it is not obvious that the extensions and amendments suggested above cannot be incorporated in the existing vision of conversion. In addition, if efforts to extend and reinvent the concept of conversion lead practitioners to engage in divisive and unproductive turf battles or trigger esoteric theoretical debates, they will be ultimately counterproductive. Thus the final test of preventive conversion will not be its conceptual soundness but whether it is accepted or rejected by conversion advocates and practitioners as an appropriate label for their activities.

References

- ACDA. See: Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (United States).
- Alford, Jonathan. 1981. "The Usefulness and the Limitations of CBMS". In William Epstein and Bernard Felder, eds., *New Directions in Disarmament*. New York: Praeger.
- Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (United States). 1997. *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1996*. Washington: ACDA.
- _____. 1998. *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1997*. Washington: ACDA.
- Ball, Nicole. 2000. "Good Practices in Security Sector Reform." In: Herbert Wulf (ed.), *Security Sector Reform. Brief 15* Bonn: BICC, June, pp. 14–22.
- _____. 1998. *Spreading Good Practices in Security Sector Reform: Policy Options for the British Government*. London: Saferworld.
- _____. 1988. *Security and Economy in the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- _____. 1986. "Converting the Workforce: Defence Industry Conversion in the Industrialised Countries". *International Labour Review*, 125:4, pp. 401–422.
- Batchelor, Peter and Susan Willett. 1998. *Disarmament and Defence Industrial Adjustment in South Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- BICC. See: Bonn International Center for Conversion.
- Bishak, Gregory, ed. 1991. *Towards a Peace Economy in the United States*. London: Macmillan.

- Bonn International Center for Conversion. 1996. *Conversion Survey 1996. Global Disarmament Demilitarization and Demobilization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 1997. *Conversion Survey 1997. Global Disarmament and Disposal of Surplus Weapons*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 1998. *Conversion Survey 1998. Global Disarmament, Defense Industry Consolidation and Conversion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brzoska, Michael. 1999. "Military Conversion: The Balance Sheet". *Journal of Peace Research*, 36:2 pp. 131–140.
- Carter, Ashton, William Perry and John Steinbrunner. 1992. *A New Concept of Cooperative Security* Washington: The Brookings Institution.
- Chan, Steve. 1995. "Grasping the Peace Dividend: Some Propositions on the Conversion of Swords into Ploughshares". *Mershon International Studies Review* 39, pp. 53–95.
- Chopra, Jarat. 1997. "Peace Maintenance: The Last Stage of Development". *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*. Also available at: <http://www-jha.sps.cam.ac.uk/a/a243.htm>.
- Cooper, Julian. 1995. "Conversion is Dead, Long Live Conversion". *Journal of Peace Research*, 32:2, pp. 129–132.
- Cox, Robert. 1986. "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory." In Robert Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- _____. 1995. "The Economics of Conversion" 6:3. *Defence and Peace Economics*.
- Ferguson, James. 1994. *The Anti-Politics Machine: 'Development,' Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- FEWER. See: Forum on early warning and early response.
- Forum on early warning and early response. 2000. Homepage <http://www.fewer.org/functions/about/index.htm>.
- Harker, John. 1998. "Private power, Public Insecurity: The Growing Reality of Security for Profit," *Ploughshares Monitor*, September. (<http://www.ploughshares.ca/content/MONITOR/mons98b.html>).
- Holst, Johan Jorgen and Karen Melander. 1977. "European Security and Confidence-Building Measures". *Survival*, 19:4, July/August.
- Holsti, Kal. 1996. *The State, War and the State of War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Huxley, Tim and Susan Willett. 1999. *Arming East Asia*. Adelphi paper 329. London: International Institute for Strategic Studies.
- Kingma, Kees. 1997. "Demobilization of Combatants after Civil Wars in Africa and their Reintegration into Civilian Life". *Policy Sciences*, 30.
- Klare, Michael and Peter Kornbluh, eds. 1988. *Low Intensity Warfare*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Knight, Malcolm, Norman Loayza and Delano Villanueva. 1996. "The Peace Dividend: Military Spending Cuts and Economic Growth". *IMF Staff Papers*, 43:1, March, pp. 1–37.
- Krause, Keith, ed. 1999. *Culture and Security: Multilateralism, Arms Control and Security Building* London: Frank Cass.
- _____. 1997. *Military Spending and Social, Economic and Political Development: Indicators and Regional Analyses*. Ottawa: Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada.
- _____. 1992. *Arms and the State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Krause, Keith and Andrew Latham. 1998. "Constructing Non-Proliferation and Arms Control: The Norms of Western Practice". *Contemporary Security Policy*, 19:1, April, pp. 23–94.
- Laurance, Edward and Herbert Wulf, with the assistance of Joseph Di Chiaro III. 1995. *Conversion and the Integration of Economic and Security Dimensions*. Report 1. Bonn: BICC, January.
- Lynch, Roberta and Ann Markusen. 1994. "Can Markets Govern?". *The American Prospect* 16, pp. 125–134. Also available at <http://epn.org/prospect/16/16lync.html>.
- Macintosh, James. 1996. "Confidence-Building: Looking to the Future." In J. Marshall Beier and Steven Mataija, eds., *Verification, Compliance and Confidence Building*. Toronto: York Centre for International and Security Studies, pp. 21–36.
- Markusen, Ann et al. 1991. *The Rise of the Gunbelt*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 1989. "Cold War Economics". *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 45:1, Jan./Feb.
- Melman, Seymour. 1997. "From Private to State Capitalism: How the Permanent War Economy

- Transformed the Institutions of American Capitalism". *Briefing paper 18*. National Commission for Economic Conversion and Disarmament, February.
- _____. 1986. "Swords into Ploughshares: Converting from Civilian to Military Production". *Technology Review*. January, pp. 62–71.
- _____. 1974. *The Permanent War Economy*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- _____. (ed.). 1970. *Conversion of Industry from a Military to a Civilian Economy*, six vols.: Praeger, New York.
- Renner, Michael. 1992. *Economic Adjustments after the Cold War: Strategies for Conversion*. Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing.
- Richter, Andrew. 1994. *Reconsidering Confidence and Security Building Measures: A Critical Analysis*. Toronto: York Centre for International and Strategic Studies.
- Roberts, Adam. 1991. "Conversion Concepts and Approaches". *Disarmament*, 14:1, pp. 71–94.
- Ross, Andrew. 1987. "Dimensions of Militarization in the Third World," *Armed Forces and Society*, 13:4, pp. 561–578.
- Shearer, David. 1998. *Private Armies and Military Intervention*. Adelphi paper 316. London: International Institute for Strategic Studies.
- SIPRI. See: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.
- Specht, Irma and Carlien van Empel. 1998. *Enlargement, A Challenge for Social and Economic Reintegration: Targeting Ex-Combatants or All War-Affected People*. Geneva: ILO, March.
- Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. 1998. *SIPRI Yearbook 1998. Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- UNIDIR. See: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.
- United Nations, *The Relationship between Disarmament and Development* (New York: United Nations, 1982), recommendation 5, cited in Marek Thee, "Swords into Ploughshares: The Quest for Peace and Human Development", *International Labour Review*, 122:5 (1983), 545.
- United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. 1994. *Le désarmement et la conversion de l'industrie militaire en Russie*. research paper 24. Geneva: UNIDIR.
- United Nations Secretary-General. 1992. *An Agenda for Peace*. A/47/277, 17 June 1992. New York: United Nations.
- Väyrynen, Raimo. 1992. *Military Industrialization and Economic Development*. Geneva: UNIDIR.
- Ward, Michael, Jordin Cohen and Michele Betsill. 1995. "The Three Faces of Conversion in the USA." *Defence and Peace Economics*, 6, pp. 221–235.

2

Case Studies in Practical Disarmament

***For technical reasons photo
available in printed version only***

The Elusive Peace Dividend in South Asia

by Richard Ponzio

Introduction

India's three nuclear tests on the morning of 11 May 1998 and two on 13 May, near the Rajasthani village of Pokhran, heralded a new age of nuclear politics in South Asia and a significant shift in the region's relations with the outside world. Pakistan's six nuclear counter-blasts on 28 and 30 May in Chagai, Baluchistan, further weakened the global nuclear non-proliferation regime of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Non-Proliferation Treaty, or NPT), sharpening tensions between the two South Asian rivals. India's and Pakistan's overt nuclear capabilities have undermined the 'security in ambiguity' surrounding the subcontinent's nuclear deterrence. In addition to heightening insecurities and mistrust in the region, the advent of full-scale nuclear programs adds considerably to already high conventional military expenditures. The implications for the promotion of human security and human development in South Asia are disturbing.

This paper examines the conflict–security–development nexus in South Asia after the nuclear tests and the prospects and rationale for generating a peace dividend in the region. Demilitarization and conversion strategies are introduced as means to capture a peace dividend for human development purposes. The relevance of demilitarization and conversion to security building and conflict prevention is discussed, as well as the potential role for a regional security forum in South Asia.

South Asia's conflict–security—development nexus after the nuclear tests

Reaching a historical peak in 1987 totaling nearly US \$1 trillion (UNDP, 1994, p. 48), annual world military expenditure has since then declined dramatically to around US \$670 billion in 1998—the lowest level since 1966 and almost 40 percent below the 1987 peak (BICC, 1999). On a global scale, one calculation of the peace dividend—interpreted narrowly as the accumulated savings from reduced military spending—estimates a savings of US \$935 billion during the period 1987–1994 (Haq, 1995, p. 126).

Contrary to this global trend, military spending (as a proportion of gross national product, GNP) in South Asia, as the only region, has increased since 1987 (Haq, 1997, p. 3). Home to two of the 10 largest land armies in the world, South Asia has also consistently ranked at the bottom of the BICC Conversion, Disarmament, Demobilization and Demilitarization Index (BIC3D) (BICC, 1999) and is the only region which had a larger military sector in 1995 than in 1985.

A major consequence of the region's high military expenditure is the tremendous strain placed on the limited resources available for social and human development programs. According to the report *Human Development in South Asia 1997*, "About

260 million people [in South Asia] lack access to even rudimentary health facilities; 337 million lack safe drinking water; 830 million have no access to basic sanitation facilities; and over 400 million people go hungry every day" (Haq, 1997). Given that earmarking less than 2 percent of South Asia's gross domestic product (GDP) could finance the region's most urgent human development priorities (Haq, 1997, p. 5), a new balance between expenditure on national and personal security warrants consideration. Even as the region's military expenditure slightly contracted as a percentage of GDP between 1994 and 1997, the military expenditure burden as a percentage of central government expenditure rose by two percentage points. Similarly, the ratio of military expenditure as a percentage of the combined education and health expenditures in South Asia also increased by two percentage points from 1991 to 1997. Most noticeable during this period was the rise in military expenditure in relation to education and health spending: for Pakistan from 1.25:1 previously to 1.5 to 1; and for Bangladesh from 0.4:1 to 0.8:1.

In 1997 the renewed peace dialogue between Pakistan and India, coupled with Pakistan's announcement that it would reduce its defense spending by 10 percent in real terms in the 1997/1998 budget, fueled hopes that military expenditures would begin a slow but steady decline in the region. The financial savings could then potentially serve to augment the scarce resources available for human development programs. After the 1998 nuclear tests, however, the Indian government declared an allocation of US \$9.9 billion (Indian Rs 412 billion) for defense in its 1998/1999 budget, an increase of US \$1.2 billion or 14 percent in nominal terms over the previous year (IISS, 1998, p. 147). After India's announcement, Pakistan responded by increasing its defense

expenditure by an additional 8.5 percent in nominal terms to US \$3.3 billion (Pakistani Rs 143 billion) for fiscal year 1998/1999 (IISS, 1998, p. 148). Sustaining this trend, both India and Pakistan are planning to increase their military expenditures for 1999/2000. Given the domestic political pressures from the far right favoring such increases, the opposition and military establishment in both countries, and the desire to acquire the most sophisticated military hardware, the major factor restraining additional military budget increases is the financial limitations facing both governments.

Military expenditure reductions may occur when there are perceived improvements in a state's external and internal security, shifts in domestic politics and ideological viewpoints, and other significant factors, such as fiscal pressures (BICC, 1996, p. 63). While fiscal concerns constrain further growth in South Asian military spending today (particularly with the application of sanctions by some Western powers after the nuclear tests), the perceived external and internal security threats to South Asia's ruling regimes are the fundamental determinants sustaining current military expenditure levels. Any strategies to curb military spending must confront the conflicts and pressures that heighten insecurity on the subcontinent. To a far lesser extent, the limited public knowledge of the military budget's 'crowding out' effect on long-range development planning also helps to entrench the defense establishment's share of the annual national budget. Despite the efforts of foreign and regional policy think-tanks and the growing interest of many international organizations, the disarmament and development debate has failed to progress in South Asia, as compared to other regions, since the end of the Cold War.

In the first 10 months after India's and Pakistan's nuclear tests, attempts were made by the ruling regime in each country to renew negotiations on the Kashmir conflict and other bilateral disputes. This process culminated in February 1999 with their signing of the Lahore Declaration, which called for new confidence-building measures, non-interference in domestic affairs and an acceptance of the 1972 Simla Agreement as the basis for further dialogue. After these advances, however, tensions flared up again from the following two sets of events:

- Seeking to pre-empt a collapse of its ruling coalition, India's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, or Indian People's Party) ordered the testing of its longest-range (over 2000 km) missile system, the Agni II, in March 1999. Not surprisingly, Pakistan responded by testing both its long-range Ghauri II missile system and medium-range Shaheen missile.
- More significantly, following weeks of seasonal shelling along India's and Pakistan's Line of Control (LOC) in Kashmir, in late May India ordered air strikes on Kashmiri militants, which led to the downing of two Indian MiG aircraft on Pakistan's side of the LOC. India claims that conflict along the LOC has been exacerbated by the infiltration of foreign Mujahideen and Pakistani army regulars from Pakistan's side of the LOC.

While fighting in India's Kargil sector abated with the Pakistan-supported withdrawal of combatants, tensions and intense mistrust continue to linger. Many observers fear that the slightest provocation could engulf the two countries in a much wider, more serious conflagration than that over Kargil. Moreover, a possible nuclear exchange in such a scenario cannot be ruled out given the political stakes involved, the unpredictable nature of civil-military relations in Pakistan, and the limited nuclear doctrine and

command and control capabilities in both countries. Since the nuclearization of India's and Pakistan's arsenals has further upset the ability of conventional forces to provide adequate territorial defense, thereby heightening regional tensions (similar to US-Soviet relations during the Cold War), and has eroded the relatively safer non-weaponized nuclear deterrent on the subcontinent, the current security situation and prospects for a military drawdown appear very unpromising.

This paper focuses on the dynamics between India and Pakistan because their combined military expenditure constitutes 93 percent of South Asia's total defense spending. In the past decade, however, new military expenditure data for other parts of the region have shown trends that require careful monitoring. Embroiled in an internecine 15-year conflict with Tamil separatists that has left over 50,000 dead, Sri Lanka's defense spending has increased to alarming levels in recent years, accounting for nearly 20 percent of central government expenditure. While the government of Bangladesh recently concluded its long-standing conflict with guerrilla forces in the Chittagong Hill Tracts through a peace accord, it, too, has considerably increased its military spending, which constitutes over 17 percent of the national budget.

The peace dividend concept broadly defined

The current South Asian security environment is far from propitious for the introduction of far-sighted disarmament and demobilization programs. Indeed, discussion of demilitarization and the generation of a peace dividend for human development purposes may strike many as illusory or impractical. Although this

might seem justified in light of the many difficulties that continue to beset Indo-Pakistani relations, certain demilitarization and conversion strategies could slowly reverse the region's deteriorating security climate and serve as important tools for conflict prevention. Before entertaining such policy proposals, however, it is useful to adopt a broad interpretation of the peace dividend concept in order to further the rationale for pursuing a military downsizing agenda within a new regional security framework.

The peace dividend signifies more than just the fiscal aspects of military expenditure reductions. A comprehensive assessment is needed to get a complete picture of what transpires during disarmament and military conversion processes. In *Conversion Survey 1996*, the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) distinguishes three separate components of the peace dividend:

- The resource dividend, which represents the savings resulting from reduced military spending
- The product dividend, which reflects the sum of various alternative uses to which the savings are allocated
- The welfare dividend, which gauges the positive welfare effects resulting from resources released from the military (BICC, 1996, p. 63).

Drawing on this broader understanding of the concept, the costs associated with demilitarization can be separated from the consequent improvements in economic performance and social spending that may, over time, lead to advances in human development.

In the wake of the Cold War, the decline in military spending is estimated to have yielded a cumulative

saving of hundreds of billions of dollars, but observers have found tracking the funds a herculean task (UNDP, 1994, p. 8). One result of the monitoring difficulties is that scholars still lack the conclusive evidence necessary to make a firm linkage between reduced military spending and increased social spending. To more precisely identify military savings and harness a peace dividend for human development activities, South Asian governments would be well advised to either separate the peace dividend as an item in the national budget accounts or credit the accumulated military savings to a demilitarization fund (UNDP, 1994, p. 59). The proposed demilitarization fund would undoubtedly be tapped for reducing budget deficits and covering the often high costs associated with military conversion. However, if skillfully differentiated in national budgets and sufficiently monitored, a large part of the fund could be made available for furthering human development goals.

Through carefully designed demilitarization measures, such as those described in the next section, India and Pakistan could enter into a mutual pact to freeze and then gradually scale back their current levels of military spending by 2–5 percent a year. The report *Human Development in South Asia 1997* presented the potential outcome in India and Pakistan of a military spending freeze (in real terms), a 2 percent annual cut and a 5 percent annual cut. It projected the size of military expenditure savings over a 15-year period to be US \$80 billion and US \$125 billion, respectively (Haq, 1997, p. 85). As important as these budgetary savings would be, if they were generated, realization of a broader type of peace dividend would require clear strategies and political fortitude to ensure that freed resources are reallocated to human development programs.

Building confidence and security in South Asia through demilitarization

Given the considerable repercussions of high military spending and the nuclear stand-off in South Asia, a delicate balance must be sought between future investments in weapons and soldiers and future investments in people's welfare. Such a balance can only come about through a concerted effort to build confidence and devise a new framework for peaceful co-existence in the region. The three wars fought between India and Pakistan, coupled with constant low-intensity conflict along the Line of Control and on the Siachen Glacier, have left a legacy of bitter mistrust. To transcend past enmities and current nuclear dangers, a broad but integrated strategy for peace and security in South Asia must be forged.

In recent decades, a series of confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) have been proposed to buttress, rather than replace, the conflict resolution processes in South Asia. The most recently agreed CSBMs between India and Pakistan include:

- Agreement on advance notification of military exercises and troop movements
- Establishment of a direct communications link between the Directors-General of Military Operations
- Agreement not to attack each other's nuclear installations and facilities (Sandrock, 1997, pp. 209–211).

Many of the CSBMs adopted over the past 20 years are moribund today, and most have not been implemented effectively because of the limited verification measures and incentives for

compliance. The problem of non-compliance has led both sides to question the value of additional CSBMs. To enhance the sense of external and internal security that both nations require and to induce a more favorable environment for conflict prevention and resolution, the case for demilitarization should be re-examined and an innovative implementation strategy introduced.

Militarism, in the context of the South Asian developing countries, is a broad concept. "Militarism has not only expanded at the international level, in the form of arms buildup and in the use of force as an 'instrument of supremacy'; in the developing states it has also led to an increase in the role of the military establishment in domestic and foreign policy-making and execution" (Mazari, 1996, p. 96). Demilitarization entails not only reductions in military expenditure, personnel and weapon holdings but also a process for diminishing the influence of the military over civilian institutions and delegitimizing the use of violence to resolve conflicts. With comprehensive verification systems, proper incentives and a new regional security arrangement, a step-by-step process for the gradual demilitarization of South Asia becomes the only viable approach to fostering trust and building regional security (in all its dimensions). In this regard, five fundamental steps are recommended.

Expand verification capabilities: Demilitarization in the current setting of South Asia is unimaginable, and may run counter to conflict prevention efforts, if proper treaty verification measures are not in place and constant external pressure is not applied. Both India and Pakistan currently maintain receiving stations for SPOT and LANDSAT satellite data (Pakistan, in Islamabad; India, in Hyderabad). In addition, India has its own remote sensing satellite, and Pakistan has four

and India 19 known seismic stations (Sandrock, 1997, p. 213). More comprehensive verification systems, however, would be needed to ensure compliance with disarmament and demobilization agreements. This may involve considerable economic costs, requiring external assistance to expand existing capabilities.

Before a serious Indo-Pakistani dialogue on demilitarization issues commences, ranging from an initial 2–3 percent military budget reduction (in real terms) and a freeze on long-range missile production to possible troop withdrawals from areas bordering the Line of Control, it is necessary for the great powers, the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to contribute technical advice and significant resources to the start-up costs for comprehensive monitoring systems. In discussing legitimate techniques of verification and information-gathering, India and Pakistan may want to consider the following measures:

- A regular exchange of the two countries' military officers
- Regular on-site inspection teams
- Weekly reconnaissance overflights
- The cooperative use of technical assistance from a third party, such as Russia or the United States.

Address India's concern about the nuclear threat from China: Despite the useful lessons from the Brazil–Argentina nuclear agreement and the weapon-free-zone agreed in the Treaty of Tlatelolco, South Africa's decision in the 1990s to denuclearize its arsenal, nothing short of complete and universal nuclear disarmament—involving a new universal regulatory regime—will convince India and Pakistan to dismantle their nuclear warheads and production capabilities. This stems largely from India's perceived threat from a nuclear China,

which has acquired nuclear capabilities in response to the nuclear posturing of the other four permanent members of the UN Security Council. At a bare minimum, the costs associated with the Indian and Pakistani nuclear programs are estimated to run over US \$750 million per year each (Sharma, 1998, p. 33). Besides the potential savings from a process of denuclearization in South Asia, the security situation would improve as the fear of pre-emptive strikes against India's and Pakistan's nuclear installations diminishes. This argument, of course, runs counter to the general perception in India and Pakistan that nuclear weapons are not destabilizing and that the logic of deterrence and arms control will hold. Unless the nuclear-weapon powers are willing to risk the possibility of further countries and terrorist organizations acquiring nuclear weapons, they must commit themselves to their obligation under Article IV of the NPT to work for "complete disarmament under strict and effective international control." Such a commitment, coupled with a package of development-oriented incentives, is essential for India and Pakistan to adhere to both the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the NPT.

Engage in a national dialogue on the pros and cons of demilitarization and conversion: A third step in support of gradual demilitarization is to forge a national consensus in the South Asian countries on the need for more affordable, credible defense programs (Singh, 1994). In addition to assessing how regional threat perceptions may be improved through a region-wide military drawdown, the debate should focus on the possible trade-offs between excessive military spending (especially hidden costs and military debt servicing) and neglecting human development priorities. Given the

region's sustained dismal social indicators, the net balance between the positive and negative impacts of high military spending in South Asia arguably weighs heavily against efforts to secure scarce public resources for human development programs.

Besides offering financial incentives to re-focus policy attention on development needs, the international donor community could aid the demilitarization dialogue by sharing 'best practices' for optimizing societal benefits from the reuse of military resources. Such financial and technical resources may be crucial, as the costs associated with demilitarization and conversion efforts are potentially high. Demobilizing, and reintegrating a portion of the more than two million South Asian soldiers in particular, will require a comprehensive retraining program and the creation of alternative employment opportunities. Due to the political sensitivity of force reductions, this may involve, at the initial stage, an expansion of the development role of the armed forces. When carried out successfully, conversion has the potential to result in significant social benefits (e.g., more teachers for the region's many 'ghost schools'); it may even contribute to a further willingness to demilitarize.

Promote a demilitarized culture: In addition to reducing the level of military spending and the number of soldiers, armaments and defense industries, demilitarization involves a process of lessening the influence of the military on civilian institutions and delegitimizing the use of violence to resolve external and internal conflicts. Two near-term goals in this direction would be:

- To increase transparency in military budget decision-making through active parliamentary oversight and statutory auditing, including foreign arms procurement
- To improve efficiency and accountability in the management of defense sector resources, including the public defense industries, military businesses and land holdings.

In addition to curbing the military's role in national decision-making and the economy, promoting a culture of peace requires the active commitment of all groups in society to renounce the tools of war and use of force to settle disputes. To realize this aim, domestic programs for training in non-violent conflict resolution, in all schools, and for dispute-resolution services, including mediation and arbitration, should be created or expanded in all communities. With their broad, interdisciplinary scope, peace education and skills training in the techniques of war prevention help to bridge practitioners, activists and scholars from the conflict prevention, disarmament and development communities.

Establish a regional security forum: While the above four steps are essential elements of demilitarization in South Asia, a primary vehicle is still needed for negotiating and sustaining a series of regional military cut-backs. Ostensibly, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), created in 1985, appears as a suitable candidate to focus South Asian states on the region's chief security concerns. However, Article 10 of the SAARC Charter explicitly states that all "bilateral and contentious issues shall be excluded from deliberation," which India, in particular, often invokes. Learning from the Helsinki process of peace and cooperation that culminated in major conventional and nuclear force reductions in Europe and the

creation of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), a flexible regional security arrangement—extending beyond SAARC's current mandate and capabilities—could serve as the engine in South Asia for consolidating stability, encouraging mutual defense cuts and overseeing the technical aspects of a multi-staged demilitarization effort. When appropriate, China and other relevant powers should be invited for consultations conducted within the new regional security forum. The OSCE Helsinki process working methods that may be of relevance to South Asia include:

- Viewing regional problems as interdependent and attempting to address them simultaneously
- Emphasizing prevention rather than coercion by adopting a 'cooperative decision-making approach' in which security issues are steered away from narrowly focused zero-sum perceptions
- Building security and reducing the ability to project military power through incrementalist strategies.

Recognizing the inextricable links between building a stable security environment and managing disarmament and demobilization efforts, a pan-South Asian security arrangement similar to that of the OSCE could help countries in the region to agree on a timetable for a mutual freeze and gradual reduction (2–5 percent in real terms) of military spending. For India and Pakistan in particular, continuous dialogue in a permanent regional security forum could help direct the two adversaries

away from their dangerous zero-sum perception of the Kashmir dispute toward the restoration of political normalcy. The repeated failure of bilateral talks over Kashmir, coupled with India's reluctance to formally involve a great power or the United Nations, calls for an autonomous and sustained initiative that engages the region's other stakeholders in the outcome of South Asia's most intractable conflict.

Capturing a peace dividend in South Asia

The comprehensive South Asian demilitarization program presented in this paper is premised on the need to ensure at least the minimum security requirements and to avoid conflict escalation. Accordingly, sustained demilitarization in a region such as South Asia requires an integrated approach involving local, regional and global actors and must take into account the various dimensions and perceptions of militarism and security embedded in the status quo. Continued reliance on cosmetic and ineffectual measures to build regional confidence and security will fail to foster, and may even inhibit, the political dialogue necessary to prevent and eventually resolve conflicts. A broad approach to conflict prevention that goes beyond the traditional tools of preventive diplomacy is needed. Besides presenting a viable opportunity to generate a modest peace dividend for human development purposes, sustaining a step-by-step demilitarization and 'preventive conversion' process in South Asia sends the right signals to government officials involved in complex bilateral and multilateral negotiations for peace and greater security.

A peace dividend in South Asia would serve as one means of promoting long-term human security by providing governments with the resources and requisite stability to concentrate further attention on income and job security, environmental security, security against crime, and the security of both individuals and communities.

Admittedly, national territorial security is still regarded as paramount, but its attainment in the coming decades will be linked increasingly to the security of the population. As Mahbub ul Haq has often remarked, a narrow concept of national security cannot be realized in a situation where people starve while arms accumulate—where social expenditure declines while military expenditure rises (Haq, 1995).

After 50 years of confrontation, economic bifurcation and mistrust, the traumatic legacy of the subcontinent's partition shows little sign of diminishing. The region's latest crisis, however, may develop positive prospects if both India and Pakistan realize the futility of seeking a military solution to their political discord. While the prospects for a peace dividend that enriches lives remain bleak in South Asia, cautious application of gradual demilitarization strategies offers the best hope for fortifying conflict prevention and resolution efforts, building a broad sense of security and redirecting scarce resources to long-term development needs. For South Asians, there is no enterprise more noble than this—and yet no task more difficult than this.

References

BICC. See: Bonn International Center for Conversion.

Bonn International Center for Conversion. 1996. *Conversion Survey 1996: Global Disarmament, Demilitarization, and Demobilization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

_____. 1999. *Conversion Survey 1999: Global Disarmament, Demilitarization, and Demobilization*. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft.

Haq, Mahbub ul. 1997. *Human Development in South Asia 1997*. Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press.

_____. 1995. *Reflections on Human Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

IISS. See: International Institute for Strategic Studies.

International Institute for Strategic Studies. 1998. *The Military Balance 1998–1999*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mazari, Shireen. 1996. "Militarism and the Militarization of Pakistan's Civil Society: 1977–1990". In Kumar Rupesinghe and Khawar Mumtaz, eds. *Internal Conflicts in South Asia*. London: Sage Publications.

Sandrock, John. 1997. "Prerequisites for Success." In Sumit Ganguly and Ted Greenwood, eds. *Mending Fences: Confidence- and Security-Building Measures in South Asia*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Sharma, Kalpana. 1998. "The Hindu Bomb." In *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, July/August.

Singh, Jasjit. 1994. "Affordable Credible

Defence of India." In *Strategic Analysis*. Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies Analyses.

The Economist. 1997. "Linking arms", 14 June.

UNDP. See: United Nations Development Programme.

United Nations Development Programme. 1994. *Human Development Report 1994*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Civil Disarmament in Post-Conflict Cambodia

by Edgar A. Janz

Introduction

Cambodia is known for the vast number of landmines that were littered throughout the country during almost 30 years of internal armed conflict.

Less well known is the equally lethal legacy of small arms and light weapons that accumulated over the decades of fighting and mistrust. Although weapons were not a direct cause of the conflict, they fueled its intensity and duration. Today, the overwhelming presence and widespread use of small arms are among the many crucial issues that Cambodia must deal with as it emerges as a post-conflict society.

The conditions for a united action against small arms and light weapons are present. Armed conflict in Cambodia has finally come to an end and a new, fragile peace exists. In 1999 the few remaining Khmer Rouge leaders defected or were captured and their troops reintegrated into the national army. The political environment is improving and a relatively stable government has been in place since the 1998 elections. The government, with the assistance of the World Bank, is planning to demobilize a significant number of soldiers and reintegrate them into civilian life. In

late 1998 the government initiated a civilian disarmament campaign. These efforts, despite the difficulties and challenges, should be supported and strengthened to ensure a lasting peace in Cambodia.

Weapons reduction feasibility study

To understand the nature and scope of the problem and evaluate the possibility of arms reduction in Cambodia, the Peace Partnership commissioned a feasibility study on the issue of small arms and light weapons in Cambodia.¹ The objective of the study was to determine the extent to which small arms pose a threat to Cambodian society and to assess the possible responses of civil society. The study “Possibilities to Reduce the Number of Weapons and the Practice of Using Weapons to Solve Problems in Cambodia” was completed in July 1998. It was based on interviews with over 250 people across a broad cross-section of society in nine provinces with differing experiences of conflict.

The study confirmed a number of obvious facts. There is easy, inexpensive access to a broad variety of weapons and ammunition across Cambodia. The most common weapon, the AK-47, primarily of Russian and Chinese origin, is available almost everywhere in the country;

prices range from US \$5 to \$50. American-produced M-16s can be purchased for US \$18–100. Prices depend on the condition and geographical location of the weapon—weapons sold in areas of recent conflict are generally less expensive, most likely because of the higher concentration of weapons there. More sophisticated weapons can be purchased in some parts of the country. For example, a B-40 rocket launcher with four explosives may cost as little as US \$32, while pistol prices start at approximately US \$120. Ammunition for most weapons is easily available throughout the country. In the capital city of Phnom Penh a black market for weapons operates out of the Tuk Thla market. Although the visibility of activity varies according to the level of public attention, the arms market remains operational.

In some areas of the country with no recent history of armed conflict, weapons do not pose a major threat to local communities. In the province of Svay Rieng, for example, researchers found that guns are generally not carried openly by citizens or the armed forces. Although respondents assumed that a significant number of weapons were stashed, they did not feel threatened. The situations in areas with recent conflicts were significantly different. In the rural areas of Banteay Meanchey, for example, a particularly high concentration of weapons was reported. Interviewees claimed that nearly 80 percent of all the households have at least one gun.

Alongside the proliferation of weapons, a more dangerous problem has developed—a culture of violence. It is becoming more common for people to think of guns as the first solution to problems. This is increasingly evident in the reported use

¹ Three organizations comprised the Peace Partnership: the Dhammayietra Center for Peace and Nonviolence, the American Friends Service Committee, and the Mennonite Central Committee. Two staff members of a local NGO, Star Kampuchea, conducted the research during the period 9 April–14 July 1998.

of weapons in domestic disputes, traffic incidents and self-defense. A sobering example is found in a 1994 report on domestic violence in Cambodia: 18 percent of the battered women interviewed responded that they had been threatened with a gun and 4 percent with a grenade or bayonet (Zimmermann, 1994, p. 61). According to the report, "About one-quarter of the victims' husbands owned guns ... Guns were used most often to threaten or coerce women. Women describe having guns held to their heads, shoved under their chin and aimed at them" (Zimmermann, 1994, p. 65).

Although the feasibility study highlighted the severity and extent of the small arms problem in Cambodia, it also gave rise to hope. The majority of citizens interviewed expressed strong support for disarmament efforts. They believed that a sustained and well-resourced effort by the government could have a significant impact on the reduction of the numbers and use of weapons in the country. Many also believed that communities and groups of citizens, if mobilized, could play an important role in improving the situation. Despite the general enthusiasm expressed for voluntary weapons-collection schemes, respondents felt reluctant to participate in such programs until they felt secure, both personally and in their communities. However, a sense of security will be difficult to create without the establishment of the rule of law and public trust.

The role of civil society in weapons reduction in Cambodia

The study concluded that weapons and fear of them are blocking progress toward development, democracy, and a peaceful and healthy society. Furthermore, it recommends that a campaign be initiated to reduce the

number of weapons and the practice of using weapons to solve problems. In response, local Cambodian and international organizations and individuals decided to form a coalition to address the issue.

The Working Group for Weapons Reduction in Cambodia (WGWR) is the first civil society effort to focus specifically on small arms and light weapons in the country and region. The formation of the working group was well timed. Shortly afterward the Municipality of Phnom Penh initiated weapons census and confiscation programs. In December 1998 the WGWR held a workshop for over 200 municipality officials to examine international disarmament case studies and apply relevant experiences. Upon completion of the Phnom Penh campaign, the Ministry of Interior expanded the disarmament efforts to a national scale.

At the same time, international organizations formed the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA). Several governments also played a leading role in advancing the issue of small arms on the international agenda. Collectively, these efforts offer a wealth of resources, support and expertise to post-conflict countries such as Cambodia, which are beginning to struggle to manage their internal small arms problems. The WGWR is well placed to facilitate the needed links between the international community, the Cambodian government, civil society and local communities in order to ensure that disarmament efforts in Cambodia are effective, comprehensive and integrated.

The WGWR's vision for Cambodia is that of a just and secure country where neither weapons nor other violent means are used to solve problems and where people at all levels of society enjoy peace within themselves and in their communities. To accomplish its goal, the WGWR seeks to cooperate as a coalition to:

- Transform the desire to own and use weapons into commitment and skills for non-violent problem solving
- Reduce the number of small arms and light weapons
- Promote proper control of the weapons which exist
- Work so that all weapons removed from society are destroyed so that they can never be used again anywhere.

The pilot year of the working group has focused on alliance building, further research, public education, government advocacy and cooperation, and continued participation in the IANSA. Support from the European Union has now been offered.

Royal government of Cambodia disarmament efforts

The focus of the working group shifted when the Cambodian government, on its own initiative, started a disarmament campaign. The campaign opened with a weapons census that asked Phnom Penh residents how many weapons, legal and illegal, were in each household. The results showed that, of the approximately 15,000 households surveyed, 9,922 admitted to possessing weapons, 12 percent of which were not registered with the Ministry of Interior (*The Cambodia Daily*, 1999, p. 14). The accuracy of the survey of course depends on how truthfully respondents answered the questions posed by the local authorities, but the actual number of weapons in Phnom Penh, legal and illegal, was believed to be significantly higher. The municipality decided to implement an urban weapons-collection campaign. The first stage of

the campaign was a limited weapons buy-back program. Approximately US \$10 were offered for AK-47s and similar weapons, US \$13 for shotguns, and US \$1 for grenades. Only 665 guns and 70 grenades were collected by February 1999 (*The Cambodia Daily*, 1999, p. 14).

The second stage of the campaign began with the issuing of a sub-decree on “Administering and Inspecting the Import, Production, Selling, Distribution and Handling of All Types of Weapons.”² The sub-decree limits legal gun ownership to a thin stratum of upper-level civil servants and to police and soldiers on active duty (Sub-decree No. 38, Chapter 4 “Rights to Handle a Pistol as Private Property”). Weapon sales and use, even at shooting clubs, is now forbidden by law. Under the new sub-decree, citizens were urged to turn in all weapons with revoked registration to the local authorities. On 5 May 1999 over 10,000 Phnom Penh residents gathered in the Olympic Stadium to watch a fleet of bulldozers crush 3,855 weapons, mostly old AK-47s. The remaining 28 percent, or

1,499 weapons, became the property and responsibility of the Ministries of Interior and Defense.

The government, through the Ministry of Interior, then announced its intention to collect weapons in each of the provinces. As of October 1999, 59,465 additional weapons were collected from citizens, police and military warehouses in 22 provinces. Table 1 lists the number of small arms and other weapons collected and the mode of collection prior to 15 October 1999 (General Ouk Kim Lek, Chief of Department of Police Administration, Ministry of Interior, 15 October 1999). Of the small arms collected, 16,271 were destroyed at four additional provincial public destruction ceremonies. Currently, the government is attempting to draft a new gun-control law, replacing Decree No. 11 of 2 July 1992.

The challenges of weapons reduction in Cambodia

In order to better monitor and understand the impact of weapons confiscation, the Working Group for Weapons Reduction conducted a nationwide public opinion survey of the government’s disarmament campaign. Respondents were asked to comment on their experience of the national campaign and to relate their concerns, hopes and expectations for the government and civil society in the process of disarmament. The report, distributed by a network of local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Cambodia, was completed in October 1999. Over 400 individuals in 13 provinces were surveyed. The results revealed both cause for concern and hope for the future of effective disarmament in Cambodia. The Municipality of Phnom Penh, when starting its urban weapons confiscation program, did not initially comment on the fate of the weapons

Table 1

Weapons Source	Method of Weapons Collection			Other Weapons Collected			
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Confiscated</i>	<i>Voluntary</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Grenades</i>	<i>Mines</i>	<i>Rockets</i>
Phnom Penh	5,354	145	5,209	116	62	0	54
Provinces	58,745	44,494	14,251	1,072	497	431	144
Mid-Level Civil Servants	286	0	286	0	0	0	0
Ministry of Interior Depts.	434	0	434	0	0	0	0
Total	64,819	44,639	20,180	1,188	559	431	198

² Sub-decree No. 38, receiving agreement by the Ministers’ Council in plenary on 30 April 1999. Unofficial translation cited. Weapons in this document refer to all firearms (automatic and semi-automatic), pistols, rockets, chemical and biological weapons, electric shock sticks, grenades, mine, explosive substances and all types of bullets.

collected. Possibly in response to the NGOs and individuals who pressed the issue at the December 1998 WGWR workshop, the municipality later announced that some of the weapons to be collected would also be publicly destroyed. The Ministry of Interior followed with its nationwide weapons confiscation program and made a commitment to hold periodic, provincially based public destruction ceremonies. In reality, however, the majority of the weapons were kept in government-controlled warehouses. Only a fraction of the aged small arms, predominantly AK-47s, were destroyed. As of 14 October 1999 only 31 percent of all the collected weapons had been publicly destroyed.

Given the low capacity, lenient discipline and low salaries of police and soldiers, it is not surprising that many of the weapons collected and stored in government warehouses were illegally sold and re-circulated. Co-minister of Interior and Deputy Prime Minister Sar Kheng admitted this to reporters during the Kandal province weapons destruction ceremony: "According to reports, many new guns from warehouses are being sold at [black] markets... If we do not take care of this, then even though we collect weapons from people, crime will increase" (*The Cambodia Daily*, 1999, p. 12). Critics maintained that, if disarmament is to be effective in Cambodia, public destruction of all weapons is essential. This is the only guarantee that the weapons will not again come into circulation through traffic rings in Cambodia and internationally.

Cambodian citizens, fully aware that weapons are being re-circulated, need visible evidence that disarmament does not simply remove weapons from the hands of honest citizens. Its primary focus should be the permanent removal of the tools of oppression from those who threaten the security of Cambodian communities.

Respondents asked that the government "destroy all the collected weapons. If the weapons are kept in government warehouses, they can be resold in the market where criminals can buy them" (WGWR, 1999, p. 11). Public destruction of all collected weapons is an important symbol through which the Cambodian government can encourage public trust in proper exercise of its authority.

The primary focus of the current government disarmament campaign is on curbing criminal activities, in particular robbery, kidnapping and murder. Although this is a legitimate concern, it does not address some of the broader root issues that are a more serious threat to the development of Cambodia. Many Cambodians want to hold weapons to protect themselves not only from criminals but also from government and military authorities who use their position and weapons for their own benefit. One respondent expressed a concern echoed by many others: "Weapons are in the hands of authorities who use them to threaten innocent people" (WGWR, 1999, p. 12). Recent reports accuse the relatives and bodyguards of a provincial army commander, armed with M-16 and AK-47 rifles and an M-79 rocket launcher, of threatening and beating up local students (*Phnom Penh Post*, 1999, p. 1). In rural areas there are frequent reports of villagers forced from their land by gun-wielding soldiers. A local newspaper asked: "Should these soldiers be considered protectors or enemies of public safety since they illegally use their power and weapons to threaten the wellbeing of the people?" (*Samleng Yuvachun Khmer*, 1999). Occasionally, authorities are even accused of collaborating with criminal elements.

The perceived threat from armed authorities, whether real or exaggerated, is one that seriously undermines the success of all government-initiated weapons-

collection programs. Citizens are willing to participate in the process only if the root causes of national and community insecurity are addressed in the campaign. Community security may actually worsen if citizens are asked to hand in their weapons to those by whom they feel threatened. Until the government further commits itself to instate the rule of law in Cambodia, citizens will either keep their weapons or become victims of those who use violence with impunity. Disarmament, therefore, cannot be effectively carried out without addressing the related issues of police and military capacity-building, discipline and respect for the rule of law. Weapons reduction is only one component, albeit an essential one, of the improvement of personal security.

Plans are pending for the demobilization of up to 55,000 soldiers, although the actual number could be significantly lower. The 'demobilization' of approximately 13,000 'ghost soldiers'—those with false identities, enabling them to collect additional wages—is included in the total figure. The Cambodian Veterans Assistance Program (CVAP), which outlines the demobilization plan, has inadequate provisions for disarmament. No reference is made to the process by which weapons will be collected from the demobilized soldiers or what the fate of the weapons will be. The lack of clarity, accompanied by an apparent schism between the issues of disarmament and demobilization, will only exacerbate the problem. A local newspaper has reported the fear that "cheap weapons availability is also expected to increase in Cambodia with the government about to embark on an ambitious program of military demobilization" (*The Cambodia Daily*, 1999, p. 12). A well-integrated demobilization and disarmament plan, by both the Cambodian government and donors, must be established to avoid such secondary problems.

There is a danger that partisan politics are a determining factor for disarmament in Cambodia. In a climate where politics are deeply divided and politicians mutually suspicious, disarmament can easily be misconstrued or abused to serve individual political interests. Again, public survey results reveal that some citizens accuse arms collection teams of being partisan-biased in their efforts. The government must be rigorous in its attempts to disarm all persons, regardless of political stance. Proactive steps, such as governmental self-disarmament and discipline, must be taken to restore the confidence of both the general public and opposition political parties that feel threatened or targeted during a disarmament process.

Finally, weapons collection and destruction in and of themselves are not effective means to reduce the number and use of weapons. Arms traffic through Cambodia's porous border could undermine any disarmament efforts and must therefore be addressed directly. Countries in the region with current armed conflicts are especially affected by the impact of arms trafficking through centrally located Cambodia. Cambodia, the southern port of Sihanoukville in particular, is believed to be a conduit for arms supplies to such countries as Indonesia, Burma and Sri Lanka (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1999, 14 August). Critics claim that "buying weapons and shipping is easy in countries like Cambodia, where corruption in law enforcement and customs controls remains a widespread and accepted practice" (*The Cambodia Daily*, 1999, p. 12).

Efforts must also be made to address the culture of violence, another legacy of the decades of internal conflict in Cambodia. Through additional research, the public perception of national and community insecurity can be better understood. Public education and awareness-raising can provide Cambodians with an opportunity to deal with their fears and find common

solutions for the improvement of peace in their own communities. Disarmament must be understood as a broader process carried out by members of society at all levels. The Cambodian government campaign, in its first year of operation, is not engaged in public education. There is an urgent need for commitment, experience and resources to identify, stop and reverse the culture of violence commonly witnessed in Cambodia.

Opportunities for Weapons Reduction in Cambodia

Alongside these challenges, opportunities also exist. Although lacking in experience and resources, the government has demonstrated an encouraging openness to assistance from civil society and the international community. There is an eagerness to apply lessons learned from international disarmament campaigns to the Cambodian situation. The process of sharing ideas and information, however, will require patience and mutual effort to cooperate on sensitive issues.

Encouragingly, the Working Group for Weapons Reduction discovered that there is widespread support for reducing the number and use of weapons in Cambodia. The public opinion survey showed that, despite the serious concerns mentioned above, 94 percent of the respondents support the collection of illegal weapons and 74 percent believe that disarmament will improve the safety of their families. Similarly, many local and international NGOs support both government and civil society in their efforts to address the issues of small arms and the culture of violence in Cambodia (WGWR, 1999). Through this growing network of interested organizations and individuals, it is possible to begin to find a peaceful solution to the problem of small arms in Cambodia. The future development of Cambodia depends on this.

References

- Samleng Yuvachun Khmer*. 1999. Vol. 6, No. 771, 13 August.
- WGWR. See: Working Group for Weapons Reduction in Cambodia.
- Working Group for Weapons Reduction in Cambodia (WGWR). 1999. *Public Opinion Survey of the Government's Disarmament Campaign*. Phnom Penh. October.
- Zimmerman, Cathy. 1994. *Plates in a Basket Will Rattle: Domestic Violence in Cambodia*. Phnom Penh, Cambodia. December.

The Regulation of Armaments in South-Eastern Europe

by Ian Anthony

Introduction

It is important that the role and structure of arms control and disarmament arrangements for south-eastern Europe are discussed as an element of the wider security environment of the region. The discussions about the enlargement of NATO as well as the war in and around the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) have tended to focus attention on the role of military instruments in managing European security problems. It has even been suggested that we are witnessing the end of the experiment in cooperative and comprehensive security in Europe and a reversion to power politics. In such conditions the political momentum would not be for a regulation of armaments but for a build-up of military power.

Recent developments in this region are difficult to reconcile with the logic of cooperative security established as the basis for European security in the early 1990s. Military power has not been effective in solving problems. The Yugoslav government was not able to establish legitimate authority through the use of force. Several parts of the former Yugoslavia (the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, SFRY) seceded, the future place of Kosovo within the successor Federal Republic of Yugoslavia appears extremely

tenuous and further disintegration of the FRY cannot be excluded. The relations within and between several other countries in south-eastern Europe are extremely fragile. Other states that are not direct parties to disputes are concerned about the impact of any new conflict on their own security and stability.

The presence of external military and political forces has helped to end large-scale organized fighting. However, NATO has not been able to enforce the principles and norms agreed within the European security system.

States and political authorities in the region will continue to regard military preparedness as a key element in the safeguarding of their security. It is not my argument that disarmament can be achieved or even that this would necessarily be desirable. General Carlo Jean has pointed out that no order is possible without the capacity to enforce rules and therefore without weapons; complete disarmament, by eliminating legitimate force, leaves the field open to illegitimate force (Jean, 1998). At the same time recent experience has suggested that unregulated force is equally unable to deliver order. Power must be backed by a system of rules.

Recent peacekeeping operations on the territory of the former Yugoslavia have been established in a very complex environment. The conflicts that gave rise to the need for the operations were

not international but at the same time not internal. There was a significant involvement of external actors. The conflicts occurred where arms were readily available because the SFRY had a military doctrine that depended on mobilizing and arming a large section of society in a crisis or war. With the breakdown of civil and military control, these arms were often not only in the possession of forces under the control of the state (including paramilitary and armed forces). Non-state warring parties also had access to significant quantities of arms (Matovic, 1993, pp. 45–72).

Apart from the possible threat to the safety of the peacekeepers, the concern of those responsible for peacekeeping operations has been that these conditions will make it more difficult to establish a sustainable settlement. The absence of a sustainable settlement in turn makes it difficult to reduce external involvement in the conflict location and to return to more normal political arrangements.

Arms control and disarmament should be evaluated against their usefulness in solving security problems. The discussion on the regulation of armaments in south-eastern Europe has three dimensions: reducing or eliminating security problems within states; reducing or eliminating security problems between states that are neighbors or in close proximity; and reducing or eliminating the need for major military engagement by external states. Arms control and disarmament should not be seen as a single process or the exclusive competence of one organization. A range of different instruments have been applied to regulate armaments in south-eastern Europe and these have not operated in the framework of any single organization. Rather, cooperative arms control, confidence- and security-building measures, embargoes and export controls each have specific characteristics and different institutional arrangements to support them.

■ Since September 1991 arms embargoes and sanctions have been applied at different stages to various territories in the area without the consent or participation of the governments of the targeted countries.

■ The region is part of a wider European security space in which a framework for conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building has been developed based on cooperation and consent. Some of the countries in south-eastern Europe are parties to the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), while others are not.

■ Localized measures have been defined in the 1996 Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control (Florence Agreement) established in accordance the 1995 Dayton Agreement. While accepted by representatives of the parties to these conflicts, such measures cannot be described as ‘cooperative’ since their acceptance was a condition for assistance or the termination of fighting.

■ In addition, there are current discussions about sub-regional arms control approaches in the context of the Dayton Agreement (Article V) and the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (Table III: Sub-table on Security and Defence).

The political and military environment in south-eastern Europe is very different from that which formed the background to earlier arms control discussions. Arms control and disarmament procedures must be adapted to such changes if they are to play a role in managing security problems. In the conditions of the Cold War, arms control provided adversaries with an opportunity to discuss the politico-military aspects of their relationship in a structured manner. In the conditions prevailing in Europe, arms control was intended to

reduce the risk of war, reduce the destructiveness of war should it occur and reduce the economic costs of maintaining effective deterrence (Schelling and Halperin, 1961, p. 3). It was assumed that in a ‘hot’ conflict the warring parties would not restrict their armaments or the movement of fighting forces—an assumption borne out in the recent war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. After the fighting stopped, these broad objectives for arms control still appear to be relevant.

Cooperative arms control requires the participation of all parties to seek a mutually acceptable agreement on levels and/or types of equipment. Parties must see mutual advantages in agreement although almost by definition they do not fully trust one another and may have serious, genuine differences of interest. Defining, negotiating and implementing arms control measures might be a part of the process of reconciliation and normalization between former warring parties. Meeting commitments in a verifiable way may build confidence by demonstrating good faith and trustworthiness.

In keeping with traditional approaches, arms control can therefore be seen as a preventive measure if it increases the durability of any settlement that is reached. To achieve these effects, arms control and disarmament processes have had to adopt non-traditional forms.

In traditional arms control processes much time was spent in defining the fine detail of control and verification procedures. In the conditions that exist during or after a war, a strict approach to definitions, counting against agreed baselines and verification, may not be possible within an acceptable timeframe. The attention to detail in arms control has reflected the seriousness that states have given to

treaty compliance. Understanding their obligations and the undertakings others have given has increased the probability of compliance and reduced the risk of misunderstandings that could lead to suspicion or tension.

The recent agreements in south-eastern Europe pay less attention to detail in order to achieve results more rapidly. They are likely to be judged more by their political impact and less by technical criteria.

Conventional arms control in Europe identified measures that are militarily relevant—that is, measures that deny states military options in a way that can be monitored effectively. These options have been expressed in terms that are clear and easily understood—such as the capacity to mount a surprise attack or the capacity to take and hold a given territory. These clear objectives can be the basis for identifying specific equipment and formations that are subject to restriction. Applying this criterion of military relevance was more complicated in south-eastern Europe. Where both regular military and internal security forces participate in fighting, where fighting involves irregular (non-state) forces and where warring parties deliberately ignore traditional laws of war, accepted criteria become difficult to apply. Therefore, an additional objective was identified for arms control: to eliminate irregular forces operating outside the control of a recognized political authority.

Arms control was challenged where authorities that nominally govern the state had lost the support of citizens and parts of the armed forces. Arms ‘control’ is devalued where political authorities cannot fulfill their commitments. This is not an issue of bad faith (cheating) but of a loss of authority. If a party to an agreement cheats, the agreement will be rapidly undermined. However, if a party is acting in good faith but is unable to deliver on its promises, that may be a

manageable problem. External organizations or other states might help with implementation and provide missing capacities to prevent other parties from using a lack of authority to justify disregarding their own obligations.

The remainder of this paper examines in more detail the web of approaches to the regulation of armaments in south-eastern Europe.

Sanctions and embargoes

Sanctions are defined here as any non-military measure designed to punish a target state for behavior that is considered unacceptable. This could mean inflicting political or economic damage, denying the target state something it desires, limiting its capabilities or raising the cost of acquiring given capabilities. Examples include confiscation of financial assets, expulsion from intergovernmental organizations, loss of airport access rights, refusing access to credit, a general trade embargo or a narrower arms embargo. Sanctions are therefore a reactive measure that can have one or both of two functions. The sanction may be a signal that the action of the target state is unacceptable, or it may be an attempt to change or restore the status quo.

Ethical values such as proportionality and limits to collateral damage apply to sanctions. Even in a just cause—of which the United Nations Security Council is usually considered to be the most authoritative judge—legal sanctions may not intentionally create disproportionate suffering. For this reason the choice of sanctions may be limited to those with an impact on decision-making, called ‘smart sanctions’ (United Nations, 1999). The arms embargo can be put in this category since its effects are primarily felt in the armed forces or paramilitary forces that are the direct instruments of state policy.

The objectives of an embargo can (and do) differ from case to case. Since 1990 UN Security Council arms embargoes have been imposed to try to achieve a variety of objectives. If imposed on all parties to a conflict, the embargo would be a political signal that the international community (or the subgroup of states that imposed it) does not intend to become militarily involved in the conflict on either side. The embargo would reinforce the general preference for peaceful settlement of disputes. If imposed on only one end-user, the embargo could signal to that party that it is held primarily responsible for the conflict.

The role that the embargo can play depends on its effectiveness—a technical question about whether measures can be implemented and enforced. Effectiveness will not necessarily lead to success, which would depend on a judgement about whether the embargo achieved the objectives set for it. At the same time ineffective measures are unlikely to succeed. If implemented and enforced, an embargo might reduce the intensity or duration of the conflict by progressively degrading the capabilities available to the warring parties. If imposed on some but not all parties, the embargo might also influence the military balance in the conflict.

Export controls are an instrument through which sanctions might be implemented but they are not themselves sanctions. They allow a choice to be made about whether or not a specific item may be exported but they do not predetermine whether or not authorization will be granted.

Whether an arms embargo is agreed in the framework of an international organization (most likely the United Nations) and the terms of the embargo are important determinants of how export controls will be implemented.

All the UN member states have pledged in Article 2.5 of the UN Charter “to give the United Nations every assistance in any action it takes in accordance with the present Charter” and to “refrain from giving assistance against which the United Nations is taking preventive or enforcement action.” Member states are obliged to control the export of goods subject to a mandatory embargo and to implement that embargo. In practice, the effectiveness of the embargo and the sanctions hinges on the response of individual states since the United Nations has no instruments with which to enforce its resolutions. In the absence of an embargo, states will make their own judgement about whether or not to authorize controls. These decisions will reflect the states’ national interests, which are likely to be different. If the scope of the arms embargo is not defined or is vague, the decision about what items are subject to the embargo will also be taken nationally, and there are likely to be different views on this question.

The words used in resolutions that impose mandatory arms embargoes are open to interpretation. The phrases “weapons and military equipment,” “weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary police equipment and spare parts for the aforementioned” and “arms and related materiel of all types” are all used in one or more resolutions.

The question whether controls should be applied only to goods or whether technologies, information and services fall under the scope of an embargo is also not clarified. Where states or non-state warring parties do not have independent indigenous arms industries it may be possible to impose arms control on military or paramilitary end-users by an arms embargo. Where the parties to the conflict do have indigenous arms industries, industrial end-users would have to be included as well as materials, semi-finished products and dual-use items required for production.

The arms embargo on the former Yugoslavia, 1991–95

On 25 September 1991 the United Nations Security Council established a mandatory arms embargo on the SFRY in Security Council Resolution 713. The embargo included all the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The United Nations did not take the initial decision on an arms embargo. A European Union arms embargo had been agreed in July 1991 and the EU states argued that the impact of the embargo would be greater if it was global in scope.

On 30 May 1992 the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 757, which established mandatory sanctions that applied only to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (i.e. Serbia and Montenegro). The timing and content of these resolutions were a response to several watershed events in the history of the war in the former Yugoslavia. Multilateral cooperation in harmonizing and enforcing national export controls is still in its infancy. However, to implement Resolutions 713 and 757, unprecedented forms of collaboration were developed between the United Nations, European regional organizations—including the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the EU, the Western European Union (WEU) and NATO—and countries of the region.

This experience of implementing export controls on the territory of the former Yugoslavia underlined that four categories of state have a different role in determining the effectiveness of implementation.

The categories are:

- The target states—in this case states that emerged on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, all of which were subject to the arms embargo established by the UN Security Council

- States that have a border with one or more of the states listed above—Italy, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Albania. This also included Ukraine as one of the riparian states of a navigable portion of the River Danube

- Extra-regional powers that declare an interest in the outcome of the conflicts underway in the former Yugoslavia

- The international community at large.

This shows that implementing sanctions is immensely complex because of the number of actors involved and the fact that their interests are not aligned.

The military capabilities of successor states were also different. Before sanctions were imposed the FRY consolidated its arms production in Serbia, consolidated foreign exchange reserves in overseas accounts and developed a strategic stockpile of materials needed to continue production. To have an impact on the capabilities of the warring parties it was necessary to include dual-use products as well as items specifically designed and developed for military use in the scope of the embargo. By the time this decision was taken (1992) it was possible to differentiate between different parts of the former SFRY.

The Yugoslav political crisis was nearly two years old (if dated from the decision of Slovenia to initiate its secession in the autumn of 1989) when the first arms embargo was put in place. By mid-1991 Slovenia and Croatia had declared themselves independent but no foreign country had recognized them as such. Resolution 713 was a response to the escalating fighting in Croatia. The brief war in Slovenia was over and, while there was fighting between Croatian and Serb forces in Croatia, there was no war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There were no peacekeeping forces in the former Yugoslavia.

The initial UN embargo was an effort to lend support to European political initiatives aimed at establishing a peaceful dialogue to resolve the future political and constitutional arrangements for Yugoslavia. The United States was relatively detached from these initiatives at this point and did not claim any ‘ownership’ of them. The framework for the dialogue was the Declaration of 3 September 1991 by the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE, now the OSCE) that “no territorial gains or changes within Yugoslavia brought about by violence are acceptable.”

Fighting escalated in Croatia in late 1991 and early 1992. While Croatia and Serbia both endorsed the Vance Plan in January 1992, Serb leaders in Croatia continued their fight for control of Krajina. Evidence that the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) was participating in this fighting was overwhelming. The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was first introduced on the ground in April 1992.

By the time Resolution 757 had established economic sanctions in May 1992, Croatia and Slovenia were recognized as independent states and fighting was taking place in Bosnia. It was also at this point that the FRY was suspended from the CSCE. The arms embargo did not single out any party to the conflict but was intended to help bring about participation in a cooperative political process. Sanctions had a narrower target (Serbia and Montenegro) and a different function. They were intended to punish Serbia for failing to live up to the commitments in the Vance Plan and to put pressure on President Milosevic to use his influence to restrain Serb irregulars fighting in the new war that had erupted in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Of the extra-regional powers that had a major impact on the policies affecting the war(s) on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, the most influential were France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. These states did not make common assessments of the implications for policy of developments on the ground in the conflict. Although some external powers would have preferred to take a more flexible approach to the states that seceded from Yugoslavia (after they had been recognized as independent states) these external actors were obliged to respect the decision of the UN that applied to a particular territory.

The approaches to the embargo and the sanctions continued to evolve as the conflict unfolded. The public debate on the arms embargo in Western countries increasingly stressed that Bosnia and Herzegovina, once it was recognized as a state, was entitled to the inherent right of self-defense granted to states under the UN Charter. The impact on conflict resolution was secondary in that lifting the arms embargo was seen as the right approach, even if it prolonged the war.

Advocates of lifting the embargo were not prepared to concede a military victory to Bosnian Serb forces. Opponents of lifting it believed that the Bosnian Serbs had effectively won the war and that, unless there was a decision to reverse this fact by military means, it would have to be reflected in any settlement. These positions directly affected the implementation of the embargo. Many believe that external military assistance played an important role in allowing Bosnian Croat and Bosnian forces to change the military balance vis-à-vis Serb forces in Bosnia and that this in turn was decisive in bringing about a political settlement. Some also argued that Slovenia should be treated differently. Others argued

that Slovenia would be unable or unwilling to prevent equipment it received from leaking to Croatia and therefore must be subject to the arms embargo. These differences led the United States to continue its formal support for the embargo as far as US suppliers were concerned but to turn its head from information about supplies to Croatian and Bosnian government forces from non-US sources. While this group of external major powers did discuss policies (even if they could not coordinate them) there was no framework for informing a wider group of interested states about the progress in discussions. However, effective implementation of the trade embargoes and sanctions depended to some extent on the Islamic countries (notably Egypt, Iran and Turkey, which wanted to provide military assistance to the Bosnian government and some Arab states prepared to finance this assistance) as well as other European countries.

The objectives for economic sanctions also shifted considerably. The original effort was to force Serbia to put pressure on irregular forces in Croatia to accept a diplomatic plan drawn up with the aid of international mediation. In practice the sanctions proved to be a blunt instrument. They imposed considerable costs (political and economic) on the states bordering Serbia and Montenegro, which led several of these states to question the reasons for maintaining sanctions. As the focus of the conflict shifted to Bosnia, the Serbian government pointed to sanctions to support its claim that Serbia was being unfairly victimized. Serb irregular forces in Bosnia were willing to accept the plans of mediators since these broadly met their objectives and it was mainly the Bosnian government that was unwilling to accept these international peace plans.

Throughout the period 1991–1995 the governments of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia made no secret of their desire to acquire military equipment; this was one primary focus of their diplomacy along with a campaign against the arms embargo. Serbia preferred the fullest possible enforcement of the arms embargo; it was the best armed and supplied of the local states and able to support the needs of Bosnian Serb forces. The government of the FRY made 31 of the first 45 reports of alleged violations to the UN Sanctions Committee. At the same time Serbian authorities underlined the negative impact of economic sanctions on civilians and on the economy of such states as Romania.

The views of external powers on key issues were not fully aligned. For example, there were different views on the question of whether the embargo prevented all forms of military assistance to Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina and on the approach that should be taken toward Serbia and Montenegro. Apart from the differences between states, the public position of individual states was also liable to change with events and shifts in the internal discussion between different agencies.

Implementing coercive measures against the former Yugoslavia

Implementation of the arms embargo and trade sanctions involved cooperation at several levels. The United Nations cannot in practice compel governments to comply with mandatory embargoes, and primary responsibility for implementation rests with states through their national export control systems. Apart from cooperation between states and international organizations, there was also cooperation between international organizations.

In December 1991 a Sanctions Committee was established to administer the UN arms embargo and sanctions. Located in the UN Department of Political and Security Council Affairs, the Committee was directly

subordinate to the Security Council. The Committee had a small staff responsible for information collection and dissemination, acting essentially as a communications node. The UN could not monitor implementation using its own resources since it had (and still has) no independent means of collecting information. The Committee depended on submissions by governments, regional intergovernmental organizations and non-government sources (Conlon, 1995).

The Sanctions Committee consists of representatives from the 15 states on the Security Council but all the members have a veto. This has further reduced the possibility that the Committee would name any state as being in non-compliance with the embargo resolution. Allegations brought to the attention of the Committee were raised with the member states concerned. If the members rejected the allegations, investigated and subsequently dismissed them or simply failed to respond, then the Sanctions Committee could not press further without referring the specific allegation to the Security Council.

Implementation of economic sanctions was addressed at the Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, held in London on 26–27 August 1992. The Conference decided to “implement an agreed action plan to ensure the rigorous application of sanctions” (Conclusions of the Peace Implementation Conference held at Lancaster House, London, 8–9 Dec. 1995).

The UN Security Council was asked to take steps to enforce sanctions in areas away from the immediate geographical vicinity of the former Yugoslavia while the European Community and the CSCE were asked to coordinate all

necessary practical assistance to the countries bordering on Serbia and Montenegro. This was to include experts drawn from CSCE member states to participate in local monitoring missions.

The United Kingdom, co-sponsor of the Conference, drew up a specific plan to implement Conference decisions. On the invitation of the governments of Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, Sanctions Assistance Missions (SAMs) were established in these three countries that became operational in October 1992. By early 1993 a new SAM had been established in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). The activities of the SAMs were coordinated for the CSCE by a single official, the Sanctions Coordinator, with an office in Brussels (to ease contact with the Commission of the European Communities). The Commission established an office (SAMCOMM) within the Directorate General for Customs and Indirect Taxation to manage the work of the SAMs on behalf of the EC. The involvement of the European Community was a practical matter. The European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM) had been operating since July 1991 and had already established a logistics system and an understanding of local conditions.

Reports by SAMCOMM underlined several points. First, new SAMs in Albania, Croatia and Ukraine were essential to the effective implementation of sanctions. Second, the group recommended that countries situated on the banks of the Danube River (Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Austria) should stop and inspect foreign vessels even in international waters. SAM reports indicate that many vessels on the Danube, when challenged, refused to stop. The London Conference expressed the view that riparian states had the right to enforce sanctions by halting ships in international waters to inspect their cargoes—this was also incorporated in

UN Security Council Resolution 787 (1992). However, carrying out this task represented a significant political and military undertaking for the states concerned. The problem of controlling the movement of ships on the River Danube was partly alleviated by the stationing of Western European Union SAMs along the river. Meanwhile, NATO/WEU naval vessels monitored ship movements in the Adriatic Sea.

The CSCE and the EC agencies were connected to the UN Sanctions Committee. There was also a direct link between each SAM and the UN, allowing monitors to verify whether or not goods were subject to the embargo. The UN Sanctions Committee had direct electronic contact with the NATO/WEU monitoring teams and with UNPROFOR forces. In this way the UN Security Council as well as member governments of the CSCE, the EC, NATO and the WEU had the fullest possible picture of whether or not embargoed goods were entering the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This apparatus was linked to economic sanctions on Serbia and Montenegro. The level of monitoring of the arms embargo on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia was far less developed than that for Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Moreover, governments usually chose not to report to the Security Council Sanctions Committee all of the information in their possession regarding violations of the arms embargo.

Much of the documentation associated with the sanctions missions was restricted, so it is impossible to know how much information about violations was contained in the reports submitted to the various international organizations. Parliamentarians had no satisfactory means of measuring the degree to which the embargo was leaking. In 1992 the WEU Assembly

recommended that the WEU Council of Ministers publish evidence of any known breach of sanctions but in particular “cases where arms or other military equipment were exported to the Serbs and other warring factions.” In its reply to this recommendation the Council confirmed that all such evidence remained classified. The UN Security Council was similarly reluctant to release information (Marten and Speed, 1993).

There were several documented and many suspected violations. By February 1992 the United Nations had gathered sufficient evidence that the arms embargo was being breached to justify Security Council Resolution 740, in which the Council expressed concern that the embargo was not being observed. These concerns were repeated in Resolution 787 of 16 November 1992. Media allegations about embargo violations named private arms dealers operating from Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Greece, Iran, Lebanon and Ukraine as sources of supply to one or more of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. Several of these allegations have been substantiated.

Between 1991 and 1995 Argentina supplied 35,000 rifles, 36 heavy artillery pieces, short-range artillery rockets, landmines and grenades as well as about 6,500 tons of munitions to Croatia. These exports used documents that gave Panama as the destination and end-user of the equipment (SIPRI, 1999, pp. 438–39). In January 1993 the *Dolphin One*, a ship carrying the flag of St Vincent and the Grenadines, was stopped in the Adriatic Sea. The ship was carrying artillery rockets and small arms ammunition manufactured in the former Soviet Union and China.

In its second report to the Security Council the Sanctions Committee noted 46 reported sanctions violations, of which two were established as having occurred. Of these two confirmed violations one was the delivery of weapons and military

equipment to Zagreb airport, Croatia, by an Iranian transport aircraft. The shipment was destroyed under UNPROFOR supervision (United Nations, 1992).

In July 1993 Slovenian authorities seized a consignment of assault rifles and mortars together with ammunition at an airport near Maribor, Slovenia. The Serbian press suggested that the consignment was part of an agreement between Slovenian officials and the Bosnian government. This agreement might have been known to and approved by the two presidents (SIPRI, 1994, pp. 497–99).

Several cases in which individuals attempted to violate the arms embargo highlighted the activities of multinational networks of private arms dealers operating with the assistance of corrupt government officials. In July 1993 it was alleged that on two occasions Panamanian officials—including the vice consul in Barcelona—had provided false documentation to assist illegal transfers of small arms. In one case a consignment of sub-machine guns and handguns of Czech origin was to have been sent to Bosnia in a deal organized by an Italian businessman. In the other case, small arms of Austrian origin would have been supplied to Bosnia. The Panamanian government acknowledged that a “disgraceful scandal” had occurred but the specific details were not confirmed in the public report issued about the affair.

In mid-1993 six Bolivian Foreign Ministry officials were implicated in an effort to supply eight Russian T-72 tanks to Croatian forces. In a somewhat similar deal, in October 1993 two Bolivian officials were put on trial, charged with providing forged documents to assist an international arms trafficking operation that included one Portuguese, two Israeli, one Iranian, two Austrian and two Chilean nationals. It was not clear which of the warring parties in the former Yugoslavia would have received these weapons.

Summary of findings related to the arms embargo on the SFRY

The preceding sections of this paper can be summarized as follows. In several cases the effort to supply arms to warring parties in the former Yugoslavia was detected by export control authorities, monitored by intelligence agencies and stopped by police or customs officers. In each case where corruption in government was alleged, the government concerned established a judicial enquiry or a criminal prosecution of the individuals identified. Nevertheless, there is enough information to conclude that flawless embargo enforcement is unlikely, even where geography is fairly helpful and where the international community commits substantial resources to implementation.

Sanctions contained in legally or politically binding decisions are not flexible unless the resolutions that establish them use general language. Very specific language would reduce the room for maneuver of states as events (that are inherently unpredictable) unfold. Modifying the decisions can also be difficult. This is partly because changes in the United Nations need consent in the Security Council and partly because the decisions are themselves compromises. There may be a concern that if a decision is undone no new consensus could be formed.

The scope of UN arms embargoes could be made more precise by defining the scope of equipment subject to the embargo. For example, the United Nations has not elaborated a core list of military equipment for the purpose of clarifying what is subject to arms embargoes. This approach also carries some risks,

however. The UN has no technical expertise in making such a list. A core list negotiated among states at the UN could represent a 'least common denominator' approach. If states applied this core list instead of their national munitions lists or lists agreed in other forums (such as the EU) the effect might be to make more equipment available to embargoed parties than is presently the case.

As the original objectives for the arms embargo and economic sanctions were overtaken by events they were replaced by objectives determined by the states with important interests at stake in the conflict rather than in the Security Council. This reflected the need for flexibility but raised a question against the legitimacy of such decisions. Such decisions may not command the support of the wider community and that may in turn reduce their effectiveness. If it becomes clear that the embargo is not being enforced for one party, it becomes difficult to argue that the UN resolutions prohibit transfers to other parties in the conflict. At the same time there is currently no forum or mechanism other than the UN through which the wider international community can be informed about the evolution of policies and developments in the countries most closely involved in the conflict. This combination of weaknesses in the existing UN system and the absence of alternative institutions makes it difficult to achieve effective implementation of agreed measures.

Several theoretical solutions to this problem can be identified.

■ Increasing the effectiveness of the UN Security Council as a decision-making body to allow flexibility and legitimacy to be combined. The Security Council does not, however, have access to the human, material and information resources that would be necessary. There seems little chance that such resources will be made available because major

powers do not currently see the Security Council as an executive body, not even in questions of peace and security. States will therefore continue to find other forums in which to coordinate their national policies.

■ An enhanced role for regional arrangements within the framework of the UN and for these regional arrangements to be linked horizontally for purposes of information exchange. There would also seem to be little momentum behind a development in this direction.

■ Enhanced cooperation between organizations but without hierarchy. European security is managed by regional organizations. Within Europe the EC/CSCCE implementation mechanisms and NATO/WEU monitoring mechanisms established for the former Yugoslavia showed that regional approaches could be developed. Excluding the United States from the process of finding a political solution to the conflict was extremely counter-productive.

While organizations had an important role, the low number of reports to the international agencies responsible for sanctions monitoring suggest that states often preferred to deal with one another bilaterally and on a confidential basis rather than using any international organization as a forum for resolving sensitive questions such as embargo violations. While it is difficult to evaluate the extent of embargo violations it seems that governments did have a fairly clear picture of what was moving in and out of the region. In cases where deliveries did take place it seems that they were only possible with the knowledge and at least tacit approval of the United States in particular. Other major powers (certainly including the United Kingdom) were aware of the deliveries and could have chosen to report them to the responsible UN committee but decided not to do so.

The effectiveness of the embargo was undermined by government attitudes to information but this also revealed the limits to transparency. Non-disclosure made it less likely that governments would come under domestic pressure to implement UN decisions or be held accountable for failing to do so. The refusal to publish information about violations also reflected the reluctance of governments to embarrass (let alone punish) one another. However, non-publication also offered governments a way to create some flexibility that would have been lost by strict implementation of UN decisions.

While full effectiveness was not achieved, perfect implementation is not required for an embargo to be judged a success. Most countries in Europe and beyond observed the sanctions and arms embargo. Without the UN resolutions the combatants in the former Yugoslavia would have been able to find many more arms suppliers prepared to meet their requirements for commercial or political reasons. It is also argued (particularly in the United States) that the flexible approach to enforcement helped create the conditions for a peace settlement. By 1995 flexible enforcement had shifted the military balance away from Bosnian Serb forces and towards Bosnian Croat and Bosnian government forces.

Finally, national approaches were the least discussed but the most important element in embargo implementation. The vast majority of arms producers and dealers do seem to have respected national export regulations in spite of the determined arms acquisition efforts of warring parties. Moreover, there was evidence of some progress in the development of national export control systems in several important European countries. Two successes in enforcing the embargo against the former Yugoslavia stemmed from the actions of export control authorities in the Czech Republic and Russia.

The arms embargo on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

In November 1995 the UN Security Council lifted the arms embargo that had been established in September 1991 on the territory of the former SFRY (United Nations, 1995). With the development of the crisis over the future status of Kosovo, the Security Council imposed a new arms embargo in March 1998 (United Nations, 1998). The way in which the embargo was decided, framed and imposed reflected lessons learned from the earlier arms embargo experience as well as reflecting differences in the wider approach taken to the Kosovo crisis.

Recognizing the problem of creating coherence in policy between the major powers in the context of the war in Bosnia, an informal Contact Group on Bosnia and Herzegovina was created in April 1994. In May 1996 this Contact Group was reconvened to discuss the crisis developing in Kosovo and its membership extended to include France, Germany, Italy, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Contact Group meetings were usually attended by representatives of international organizations (the EU, the European Commission, the OSCE and the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia).

The issue of sanctions was discussed in this informal grouping before a legal decision was taken in the UN Security Council. The discussion indicated that while a political consensus could be reached on an arms embargo, there was no consensus for wider economic sanctions (because of Russian objections).

The scope of application of the embargo contained in UN Resolution 1160 (which remains in force) is to “prevent the sale or supply to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including Kosovo, by their nationals or from their territories or using their flag vessels and aircraft, of arms and related matériel of all types, such as

weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment and spare parts for the aforementioned, and shall prevent arming and training for terrorist activities there.” The text specifies a wider range of items for control as well as making it clear that states have a responsibility to prevent their nationals from embargo-busting, whether or not they are on their national territory.

After the lifting of the UN arms embargo in 1995, Russia moved to restore military–technical cooperation with Serbia. Most of the equipment used by the Yugoslav armed forces is of Soviet origin even if produced in the FRY. Therefore, Russian support for an arms embargo was required to achieve a resolution in the Security Council and Russian national export controls were a central instrument in effective enforcement. The legal instrument by which Russia enforces each UN embargo is a specific Presidential Decree issued when an embargo is imposed. The decree also establishes the Russian interpretation of the scope of the embargo on this particular target.

The issue of flexibility in implementation was once again raised after Resolution 1160 was adopted. The resolution refers to certain services (such as arming and training terrorist forces) as falling under the scope of the embargo. This would seem to exclude the arming and training of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)—which was almost certainly the purpose at the time the resolution was drafted. As the crisis developed into a military action by NATO, the central priority for the states engaged in combat became

victory. Under these conditions several public sources suggested that arming and assisting the KLA was an option being considered. The KLA leadership made public appeals for military assistance from NATO members. These appeals were supported by the President of Albania, Rexhep Meidani. Each argued that the KLA could not reasonably be called a terrorist organization and that supporting its activities in Albania (outside the territorial scope of the embargo) would therefore not be a violation (RFE/RL, 1999a; RFE/RL, 1999b).

There is widespread agreement that the main equipment of the KLA came from the Albanian Army stocks raided during the collapse of central authority in Albania in the spring of 1997. However, it is alleged that the KLA acquired more modern equipment via an international criminal network of ethnic Albanians operating mainly in Italy but also elsewhere in Western Europe. Financing for these purchases was said to have come from the expatriate Albanian community, from the proceeds of illicit drug trade and from certain Islamic countries of which Iran was named as the most important (*Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, p. 2 (in Russian), in FBIS-SOV-1999-0512, 30 April 1999; *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 21 May 1999 (in English), in FBIS-SOV-1999-0522, 21 May 1999).

With so many political and military representatives of NATO and its member states active in and around the target of sanctions, the most convincing theory is that these states took the same view of their obligations that they had taken during the war in Bosnia. Namely, while enforcing the embargo on their own territories and nationals, states did not feel obliged to respond to each case of a potential embargo violation about which they had knowledge.

Arms control in conditions of neither war nor peace

Apart from the embargo and sanctions noted above, other measures have also been used to try to reduce and regulate the volume of armaments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and more recently in Kosovo.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

In Bosnia and Herzegovina part of the post-conflict settlement has involved trying to reduce or eliminate the circulation of arms (in particular military-style arms) among the civilian population.

Operation Harvest is the name for the ongoing effort by national and local authorities of the different political entities that operate legitimately in the different parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina to encourage and facilitate the voluntary surrender of privately held weapons by civilians. Citizens may surrender a weapon, ammunition or explosives to the UN Stabilization Force (SFOR), the local police or the international police without sanction for illegal possession. If they prefer, citizens may notify the authorities of the location of the equipment rather than surrendering it in person. Operation Harvest is considered by SFOR to have been “extremely successful” (data on implementation of Operation Harvest are regularly posted by SFOR). By the end of June 1999 the operation had led to around 4,000 small arms being surrendered voluntarily along with over 800 000 rounds of ammunition. In addition, around 500 weapons of 20–76 millimeter caliber had been surrendered along with 11,000 rounds of ammunition. In November 1999 the operation continued with 248 small-caliber weapons surrendered in that month along with 170,000 rounds of ammunition.

Croatia

In 1996 and 1997 a series of measures were implemented in the framework of the agreement between Croatian and Serb entities to establish a transitional administration under United Nations authority to ‘govern’ the region of Croatia that had been populated primarily by Serbs prior to mid-1995.

Three approaches can be identified within the overall program, and these were essentially addressed to different types of armed actor present on the ground in Croatia and in Kosovo:

- Armed forces that were ‘regular.’ In some cases these forces were the Yugoslav National Army or paramilitary police formations. In other cases they were forces with military training (having been part of the JNA). These forces tried to conduct their operations according to accepted military rules and procedures.
- Irregular forces that were organized under a coherent command but which did not observe military rules and procedures.
- Non-combatant citizens who had weapons for their own protection.

These categories are not easy to apply. In a three-year war of the type fought in Croatia almost all male individuals were at some point mobilized to fight and may have moved backward and forward between ‘regular’ and ‘irregular’ categories more than once. Moreover, some units are difficult to classify—such as the heavily armed paramilitary police, most of whom were Serbian.

The approaches taken in the three cases were essentially as follows. Remaining armed forces of the JNA loyal to Serbia were allowed to withdraw from the region with all their arms and equipment. Irregular forces were required to disband. If necessary,

this task was carried out in Croatia by military forces that were not integrated into the UN transitional administration (many functions were integrated into the UN force structure then in Bosnia and Herzegovina) but were available to the regional administrator when required. Private citizens are discouraged from possessing or displaying weapons. Unauthorized weapons displayed in public are confiscated. In Croatia a weapon ‘buy-back’ program was launched with the objective of persuading citizens to sell their personal weapons to the UN transitional authority.

The three elements were interrelated in several ways in Croatia. The withdrawal of the JNA reduced the security of the Serbian population in the region. During the successful Croatian military offensives in the summer of 1995 around 200,000 Serbs were displaced from their homes and around 60,000–65,000 of these traveled to the region under UN transitional administration. With the local Serbs, this created a population of around 120,000 Serbs concerned about how they would be treated by Croatian authorities after the withdrawal of the JNA.

Serb irregular forces were, by most accounts, of only limited assistance in providing security for the Serb population. The activities of these units often appear to have mixed criminality with more political functions, and local Serbs were not immune from these criminal activities. The disbanding of the irregular forces (or in some cases their expulsion from the region) was an important objective but did not solve the security problem of the general Serb population.

Few people believe that the weapon ‘buy-back’ program took many weapons out of circulation—around 10,000 weapons were collected in total;

although gun ownership is natural for many of the local population there may be other reasons for this reluctance to sell weapons. Of the weapons collected few were destroyed. The majority were stored and then, at the end of the period of UN transitional administration, most were passed on to the Croatian government (which had financed the program).

Kosovo

In June 1999, after the termination of NATO operations in the FRY, separate agreements were reached on demilitarization and disarmament: on the one hand, with representatives of the FRY government and of Serbia and, on the other, with representatives of the KLA. On 20 June the Kosovo Liberation Army and KFOR agreed the Undertaking of Demilitarisation and Transformation.

Implementation of the Undertaking was monitored by KFOR. According to KFOR “thousands of weapons” have been handed over under the amnesty campaign as part of the demilitarization process while “over 2000” illegally held weapons have been confiscated and are being destroyed. (Information about the implementation of the Undertaking can be found on the KFOR Web site, URL <http://kforonline.com>). Some former owners of illegal weapons were arrested.

As in parts of Croatia, a residual Serb civilian population was left in Kosovo after the withdrawal of regular forces and irregular forces. The main difference appears to be the existence of a defined framework for a political settlement in Croatia and the absence of such a framework in Kosovo. The character and performance of the local administration envisaged for Kosovo and how Kosovo will be policed will probably determine how far the demand for weapons among the civil population can be reduced. Members of the KLA, having been disarmed,

will re-enlist in the police forces responsible for law enforcement in Kosovo. If political positions also come to be dominated by the leadership of the KLA, then the extent to which Serb civilians would be prepared to trust their security to the authorities could be expected to be low.

One additional difference between Croatia and Kosovo should be noted. A Croatian law establishing conditions for legal gun ownership was passed and this may have contributed to reducing the number of people carrying their personal weapons in public. In Kosovo, which is still part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, establishing a new and separate legal framework for gun ownership would be more complicated.

Cooperative Arms Control

In conditions where there is a low level of information about the capabilities and intentions of possible adversaries, states look to increase their own military power as a central element of their security policy. The efforts by a state to improve its own security may decrease the security of others—at least this is how they may perceive the situation. If these states in turn seek to increase their own capabilities, then the original state may suffer a net deterioration in the relative military balance as a consequence of its own action. Arms control and disarmament are instruments that have been used by states to manage this ‘security dilemma’ by raising the level of information about the capabilities and intentions of adversaries.

On a Europe-wide basis the process of reversing this action–reaction dynamic has involved negotiations between states in interlocking processes based on the 1990 CFE Treaty, the 1992 Concluding Act of the Negotiation on Personnel Strength of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE-1A Agreement) and the 1999 Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty, signed at the November 1999 Istanbul OSCE summit. In addition, the arms control arrangements are supported by

confidence- and security-measures contained in the Vienna Documents 1990, 1992, 1994 and 1999. These agreements were seen as part of an ongoing process of security-building in Europe rather than as an end in themselves.

The adapted CFE Treaty is intended to move from an arms control arrangement based on equilibrium of forces (a concept made irrelevant by the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the Soviet Union) to an arrangement based on national and territorial equipment ceilings.

At present some countries in south-eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy and Romania) participate in the CFE Treaty process while others (Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYROM, Slovenia and the FRY) do not. With the removal of the bloc-to-bloc equilibrium as the organizing principle for the arms control arrangement, the question arises whether European states that were neutral or non-aligned during the Cold War will participate in the new arrangement.

Austria and Slovenia are two states that might now join the Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty. Bulgaria has pointed to the risk that levels of armament sanctioned by a pan-European agreement might still create concentrations sufficient to threaten local stability in a given region of Europe. A state such as Bulgaria (outside the framework of an alliance) might have to choose between an imbalance of local military capability and devoting an undesirably large share of its resources to defence. This raises the question whether arrangements can be found that are consistent with the adapted CFE framework while reassuring states that feel vulnerable in regions that can still be considered ‘over-armed.’

The Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty, covering the whole of Europe, might open the way for talks about regional arms control within south-eastern Europe intended to address the security concerns of local states in more detail than a pan-European framework can accomplish.

In regional discussions it could be possible to move beyond the technical parameters of the CFE Treaty that are linked to offensive operations by large military formations equipped with heavy weaponry. In the specific conditions of south-eastern Europe it has been demonstrated that light infantry can provide a major offensive capability even without features such as close air support and heavy armored support (Jean, 1999).

In 1995 the Dayton Agreement linked post-conflict arrangements in the Balkans with the process of finding a regional approach to arms control to complement the wider European process. The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, signed in Paris, tasked the OSCE Forum on Security Co-operation (FSC) with the goal of establishing a regional balance “in and around” the former Yugoslavia.

The 1996 Florence Agreement was between only five parties: the three entities within Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (which included both Bosnian and Bosnian Croat representatives) and the Republika Srpska) as well as Croatia and the FRY. The agreement established ceilings in five categories of conventional armaments (battle tanks, artillery pieces, combat aircraft, attack helicopters and armored combat vehicles). There were initial difficulties in implementing the agreement but, by October 1997, close to 6600 armaments had been reduced. The ceilings reflect a ratio of 5:2:2 between the forces of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia, respectively.

Within the equipment holdings authorized for Bosnia and Herzegovina a ratio of 2:1 was established between the Muslim–Croat Federation forces and the Bosnian Serb Republika Srpska (Lachowski, 1999, pp. 633–36).

Parties tried, where possible, to avoid meeting their commitments. Declarations of holdings that were to be the basis for calculating reduction obligations were false and parties attempted to hide a proportion of their equipment to avoid having to declare it. Attempts were made to abuse the protocols defining how compliance could be achieved. For example, quantities of equipment were declared as reserved for use in research and development or in temporary storage awaiting export to avoid destruction. These efforts to circumvent commitments meant that the confidence-building effect that would have come from voluntary compliance was not achieved. Technical aspects of implementing agreements—identifying, collecting and destroying arms with appropriate verification mechanisms—were shown still to be a very important ingredient in successful arms control. The Florence Agreement provided for the establishment of a Sub-Regional Consultative Commission (SRCC) composed of representatives of the signatories to the agreement along with representatives of the OSCE. Although the SRCC could perform many useful tasks, for example in organizing verification inspections, it did not have access to resources that would be needed to collect information about compliance. The evasion efforts were uncovered or pointed out by external actors, usually through information provided by intelligence agencies of major powers.

Innovation was required to achieve the existing sub-regional arms control agreement. It was necessary to accommodate the Republika Srpska and its armed formations as a very reluctant participant in the ‘state’ of

Bosnia and Herzegovina. Forces that are not integrated into the new structure were to be disarmed, demobilized and reintegrated into civil society. After implementation there should be no irregular forces outside the control of specified political authorities. At the same time, the process also had to take account of the need to establish stable relations between the newly created states that seceded from Yugoslavia (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). The agreement therefore accommodated state and non-state parties in conditions where the underlying cause of the conflict was secession. Representatives of states were understandably cautious about any process that established rights and duties for non-state armed groups since this could be regarded as giving recognition to such groups.

The OSCE and independent observers have both concluded that the Florence Agreement has been successful in its own terms. However, there are essential issues that are not addressed in the agreement that could undo its positive achievements. One issue the Florence Agreement does not address is whether and how internal security forces can be made subject to controls without infringing on the capability of legitimate political authorities to maintain internal order. The agreement did not apply to “armoured personnel carriers, armoured infantry fighting vehicles, heavy armament combat vehicles or multi-purpose attack helicopters held by organisations designed and structured to perform in peacetime internal security functions.”

International rules to govern the behavior of internal security forces or armed forces when they are involved in operations within their state boundaries have been discussed in Europe. Certain principles have been established in the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security agreed in the framework of the OSCE. A state should “provide for and maintain effective guidance to and control of its military, paramilitary and

security force by constitutionally established authorities at all times, and to ensure their compliance with the provisions of international humanitarian law.” The Code establishes that, if an enforcement operation is required to establish the authority of the state, the operation must be proportionate, while the use of armed forces “to limit the peaceful and lawful exercise of civil rights by persons (as individuals or as representatives of groups), or to deprive them of their national, religious, cultural, linguistic or ethnic identity” is proscribed.

The need to address these issues within the framework of arms control processes has become more apparent with the continued difficulty in implementing the settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina and with the recent experience in Kosovo. As long as Kosovo is legally a part of Yugoslavia, stability will depend on both the activities of whatever internal security forces are created in Kosovo and on the relations between these internal security forces in Kosovo and Serbia.

Whether the Florence Agreement, as currently structured, will survive the current war is not known. Yugoslavia has presumably lost some quantities of equipment covered by the agreement, which may have changed the agreed 5:2:2 equipment ratio. At the same time Yugoslavia remains subject to a UN arms embargo and is severely economically constrained. If Yugoslavia is unable to replace lost equipment it will presumably have to accept a modified equipment ratio.

A framework for regulating armaments in south-eastern Europe

The framework for regulating armaments in south-eastern Europe is extremely complicated. The different efforts to regulate armaments are the responsibility of different

organizations. There is no formal coordination between some of the processes and no coordination at all between others.

Some regional states participate in Europe-wide conventional arms control while others do not. Three states participate in the only sub-regional arms control arrangement currently in force in Europe. A mandate exists to develop a regional process covering not only these three states but also any other states that might choose to participate.

Regional arms control to expand the scope of arms control below the all-European level (as foreseen in Article V of the Dayton Agreement) has not yet progressed far since negotiations began in December 1997. There are still forecasts that further regional conflict can be expected unless more stable political arrangements can be found. The existing sub-regional process also covers specific non-state actors. Agreements that accompanied the ending of hostilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and recently in Kosovo included demilitarization arrangements intended to eliminate all irregular forces and reduce the level of arms held in civil society.

The European Union member states maintain arms embargoes against Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Croatia but these states are able to modernize their armed forces by imports from other suppliers. One state (the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) is subject to a mandatory UN arms embargo.

Although one group of states (the European Union) has moved to develop a more harmonized approach to arms exports, the coordination of export controls by European countries remains extremely rudimentary. While

the OSCE has discussed the issue of conventional arms export controls it has not done so in a sustained manner although external supplies played a role in equipping warring parties in recent conflicts in south-eastern Europe.

The Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty has been an obstacle to the further development of sub-regional measures since some south-east European states do not want to commit themselves to limits that could complicate their role in an all-European agreement. It may be that the adapted CFE Treaty will eliminate one obstacle by removing ambiguity about national ceilings of states, including some states in south-eastern Europe.

There has been relatively little political momentum supporting sub-regional arms control from key states in south-eastern Europe and relatively little pressure on these states from external major powers. This reflects the fact that states have downgraded the political importance of arms control as an instrument of security policy, concentrating attention more on integration processes such as NATO enlargement.

The post-conflict arms control arrangements of the Florence Agreement appear to have been successful in their own terms, underlining that arms control can play a useful part in managing post-conflict security problems. In other cases the arrangements made for arms control in the ‘gray area’ between peace and war suggest that the more successful efforts focused on control of units and forces rather than weapons. The only implemented arrangement that included weapons other than major equipment gained control over a small number of weapons handed over by Serb civilians, most of which were not destroyed but transferred to Croatian authorities.

It has not yet been possible to take the next step of establishing legal commitments regarding how states may carry out internal security operations and mechanisms to implement them. Nor has it been possible to develop arms control and disarmament measures that would apply to forces intended for internal security operations. These kinds of rules and enforcement procedures are still considered to be incompatible with the concept of the sovereignty of states.

Developing an arms control agenda that creates a coherent and consistent set of objectives and instruments to pursue them will be extremely complicated in the specific south-east European context. However, in the period after the November 1999 Istanbul OSCE summit meeting, this would seem to be among the most important new tasks for arms control.

References

Conlon, Paul. 1995. "The UN's Questionable Sanctions Practices." *Aussenpolitik*. vol. 46, no. 4, pp. 327–338.

FBIS-SOV-1999-0522. 1999. Daily Report for Eurasia, 21 May.

FBIS-SOV-1999-0512. 1999. Daily Report for Eurasia, 30 April.

ITAR-TASS World Service. 1999. 21 May.

Jean, General Carlo. 1999. "Arms Control in Transition: In Search of a New Organising Principle." Unpublished paper delivered to the Nobel Symposium on *A Future Arms Control Agenda*, Lidingö, Sweden, 1–2 October.

_____. 1998. "New Role of the Military and Arms Control in the Post-Bipolar World." *Review of International Affairs* (Belgrade). vol. 49, no. 1068–69, May–June.

KFOR. <http://www.kforonline.com/>.

Lachowski, Z. 1999. "Conventional Arms Control." In SIPRI 1999, pp. 633–36.

Matovic, Colonel Rodoljub. 1993. "Defense System and Army of FR of Yugoslavia." *Yugoslav Survey*. vol. 34, no. 4.

Marten, Mr and Sir Keith Speed. 1993. *WEU Initiatives on the Danube and in the Adriatic*. Report on behalf of the Defence Committee. Proceedings of the 39th Ordinary Session, Assembly of the Western European Union, Part I: Assembly Documents. Paris, June.

Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozreniye. 1999. no. 16, 30 April–6 May.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty: Newline. 1999a. vol. 3, no. 82, Part II, 28 April. Available at: <http://www.hri.org/news/balkans/rferl>.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty: Newline. 1999b. vol. 3, no. 97, Part II, 19 May. Available at: <http://www.hri.org/news/balkans/rferl>.

RFE/RL. See: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

Schelling, Thomas and Morton Halperin. 1961. *Strategy and Arms Control*. New York: Twentieth Century Fund.

SFOR. <http://www.nato.int/sfor/index.htm>.

SIPRI. See: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. 1999. *SIPRI Yearbook 1999. Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

_____. 1994. *SIPRI Yearbook 1994*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

United Nations. 1998. S/RES/1160, 31 March.

_____. 1995. S/RES/1021, 22 November.

_____. 1992. Document S/25027, 30 December.

United Nations Secretariat, Department of Political Affairs. 1999. Informal Background Paper prepared for the First Expert Seminar on *Smart Sanctions, The Next Step: Arms Embargoes and Travel Sanctions*. Bonn, 21–23 November.

The Small Arms 'Joint Action' of the European Union

by *Walter-Jürgen Schmid*

The excessive and uncontrolled accumulation of military small arms and light weapons (hereafter referred to as 'small arms') has become a global problem, exacerbating threats to peace and security in many parts of the world. Especially in crisis areas and countries where the security situation is precarious, excessive supplies of—primarily military—small arms and the lack of control over them have contributed to the outbreak of internal conflicts. According to United Nations estimates, about 46 of the 49 conflicts that have erupted since 1990 have been fought principally with small arms. Most of the civilian deaths in these conflicts have been caused by small arms, of which there are reckoned to be some 100 million circulating uncontrolled throughout the world. Given these facts, there is an urgent need to combat the conflict-promoting and destabilizing impact of these weapons. A multifaceted approach is required which takes into account the complexity of the problem and its underlying political, military, economic and social causes.

Although it is complex, the problem is essentially one of arms control. What is needed is a reduction in surplus arms as well as effective measures to prevent new accumulations from posing a threat to security, in effect a classic arms control task. An approach

confined only to combating illegal transfers of small arms, which some see as the key to a solution, does not go far enough since it would not address the pressing problem of existing accumulations. In addition, nearly all 'illegal' small arms originate as legally held weapons. Only if we also consider the legal production, transfer and holding of such weapons and study these issues from an arms control perspective will we be able to devise satisfactory measures.

This has been attempted in the broad-based approach that combines both preventive and reactive measures contained in the Joint Action of 17 December 1998 adopted by the European Union (EU) under its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and legally binding on the EU member states. The Joint Action integrates previous CFSP instruments, notably the 1997 EU Programme for Combating and Preventing Illicit Trafficking in Conventional Arms and the EU Code of Conduct for Arms Exports, adopted in June 1998. The objectives of the Joint Action are threefold:

- To combat and contribute to ending the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms
- To contribute to the reduction of existing accumulations of these weapons to levels consistent with countries' legitimate security needs

- To help solve the problems caused by such accumulations.

The last objective is the most urgent task, since these arms cause immense suffering. Article 4 of the Joint Action spells out a number of guidelines for action. First, assistance and material support are to be given to those countries keen to establish more effective control over or eliminate their surplus small arms. Where a crisis is looming this is particularly important, but the problem of surplus weapons should not be underestimated in other situations. Experience has shown that weapons from army surplus supplies are often the main source of destabilizing accumulations of small arms. It is therefore vital that such the source of surplus supplies be detected and provision made for their safe storage and rapid destruction. Once they enter the international arms trade circuit, recovering them is immeasurably harder. Once conflict has broken out, there is virtually no prospect of achieving any reduction in such destabilizing accumulations.

In post-conflict situations, however, such reductions may again be feasible. In the context of demobilization, measures designed to build confidence and reintegrate former combatants as well as incentives to voluntarily surrender weapons are called for. If weapons collection either is not attempted or fails, experience shows that sooner or later these weapons will turn up in another trouble-spot, often on a different continent. Weapons collection in a post-conflict situation will only succeed if, preferably on the basis of a peace treaty, a secure environment can be created (the 'security first' concept) and incentives provided for sustainable economic and social development. Where the parties to the conflict are unable to reach a settlement, the United Nations should act in the context of its peace-making or peacekeeping operations to ensure the demobilization of former

combatants and the elimination of surplus weapons, for obvious reasons. As seen in Somalia, weapons not taken out of circulation at the start of a peacekeeping operation end up being used against the peacekeepers themselves.

In its Joint Action the European Union not only established a set of guidelines but also committed itself to providing concrete financial and technical support for programs and projects to tackle the problem of small arms. Thus CFSP funds are being used to support a small arms program in Gramsh, Albania, under which the local population is encouraged to surrender arms voluntarily in return for development projects run by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Here the European Union is responsible for the technical aspects of the weapons collection program and the subsequent destruction of weapons. This pilot project, if it is successful, will be followed by further projects in other provinces of Albania. Other EU projects in Cambodia and Ossetia are currently in the process of evaluation.

Measures to promote development have an important part to play in tackling the small arms problem. It was a logical step, therefore, given the Joint Action's objectives, that the EU Council of Ministers responsible for development affairs agreed in May to give the small arms problem special attention. Specifically, this means that the European Union is committed to supporting development projects that provide incentives for the voluntary surrender of surplus or illegally held small arms, the destruction of weapons and ordnance, the demobilization of combatants and their rehabilitation and reintegration into society as well as measures to restore and maintain law and order (the 'security first' concept).

With its Joint Action and the resolution adopted by the Council of Development Ministers, the European Union now has a cohesive, effective set of instruments with which to tackle the problem of small arms.

The support provided by the European Union comes with conditions attached. In addition to the usual conditions, such as demonstrated respect for human rights and international law and good governance, others are specifically geared to the small arms problem. Support goes only to those committed to effective prevention, that is, stopping the proliferation and destabilizing accumulation of small arms. There is, after all, little point in assiduously reducing existing accumulations without at the same time ensuring that no new destabilizing supplies are built up. Unless such measures are taken, the result might be not a reduction in small arms but a vicious circle in which we end up financing the international arms trade.

Article 3 of the Joint Action addresses prevention, or how to devise effective measures to counteract destabilizing accumulations of small arms. There is an important point to recall here: the Joint Action is concerned only with military small arms, since these are the weapons generally employed in armed conflicts, especially civil wars, in the developing countries. It is to combat this type of conflict, threatening a country's very existence, that the Joint Action was adopted, not to maintain domestic law and order and protect populations from the activities of criminals. As the example of the United States shows, citizens may see 'civilian' small arms, such as pistols, sporting or hunting rifles, as a significant threat to public safety, even though the existence of the state is clearly not at risk.

This focus on military small arms means that arms control instruments may be brought into play that reasonably would not apply to 'civilian' small arms. This focus is the key to

defining the central concept of excessive and destabilizing accumulations of small arms. The Joint Action starts from the supposition that, unlike anti-personnel mines, small arms cannot be banned as a category. Their possession and use may well be fully consistent with a country's legitimate security needs. These security needs are the benchmark for gauging what constitutes the excessive accumulations we have identified as the source of the small arms problem.

Bringing in the concept of 'legitimate security needs' as a decisive criterion begs further questions. Such needs must be defined in practical, operational terms, something that is easier said than done. Here the Joint Action pursues several approaches. The first is to define legitimate security needs more concretely as "legitimate self-defense and security requirements, including the ability to participate in UN peacekeeping operations." Legitimate arms holdings are arms held at the level required to ensure a country's external defense, maintain law and order, and support international efforts to resolve conflicts. The next question is: Who decides what these requirements are and what that implies in terms of a country's small arms holdings? While some may reply 'every country for itself,' that is not a satisfactory answer. The Joint Action therefore proposes the adoption of confidence-building measures such as regional registers and sharing of information on small arms exports, imports, production and holdings, measures that could provide increased transparency among the countries of a region and encourage them to consult on the shared data and the scale of their small arms holdings. It is hoped that the countries of a region will, through dialogue, seek to determine their respective needs in terms of small arms. The one criterion available to them all is the size of their armed

forces. Among military experts there appears to be a general consensus on the ratio between the size of armed forces and the number of small arms those forces need. As far as guns are concerned, this figure seems to be between one and two per soldier. The proposed consultations would also achieve their objective if they produced only approximate figures based on over- rather than underestimates since the primary intention is to identify obvious discrepancies between the size of a country's armed forces and the size of its small arms holdings. A striking example is Albania, where in the recent period of turmoil some half a million weapons were stolen from its about 50,000-strong armed forces and are now circulating illegally.

It is to prevent such illegal holdings that the Joint Action adopted a code of conduct. Countries should import and hold small arms only for their legitimate security needs, as defined above. Furthermore, they may supply small arms only to governments, which should consequently commit themselves to acquire them only for legitimate security needs. In essence, private individuals would be banned from possessing military small arms. The aim is to set up a transparent, closed circuit involving only state actors, which would safeguard their monopoly by adopting appropriate national regulations on arms possession and making transfers subject to effective control. Sales of 'surplus weapons' on the gray market would be illegal.

The restriction of sales of military small arms to only state actors is a crucial point. First, it follows from a decision of principle that such arms do not belong in the hands of private individuals. It is also essential to ensure that surplus weapons do not appear on the gray market, the main source of destabilizing accumulations of military-specification small arms. However,

restricting arms supplies to state actors can in certain internal conflict situations be tantamount to protecting governments with unsavory reputations. This argument is periodically raised by advocates of so-called covert supply, notably in cases where minorities are threatened with genocide. The problem was discussed in depth by the European Union, which concluded that there is ample evidence that intra-state conflicts cannot be resolved by supplying arms. In the case of Kosovo, this was the unequivocal view of the international community, as reflected in the United Nations weapons embargo on all parties to the conflict. Finally, if military small arms supplies are successfully restricted to governments, we will also make progress toward ensuring that weapon holdings are commensurate with a country's legitimate security needs. Given the parlous state of public finances worldwide, few governments will want to spend more money on weapons than is required for their security.

The Joint Action commits the EU member states to enhance efforts to build consensus in regional and international forums and among affected states on preventive and reactive measures as a basis for regional and incremental approaches to the problem and to respect international instruments on small arms. In March 1999 the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries members of the European Economic Area, 14 countries in all, added their support to the Joint Action, as did Canada and South Africa. The European Union is engaged in close consultations with the United States, with which there may be a broad basis for common action. The European Union also cooperates constructively with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with a view to launching concrete projects. A similar approach

has been agreed with the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (the ARF) and the countries of Central and Latin America (the Cartagena and Rio Groups). In the OSCE, a position paper was tabled at the November 1999 Istanbul summit meeting.

The main focus of current EU efforts is the international conference on small arms to be convened by the United Nations in 2001. The Guidelines on Conventional Arms Control/Limitation and Disarmament, adopted by the United Nations Disarmament Commission in April 1999, provide a solid foundation for a comprehensive approach to tackling this problem in the international arena. Similarly, the final report of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, published in July 1999, is reflected in the resolution on small arms adopted at the 1999 UN General Assembly session that prepared the international conference for 2001. The report of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms also opposes residual attempts to narrow the problem down to illegal transfers of small arms and advocates a broad-based approach. It argues:

"The scope of the Conference should therefore not be limited to criminal breaches of existing arms legislation and export/import controls, but should consider all relevant factors leading to the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons in the context of the illicit arms trade."

Thus there are now good prospects for the achievement of comprehensive solutions to the small arms problem. For this to become a reality, however, a great deal of work remains to be done. With the Joint Action, the European Union has contributed to this process, one which requires our full commitment and support.

About the Center

The Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) facilitates the processes whereby people, skills, technology, equipment, and financial and economic resources are shifted away from the defense sector and applied to alternative civilian uses. BICC supports governmental and non-governmental initiatives as well as public and private sector organizations by finding ways to reduce costs and enhance effectiveness in the draw-down of military-related activities. As a result, BICC contributes to disarmament, demilitarization, peace-building, post-conflict rehabilitation and human development.

International think tank

BICC conducts research and makes policy suggestions. Experts provide comparative analyses and background studies on topics such as military expenditures and the peace dividend, management and disposal of surplus weapons, and the conversion of military research and development (R&D) infrastructures.

Project management and consulting services

BICC provides practical support to public and private organizations in a range of conversion projects. For instance, BICC staff advise local governments confronted with the difficult task of redeveloping former military installations. They help former defense industries cope with the transition to producing civilian goods. BICC also links development assistance and conversion by providing help with demobilization, reintegration and peace-building.

Clearinghouse

Using its independent status, BICC provides conversion support and information to international organizations, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, companies and the media as well as to individuals and organizations of the private and public sector. In this role, it mediates and facilitates the conversion process at all levels—local, national and global.

BICC's six program areas:

- *Reduced military expenditures—
A lasting peace dividend?*
- *Reorientation of military R&D—
A potential largely untapped*
- *Defense industry restructuring—
Facing a changed environment*
- *Demobilization and reintegration—
Opportunities for human development*
- *Base closure and redevelopment—
A challenge for communities*
- *Surplus weapons—Dismantling the
remnants of conflicts*

The Bonn International Center for Conversion was established in 1994 with generous support from the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW). The Center's Trustees include the two German states of North Rhine-Westphalia and Brandenburg as well as the Westdeutsche Landesbank-Girozentrale (WestLB), Düsseldorf/Münster and the Landesentwicklungsgesellschaft NRW (LEG) (Development Agency). BICC cooperates with multilateral institutions, German organizations and international organizations.

Published by
© BICC, Bonn 2000
Bonn International Center for Conversion
Director: Dr. Herbert Wulf
Publishing management: Michael Dedek
An der Elisabethkirche 25
D-53113 Bonn
Germany
Phone +49-228-911960
Fax +49-228-241215
E-mail: bicc@bicc.de
Internet: <http://www.bicc.de>
ISSN 0947-7322
Layout: Svenja Bends
Printed in Germany
All rights reserved



BONN INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CONVERSION

B · I · C · C

