

Policy Position Paper
Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament

Ian Argue
Laura Franzini
Michael Langlais
Gary Newman
Becky Walker

Presented to
Prof. Matthew Paterson
POL2103A – Introduction to International Relations and Global Politics

Foreign Affairs Canada

Policy Position Paper

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University of Ottawa

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Professor Matthew Paterson

Submitted 23/Oct/2006

Project team:

Ian Argue

Laura Franzini

Michael Langlais

Gary Newman

Becky Walker

Issues Identified

1. Large supply and easy access to small arms and light weapons (SALW) in conflict-affected areas (CAA)
2. Social acceptance of SALW in CAA
3. Large illegal SALW market in CAA due to inadequate border control
4. Large legal SALW market in CAA due to continuing production and export
5. Absence of an adequate integrated global tracking system for SALW
6. Inefficiency of confiscation efforts due to the diffuse nature of SALW supply and the lack of concentrated stockpiles in CAA
7. Civilian non-combatant status of individuals in possession of SALW in CAA impedes confiscation efforts
8. Negative public perception of SALW confiscation in CAA can contribute to politico-economic instability and conflict
9. Acquisition of SALW in CAA motivated by need to satisfy basic physiological needs and security needs

Response to e-Discussion

What are the best ways to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in conflict-affected areas (CAA), considering both the demand and supply aspects of the problem?

Both suppliers and consumers can derive significant benefits from the large market for SALW generated by regions experiencing conflict and instability. A lack of political authority and legislation in CAA means that there is no notion of restricted weapons, and consequentially that SALW cannot simply be made illegal and confiscated. Additionally, the arms trade can be conducted through cashless transactions: this makes the tracking

and recovery of illicit arms difficult and the creation of an integrated global tracking system nearly impossible.

The value of SALW in CAA is high because the perceived benefit outweighs the price: SALW provide a means of satisfying basic physiological needs through theft or coercion and a way of satisfying the need for personal and collective security. These needs must be otherwise satisfied before the supply can be reduced. Even then, individuals will be reluctant to give up what has become an everyday item: initiative must be taken to 'buy back' SALW by offering an amount equalling or exceeding their perceived value. In this manner, the individual will be able to trade SALW for something of higher value, and in turn be able to use that value to trade and stimulate the local economy.

Recommendations

1. Small arms control:
 - a. Creation of a small arms fund financed by the government of Canada in cooperation with international partners;
 - b. Creation of SALW buyback program in conflict affected areas, using small arms fund to purchase SALW at or above market value;
 - i. Management of buyback program by a nongovernmental organization approved by both the Canadian and local governments, by;
 1. Determining the market value of SALW;
 2. Establishing SALW buyback venues;
 3. Using small arms fund to recover SALW;
 4. Recording and accounting of SALW recovery;
 5. Handing over SALW to military authorities;
 - ii. Periodic auditing of buyback program by a third party organization approved by both the Canadian and local governments, by;
 1. Verifying SALW recovery accounting and comparison with records of handovers;
 2. Conducting security verifications of personnel;
 3. Reporting potential security risks to military authorities;
 - iii. Provision of military support and security for buyback program, by;
 1. Destroying recovered SALW;
 2. Providing physical security for SALW buyback venues;
 3. Providing physical security for nongovernmental personnel;
 - c. Creation of legislation regulating trade, possession and use of SALW within CAA;
 - d. Initiation of awareness campaigns within CAA in order to reduce the social acceptance of SALW.

2. Border control:
 - a. Guarantee of CAA border integrity by the government of Canada;
 - b. Creation of a local government border services agency in CAA, by:
 - i. Providing professional assistance from Canadian Border Services Agency employees for advice and training;
 - ii. Providing monetary support for the creation of a local government border services agency and the development of infrastructure;
 - c. Creation of legislation regulating the import and export of SALW;
 - d. Confiscation of illegally imported SALW;
 - e. Improved monitoring of all shipments entering CAA.

3. Implementation of Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement (DDRRR) initiatives in CAA, in accordance with UN article “Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Stability in Africa”:
 - a. Transfer of SALW stocks in the theatre of operations to authorized organizations;
 - b. Provision of incentives and opportunities for reintegration to ex-combatants;
 - c. Provision of monetary support for repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of displaced and affected persons.

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