

What Prospects for Missile Controls?

Following its role as consultant to the 2001–2002 United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Missiles, UNIDIR, jointly with the Institut français des relations internationales (IFRI), held the seminar ‘What Prospects for Missile Controls?’ in Paris on 20–21 March 2003.

The meeting provided an opportunity for informal, off-the-record discussion of the challenges posed by the spread and qualitative improvement of missile capabilities. Arms control approaches to the missile issue, as well as the content and prospects of current and future initiatives, were also considered.

Meeting participants discussed missile-related security issues in the context of regional and global trends in technology transfers, missile proliferation, testing and deployment. Regional and global threat perceptions were also examined. The meeting took a practical and hands-on approach to looking at which types of missiles could be subjected to arms control regimes (ballistic or cruise missiles, conventional or WMD-armed missiles) as well as the issue of dual use. In this regard, the seminar analysed specifically the link between missile defences and missiles control regimes. Participants reviewed current proposals and approaches to missile controls (MTCR, ICOC, the Russian proposal and that of the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts), their impact and the possible avenues for further action.

For more information, please contact:

Christophe Carle

Deputy Director

Tel.: + 41 (0)22 917 31 86

Fax: + 41 (0)22 917 01 76

E-mail: ccarle@unog.ch

In each issue of *Disarmament Forum*, UNIDIR Focus highlights one activity of the Institute, outlining the project’s methodology, recent developments in the research or its outcomes. UNIDIR Focus will also describe a new UNIDIR publication. You can find summaries and contact information for all of the Institute’s present and past activities, as well as sample chapters of publications and ordering information, online at www.unidir.org

The Scope and Implications of a Tracing Mechanism for Small Arms and Light Weapons

Effective tracing of all small arms and light weapons (SALW) requires adequate marking and record-keeping, along with international cooperation that enables relevant authorities to trace the sources, supply routes and diversion points of illicit weapons in a timely and reliable manner.

Most SALW are marked during manufacture. However, marking practices vary widely from country to country. Such divergences hamper the identification of weapons recovered outside their country of manufacture. In addition, the adequate marking of individual SALW needs to be supported by adequate record-keeping if it is to serve a useful purpose. The extent to which records are accessible, the length of time they are held, and their accuracy are key issues in this regard.

Tracing typically transpires in relation to two types of contexts, each of which presents special challenges. Most commonly, tracing is carried out for law enforcement purposes. In such cases, tracing needs to be effected in a reliable and timely manner. Here, access to computerized records, some degree of centralization, and the gathering and sharing of data extrinsic to the weapon itself (i.e. recovery location, possessor, etc.), are essential.

Tracing may also be carried out to investigate, prevent or disrupt losses of SALW from military and other official stocks as well as their illicit trafficking. Tracing for these purposes involves particular complexities including longer, more complex weapons supply lines, and the involvement of customs services, military police and intelligence services. Here, national military marking and record-keeping, along with access to an accurate reading of these, are particularly important.

Produced jointly by UNIDIR and the Small Arms Survey, *The Scope and Implications of a Tracing Mechanism for Small Arms and Light Weapons* examines the different aspects of SALW tracing and marking practices and international legal instruments currently in place. The volume argues that existing marking, record-keeping and tracing cooperation need to be substantially improved in order to facilitate more effective tracing. An international instrument building on existing norms and standards, including those contained in regional agreements, could play an important role in this regard.

The Scope and Implications of a Tracing Mechanism for Small Arms and Light Weapons

O. Greene, F. Schütz, M. Hallowes, G. Thomas, M. Wéry & I. Berkol

UNIDIR, 2003

238 p

UN sales number G.V.E.03.0.7

US\$ 20 (plus shipping and handling)