

## SPECIAL COMMENT

The unregulated transfer of weapons and related materials through illicit brokering constitutes an emerging feature of the proliferation challenge today. As governments have implemented tighter non-proliferation regimes at the domestic and international level, proliferators have become smarter in their ways of doing business. A number of research and investigative reports show that weapons-related proliferation through illicit brokering activities poses an ever-growing challenge not only to international peace and security, but to sustainable development and humanitarian efforts.

Although the problem of illicit brokering activities has been emphasized in various international disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, the discussions have so far mainly been confined to the context of small arms and light weapons (SALW). But even with regard to SALW, there have not been appropriate follow-up measures to implement the recommendations put forward in international discussions including relevant UN resolutions and the report of the UN Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons.

However, the threats from illicit brokering are not restricted to the field of small arms and light weapons. In fact, we face a stark reality of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or WMD-related proliferation through illicit brokering activities in breach of the international treaties that prohibit any transfer of WMD, namely the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Considering that only one case of WMD-related proliferation may have a devastating effect on international non-proliferation efforts, as was clearly demonstrated by the revelation of the A.Q. Khan network, there is an urgent need to make renewed efforts to squarely address the issue. In recognition of such serious problems, Security Council resolution 1540 explicitly articulates the regulation of WMD-related brokering activities.

The Republic of Korea is playing a role in efforts to address the issue of illicit brokering controls, co-hosting with Australia, in March 2007, the first international seminar on brokering controls. The two states carried forward their contribution in tabling a resolution entitled "Preventing and Combating Illicit Brokering Activities" at the First Committee of the Sixty-third UN General Assembly: the resolution was adopted by consensus, with 61 countries participating as co-sponsors.

The resolution recognizes the need to prevent and combat illicit brokering activities not only in conventional arms but also in materials, equipment and technology that could contribute to the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery. It also calls upon Member States to establish appropriate national laws or measures to prevent and combat illicit brokering activities, and to implement further relevant international treaties, instruments and resolutions.

With the resolution, the Republic of Korea intends to raise awareness among the international community, to stimulate in-depth discussion, and to pave the way for further international efforts on this issue. It is therefore indeed timely and meaningful that *Disarmament Forum* accords particular interest to this question and is looking into various threats and challenges regarding illicit brokering and the way forward. The Republic of Korea stands ready to work closely with the international community and UNIDIR, and further contribute to international cooperation.

***Yu Myung-hwan***

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Republic of Korea