

*Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace and
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*

**Executive Summary of the
International Conference on
“Small Arms Proliferation and Trade in the Asia Pacific”
19-20 February 2001**

*Prepared for the ARF CBM Seminar on
Conventional Arms and Light Weapons*

*At Hotel Inter-Continental, Phnom Penh
February 21, 2001*

Background

The Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung jointly organized an International Conference on “Small Arms Proliferation and Trade in the Asia Pacific” on 19-20 February 2001, in Phnom Penh. The conference was well attended by more than 100 participants, from most of the ASEAN countries, as well as representatives of the EU, the UN, China, Japan, Germany, Russian Federation, and the United Kingdom. The conference was organized at the track-two level. Overall, while the meeting raised many key issues concerning proliferation and trade of small arms and light weapons, the timing of the conference was important in relations to: (1) the Cambodian government’s ongoing efforts to curb the use and trafficking of small arms and light weapons; (2) the track-one ARF CBM Seminar on Light Weapons and Conventional Arms; and (3) the upcoming International State Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects scheduled on 9-20 July 2001, in New York.

Below is a concise summary of the outcomes of the two-day conference. The summary is not intended to capture every point. Rather, this concise summary only highlighted the key issues raised at the conference.

1. General

- » small arms and light weapons are part of conventional arms
- address both supply and demand sides
- not only focus on illicit trade but also focus on all aspects of small arms and light weapons (including ammunition)
- Cope with the root causes in the intra-state conflicts; combat the proliferation of small arms

2. Imperative of Cooperation

- international cooperation is necessary
- closer cooperation and consultation between and among ASEAN states are essential
- problems ~~cannot~~ be handled successfully by **individual** countries, not even regions alone. But, ultimately the responsibility rests with individual states
- the situation in neighboring country directly affects the situation **in** another country
- prevention before conflicts (prevention of new **destabilizing** accumulation)
- parliamentary oversight

3: Interdependence between arms reduction measures and development

- easy availability of small arms poses threat to development
- availability of arms is a major source of **insecurity**
- *the prevalence* of weapons increases the lethality or violence of conflicts

4. **Respect for Legitimate Security Needs (question of interference in internal affairs)**
 - small arms cannot be prohibited as a category because of legitimate needs for self-defense
 - legitimate security needs (arms for **self-defense**) should serve as a benchmark, the rest is surplus
 - intentionally or unintentionally, efforts in other countries are easily undermined
 - non-state actors should not be supplied with weapons at all

5. **Agreement or Consensus on Definitions**
 - use precise definitions or concepts in order not to leave loopholes
 - * **concentrate** on military **weapons**
 - Address the question of ammunition (in a way it's easier to tackle: perishable, difficult to manufacture, is needed **in** large quantities)

6. **Arms Control, Trade Control, Export Trade Control**
 - monitoring of arms trade is vital
 - focus not only on illicit trade but also on legal production and trade (norms setting and standardization)
 - * focus both on new and used arms (recycle of small arms from one place to another)
 - prevent the **diversion** of small arms to illegal channels (means: see transparency)
 - **reduction** of existing surplus is crucial (political **decision** or leadership)

7. **Post-Conflict Policies: Demobilization, Disarmament, Reintegration (DDR)**
 - registration of arms, safe storage (prevent leakage from officially stored weapons), and (public) destruction

- DDR should be **included** in peace **agreements**
- disarmament should be mandatory, rapid and transparent
- **disarmament should be done immediately, using the existing chains of command; later arms are dispersed in the population and owned by individuals**
- **disarmament using the chain of command first, later offer incentives for voluntary disarmament (more complicated)**
- **important: address the topic of surplus weapons (industrialized nations are also affected, should set examples)**
- **long-term measures: confidence-building (establish confidence and trust in security situation) by training of police, reform of security sector, and establishing rule of law**
- **key factors: capacity to enforce control and inspire confidence**
 - a capacity building (local inputs), especially local communities
 - a reconciliation and justice (reintegration not at the expense of justice)
 - a institutional building
 - a challenge and reverse culture of **violence** (e.g., it's dishonorable to possess arms)
 - a development assistance

8. Transparency

- information exchange (as a first step: government to government transparency)
- exchange information on export policies, export control, pass on information to UN arms register
- marking of weapons in order to be able to trace them
- registration of weapons
- accurate and sustained record keeping
- information exchange can reinforce or **enhance** sovereignty, not undermine sovereignty

9. Participation or Involvement of the Track Two and Civil Society

- **inputs** from think tanks or the track two are essential (such as **ASEAN-ISIS** or **CSCAP**)
- active support from civil society is required, especially for disarmament

10. Recommendations for Cooperation; Possible First Steps

- establish national commission for management of weapons and ammunition
- information exchange (state-to-state, but also establishment of networks) concerning national laws and regulations, the marking system, which authorities are in charge
- * network for **cooperation between** law enforcement officials
- « closer regional cooperation on customs, police, border **controls**
- * support programmes for **reduction** of weapons in post-conflict situations (e.g. **EU** in Cambodia)