

**ADVISORY BOARD ON DISARMAMENT MATTERS**

---

FORTY-FOURTH SESSION  
New York, 23-25 February 2005

**Discussion Paper****Agenda item 6****Regional security and global norms: small arms and light weapons**

**Kuniko INOBUCHI, Ph.D.**

**Professor of Political Science, Sophia University**

**Special Assistant to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan**

**1. Introduction**

This paper considers how global norms for combating the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons (SALW) can be further mainstreamed, and how such emerging global norms can enhance regional security and the reconciliation process in post-conflict situations. During the past decade, groundbreaking efforts through the United Nations fora and at regional levels in partnership with NGOs have successfully contributed to the formation of new global norms concerning SALW. Today, it is widely understood that the proliferation of SALW leads to the recurrence of violence, hinders post-conflict reconstruction, and becomes one of the major sources of poverty and social insecurity. Mainstreaming new norms in the international community is always a difficult challenge, but SALW is one important area whereby the UN process has functioned effectively in a relatively short period of time to help mainstream new global norms together with regional and civil society organizations. However, how the formation of global norms

could effectively result in reducing regional insecurity depends on the degree of implementation of political and legal agreements. Implementation of the UN Program of Action (PoA) and other related agreements on SALW would require massive financial and technical cooperation as well as strengthened commitment from national legislators. Successful mainstreaming of SALW norms at the global level should help all those involved in the implementation of norms.

## 2. Inclusive multilateralism and formation of new global norms

The problem of SALW is widespread across national borders and economic zones. No country is free from its impact, and no country should be left alone in coping with the impact. Thus, we need an inclusive approach, whereby every nation-state is included in the process and the sense of ownership is shared, bearing in mind different situations, capacities, and priorities. Truly sustainable solutions to these challenges cannot be imposed from without, but must be embraced from within as legitimate reflections of concrete national interests. Thus, the SALW process developed as a UN process including all member states, and the consensus approach became the dominant methodology. Inclusive multilateralism as such may require patience and tolerance from all states, but states are requested to develop flexibility and exercise self-restraint to work toward a common future and for the benefit of nurturing new dimensions of global norms.

At the United Nations First Biennial Meeting of States on the Implementation of the PoA in 2003, which I chaired, it was widely understood that many aspects of the PoA have become firmly accepted as irreversible global norms. It is now time to work constructively with Finnish Chair-designate for the Second Biennial Meeting of States (BMS2), Ambassador Pasi Patokallio, so that the lead up process and the meeting in New York in July 2005 will become another major threshold for the deepening of global norms concerning SALW. BMSs serve an important purpose including implementation of the UN PoA, raising awareness, creating a sense of ownership among governments and organizations, consolidating shared

institutional memory, and strengthening emerging global norms. .

While the inclusion of all UN member states can be considered as horizontal inclusiveness, vertical inclusiveness encompassing regional, national and civil society levels is also essential. This can partly be achieved by asking member states to include in their national reports efforts of NGOs and local governments within respective national jurisdictions, and by providing opportunities to regional, international and civil society organizations to submit their reports and/or express their views at BMS. It should always be reminded that all local and civil efforts to curb illicit SALW need to be reported to national and/or regional focal points so that they will be reported to the UN process to be shared with the rest of the global community. Regarding SALWs, every effort at every level should eventually constitute an integral part of the UN process.

### 3. Solution-Oriented Synergies (SOS)

The world is suffering from the scourge of illicit SALW. What we need is a common and coordinated response based on SOS, i.e. Solution-Oriented Synergies. In order to foster effective multilateralism, we need to activate strategic linkages and synergies among key international bodies and sectors.

First, the General Assembly process and Security Council actions need to become more interactive and mutually reinforcing. In this context, the Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on Small Arms (S/2005/69) issued on 7 February 2005 includes relevant recommendations including Recommendation 4:

*The Council may wish to consider means by which its interaction with the General Assembly on issues relating to small arms might be enhanced, so as to promote the further development of long-term strategies to halt the scourge of the illicit proliferation of small arms within the framework of international efforts aimed at conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and in the context of the Programme of Action adopted at the July 2001 United Nations conference on small arms.*

The Report also draws useful conclusions, such as para. 66 which recommends the

establishment of a small joint committee to look into how the two organs could work together in this area.

*(S/2005/69) 66. Regarding recommendation 4, on the interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly, while no structured interaction has been established between the two organs on the topic of small arms and light weapons, the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects has emerged as a key issue on the agenda of both organs. In order to develop a coherent and comprehensive United Nations policy on small arms and light weapons, I recommend that the Security Council and the General Assembly establish a small committee to look into how the two organs could work together in this area. I am particularly pleased to note the progress being made on the issue of illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons, which has been an area of concern, particularly in connection with activities of terrorist groups.*

Future Security Council resolutions concerning restoration of peace ought to assign higher priorities to recommendations for the collection and destruction of illicit small arms, the training of officers to control stockpiles, the need for national legislative measures to combat illicit flows, and cross-cutting international cooperation, etc.

Secondly, strategic synergies need to be developed with relevant financial institutions including the World Bank and regional development banks. It is important to integrate SALWs issues into post-conflict development programmes with special attention to DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration of former combatants) programmes. DDR programmes also need to be designed with a stronger focus on illicit SALW problems.

Thirdly, SALW problems need to be further mainstreamed in global governance processes and security talks. The UN and respective governments should endeavor to make sure that SALW issues are included in the agenda and/or given due attention at the G8 Summit, regional summits, and all high level talks concerning international/regional peace and security. It ought to be remembered

that the Evian G8 Summit in June 2003 produced a Chair's summary containing a special short paragraph welcoming the First UN Biennial Meeting of States on small arms. It is hoped that the Second UN Biennial Meeting will enjoy similar attention.

#### 4. Enhancing reconciliation and regional security

In my discussion paper submitted to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Advisory Board, I made a point that there was a shift in the characteristics of violent conflicts, from a traditional inter-state conflict to a deep-rooted intra-state conflict, and therefore a reconciliation process, along with a peace pact, is necessary to deter the recurrence of similar conflicts. The nature of a deep-rooted conflict is such that it “combines two powerful elements: potent identity-based factors, based on differences in race, religion, culture, language and so on, with a perceived imbalance in the distribution of economic, political and social resources.”<sup>i</sup> Traditional approaches all too often fail to address this deep-rooted nature of conflicts and thus the conclusion of peace pacts does not necessarily bring human security. People continue to suffer or even die from war-related effects long after the war itself has come to an end, or national security is seemingly restored.

None of these conflicts have a clear solution for achieving peace, but all have one thing in common: deep-rooted hatred in the minds of people. Thus reconciliation at all politico-social levels is the key to ending a violent conflict. Reconciliation in the aftermath of a violent conflict is a complex process. It is an inclusive process, combining the search for truth, justice, forgiveness, healing, reparation, and cooperation in the design of the road to a peaceful future.<sup>ii</sup> Reconciliation is both a goal and a process to find a way to coexist with former adversaries by sharing a future.

“Reconciliation as a concept and a praxis to reframe the conflict so that the parties are no longer preoccupied with focusing on the issues in a direct, cognitive manner. Its primary goal and key contribution is to seek innovative ways to create a time and a place, within various levels of the affected population, to address, integrate, and embrace the painful past and the

necessary shared future as a means of dealing with the present.”<sup>iii</sup>

Reconciliation supports the (re)building of non-violent relationships between individuals and communities. Reconciliation means enabling victims to carry on with their lives and, at the society level, the establishment of a political dialogue and an adequate sharing of power.<sup>iv</sup> Eradicating illicit SALW should constitute the first step toward non-violence and reconciliation and disarmament programmes should be designed to bring incentives for reconstruction activities. Post-conflict small arms disarmament programmes should be community-based and human security-centered, and must include local security sector reform.

In order to achieve lasting regional security, all peace pacts should give priority to programmes aimed at combating SALW in the region. Surrendering SALW by former combatants ought to be viewed as an important positive step in the restoration of social unity and coherence. The international community must extend financial and technical cooperation to help combat the illicit accumulation and transactions of SALW in societies and regions emerging from conflicts, bearing in mind that the majority of victims in post-conflict situations are women and children killed by illicit small arms. Their deaths often outnumber victims in combat.

---

<sup>i</sup> David Bloomfield and Ben Reilly (eds.), *Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators* (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2001)

<sup>ii</sup> David Bloomfield, Teresa Barns, and Luc Huyse (eds.), *Reconciliation After Violent Conflicts: A Handbook* (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2003)

<sup>iii</sup> John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1997)

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid., p.19.